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— and —
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The Field is the World

STANDING at the threshold of a New Year, it is natural to wonder what it holds in store for us each individually, for Christian organizations of every shade of belief, and for the world generally. Recently we came across a paper published in 1930, predicting a European war for that year. That would have meant much to individuals and religious organizations of all shades of opinion, and to the worldly governments concerned. Similar predictions were made successively by different scanners of the future for 1931, 1932, 1933, and 1934. And there are those who hold that war is likely in Europe in 1935.

Any high church dignitary, prominent statesman, politician, economist, or newspaper writer may make such predictions and be more or less believed, with the result that many European peoples with their American and Canadian "cousins" are unnecessarily disturbed in mind. Other parts of the world also would feel the repercussions of such a conflict.

No sane person would wish for another world war, with all its horrors and its aftermath of ruin, with more or less still of national hatreds. Nor can any reasonable person desire the horrors of a Communist revolution, such as Russia experienced, and, later, sections of China.

Pray for Kings. Taking our individual selves first, we have the apostle's admonition "that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men;" and there is a reason for this. Though we are not "of the world," yet we are in it, and more or less affected by the conduct of "all men." We should pray too "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." (1 Timothy 2: 1, 2.) Prayer along these lines acknowledges the responsibility of ruling authorities to preserve order in the earth and afford protection and peaceful conditions for their peoples. Such prayer also acknowledges our own responsibility to lead honest, godly lives; and, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Romans 12: 9-21 contains further instruction most helpful at the present time, as it has been helpful to Christians all down the age.

Kings, presidents, governors, parliaments, other elective congresses, councils, and assemblies—as well as dictators, whether self appointed or elected—have to-day many difficult problems to handle, many evils to contend against. That is their job. And our prayers should be that peaceful conditions may prevail for the general good as well as our own. But the apostle goes no further. We are not instructed to take active part in political affairs. He goes on in his letter to Timothy to indicate that peaceful conditions are favorable to the spread of the truth. And that should be our chief interest. For it is by the spread of the truth that the special work of the Gospel age is being carried on; namely, the taking out of a people for God's name, and building one another up on our most holy faith.—Acts 15: 14; Jude 20, 21; Colossians 2: 6, 7.

Droughts, Floods, Plagues, and Pests have again raised the query as to how much of such calamity (if any) is directly God sent. No doubt God could cause such things to occur as a rebuke or chastisement, as He did when Israel was His chosen people. But the nations to-day are not under that covenant; they never have been. The apostles told the unbelieving Gentiles how God sends them the rains and fruitful seasons, and the Lord in expounding the New Covenant said that God sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Acts 14: 15-17; Matthew 5: 45.) In the beginning a curse was pronounced on account of sin, that men might be enabled to realize that a perfectly functioning natural order could not, consistently with God's righteousness, be supplied to a race which chose sin in preference to righteousness. (Genesis 3: 17-19.) The toil and sweat of face which precede the final stage of death have disciplinary power, and men have been kept busy dealing with the thorns and pests and other elements of the

curse. Droughts, floods, and earthquakes, storms, etc., are large scale evidence of the same unreadiness of the earth as a perfect abode. Some persons suffer disaster when they build dwellings in river flats and narrow gullies where floods are to be expected at times. And men by cutting down forests and failing to plant trees in prairie country have increased liability to floods.

At the same time it must be remembered that the fertility of river flats is increased by the silt spread over the soil when the waters subside. Without the Nile floods Egypt would never have been the prosperous land it was. And the value of volcanic soil is well known.

This reminds us of a cyclonic storm that burst over portion of Australia doing considerable damage to property. Everyone was shocked, and sorry for the sufferers. But a few days later an item appeared in a Melbourne daily stating that the cyclonic storm had been received with thankfulness by the wheat growers and pastoralists, for that same storm spread heavy downpours of much needed rain over miles of drought-suffering country to the north. The inference was that the good done by the rain far outweighed the damage by the storm.

The Full Meaning. That which affects us personally is always more awful than when the sufferer is some one else, particularly a foreigner. The great drought in the Middle West was an awful experience for American wheat and maize (corn) farmers of that section of the U.S.A. The recent droughts in Australia, though by no means new, also unprecedented floods in Victoria, served to bring the "curse" home to Australians. And now the newspapers inform us that the island of Cyprus has had many years of unusually dry conditions, of which fact few westerners were aware. Human beings learn better by experience than by hearsay, as a rule. They cannot grasp the full meaning of the "curse" by other people's sufferings under it. If then the Lord while sending the rain, with fruitful seasons, upon the unjust as well as the just, sometimes allows some of the calamities also to fall upon the just, let us understand the full meaning of His dealings.

Let human ingenuity and skill foresee and provide against aberrations of climate and natural phenomena, and when in spite of all disaster comes—repair the damage. And here is where the knowledge of the truth comes in: to know that the "curse" is not to be inflicted forever. Let all learn what lessons they can in the present life and develop a character of honesty and dependability and look forward to the time promised when there shall be no more curse; when God's Kingdom will be set up in the earth and men learn righteousness, and so no longer need the punishment and the discipline of the curse. And if we are inclined to complain that the "curse" seems to rest more heavily on some than on others, let us resolve to leave that part to the Lord to overrule for good in the end.

All Made of One Blood. Identity of experience helps us to connect ourselves with the peoples of the past. Several days of torrential rain with resulting "highest floods known" cause some to think that Noah's flood is not unreasonable after forty days of continuous rain. And as people take to boats when the waters rise, they may well think how God, knowing the height the flood would reach, prepared an "ark"—a well-proportioned boat with every accommodation for Noah and his family and the animals as well. The grasshopper plague now being experienced in parts of Australia gives an idea of what a plague of locusts meant to Palestine and Trans-Jordania a year or two ago; also taking us back to ancient times when the locusts covered the face of the earth and the land was darkened so the Egyptians could not see it; and filled their houses, and did eat every green thing in orchard and field. The Lord could cause the east wind to bring the locusts, and at the right time turn a mighty west wind to take them away and cast them into the Red Sea. (Genesis 10: 4-19.) What was painful to those people then is painful to us to-day. And while at that time God took away the locusts, for stated reasons, at the present time men are encouraged, by the spread of education and scientific discovery, to devise their own means of dealing with the locust invasions.

Yet another service the locusts perform. Not only do they help us to realize that all nations are of one blood and suffering under one and the same curse (as well as sharing the benefits of sun and rain, etc.), they provide also a most convenient descriptive formula for use in prophecy. Swarms of locusts covering the land and darkening the sun well pictured the Saracenic invasion of Syria and other parts of the Roman empire. (Revelation 9: 3-11.) Other characteristics were ascribed to these locusts which enable us to understand their use as a symbol, such as the stings in their tails—painful like the scorpion's, but not necessarily fatal, etc. Certainly the myriads of horsemen under Abu Beker and his successors are well visualized to us by the figure of swarms of locusts. Recently the Australian people have had such a demonstration: trains stopped, streets impassable, shops and houses invaded as well as fields and pastures denuded.

While sympathizing with the sufferers from the locust plague, let us not fail to observe the relevant features that assist us to understand the history of the world as well as the apt symbolisms of prophecy.

Trial and Error. Research laboratories are busy the world over seeking new insecticides or new dyes or new treatments for fibre to produce textile substitutes. Different substances are mixed with certain expectations, which are not always realized—hence, "trial and error." But they may discover something else equally valuable. Christopher Columbus tried to find a westward route to India—he failed; but his voyage was a success nevertheless, in that a new continent was discovered. For centuries men have been experimenting with political expedients, and since the Great Reformation more thought than before has been given to the education and social welfare of the masses, wherever it was discerned that

individual study of the Scriptures was advisable, with the right of private judgment.

Alterations in Government policy have demonstrated all over the world that man works by trial and error. Theories lauded to the skies are found defective when put into operation—trial and error. Some new method is suggested; again, trial and error, and difference of opinion as to the best way to correct faults in theory or in administration.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, elected President of the United States in 1932, promised the country a "new deal," and drew around him experts with whom to plan "recovery." But he was careful to assure the people that his plans were largely experimental and that he could promise no more than the best efforts of the administration to introduce legislation and arrange facilities for the application of his new economy. In these the co-operation of all parties and classes was desirable. Again, trial and error. In regard to some of the experiments a measure of success, but in most of them modifications and alterations were seen to be desirable, and are having the attention of the President and his colleagues at the present time.

For example, one of the aids to recovery is a fund for lending large sums for "home building," which at the same time would effect "slum" clearance, by the erection of new apartment houses of block size, and with modern improvements, thus offering better sanitary homes for the former condemned premises. But a large syndicate formed in Chicago to take advantage of the loan facilities found on investigation that tenants in present apartments would not take the new rooms because rents would necessarily be higher. The slum conditions at low rentals met their absolute requirements at a rent they could pay. Any tenants whose financial standing improved and were prepared to pay higher rents preferred to leave the district entirely. An up-to-date apartment house in a slum area would be a "white elephant." Hence the syndicate suggests—rather than such trial and error—the buying of the old tenement block, razing the old buildings and laying out a park, while the estimated cost of an apartment be spent in providing homes—preferably individual houses—in an open suburban area, which could be let at a reasonable rental. The syndicate claimed also that in this way more employment could be given to artisans in all branches of the building trade, which would conduce to purchase of new furnishings, thus helping many other branches of industry.

Worldwide unemployment due largely to slackness in trade has required all governments to give thought to the best means of providing sustenance without destroying the will to work when work can be provided either by government grants or private industry.

And so it will go on through 1935 and succeeding years so long as the present political and social systems endure. Such a prospect forever would be tiresome indeed, with the countless millions whose wants under any system of man have never been met. One turns with gladness to the Word of God which tells us that in God's planning there is no "trial and error." All His work is perfect, and the kingdom of God soon to be set up will demonstrate to all mankind a social order in which the government and its administration make no mistakes, no miscalculations, and where there will be no shortage or faulty distribution. Not one word of all His good promises shall fail.

MEMORIAL SUPPER, 1935

According to the calendar in vogue in Palestine at the time of our Lord's earthly ministry, the first day of the month Nisan will correspond this year with Thursday, April 4, beginning the previous evening at sunset. The fifteenth day of Nisan will therefore correspond with Thursday, April 18, beginning Wednesday, April 17, at sunset. The time for the celebration of the Supper in memory of our dear Redeemer's atoning death for us and for the whole world will therefore be on Wednesday, April 17, after sunset, this being the anniversary of the institution of the Supper, also of His death, which occurred before the next sunset. The congregation at Melbourne will, D.V., assemble for the solemn commemoration at 8 p.m., in their usual meeting place, the Foresters' Hall, Chapel-st., between Toorak and Malvern Roads. All believers in Jesus as their Redeemer and Mediator are exhorted to obedience to the Master's command to "Do this in remembrance of me." Assemble with others likeminded if possible; but if such assembling be not feasible, the Lord will bless those who in solitariness obey and honour Him.

The Work of Faith

— Annual Report —

TWO YEARS, instead of one, have rolled round since our last Report. Our usual time for presenting a Financial Statement is in January. The year 1932 closed with arrears in payment of printer's bills which we much regretted, and we hoped that the early months of 1933 would witness sales of books, subscriptions, and contributions to the Funds so that we could give an encouraging Report early in that year. And we gratefully acknowledged in N.C.A. issues sums sent in to try to catch up on these arrears. Valiant assistance was rendered by many friends of the truth, but in our issue of January 1934 we were obliged to state that there still remained a Deficit in the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1933 of £109, and in The Advocate Sustaining Fund for the same year (1933) of £282.

During 1934 progress was made in reduction of these amounts, but all the while the expenses of publication for 1934 were going on. And, each month trusting that the amounts for 1933 would soon be made up, we postponed the issue of a full statement for 1933. Until now, at the beginning of 1935, we are pleased to say that in our issue of December 1934 we were able to report the N.C.A. Deficit for 1933 made up with £21 to apply on the N.C.A. work for 1934, while the Cheerful Givers' Fund had done even better.

The year 1934 was in some parts of the world reckoned an improvement on 1933, but still many friends of the truth have been suffering from what it is hoped is the fag end of the "Depression." Yet we wonder whether all readers realized that the N.C.A. Deficits mentioned from month to month last year were for 1933 and not 1934, and that the whole of 1934 required pulling up. Through changed circumstances some former liberal contributors have not been able to continue contributions on the same scale; other old and beloved helpers in the work have laid down their lives, and their help, as well as themselves personally, is missed. It remains for other willing helpers to make up the leeway, including newly interested ones, who can in this way indicate their appreciation of the good things the Lord has given them and become the means of placing the truth in the hands of still others.

The New Year

As a Work of Faith we continued during 1934, and, God Willing, propose to do the same during 1935. We have already been heartened by some special efforts made by the brethren who, during the last days of December, noted the position. A skeptic might say that if it is a work of faith and the money has been slow in coming in, that would indicate that the Lord did not wish us to have it, and therefore His people are relieved of all responsibility to send it. But we do not look upon it that way. We look upon the shortage as a test upon all of us: whether we love the Lord as much in hard times as in good times, and whether we are willing to make sacrifices in hard times as well as when things are easier.

The Lord has a work to be done, there is no doubt of that. Furthermore, we believe that He wishes the N.C.A. to continue as a living witness to the truth for our times, which includes all the truth the Lord has revealed in His Word and has enabled us to understand, according to the promise that "ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

It shall therefore be our endeavor during the coming year to carry on by the grace of God. The N.C.A. is sent regularly to readers in many parts of the world, some of whose appreciative letters have appeared from time to time in these columns. Let us continue to co-operate in the search for the truth hungry. Following are the donations received since our last issue—

The Advocate Sustaining Fund

368, 6/-; 369, 6/-; 370, 18/-; 371, £1:10:0; 372, 4/6; 373, 3/-; 374, 2/-; 375, 5/-; 376, £2; 377, £49:7:6; 378, 2/-; 379, £1:10:0; 380, 2/-; 381, 10/-; 382, 2/-; 383, 10/-; 384, £51:5:0; 385, £20; 386, 2/-; 387, £1:5:3; 388, 10/-; 389, 2/-; 390, £6:4:0; received at Bristol, 82, 5/-; 83, 8/-; 86, 10/-; 89, £2:10:0; 91, 5/-; 92, 10/-; 93, 2/6; total for 6 weeks, £141:16:9 ($689.33); total since Dec. 19, 1932, £759:11:9 ($3691.59).

FINANCIAL REPORT, "NEW COVENANT ADVOCATE, December 19, 1932, to January 14, 1935

Receipts								
Credit Balance brought forward from last report ...				£29	2	7		$141.59
Subscriptions and Sales of Extra Copies				210	11	4		1023.35
"Advocate" Sustaining Fund				759	11	9		3691.59
Expenditures								
Paper and Printing	£851	13	11				$4139.23	
Postage	73	9	6				357.09	
Part Office Expenses	97	16	2				475.35	
	£1022	19	7	£999	5	8	$4971.67	$4856.53
Adverse Balance carried forward				23	13	11		115.14
Besides this adverse balance there are unpaid printers' bills amounting to							£63 5 8	($307.55)

Well may we all of us who have the interests of the cause at heart join in praise to God that the end of 1934 finds the N.C.A. Fund in so much better position than at the close of 1932 and 1933. Paul said that he and others who preached the gospel were "labourers together with God." So also may we say of those who have assisted the preaching of the gospel through the columns of the N.C.A.; we have been "labourers together with God." In the one case the truth was orally expressed, and in the present case the truth has been expressed in print which in turn could be read aloud if desired to as many as would care to listen. Thus the "preaching" of any given N.C.A. becomes worldwide in a few weeks from date of issue. We each and all do our part in supporting and distributing the truth thus set forth, and, also as of old, it is God that gives the increase.—1 Corinthians 3: 5-11.

Cheerful Givers Fund

Following are the donations received by the Cheerful Givers Fund during the last month, up to January 14, 1935—

201, 8/-; 202, 10/; 203, 10/-; 204, 1/3; total for month, £1:9:3 ($7.11); total since Dec. 19, 1932, £604:0:3 ($2935.50).

REPORT OF CHEERFUL GIVERS' FUND, December 19, 1932, to January 14, 1935

Receipts			
Voluntary Donations		£ 604 0 3	$2935.50
Expenditures			
Adverse Balance brought forward from last report	£154 3 2	$749.20	
Paper and Printing Tracts	255 18 9	1243.85	
Freight, Postage and Duty	75 16 10	368.59	
Part Office Expenses	97 16 2	475.35	
	£583 14 11	£604 0 3	$2863.99	$2935.50
Credit Balance carried for'd	20 5 4	98.51	

The C.G. Fund is used mostly for the printing and circulation of tracts. Tracts published in the last two years have brought in many inquiries from new readers. All N.C.A. readers are not only invited but desired to use the tracts freely.

The Expenses of the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1935 it is estimated will be about £200 ($1000).

The Book Department

The Book Department is concerned with the printing and circulation of the truth on special subjects, as may be seen by reference to the Book List, which usually appears on the last page of each issue of the N.C.A. The circulation of books in the last two years has been not nearly up to previous years.

FINANCIAL REPORT, BOOK DEPARTMENT, December 19, 1932, to January 14, 1935

Receipts			
Credit Balance brought forward from last report		£28 1 9	$136.54
Sales and Donations		501 5 7	2436.21
Expenditures			
Printing and Publishing	£541 17 9	$2633.57	
Office Expenses and Labour	216 19 2	1054.42	
Postage	103 3 6	501.43	
	£862 0 5	£529 7 4	$4189.42	$2572.75
Adverse Balance carried forward		332 13 1		1616.67
Besides this adverse balance there are unpaid printers' bills amounting to			£58 1 8	($283.28)

How You Can Help

The truth as a sacred trust has been handed down from generation to generation, being preserved by the grace of God in the Scriptures, written under inspiration and therefore the standard and guide for all truth seekers. There have been dark ages when much of the truth has been obscured, especially before the days when honored servants of God translated the ancient manuscripts into modern languages. But with the circulation of the Word has come also, as of old, the need of explanatory sermons, lectures, books, pamphlets, and tracts. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2: 15.) And if such study was necessary for Timothy who frequently accompanied Paul on his journeys and had the advantage of the inspired apostle's instruction, we can well understand that systematic study is desirable and necessary now for all who desire a correct understanding of the Gospel teaching.

As in the past, so now, each one receiving the truth is given it not alone for his own pleasure and instruction, but as a sacred trust, as a treasury from which to take and pass along the riches of the knowledge of God, that others also may enjoy the fellowship of knowledge and love which is the privilege of all the Lord's children.

Much can be done by the spoken word and also by writing letters, and before the invention of printing those were the only methods of communication. And it was the duty of those who lived then to make full use of such means, as witness the rapid spread of the gospel in the beginning of the age.

It is our privilege to-day to do the same, by speaking to others and by writing letters as we have opportunity. But since the Lord has also placed in our hands the use of the printing press, and has hitherto

blessed the circulation of Scripture explanations in print, no doubt the responsibility is laid upon His children to use this method also. We are also, most of us, living in countries where door to door work may be done; either by calling on the occupants to show and personally explain the purpose of the books, periodicals, and tracts, or by placing reading matter in their letter boxes. While immediate results of this work are desired and the desire is often gratified, still we leave results with the Lord, and sometimes the slowness of results reminds us of the parable of the sower, and how only some of the good seed fell into good ground and yielded large results.

Then again, the Lord has greatly favored us of this generation in the multiplicity of travelling facilities. While still able to walk long distances (that is, many of us), trains, trams, buses, and motor cars are all available as time savers at moderate cost to carry us to neighboring towns and villages. Holidays and vacation times are often utilized by the friends to circulate the truth away from home. One knows not when or where one may come across a genuine truth seeker.

Another way in which the Lord has favored the present generation is in the provision of extensive postal facilities. For a small sum a book or a copy of N.C.A. may be sent through the post as a present to a friend or an anonymous gift to someone we hear of recently bereaved or in other distress. The Deficit in the Book Department would soon be met if more of our readers made a practice of using the books and booklets in these various ways. And keep a few copies of the various books, N.C.A., and tracts always on hand for giving or lending. As for the post, if all could visualize the millions of professed Christians who can be readily reached at the cost of a penny postage, we are sure more of the friends would like to send something to the back blocks, or to other lands where the truth is little known. If you have not the addresses of persons in other lands, and wish to take advantage of these postal facilities in this work for the Lord, send us a few pence, a few shillings or a few pounds (or dollars) and we will send to missionaries, teachers, Christian workers, and others. And/or send us 4/- (overseas 5/-) and four addresses, and we will send the N.C.A. three months to each. In this way a desire for more reading may be awakened.

Lastly, but not least, let us unite in prayer for the Lord's blessing on His work, for increased opportunities to serve His cause; for the financial uplift needed, and for more workers to engage in the distribution of the good news concerning God's wonderful Plan of Redemption. Let the fact that times are difficult stir us up all the more. When Paul had been stoned and left for dead, he did not conclude that God had no further use for his services. Soon he rose up and after a rest was off again on his sacred mission. So let us not be stoned down even by a financial depression; but if at any time we find ourselves down, let us rise up and with renewed energy carry on the work He has given us to do. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" may well echo in our ears if we hide away discouraged when there is a great work to be done in conflict with the modern Jezebel. (1 Kings 19: 9.) Let us refresh our minds also on Paul's comment—when we feel very much alone, and wonder if there can be any others to be sought out. (Romans 11: 3-5.) We will not find them while we sit in our secluded "cave"; we must go where the people are to find the Lord's "jewels" who have not bowed the knee to Baal.



Encouraging Words From Far and Near

During the past years many interesting letters have been received by us at Melbourne and at the Branch Offices at 30 Shadwell Rd., Bristol 7, England, and 676 Fulton St., Brooklyn, N.Y., a few of which have appeared in these columns for our mutual encouragement. Brother Wallis sent us a communication received by him last August describing progress made by the writer on the new covenant and sin offering teachings of God's Word—contrasted with erroneous teachings—on those vital subjects. Perhaps others not quite settled on these matters will be helped by the Brother's experience.

Dear Brother: I desire to acknowledge with grateful thanks the various "New Covenant Advocates" which you have been forwarding me from time to time. I have read and studied them carefully and I may say I am favorably impressed with them. Their "sound doctrine" is very pronounced, and I like the safe and sober way that the Scriptures are dealt with. I have decided to become a subscriber to the N.C.A., and I am enclosing a Postal Order. I especially enjoyed the last two special issues, i.e., the Easter Conference number and the Armageddon number.

I would be glad if you would forward me a dozen N.C.A.—6 "Easter Conference" and 6 "Armageddon," for distribution. (3/6 enclosed for these.)

The annual summer holidays somewhat disturbed my studies of the "Sin-Offering" notes which you so kindly sent me, but now that the holidays are over I am finding more time to study and consider the subject.

I may say that I am grateful for the confirmation, the numerous confirmations, which I have had in the literature you have sent me of my own conclusions on the doctrine of the New Covenant. I am seeing now, however, that the doctrines of the New Covenant and the Sin-Offering are vitally linked together.

With regard to the doctrine of the Sin-Offering there are three points which have arrested my attention very strongly during my recent studies.

1st. One of the strongholds of the view that the Church is part of the sin-offering, i.e., Romans 6: 3 [which they claim means] that the Church is baptized into Christ's *sacrificial* death, and that consequently *their* death is sacrificial [on behalf of the sins of others], received a rude shock in my mind when carefully reading *the context*. That is *not* the argument of that verse nor of any part of the chapter! I find that I have been guilty of doing what I many times blamed others for doing (and quite truthfully too!), viz., taking scriptures out of their context to prove some doctrine. This is a very dangerous practice and I am quite amazed that I was "caught napping" myself.

2nd. Hebrews 7: 27 seems to kill the thought that *another* sacrifice is *yet going on* "for the people." If Jesus did this "once," then the work is done—and by *Him*.

3rd. A statement in Easter Conference number arrested attention, that since the true Sacrifice for sins had been given by our Lord Jesus, the typical sacrifices were no longer recognized. The rending of the Vail of the Temple was a remarkable sign from heaven. I asked myself the question—"How could the old covenant go out and the New Covenant come in if some of the New Covenant sacrifices were not yet completed?"

I feel impressed that the "sign" from heaven shows that no covenant could go into operation until its provisions, in the very important aspect of its sacrifices, were all *provided* and were accepted by Jehovah. How could we go to the world with a *half-finished* Gospel? Could we say truthfully, "my oxen and my fatlings are killed—Come!" No, we could not. We would have to say in our preaching of the Gospel, "Now nobody has to receive this Gospel unless they are of the church class—no sacrifice has yet been offered for you non-elect people of the world, so if you cannot realize yourself to be an "elect" person, please don't waste your time with what I am preaching!" I am quite sure Paul *would* have been "ashamed" of that "gospel;" for when I think it *over I would be rather ashamed of that "gospel"* myself.

Thanks very much, dear brother, for all your kindly services, and may the Lord reward you and bless you for them abundantly.

With Christian love, Your brother and servant in Christ, ———, *Scotland*.

Another note of appreciation received at Bristol says: Dear Brother: I received your letter of July 30. I am indeed grateful for the love and fellowship expressed therein. I am with you in all you say about the literature. The Books are real good and the N.C.A. is splendid.

High Time to Awake Out of Sleep

So wrote the apostle to the Roman brethren. Today also it is possible to know some truth and then grow listless and indifferent or become lulled by false teaching. The following from the U.S.A., received at *Melbourne, points to the need of a fresh awakening* there to vital truths once known and forgotten or never properly grasped.

Dear Brethren: Through a dear sister here I have been given a few of your journals dated 1929. I am anxious to know if the paper is still published, and if so would appreciate a few copies, late issues.

It seems strange that some of us here remained asleep so long, but as we become better acquainted *with the Word of our God we realize some wrong* reasoning has gotten in somewhere. Most friends here are bound hand and foot—both I.B.S.A. and the "Independents" as well. I have been with the "Independents" for a long time, but the dear ones are being bound tighter than ever.

Shall be pleased to hear from you. Your sister, ———, *U.S.A.*

[In response to the request an assortment of more recent copies of the N.C.A. were posted, and we trust to hear soon again. May the Lord bless all sincere and diligent searchers of the Word and give them the guidance of His Holy Spirit!]

Letting the Light Shine

Brother and Sister Henninges, Dear Brethren in Christ: We were so pleased to receive the June N.C.A., on Armageddon. It seems wonderful how the dear heavenly Father is supplying us with spiritual food at this time. Sister and I read two chapters every morning, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New, and we were studying the book of Revelation, and just going through it the second time when the N.C.A. came last Saturday with your comment.

We had heard several views over the Radio on the battle of Armageddon and the book of Revelation, but not any of them seem to fully harmonize with the Scriptures and the signs of the times as the June N.C.A. does. We had prayed much about it, and we feel it is an answer to our prayers.

It is a wonderful time we are living in now, and the distress and trouble this side the water, with unemployment, etc., are terrible. But we are thankful to the heavenly Father for His providential care of us. Everything seems to be closing in now.

The little factions of the so-called "Bible Students" are gradually going to pieces. We are still outside of them all. A few come to see us, but we do not attend their classes. We keep in correspondence with a few friends elsewhere who have faith in Christ's finished work on the cross of Calvary and that He did it all.

We are still striving to let our light shine, and pray that the Lord's richest blessings may be with you both and with all others that are interested.

With great love, from your Brethren in the One Hope of our calling, ———, *Canada*.

Enclosed with above letter was a clipping from the Victoria, B.C. "Colonist," June 22, 1934, which reads—

Sentenced to Year for Oral Blasphemy

Montreal, June 21 (CP).—Gaston Pilon, found guilty of oral blasphemy in an address on "The Lives of the Popes" on December 13 last, was today sentenced by Mr. Justice Charles A. Wilson, here, to a year at hard labor and ordered to put up a personal bond for his good conduct for a year thereafter or do another year in jail.

This news item is another reminder of the way the Roman Catholic hierarchy uses its power when it has the opportunity, as in the present case; the province of Quebec, the old French settlement on the St. Lawrence river, having remained apart from the more enlightening influences prevailing in the other provinces of Canada. What exactly the lecturer said does not appear in the brief notice, but he could have said nothing more condemnatory than the pronouncement of the Word of God that the Papal system is a "mystery of iniquity."

Two Quick Responses

Some reading matter scattered about lies a long time apparently fruitless. Other papers and tracts bring a quick response, as the following—

Editor N.C.A. Dear Sir: An old friend in Melbourne, or near there, has sent along a copy of your November '34 issue, on The Great Pyramid. I did not know there was such a publication in existence; I have seen much in it already that I pronounce very good. Being a believer of the New Covenant, that God made with Israel and Judah by Jesus Christ, which came into force at Pentecost with the gift of the Holy Spirit to all true believers, I am naturally anxious to know if we are in line. If you can and will send me some literature showing the doctrine you believe and teach, I shall be very grateful. Your Book List on page 216 seems to be, at the least, attractive, and I hope I may have the pleasure of studying some at least ere long. I am fully convinced that no one will enter the Kingdom of God if they do not wholeheartedly in true belief enter into God's New Covenant by being born again, and thus receiving God's Holy Spirit to enable them to go on to perfection.

Thanking you and hoping to hear from you soon, I am, yours faithfully awaiting Zion's King.

———, *Queensland.*

Sir: Having received one of your pamphlets Great Expectations, and read it, I was interested. So I am writing for a Free Book entitled "Armageddon." Will you be so kind as to forward a copy to the address below, and oblige. ———, *Victoria.*

Numerous Questions Answered

Please find enclosed renewal in advance of subscription to N.C.A. for my second year as a reader. I wish to thank you for the many helpful articles and suggestions published in the "Advocate" during the past year, particularly the May [Easter Conference on "World Perplexity"], June ["Armageddon"], and November ["Pyramid"] issues. These have answered numerous questions which had from time to time arisen in my mind, particularly concerning the Great Pyramid of Egypt. Trusting that this coming year will bring both Mrs. Henninges and yourself great joy and help in your wonderful work, I remain, Yours faithfully. ———, *South Australia.*



For the Children

THE BELIEVERS REJOICING

Our first duty to-day is to fulfil our promise to explain why those two words which Paul said, viz., "being Romans," should so thoroughly frighten the magistrates at Philippi. It may seem strange to you that Paul should say that he and Silas were Romans since we know that both were Jews. But now we shall see that while they were Jews by birth they had the same advantages as those who were Romans by birth.

When the Apostles lived and a good while before and after their day the Roman government was the great ruling power of the world, and almost all people were under its control. The Romans divided the people into two classes—"citizens" and "strangers." Those who were born in Italy and were true Italians were the citizens; the inhabitants of all other parts of the Empire were the strangers, and that would of course include the Jews who were under their control and were a different nation.

How Jews Could Become Roman Citizens

Although in those times, as in these, many people of Italy went away to different parts of the Empire, they were still citizens wherever they were. But if it should happen that any one not born in Italy nor true Italians, and who were for that reason strangers, should go to Italy, that did not make them citizens. That privilege could only be got by doing some great thing in war, or by special favour, or bought by the payment of money. But when a man, a stranger, had become a citizen by any one of these ways he remained one as long as he lived; and after he died it was passed on to his children. So any Jew might become a Roman, a citizen, by fulfilling the conditions.

How Silas became a Roman a citizen we do not know, but Paul's father had become one, perhaps by the payment of money, and so Paul was a Roman citizen from his birth. Thus although they were true Jews they could say they were Romans because they were entitled to all the rights of "citizens."

Now, you may ask, what good was it exactly "being Romans"?

It was a great protection. If a man was only a stranger, any of the proper officers of the Empire could take and put him in prison, if the officer thought he deserved it, without giving him any trial in a court. He could even have him beaten, still without trial, and the stranger could not say I protest; I will make this known to the Emperor and have you punished for wrongfully imprisoning or beating me. No; he just had to take what was done to him and put up with it. But to treat a Roman a citizen in that way was a great offence, and any

officer doing it was liable to be punished severely if the Emperor heard of it. The Romans the citizens were not to be imprisoned or beaten without a proper trial first; and they only had the right to say I appeal, I will have my case tried before the Emperor in Rome.

But the magistrates had both beaten and imprisoned Paul and Silas, although they were Romans, citizens, and so had made themselves liable to punishment—even death—for the offence, and if Paul and Silas had sent word to the Emperor of what had been done to them it would have gone very badly with the magistrates. But they were generous, and they went away from Philippi saying nothing about it to the authorities.

Luke and Timothy Left at Philippi

It was again a long walk they undertook next—travelling towards the city of Thessalonica, about 100 miles from Philippi. And here we may ask, Who really went to Thessalonica? Did Luke and Timothy go with Paul and Silas?

In trying to discover this we shall see how necessary it is to take great notice of every word written in the Bible. For when we come to read our usual portion in the Acts we shall find that Luke was not with them, because, in writing of their departure, he uses the word "they" and not "we." That of course leaves him out, and leaves him behind in Philippi. As for Timothy, it seems he was left behind too, for we do not hear of his going with them; nor is there any mention of him while Paul and Silas were in Thessalonica. We shall hear of him again in the next town they visited.

It must have been lovely for the Philippians to have Luke and Timothy left with them after losing Paul and Silas; for the instruction and help they so much needed, as young believers in the Lord Jesus, the two remaining missionaries were able to give. And there would be peace and quietness; for the magistrates did not imprison them; and since the earthquake and the wonderful way God had shown His power in their favour it was not likely that they would. And the eager Philippian brethren, although they had heard much from Paul, would find that the "storehouse" was still full, that there was still "more to follow," and always would be. For it is not possible for anyone to learn all there is to be known about God. But as one great truth after another is unfolded it is a great delight, a joyful experience; and the Philippians were having all that. For the Jewish brethren there had been delivered from the intolerable burdens of the Law; the Gentile brethren had come to see that their idols were only lifeless things, and they turned to the living God. All this was brought about by the Gospel and their belief in it. Therefore they rejoiced; and Paul, writing a letter to them years afterwards, said—"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

Paul and Silas at Thessalonica

Our travellers being now in Thessalonica on their great missionary tour, Paul followed his set custom of visiting the Synagogue on the first Sabbath. And taking advantage of the opportunity always available in a Synagogue, they preached the Gospel to them for three successive Sabbaths. They had therefore about three weeks in the city; and possibly more than that.

In his preaching Paul was very outspoken. He "reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

No one then who was willing to take the Scriptures and to listen to reason could still go on doubting or denying that Jesus was the Messiah, and set themselves in opposition to Paul and Silas. Only perverse and foolish people would do that; and unfortunately there were some of that kind in that city.

Why the Messiah Suffered and Died

Now I think it would be a very good exercise if we looked at some of the scriptures Paul might have quoted to prove what he said.

He first told them that their Messiah should suffer, meaning that He should die, as well as any suffering He might endure while He lived. That was something the Jews had not been able to take in at all. Why should their Messiah suffer and die? Their idea was that He would only be able to do what they needed if He LIVED amongst them, and any one suffering and dying could not therefore be their Messiah. But to prove it Paul could show them that God had caused their prophets to say that very thing about their Messiah.

The Jews thought a lot of their prophets, who had lived long ago, and also of their writings which they preserved with much care. They were ready then, no doubt, to listen to the prophets, and this is what one of them said:—

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: . . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: . . . he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. . . . he was cut off out of the land of the living: . . . he hath poured out his soul unto death: . . . he bare the sin of many.

All this was to be fulfilled by their Messiah when He came. And who did it? The only answer is, Jesus was the One. What should they do about it then? Why, just believe that Jesus was their Messiah. Some of them did.

Raised Again from the Dead

The second thing Paul told them was that He was "risen again from the dead."

What prophet had said so many years before He came at all, that He would be raised again? The "sweet singer" of Israel—David. Once he wrote these wonderful words—

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [sheol, meaning the grave]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. [But, instead of this] Thou wilt shew me the path of life: . . .

Now Paul might say, "If Messiah was to die, He would not then be in life but in death. But, if He was to see the path of life again, He must be raised up before He could. And that is exactly what David said. And did anyone see Him after? Why, yes; five hundred saw Him at once in Jerusalem, besides

others at other times, and last of all I saw Him myself."

The Jews were instructed by their Scriptures that if three people said the same thing in giving evidence they were to be believed. But here were five hundred able to say the same thing. What were the listening Jews in the Synagogue to do then? Nothing more nor less than just believe it. Some of them did. They agreed from what their Scriptures said that Jesus must be their Messiah, and they came over to the side of Paul and Silas.

The New Covenant Better than the Old

But there were others in Thessalonica who believed, and these were "devout Greeks." We understand this to mean just people of religious mind, whether idolaters, or proselytes to the Jewish faith.

To those who remained idolaters and who heard Paul it must have been a great surprise and joy to hear of a God WHO LOVED. Idol worshippers can only think of their gods as wanting to injure, terrify, and destroy; and with power to do such things to them. But to hear of One who loves all, and specially blesses those who worship Him, was extremely attractive. And when they heard from Paul how God had shown His love in sending Jesus to do all He did for men, it was more than convincing. They felt they were beginning to love Him who first loved them; they left their idols to worship the true God of love, and came over to Paul and Silas—not "some" as we have seen was the case with the Jews there, but "a great multitude," amongst them being many of the leading women of wealth and position.

All this was a great achievement for the preachers. The Synagogue of the Jews had been in the city doubtless for many years, and, we understand, had made some proselytes. But in three weeks Paul and Silas had turned to God multitudes of Greeks who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah or Christ.

It made the unbelieving Jews jealous, envious, and aroused feelings of bitterness against Paul and Silas, that they should declare Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah. But the crowning offence was that amongst the great multitudes of Greeks who believed doubtless were some, perhaps even all, of their proselytes! The whole thing was awful in their eyes; and, "moved with envy," they began to do things against Paul and Silas.

As we see it at this distance, it is hard to understand why the Jews should want to keep going something that was old and out of date, when the New and much better, by God's own arrangement, was prepared and there for them. Much more reasonable to "scrap" the synagogue and take all the advantages and blessings of grace and truth brought by Jesus Christ. But there is a terribly evil and a powerful being abroad in the world, and he is able to hold most of the Jews (and almost the whole world as well) to this day in his hand; and they still refuse to believe the message of Paul and Silas. But those Jews who believed mourned for Jesus as a man mourns for his only son. They were sorry that with wicked hands the Jews at Jerusalem had crucified the Saviour, and, being sorry, they turned to Him and believed, as the prophet had said they would do. And their mourning was turned to joy when they saw how God had overruled His death as the means of their salvation.

Now we are as glad to hear of all this in our days as were the Thessalonian idolaters to hear of the God of love in theirs. So we too rejoice with all who have believed.

Please read Acts 17: 1-4, taking notice of the third word.

Of the rejoicing Philippians, 1: 25, 26; 4: 4.

The words of the prophets, Isaiah 53: 1-12; Psalm 16: 10, 11; compare with Acts 2: 25-27.

The many who saw Jesus after His resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15: 3-8.

The testimony of several witnesses to be believed, Deuteronomy 17: 6; compare with Matthew 18: 16.

Loving Him, because He loved us, 1 John 4: 19.

The Thessalonians leave their idols, 1 Thessalonians 1: 9, 10.

The Old and the New, Hebrews 8: 7-13; 9: 15; compare with Jeremiah 31: 31-34.

Jesus the bringer of "grace and truth," John 1: 14.

The works of the "god of this world," 2 Corinthians 4: 4; Ephesians 2: 1-3; 1 John 5: 19.

The believing Jews mourned over the death of Jesus, Zechariah 12: 10, 11; Acts 2: 37; 9: 5, 6; 1 Timothy 1: 12-16.

—UNCLE FRANK.

The Sermon on the Mount

(Conference Addresses continued from December issue)

PRAYER AND FASTING

—Matthew 6: 1-18—

AS THE CHARTER of the New Covenant, the Sermon on the Mount proves to be a wonderful document. And the Lord Jesus was the Promulgator of it, placing it before the children of Israel (Israel and Judah united in Palestine since the return from the Babylonian captivity) for their acceptance. Variously He emphasized that the New Covenant terms take strict account of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is further shown in chapter 6 of Matthew. Again rewards are spoken of as given according to the heart attitude toward God, and not because of numerous ceremonies and forms such as the people had practised under the law, which, though proper to observe because God commanded them, could be carried out while their hearts were far from Him. Also the Jews had added many formalities not authorized in the law; and this had been done to such an extent that the Lord said the law was made ineffective by the traditions.—Matthew 15: 1-3; Mark 7: 1-13; Luke 6: 1-5; 13: 14-17.

Almsgiving and Its Rewards

The Jews were instructed in the law to practise almsgiving, and as a reward they would receive God's blessing. (Leviticus 25: 35-38.) The Lord now shows the principle upon which under the New Covenant our Father in heaven grants His rewards; namely, according to the intents of the heart (Matthew 6: 1-4)—

1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues *and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.* Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Our Lord during His ministry often came in contact with the Pharisees and scribes, who were the leaders and rulers of the Jewish people. Their thoughts were an open book to Him, for He knew what was in man.—Luke 16: 15; John 2: 24, 25.

Many times in His discourses to the people He pointed out the wrong practices of the Pharisees and scribes, and how unfavourable they were in the sight of God. The love of outward observances was characteristic of this self-righteous class, and the good work of almsgiving was viewed by them as a golden opportunity for further outward display and ceremony, their motive being to gain praise and honor from men, as is further stated in Mark 12: 38, 39, which reads—

38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market places,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at the feasts.

The lesson to be learned is that alms given in the same spirit and with the same intentions as were manifested by the scribes and Pharisees will not be recognized by the Heavenly Father. The true almsgivers in His sight are those who give in secret, having no selfish motive in their minds, but on the contrary their chief concern and desire are to help those who are in distress, thus showing a spirit of kindliness and generosity.

The Lord said that the Pharisees and scribes have their reward. This would be the praise and honor of men, together with the temporary pleasures of this life.

But the reward that God has designed for the true almsgivers is in the future; it is reserved in heaven, even joint heirship with the Lord Jesus Christ, to be made like Him, and see Him as He is, to rule and reign with Him as kings and priests for a thousand years, for the purpose of blessing all the families of the earth.—1 John 3: 2; 1 Peter 1: 4, 5; Revelation 2: 26, 27; 3: 20, 21; 20: 6.

In the meanwhile the heavenly Father rewards the true almsgivers by revealing to them the truth such as is to be known in their time. They receive the benefits of His providence and care, which assist them to gain this great future reward.—Matthew 6: 30-33; 10: 30; 18: 10; Hebrews 1: 14.

The true almsgivers living in the Lord's day were no doubt rewarded by a knowledge of the truth concerning Jesus Christ who was now in their midst, that He was indeed the Messiah, the great Prophet that was to come, as foretold by all the holy prophets. (Deuteronomy 18: 15; Isaiah 11: 1-5; 61: 1-4; Micah 5: 2; Malachi 3: 1-3.) Their hearts and minds would be ready to receive this great truth, they would believe and accept the meek and lowly Jesus as their Master, and they would fall in line with the merciful New Covenant conditions, thus enabling them to run in the race for the prize of the high calling. An example of how God rewards the true almsgiver is the case of the centurion mentioned in Luke 7: 5; also Dorcas, who "was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." (Acts 9: 36-42.) Cornelius the Gentile, described as a "devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway," was remembered by God, and given a knowledge of the truth concerning Jesus Christ, and received the gift of the Holy Spirit.—Acts 10: 1, 34-48.

Praying to be Seen of Men

Continuing His exhortation, our Lord instructs us on the matter of prayer; and He also draws our attention again to the hypocrites—

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

These words explain clearly that prayer to God must be in spirit and in truth—not outwardly as was practised by the hypocrites, a tendency which has been prevalent throughout this gospel age, but in secret with a desire for communion with the Father; as it is written (John 4: 24)—

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The heavenly Father desires our full and complete confidence; He never fails to hear and reward those who pray in this manner. Many incidents in the Scriptures bear witness to this fact.—Daniel 2: 18, 19; 9: 3-23; 1 Kings 17: 19-22; 2 Kings 20: 1-6; Acts 9: 40; 10: 30, 31.

No Vain Repetitions

Furthermore, we are instructed not to use vain repetitions. The Lord said—

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen [or Gentiles] do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

His listeners are given to understand that God is *an intelligent Being of the highest order, who knows* all things; His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. (Proverbs 15: 3.) Vain re-

petitions are practised to this day by the Roman Catholics, and by some Protestants, and others.

The Lord's Prayer

Guidance in prayer is given in what has come to be known as "The Lord's Prayer." Few words are used, yet sufficient is said to cover all our needs.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

From this prayer we learn how to make requests to God which will be according to His will. We learn also that God is pleased to be addressed as our Father in heaven.

We can pray for God's name to be hallowed, thus expressing our reverence for God, knowing that He is holy. Also that it is our earnest desire that His name may be sanctified in the hearts of all His creatures.—1 Peter 1: 15, 16.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

We can confidently pray for His kingdom to come, and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, knowing by the Scriptures that it is God's will in due time to set up His Kingdom in all the earth, which will be established in righteousness and equity, and which will bring peace and blessing to all the families of the earth through Jesus Christ our Lord, His only begotten Son, who gave His life a ransom for all in order to accomplish this very thing; whom God raised up from the dead, and set Him on His holy hill of Zion as King and Priest after the order of Melchisedec; who will reign till all enemies are put under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed will be death, absolute perfection will be restored once more, then God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.—Genesis 22: 15-18; Daniel 2: 44; Psalm 2: 6; 1 Corinthians 15: 24-28; Hebrews 7: 15-17; 2 Peter 3: 13; Revelation 21.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

We need to pray for our daily bread, because it is necessary for the sustenance of the body, and He has promised us those necessities that pertain to our physical well being; furthermore, we express our dependence upon Him.—Matthew 6: 30-33; Philippians 4: 6, 7.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

We need to pray daily for forgiveness of our trespasses, and we have full assurance of forgiveness providing we ask in the name of Jesus, who ever liveth to make intercession on our behalf. (Hebrews 7: 25; 1 John 1: 8, 9.) But there is a condition attached to which we must give assent when asking for forgiveness—as we forgive them that trespass against us.

If we do not forgive others, then we shall not receive forgiveness from our Father in heaven, as it is written, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—Matthew 6: 15.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

We can confidently pray to our Father in heaven to lead us not into temptation, knowing that God tempts no man. (James 1: 13.) This expression of our confidence that He will lead us NOT into temptation is supplemented by the expression of our confidence and our request that He will deliver us from evil, or from the evil one. Thus in our daily prayer for forgiveness we declare that God did not cause us to sin or in any way connive at our sin or trespass. Whatever of sin or trespass we commit is against the will of God; hence the necessity to come to Him and ask His forgiveness, and to request His guidance away from temptation, and deliverance from the influence and snares of the evil one.

We are tempted, says James (1: 14), when we are "drawn away" of our own desires—which may be legitimate enough in themselves—and enticed. The enticement may be resisted, and then there is no sin, but rather a weakness has been manifested in losing grip of our minds and allowing them to wander. But God is merciful, and will not suffer us to be tempted or tried above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.—1 Corinthians 10: 12, 13.

If God abandoned us, we would go down the broad way to destruction. Therefore we need constantly His help and guidance to keep us in the narrow way that leadeth to life.—2 Peter 2: 9; 2 Timothy 4: 18.

We need to supplicate God earnestly for deliverance from the evil one, who is described by Peter "as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5: 8); and yet he is full of subtlety, transforming himself into an angel of light to achieve his purpose. (2 Corinthians 11: 14.) The activities of Satan against the Lord's people at one period were so deadly and prolonged, that extinction would have been inevitable but for the restraining hand of God whose eyes have been over the righteous, delivering them from the evil one. (Mark 13: 20; 1 Peter 3: 12.) "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."—2 Thessalonians 3: 3.

God's Kingdom to Come

The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer as recorded in Matthew's gospel reads as follows: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." We do well to take notice here that these words are not found in the most ancient Greek manuscripts, namely, the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and are therefore an interpolation. Furthermore, the Lord's Prayer as recorded in Luke's Gospel does not contain these words. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that they have been added later to Matthew's account, at some time subsequent to the fourth century A.D.

This interpolation suggests the thought that God's kingdom has already been set up, and is a contradiction of the request made earlier in the prayer, "Thy kingdom come"—which is in the future.

Forgive, and Be Forgiven

Our Lord chose for comment only that portion of the prayer which enjoins us to ask forgiveness of our trespasses as we forgive.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Again the Jewish listeners are reminded of the New Covenant terms. The spirit of pride and vindictiveness has to be rooted out of the mind, and its place taken by a spirit of humility and forgiveness. The Apostle Peter was made to realize this when he came to the Lord desiring to know how many times he should forgive his brother; and the reply was—"I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." (Matthew 18: 22.) But someone might ask, Do we have to forgive anyone who is not sorry for his wrongdoing and not desiring forgiveness? The Lord answers this question for us (Luke 17: 3)—

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

Slowly, perhaps, but surely, as these precepts of the New Covenant are practised by the believer, his character is transformed into the divine likeness; by this process the law of God is being written in his inward parts, so that "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord" he realizes himself being "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—Hebrews 10: 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 3: 3-6, 18.

Fasting unto Our Father in Heaven

In the course of His illuminating statement of New Covenant principles and obligations, the Lord warned against hypocrisy in almsgiving and in prayer. Now He warns against hypocrisy in fasting—

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;
18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Fasting with sackcloth and ashes was a method of self affliction practised by the Jews to express to God their recognition of sinfulness and their sorrow for wrongdoing. Many instances of these fasts can be found in the Scriptures; for examples, 1 Samuel 7: 6; 2 Samuel 1: 12; Daniel 9: 3. Only one day in a year was a fast appointed in the law of Moses which was to be observed by every Jew, and that was *on the day of atonement*.—Leviticus 23: 28, 29.

It was apparent in our Lord's day that the majority, chiefly the Pharisees and scribes, put on a sad look and disfigured their faces in order to appear before men to fast, whence their "fasting" was all pretence, as a matter of ceremony and outward show; for they desired the glory and honour from men, and gave no thought to God. And they had their reward in the praise of men.

The Lord pointed out to His Jewish listeners that the right way to gain approval from the Father is *to fast "in secret,"* and by this action they will show that their devotion to the Father is genuine and sincere.

The disciples of the Lord Jesus at this particular time did not fast, and this perplexed the Pharisees, and also the disciples of John the Baptist, for they came to the Lord desiring to know the reason for this. Matthew 9: 15 gives the Lord's reply to their question—

And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

The Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist should have been rejoicing—not fasting. Here right in their midst was that Great Prophet of whom Moses spake, the Messiah, the Anointed of God, their King: *doing mighty works that none* other man ever did; but they did not believe in Him because of their hardness of heart. Consequently they continued in the old order of fasting and mourning when they should have been rejoicing.

We have seen that the thoughts and intents of the heart and mind are taken into account by the heavenly Father under the New Covenant, and so the outward ceremony of fasting with sackcloth and ashes, as was practised by the Jews, is entirely unnecessary. A much higher and wider application has to be sought, even as the glory of the New Covenant exceeds greatly the former glory of the law covenant. Now we draw near to God as our Father, to worship Him in spirit and in truth, our requests being made known "in secret," in our "closet," i.e. in the privacy of our own house or room. This was *not to discourage public prayer when practised in* sincerity in the Jewish synagogue, and later in the Christian congregations. On this instructions were given later through the apostles. But the Lord emphasized the necessity of the believer maintaining the attitude of an obedient child toward the Father, and the privilege afforded of approaching Him at all times and in all circumstances with spoken words as well as with the thoughts of the heart and the devotion of the life.

Fasting too is on a higher level than mere abstention from food, although that also has been experienced by the Lord's children in the course of their labours in His service. Paul and the other disciples laboured "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (2 Corinthians 6: 4-10; 11: 23-27.) And the "fastings" of Christians under the New Covenant include not only the physical deprivations endured, but all other deprivations which are testimony of complete devotion of heart and mind and the whole life to the Will of God; a life of self-denial for Christ's sake and for the brethren's sake. —Romans 12: 1; Colossians 3: 3; Hebrews 13: 15, 16; 1 Peter 2: 5-9; Mark 8: 34; Luke 14: 26, 27; Ephesians 6: 14; Romans 15: 1; 1 Peter 1, 22; 3: 8.

The Lord Jesus came to earth for the express purpose of giving His life a ransom for all; but He also came to reveal God as a loving Father. "Your Father in heaven" were the words He said no less than 24 times. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is willing to accept us as His children if we believe on Him whom He has sent. Therefore let us take heed to the instructions given in the Sermon on the Mount, and render devotion of heart and mind and whole life to our loving Father in heaven.

—E. L. C.

THE GREATEST DESIRES

—Matthew 6: 19-34—

EVERYBODY has a desire for something or other, and most people have a good many desires. The mind may grip a desire with great intensity or with less force and ardour. The nature of a desire and the intensity of it are clearly indicated, as a rule, by the activity of the person in pursuit of that desire.

There is in mankind the acquisitive instinct—the desire to grasp and to hold. The Jews were frequently rebuked for covetousness, for defrauding their field labourers in order to pile up more wealth in property and lands. (Exodus 20: 17; Isaiah 5: 8; Jeremiah 22: 13-17; Malachi 3: 5.) Some of them were traders, and scoured the earth to secure objects of worth to sell in order to build up fortunes enabling them to indulge in fine houses, many garments, and gold and silver vessels for use at public banquets and other means of ostentatious display.

As Promulgator of the New Covenant and of a new Kingdom, the Lord rebuked the covetousness and greed, and showed them the futility of such efforts—

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Treasure is a thing of highly estimated value. In the Scriptures we read of treasure cities built for the storage of the King's substance, and of treasure houses with treasurers in charge of them. (Exodus 1: 11; 1 Kings 9: 19; Ezra 7: 20, 21.) Treasure might consist of money and precious stones, corn and oil, flocks and herds, and other material things of value. (Genesis 43: 22, 23; 1 Chronicles 29: 8; 2 Chronicles 32: 27-29.) All these treasures are earthly and liable to corruption and loss; if not by one *means, then by another.*

On the other hand, there are treasures which may be accumulated that are imperishable; things that will endure. They are extremely valuable, but first they must be gathered, and they must be laid up in a safe place. The Lord had come preaching not only the kingdom of heaven but a kingdom in heaven. And an important preparation for entrance into that kingdom was to have the heart centred there, consequently the treasure must be there. As He said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The Single Eye

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

The Lord refers to the fact that the human body produces no light. The interior of the body is in darkness. That which conveys light to the brain and enables the person to see is the eye. The eye cannot make the light. It can only convey that which God has produced; and then only if it is in a healthy state. A defective eye cannot receive the light properly, and a seriously injured eye cannot receive the faintest ray of light.

The lesson here is that human beings in their natural state cannot appreciate the light of the Lord's life and message. The Lord Jesus was the *Light, the true Light, from heaven, and in order to* receive that Light there must be an eye of the mind. Not only should the people on the mountainside that day realize the position, but all other people then, and since their day.

The majority of people have no such eye for spiritual truth. They are in darkness. Paul, for example, was sent to the Gentiles—"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, . . ." (Acts 26: 18.) And he wrote to the Corinthians in his second letter (4: 3, 4)—

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The Jews were not *in absolute darkness like* the Gentiles. They had an advantage—"Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." (Romans 3: 2.) The parallel passage in Luke contains a direct message to them (Luke 11: 35), "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness." This would mean a perversion of the light they had received from their Scriptures, making a darkness more dense than that of the nations which had never had the law and the prophets. The same principle applies to us in the present age. If we pervert the gospel we receive, make it null and void by our misuse of it, then we shall go into darkness more dense, as the Lord said (Matthew 6: 23): "how great is that darkness!"

Let us note that the light to be received by us comes from heaven, the same heaven in which we are told to lay up our treasures. Our treasures must be in conformity to the light.

Ye Cannot Serve God and Mammon

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Mammon is a word of Chaldean origin, and signifies Riches. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary.) Many

people of the world make Riches their god, and devote their lives to it. The Lord the great Teacher warned His hearers against unrighteous and selfish greed and against setting the heart on the things of this life. Every mind must make a choice between the two masters, God and mammon. If God is recognized as Master, a man will love God and hate the mammon of unrighteousness; but if he love mammon then he will despise God.

Since ye can not serve both God and mammon, the One Master being good, and the other a temptation and a snare, whom then will we serve? Joshua and Elijah put the same question before Israel.

Joshua, whose greatest desire was to serve the Lord, reminded the Israelites of the necessity of a choice between the Lord and the unrighteous gods of the heathen. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Joshua 24: 15.

Later on God's people were called upon by Elijah (whose greatest desire was to serve the Lord) to make a choice between God and the idolatrous worship of Baal. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."—1 Kings 18: 21.

If we then would learn valuable lessons from Joshua and Elijah and from Jesus Himself, then our greatest desires will be to serve the Lord; and devotion to Him and His service will take first place in our minds and lives.

The Lord's words are more than a recommendation that we should choose between God and mammon. They are a positive command, and every one who reads the pronouncement should face the question squarely, and determine to take His stand with God.

Therefore I Say unto You

The Lord then shows us what is involved in the choice between God and mammon. Even food, drink, and clothing may become mammon to us if our hearts are set on them.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

The Greek word here and following rendered "take thought" means "be anxious," and is so rendered in the Revised Version. Anxiety is a state of distress, distraction, over solicitude. Why then should the servants of the Lord be *not* anxious about clothing and daily food? Jesus gave the answer. He taught that God knows all about them and their needs. Would God, who created our bodies and gave us life, neglect the smaller gifts, the gifts of food and raiment? Surely not. Jesus gives a series of illustrations to emphasize these facts—

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

The birds do not carry on agricultural pursuits or gather grain into barns, as men do, yet their Creator, our heavenly Father, provides food for them, which they find according to their instincts. And if the Father created human beings on a higher plane of existence, then He will certainly care for them too. This being so, why should we be anxious about food and clothing? It is no more worth while than to be anxious about other things, for example—

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit [equal to the length of the forearm] unto his stature?

The Greek word here translated stature means length, and may refer to physical length (or height) or to the length of a person's life (his age).

Zaccheus was exercised about his "stature" or height (not his age), and solved the problem by climbing a tree.—Luke 19: 2.

In either case the lesson is the same; namely, the vanity and uselessness of anxious and distracting thoughts. No amount of thinking will increase our height a fraction of an inch, or prolong our lives a moment.

The Lilies and King Solomon

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Solomon was a very wealthy king. Many passages in the Books of the Kings and the Chronicles describe his glory. We read of him building the temple, and his own palace, also the house of the forest of Lebanon, and of the wealth that went into those magnificent structures. Solomon also built Porches of judgment, the wall of Jerusalem, various cities and store cities. He planted vineyards and orchards, and also maintained a large army. The Scriptures also tell us of his wonderful throne of ivory and gold, with its steps and its rows of lions. The description of his visit from the Queen of Sheba vividly portrays the splendour of his court. (1 Kings 3: 1; 5: 6; 7: 1-10; 9: 10, 15-19; 10: 16, 17; Ecclesiastes 2: 4-8; 2 Chronicles 9: 3-8.) Yet the Lord said that Solomon, in all his glory and wealth, and with all his fine garments, was not arrayed like a lily of the field. Consider the gorgeous loveliness of the lily. Yet the beautiful lilies of the field do not need to toil for their food nor spin thread for their garments. God provides all things necessary for their growth.

Just here, attention should be drawn to the wrong idea sometimes taken from this passage; namely, that the Lord intended to teach that men need not work for a living! But that surely is not in any way part of the instruction given. The lilies of the field fulfil the object of their creation; they draw their sustenance from the earth and air, they display their beauty, and thus glorify their Creator. The fowls of the air fulfil the object of their creation; they fly around and hop about in search of food and drink. They too glorify God.

We also should fulfil the object of our creation, which is to glorify God, and this is done by using the abilities He has given us. Even Adam, before the

Fall, was given the work of dressing and keeping the garden of Eden.—Genesis 2: 15.

After being expelled from the garden Adam was told, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Yet, even under these conditions, while working for our sustenance, we are not to become anxious about our wants. If a man's treasure is in heaven; if his greatest desire is to glorify God, then, while he will still need to toil, yet he will have faith in God, who will provide for him as well as for the birds and flowers, and all the small things of the Creation.

O Ye of Little Faith

To have a Father in heaven and yet to be anxious indicates lack of faith—

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought [i.e. anxious thought], saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

As we realise more and more that these instructions are New Covenant commandments given for our obedience, we will become less apprehensive about the provision of our daily food and clothing, and will have more confidence in our heavenly Father's supervision of our affairs — particularly after some experience of the divine providence in our daily lives.

(To be continued)

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This Do in Remembrance

THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION of important events had been an established custom in Israel for centuries. First in importance in the arrangements for deliverance from Egypt was the slaying of the lamb and the sprinkling of the doorposts of their houses with the shed blood, that the destroying angel might know the dwellers within were God's chosen, and were partaking of the roast lamb according to the directions given through Moses. Although the earlier plagues on Egypt were severe enough, yet it was the last plague by which Pharaoh lost his firstborn, and so his hard heart was for the moment moved to let the children of Israel go.

In order that the people might not readily forget how with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm He had delivered them from Egyptian bondage, God made the annual celebration of the Passover an ordinance of the law given them at Sinai. The time for setting apart the lambs for the purpose, the time of day in which they were to be slain, the preparations to be made for a proper formal observance, were laid down, together with directions for the asking and answering of questions to impress upon the family the goodness of God in taking them for His people and delivering them from the oppressor's tyranny. The remembrance of this great deliverance was to be always with them, with the thought of themselves set apart from all nations to worship and serve the one true God with feelings of gratitude and praise.—Exodus 12: 3-20; Deuteronomy 16: 1-8; 6: 16-25.

The Passover's Double Purpose

The passover served a double purpose, the first being, as already said, a celebration and reminder of a past event, fostering a sense of gratitude to God and appreciation of His greatness and power, and cementing the ties which bound them to so mighty a God and Sovereign, as well as giving the people a cohesion, a sense of oneness, as a nation thus wonderfully delivered and preserved through the wilderness and many subsequent trials and difficulties.

The second purpose of the passover was to serve as a type. Wonderful as the deliverance from Egypt had been, there was to be an even greater deliverance, by which not only Israel but all men should benefit if they exercised faith in God and in the method provided to accomplish that deliverance.

The passover celebration included the supper on the anniversary of the deliverance and a week's "feast," during which none of the usual leavened or yeast bread was to be eaten. Only unleavened bread was allowed them. The typical significances of the lamb and of the unleavened bread were made clear to the disciples by our Lord's teaching and that of apostles who were present with Him at the last passover supper, and also by Paul subsequently ordained as an apostle and instructed by many visions and revelations as well as through study of the Scriptures of the Old Testament then in use among the Jews. Peter wrote that we were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1: 18, 19.) Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 5: 7, 8)—

". . . For even Christ our passover is sacrificed [marginal reading "slain"]: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Therefore the passover lamb was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, slain for our deliverance, and the unleavened bread was a type of the "sincerity and truth" which should characterize the lives of those who believe in Him. [Further on this passage, please see N.C.A., May, 1934, page 45.]

Jesus Christ was slain to deliver the Jews from the bondage of the law, and to deliver both Jew and Gentile from the bondage of sin and death. In presenting His beloved Son as the antitypical Lamb and the Sacrifice and as the Food to sustain those who flee from the bondages referred to, and in ac-

cepting His offering upon the cross, God definitely ended the law covenant and the passover and other typical observances ordained under it.—Hebrews 2: 14, 15; Colossians 2: 14-17.

And the Lord Jesus, knowing the Father's will and being devoted to the carrying out of that will, was careful, when celebrating the last passover supper with His disciples, to make clear and plain the line of demarcation between that supper under the law covenant and the new celebration under the new covenant, whereby His disciples and followers should commemorate His death and **acknowledge their deliverance as due to HIM and the shelter of HIS blood.** For, as the risen Lord, prefigured in Moses the deliverer, He leads them out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the new nation, His purchased people.—1 Peter 2: 9, margin.

Luke 22: 13-20 shows the separateness of the Lord's Supper instituted by Him from the passover supper the Jews had been accustomed to keep. Not until the passover supper was finished and the final wine cup of the passover had been passed around the circle of disciples did our Lord take bread and begin the ceremony which they were to repeat annually in remembrance of Him their Lord and Master and His death on their behalf. Hence among Christians the passover supper or any similar supper has no place; it is superseded by the new command He gave the disciples. To relate the history of the passover is good, that God's mercy to Israel and the beauty of the type may be appreciated by us. Also that the helplessness of their condition in Egyptian slavery may be seen to illustrate our own even greater helplessness under the taskmaster Sin, that we may appreciate all the more what our great Leader has done for us. But as an ordinance the passover has no place in Christian worship. [Further on this passage in Luke, please see N.C.A. for May 1934, page 45.]

The Night in Which He Was Betrayed

The directions given to the Jews through Moses and the manner in which they were carried out (recorded in Exodus 12) enable us to understand that the lambs were slain in the afternoon of Nisan 14, and partaken of by the Israelites in the night of the 15th Nisan, the same night in which they were delivered. As the Jews began their days at sunset, the night formed the first half of the 24-hour day. In conformity to these directions, the disciples made their preparations in the afternoon of Nisan 14, for it was then that the lambs were slain at the temple and were available to those who applied for them. The actual partaking of the passover took place after the 15th Nisan had begun. And if we were in any difficulty to decide the hour when the Lord instituted the new supper to be observed in remembrance of Him, Luke 22: 7-14; Matthew 26: 17-20; Mark 14: 12-17, 27 might be compared with 1 Corinthians 11: 23, 24—

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine MSS. do not contain the word "broken." The prophecy (Psalm 34: 20) is quoted in John 19: 36—"A bone of him shall not be broken," as having been fulfilled in our Lord's case. For when the soldiers went to break His legs to insure His death they found He was already dead. Luke 22: 19 reads, "This is my body which is given for you." Alford has "is being given."

Here we see that the Lord gave Paul a revelation on this question of the time. Possibly there were questions on the subject then. And doubtless the Lord knew the question would arise in our day. Hence we may see in Paul's words an evidence of God's care for us. The same night in which He was betrayed was the 15th Nisan. Therefore the 15th Nisan is the time for observing the Memorial Supper in remembrance of Him.

The anniversary of "the same night" comes this year 1935 on Wednesday, April 17, after sunset, which would be according to the Jewish method of reckoning the commencement of Thursday, April 18. The fact that Gentile nations begin the 24-hour "day" at midnight should cause no confusion, since the inspired apostle indicated that the early church observed the memorial the "night" of the betrayal. Besides which the Gospel accounts show that much happened before morning dawned —Jesus and the disciples went out into the Mount of Olives, then they came to Gethsemane, the disciples' eyes were heavy and they slept while Jesus prayed; then came Judas the betrayer with the Roman emissaries and the crowd, the Lord received the cruel kiss of treachery, and was led away to the high priest Caiaphas and the council, the chief priests and elders sought false witnesses and found none. All this took time. Finally two false witnesses came forward, the high priest pretended to accept their testimony, and when Jesus gave a good answer to his questioning, the high priest called it blasphemy, and permitted the people present to spit in His face and buffet Him and smite Him with their hands. And so the hours passed, and Peter too had an experience.

All this shows that the institution of the memorial supper in remembrance of the Lord Jesus took place in the earlier hours of that same night.

While any time after sunset on Wednesday, April 17, this year, would be correct for the observance, an hour convenient for those who are employed through the day would be appropriate; the hour appointed for assembling for the commemoration in Melbourne being 8 p.m. The service lasts an hour or a little more; thus all may reach their homes at a reasonable time. This too we believe is as the Lord would have it.

By instituting the memorial in the early hours of the night, with the implication that the time as well as the service should be observed—instead of

leaving His people to choose perhaps any time up to 3 p.m. and thus cause more or less confusion in the church—the Lord encourages us to think upon Him as the gloriously perfect Man before the betrayal and the surging crowds, the painful scourging and the cruel thorns and nails and spear had bruised Him.

We may think of Him in all His perfection sitting placidly with His beloved disciples, though sorrowful at parting from them and at the prospect before Him. Yet to him the will of God was supreme, and He had come into the world to give Himself on our behalf. And the Father strengthened Him to endure faithfully to the end.—Matthew 16: 21-23; John 12: 23-28; Luke 22: 42, 43; Hebrews 5: 7, 8.

May we today who hold Him in honour and know Him as the risen Lord able to give life and every other blessing to the followers in His footsteps—may we yet hallow the memory of those trying hours when He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, when the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes came healing for our souls.—Isaiah 53.

The Memorial Emblems

The unleavened bread and the wine were fitting emblems of our Lord's perfect body and His untainted blood. As a perfect man in perfect harmony with His righteous Father and God, there was in Him no cause of death. He knew no sin, and was under no condemnation. The Psalmist foretold the *Lord's ability to be the perfect sacrifice for sin*—"a body hast thou prepared me:" "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10: 5-12; Psalm 40: 6-8.) When the Lord said of the unleavened bread He gave to the disciples, "Take, eat; this is my body," and when we partake of similar unleavened bread at the Lord's table, the significance of His words is unmistakable. We are to "eat" or appropriate to ourselves the Lord Jesus Christ, to believe in Him, and accept Him as the One through whom alone we can draw near to God and obtain salvation and life. For we partake of Christ not only when we first believe, but all the remainder of our days.

He told the Jews He would give them His flesh to eat. (Matthew 26: 26; John 6: 47-51.) And when they questioned how this could be, He explained the figure of eating and drinking—as partaking of benefits, including life. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." The Jews could see that Jesus did not literally eat the Father in order to live. But the Father was living, and had sent the Son as His messenger. Jesus then was dependent upon the Father and was sustained by Him. This was true in regard to His work on earth, which was to do the Father's will, and it was true afterward as well: for the Father raised Him from death and gave Him the glorious life in the Father's likeness which He now enjoys at God's right hand.—John 6: 52-58; 5: 26, 27, 36-40.

To the Jews who would not receive Him He said, "ye have not the love of God in you." (John 5: 42.) They were not concerned as to what the will of God might be, nor did they trouble themselves to search and see what the Scriptures could show them concerning His Son whom He had sent into the world. And so it has been ever since, wherever the message of the Saviour has gone.

With God's Word, the inspired Scriptures, in their hands, and hearing the message about Jesus the Son of God and His mission to men, those who will not search sincerely and earnestly to learn the truth may be described in the same way—"ye have not the love of God in you." And without the Father and without the Son they have no life in them. "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Surely, then, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God is the most important thing to which men can give their attention—today or at any time.

The Lord explained further, to show in what way His flesh would be made available as a means of life. He said (John 6: 51), " . . . and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." That is to say, by the giving up of Himself as the ransom, the purchase price, for the race of sinners, He would secure them as His own with the right to dictate the terms upon which life might be received by the purchased ones.

These terms are so simple that it is astonishing how few are willing seriously to consider them.

Wine the Emblem of His Blood

Our Lord commanded the disciples to drink the cup in remembrance of Him, and one can think of nothing more appropriate as an emblem than the fruit of the vine. The juice of the grape is pressed or trodden out in the winepress, and all the richness of the vine goes into it. Many even professed Christians fail to understand the significance of this fact in connection with our Lord as lifegiver. They *lay chief emphasis on His blood as it flowed in His* veins while He sat with His disciples. True, His blood was necessary to the sustaining of His bodily existence, and was part of the body prepared as the perfect offering for sin, as related in Hebrews 10. *But had His blood not been shed it would not* have provided life for penitent men. This the Lord made clear when He gave the wine as an emblem of His blood. Matthew (26: 27, 28) relates—

> 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;
>
> 28 For this is my blood of the [Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. omit "new"] testament [or, covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

The omission of the word "new" from verse 28 by the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. is taken by some to mean that our Lord Jesus' blood was applied to some other covenant. But that does not follow, because the New Covenant is the only covenant which God has provided for the complete and everlasting

forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus. Luke's account (22: 20) contains the word "new" —"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament [or covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you." Mark 14: 24 also contains the words, "This is my blood of the new testament [or covenant], which is shed for many."

Had Jesus not died, the sin offering would not have been sacrificed, the New Covenant would not have been sealed, forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God would have been unattainable. Hence when we partake of the wine in the memorial service, we should do so with these thoughts in mind. The value of Jesus' shed blood for the forgiveness of sins was frequently referred to by the apostles during their missionary journeys and in their epistles.—Romans 3: 25; 5: 8-11; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26; 15: 1-4, 17; Ephesians 2: 13; Colossians 1: 14; 1 Timothy 1: 11-16; Hebrews 1: 3; 2: 5-9, 14-17; 3: 10 14; 4: 14-16; 5: 7; 7: 15-28; 8: 3-13; 9: 11-28; all of chapter 10; 12: 1-4, 22-25; 13: 10-15, 20, 21; 1 Peter 1: 2, 13-21; 2: 9, 10, 21-25; 3: 15-18; 4: 1, 2; 1 John 1: 1-10; 2: 1, 2, 12; 4: 9-14; 5: 9-12; Jude 21; Revelation 1: 5; 5: 6, 9; 7: 14; 13: 8; 14: 1-5.

A Demonstration of Faith

In every circumstance of life we are called on to exercise faith and to demonstrate its reality and vitality. So it is in connection with the annual Memorial Supper. By assembling together for the observance with a knowledge of its meaning and a sincere desire to follow the Lord's command in thus remembering Him, we make a demonstration. We demonstrate that we fully believe that Jesus Christ lived for a time on earth, fulfilled a great mission, and died on the cross for us. As the apostle wrote (1 Corinthians 11: 26)—

> For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not a vague shadow or myth, but a real Person who came to earth to redeem mankind. Believing in Him, we have the privilege every day of living according to His will and of following in His footsteps, thus being witnesses for Him. But when we meet with others of like precious faith and partake of the bread and the wine as He commanded, then we more particularly call attention to His death, inasmuch as we observe the very day on which He died, and in the manner He prescribed. In partaking of the emblems of bread and wine we show also that we accept that death as having been an offering on behalf of a race of helpless sinners. As we eat the bread and drink the wine we are impressed afresh with the facts as the Scriptures declare them, and with the appropriateness of individually eating His flesh and drinking His blood—that is, personally accepting the Lord Jesus Christ. No one can partake for us: it is a personal and individual matter if we desire the salvation He holds out to those whose hearts are touched by the magnificence of His sacrifice on behalf of poor humanity.

In the same chapter the apostle refers to some who eat and drink "unworthily;" that is, partake of the emblems but without faith in Him, and without having repented and turned from their sins. Such the apostle says eat and drink condemnation to themselves, "not discerning the Lord's body." It is deserving of condemnation if one goes through the form without real faith in His sacrifice and genuine desire to love and serve Him who did so much for us.—1 Corinthians 11: 26-29.

In chapter 10: 16-21 the apostle declares that there is only the one "bread" and the one "cup." He says that believers being many and partaking of one and the same Lord receive the same favours, therefore have communion with one another. It is not that we become the bread or shed our blood, but that, however many we may be, we all partake of Him the one loaf and of the only blood that could be efficacious for sins, and we all, though many, appropriate to ourselves the blessing and the benefits of the one blood. Thus there is a community of interest, all centered in the One who gave Himself for us, as much for one as for another. He gave himself a ransom for **all**. Not one member of the human race was overlooked or left out.

Let us then humbly accept the Lord's mercy and appreciate the oneness which we all as believers may enjoy, seeing the One Saviour loved, and died for, each and all of us.



For the Children

A TUMULT AND A DELIVERANCE

When we were telling last month of Paul and Silas going to Thessalonica we noted how important it was to consider carefully every word we read in the Bible. By doing this we found that Luke and Timothy were left behind in Philippi, Paul and Silas only going to Thessalonica.

And now we may have noticed a few other words which show us how the different classes of people in that city responded to the preaching of Paul. We may have observed that there were **some** Jews, a **great multitude** of devout Greeks, and **not a few** chief women—which means a good many.

If we could have looked over all these when they were together hearing Paul we might have said, Why, the church at Thessalonica consists of nearly all Gentiles; there being only a few Jews amongst them. And that is really how it was.

The Gentiles had never heard such wonderful tidings as Paul told them nor heard anyone speak

with such power. And when in addition they learned that those Glad Tidings were as much for them as for the Jews they rejoiced and believed, as they should have done. For the Glad Tidings were so full of hope and blessing as compared with the depressing and hopeless ideas they had given them in their idolatry that they truly welcomed Paul and Silas who brought them. For who could be made to feel happy on being told, as they had been in their heathen life, that when their friends or relatives died they entered into awful torments, or else that they would never be seen or heard of again? And even while heathen people live they are in constant dread of the evil spirits working evil against them.

But Paul had something much better than that. He could tell them that no one could touch the dead either for good or for evil, for they are all in the care and control of Jesus and He will raise them all up later in a resurrection. They need not therefore sorrow for those who were dead, as others do who do not know these things but have only the very wrong ideas of the heathen. And this was only a part of the Glad Tidings which brought happiness to the Thessalonians.

Although Paul greatly loved his own nation, the Jews, and was willing to do anything he could that would bring them to believe his message and "be saved," he was filled with joy on seeing the great number of Gentiles who believed, and became greatly attached to them. They, with the few Jews who believed and together made up the church in that city, were his "joy" and "crown of rejoicing;" and particularly as he saw them holding out against the persecution from unbelieving relatives and friends and others who still remained idolaters.

The "chief women" believers would forsake their former manner of life, and thus would become social outcasts. And many changes would occur in the daily lives of the men who believed, so that they would not be wanted nor would they be found where they were formerly welcomed.

There was a real fight going on: a fight between good and evil, between right and wrong, between the worship of the true God and idolatry. And Paul told them there would be, and that those on the side of good and right would have to suffer. And knowing that as new ones in this fight they might not always know how to conduct themselves in it, he gave them instructions how to act: what to say and what to do; that they might always be victorious. We have much of those instructions in his letters to this church.

Moved With Envy

But the Jews of the city were, for the most part, as stony-hearted as ever, and perhaps more so in Thessalonica than anywhere. They were not only determined unbelievers but they grew envious of "the multitudes" and the leading people, including perhaps some of their own proselytes, who were attaching themselves to Paul and Silas. They felt that their own influence and that of the synagogue over the Gentiles were being weakened; and, if this continued unchecked, what would become of them?

Envy is one of the bad things we must never allow; for it leads to hatred, and hatred may end in murder. Envy cannot rest; it must be "put off" or it will get active. And even if it did not, in the case of the Jews in Thessalonica, reach to the murder of Paul and Silas, it showed up in other wicked acts, for they determined—being envious—to take action against Paul and Silas.

What that action should be was the next thing; and it would seem necessary for them to meet somewhere to decide. We can well conceive of the beautiful home of one of the wealthy and influential Jews being used for the purpose; and, being a clever race, they would not be long in coming to the decision.

The Plot

Their idea was to go to the market place and wherever else idle persons and loungers were to be found, and stir up excitement amongst them against Paul and Silas, and through them to put the whole city in an uproar. When this is done (they seem to have thought) the authorities will want to know the reason, and then we can tell them and put the whole blame on these missionaries. And this is what we can say—"These [men] that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus."

When they had made such like arrangements and determined on their plan, the plotters set out to find the mob of idlers and others—always ready for excitement and a stir of that kind; and very soon they had the trouble well going in the city. For a mob of that kind going through the streets and told to make as much noise as possible, shrieking out about Paul and Silas endeavouring to turn the city away to "another king," would be the very things to arouse the people to excitement and resentment.

It succeeded well. It gathered up more and more followers as it went; and soon the whole city—rulers, people, and all—were in a state of alarm, in a real tumult.

The Jews felt their plan would succeed, and it was clever on their part to think of it as a means of arousing the people and the authorities against Paul and Silas, so as to gratify their own hatred. For up till then no one seems to have regarded the missionaries with any disfavour.

A "Free" City

But we may wonder why the mention of "another king" by two unimportant strangers who had come amongst them should particularly disturb all the people of Thessalonica so much. And the answer is, Chiefly because it was a "free" city.

A free city was one in which the great Roman government which ruled all the world at that time allowed the people to manage their city as they

liked as long as they gave the Emperor (Cæsar) what he required in submission to him, and in taxes and other service. This meant that they had many liberties and privileges not granted to other cities, which they valued highly and would not want to lose.

If they forsook Cæsar the Emperor, as they were told Paul and Silas were urging them to do, and went after "another king," Cæsar's wrath would come down on them, the city would be filled with soldiers from Philippi, they would be punished severely, and would lose all their valued privileges —lose everything. The idea filled them with alarm —it put the city "on an uproar"!

The New King

But did Paul really say anything about "another king?" Yes, he did; and it could not be avoided. For how could he preach the Glad Tidings without showing that God had made Jesus King, that He was calling on the peoples of the nations to repent and enter His kingdom?

The Jews who opposed them had that much at least to go on. The charge they laid had some measure of truth in it which neither Paul nor Silas would deny.

But the Jews had allowed hatred to develop in their hearts when they became envious, and because they only half listened they got only half the truth (or less) about the "other" king. If they had been willing to hear all Paul had to say about the other king, they would have learned that Jesus did not especially want to take Cæsar's territory or throne; also that all those Thessalonians who had already gone over to the other king were still under Cæsar's rule and government. And, indeed, the other king instructed them to be obedient to Cæsar's laws and to honour him as Emperor. And they were really better citizens for what they had done, for they departed from all the evil ways of evil doers and gave Cæsar and his officers no real trouble. Could not the Jews see that going on then in their own city? And what more could Cæsar want than good citizens?

The Plot Fails

When the people in such parts of the world as Macedonia, Italy, Palestine, etc., became alarmed about anything and got together in large numbers, the scenes became terrible. We can hardly imagine how wildly they carried on. They seemed to lose control of themselves. They ran about, threw dust in the air, tore their clothing, shouted and shrieked, made a big disturbance—a real row, and soon were ready to do almost anything.

At the right moment the Jews with the crowds following all rushed up to the house of a man named Jason. They were after Paul and Silas who, we understand, were lodging with Jason—but they were not in!

We may suppose the excited crowds were upset for a moment at this disappointment. But, if so, they soon recovered and turned their attention to Jason instead, and dragged him and some of the brethren who seem to have been with him at the time to the rulers of the city, there to lay against them the charges they had decided on at the first.

Taking hold of Jason and the others may seem to have been a mean act on the part of those Jews; but really it was not so inconsistent, for they were all believers, and Jason was looked upon as harbouring Paul and Silas. So he too was guilty of saying there is "another king," and in their view these brethren equally deserved the same treatment as Paul and Silas.

Still Jason and the brethren were not the ones they wanted. And so we see that where the Jews most desired to succeed they failed utterly. But they were clever enough to think out the next best thing, and they asked the rulers for security of Jason and the brethren; and when that was obtained the rulers let them go.

Taking Security of Jason

Jason and the brethren then went home; the Jews also; and the crowds melted away. So the tumult, the alarm, the disturbance was allayed for the time.

But some may be asking what is meant by "taken security of Jason, and of the other" (brethren). This is not described, but quite likely it may have been that the court forced them to pay in a sum of money and to make a solemn promise that Paul and Silas and all the brethren would keep the peace. If Jason and the brethren failed to persuade the missionaries to abide by the undertaking entered into by Jason and the others before the court on their behalf, the money would be lost, the disturbance would be worse than before (for the lower classes were still excited and the Jews very bitter), Paul and Silas would be arrested, and we do not know what would happen then.

As the brethren had given this guarantee, and as keeping silence in the city could not be thought of, there was nothing left for Paul and Silas but to depart. And that night they went away taking one of the roads that led to Berea.

So the church at Thessalonica, consisting now of many members, lost its great teachers—but not its earnestness and zeal. For they began to make known the Glad Tidings to all around, so that the sailors from the sea, and the travellers on the many roads leading from Thessalonica to all parts, heard the news and carried it into distant places. That is what the Apostle liked to see; for it showed that the word of God which they brought was "working," and others still would believe through their efforts.

God's Care Again Shown

When we read the short portion of the Acts which contains our story, there were a few words which made us pause and think. How did it come about, we asked ourselves, that Paul and Silas were out when the infuriated crowd reached the house of Jason? Was it a mere accident? or was it another

instance of God's care over them? We felt sure it was no accident.

Paul and Silas were *doing* God's will and trusting in Him, and because of that God was intensely and deeply interested in them. To have suffered again in Thessalonica in the same way as they did only about a month before in Philippi might have proved beyond their powers of endurance. So, although the Jews sought for them, "they found them not."

They could go only as far as God allowed; for whatever concealment He had provided for them was more than the Jews could discover; and so *again His grace was manifested toward His worthy* servants.

What a wonderful and encouraging thing to learn that those who are doing God's will are under His everlasting care!

Please read Acts 17: 5-10 for this Story.

Thessalonian believers happy in following the Lord, 1 Thessalonians 1: 6.

Sounding out the Word, 1 Thessalonians 1: 8.

Jesus, Lord of the Dead, Romans 14: 9; Revelation 1: 18.

The resurrection of the dead, John 5: 28, 29; Acts 24: 15.

Paul's love for his countrymen, Romans 10: 1; 9: 1-8.

Of affliction, 1 Thessalonians 3: 3, 4; and conduct, 1 Thessalonians 4: 11, 12; 5: 8, 15, 22.

Envy condemned, Titus 3: 3; James 3: 14, 16.

Christians must obey laws and respect the authorities, Romans 13: 1-8.

UNCLE FRANK.

The Sermon on the Mount

(Conference Addresses continued from January issue)

Seek Ye First the Kingdom

Food and clothing are sought after by all people of all nations, and there is no particular merit in our doing so to the extent necessary for a living. But there is something which our Master and Lord lays upon us as a daily obligation which we must accept and perform with hearty goodwill as the most important thing in our lives. He said—

33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*; and all these things shall be added unto you.

As we have already heard to-day, our Lord Jesus came announcing the kingdom of heaven as a gift to the poor in spirit who hunger and thirst after righteousness and come under His covenant. The first announcement of the kingdom was to the Jews, with an invitation to them to enter into it. (Matthew 4: 17-25; and chapter 5.) That same invitation has since been extended to include both Jew and Gentile, and it is open to us now! Our sincerity in seeking the kingdom will be shown by our faith and by our zeal in putting into practice these New Covenant commandments and precepts, and in the zeal with which we seek to learn all the truth the Lord is pleased to reveal, and which we find in His Word, hence the necessity of searching the Scriptures, and of accepting Jesus as the Mediator of the New Covenant and of realizing ourselves as beneficiaries under it.

Seek Ye First His Righteousness

But we cannot seek the kingdom of God with any expectation of finding it if we do not at the same time seek His righteousness.

To seek God's righteousness is to seek to come to an understanding of God's character and what He lays down as the true standard of righteousness. As we have heard to-day, this implies also a confession of our own lack of righteousness: it obligates us to go daily to our Father in heaven, confessing our sins and asking His forgiveness as we forgive those who trespass against us. This seeking involved the Jew in death to the law, under which many had been going about to establish their own righteousness and not submitting to the righteousness of God. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Romans 9: 31, 32; 10: 3, 4; 7: 4: 8: 1.) For the Gentile it means leaving the dominion of Satan and bowing to God's will.

God's righteousness is now manifested in His beloved Son, in that Christ died to open the way by which God could rightly and justly forgive our sins and iniquities and remember them no more: "that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—Hebrews 8: 6-13; Romans 3: 24-26.

Imputed Righteousness

With our imperfect minds and bodies we are not able to be absolutely righteous as God is righteous. But under the New Covenant God has arranged to count faith in the Lord Jesus for righteousness, the faith being accepted as instead of absolute righteousness. When faith is counted for righteousness that means the same as righteousness being imputed. (Romans 4: 3-6, 23-25.) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Romans 5: 1.

In this effort to attain the kingdom of God and His righteousness there is always the danger of hypocrisy, as was exhibited by the scribes and Pharisees, who professed a righteousness they were far from practising. For "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5: 20.) But if we seek first God's kingdom and *righteousness we shall be accepted* because of our faith, righteousness will be *imputed*, "and all these things [before mentioned] shall be added unto you." And the Lord concludes

this portion of His sermon by another direction as to how to enjoy peace of mind at all times:—

34 Take therefore no [anxious] thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Manifestly the "anxious thought" should be neither for to-day nor for to-morrow. Each day is sufficient for itself; each day should be lived by itself, its problems and cares dealt with, in faith that our Father in heaven will overrule all for good. And when to-morrow comes we shall take up that day in the same spirit of trust and confidence in God and again demonstrate by practical living that our greatest desires are not the material ones but the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Then as the days pass and the months and years go round we shall progress ever nearer to that glorious Kingdom in heaven to which we have been called. God grant we may be faithful to the end.

—H. S. W.

THE GREAT JUDGE, AND HOW WE SHOULD JUDGE

— Matthew 7: 1-6, 15-20 —

A WELL-DEFINED system of judgment with an elaborate code of laws had been given the children of Israel for the administration of justice—God being their King, and Moses His representative, through whom the law was given. Judges were appointed throughout the nation who were to deal with the smaller matters, but the more important were to be referred to Moses himself. Later such great men as Joshua and Samuel judged Israel, and often the High Priest acted as a Judge.

Of the judgment under the law we read that the word spoken was "stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;" also that "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses." (Hebrews 2: 2; 10: 28.) And it was the duty of every Israelite to assist in keeping the nation in the path of righteousness by bringing cases of transgression to notice.—Deuteronomy 13: 1-18; 17: 2-7; 19: 15.

In the course of His Pronouncement on the New Covenant and its terms, our Lord included commands relating to judgment among His disciples who were accepted under the terms and conditions of the New Covenant and not those of the law, which was shortly to come to an end. He said (Matthew 7: 1-6)—

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.
2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.
3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?
4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?
5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Verse 1.—If we consider carefully what it means to judge, we shall see that there are three distinct parts—

First, to examine in order to decide merits or *demerits*;

Second, to make a decision; and

Third, sentence, either acquittal or condemnation.

Verse 1 with its context shows "judge not" refers to harsh condemnation without considering one's own frailties and wrongdoings, and consequently one's own need of merciful judgment.

An illustration of this kind of judgment is found in Matthew 18: 23-35. In this passage our Lord gives us an example of merciful judgment, as meted out by God who freely forgives us all our transgressions when we approach Him for merciful treatment. And on the other hand He gives an illustration of one who has been forgiven, yet refuses merciful judgment to a fellow servant. And this merciful method may well be applied by all of us when we remember our own position as being debtors to God without any means of paying the debt ourselves.

God the Judge

The work of judging requires certain qualifications in order to make sound judgment. It requires knowledge, experience, and a sense of justice, as well as love and mercy—without letting one qualification override the other.

All these qualifications we find in God, who is "the Judge of all" (Hebrews 12: 23), and who exhibited them in His dealings with Israel of old, as the Psalmist declares—

And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.—Psalm 50: 6.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.—Psalm 19: 9; compare Revelation 16: 7; 19: 2.

So that there need be no fear in the mind of anyone that there will be anything of vindictiveness on God's part. He has clearly stated in His Word the lines upon which He will judge, whether to examine the merits or demerits, to decide, or to put into operation His decision.

Justice in Eden

This we can see by the past experience of our race. God gave certain laws to our first parents regarding their conduct. They were to be obedient to Him. Disobedience would bring condemnation, and that condemnation was death—nothing more, nothing less. As time went on they disobeyed, and brought upon themselves and their posterity in them the sentence, death. Justice now demands the execution of the sentence, and from Adam's day to the present not one has escaped.

Others of God's creation who transgressed were not condemned to death; their condemnation was to be "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6.) Not reserved in death, for these fallen angels are still active in their restrained condition, as we see in spiritism and the like cults.

But with the human race the penalty was death, and having gone into death they remain completely

under the sentence passed upon them—which leaves them helpless in themselves in death.

But, even before sin entered, love and mercy—fundamental qualities in God's character—had co-operated with His justice in providing a remedy. A Redeemer would be sent who would conquer death and bring the prisoners out of the prison house of death.—John 3: 16; Revelation 13: 18.

And that Redeemer was the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom [or corresponding price]. (1 Timothy 2: 6.) He thereby purchased the race with the right to call them all out from death—some to life everlasting, some to stand before the Judgment Seat, where conditions will be more favourable to good conduct than under the present order of things on earth.—John 5: 28, 29; Revelation 7: 9-17; 22: 12.

Jesus Christ the Judge

Jesus Christ the Son of God is the great Judge appointed by the Father. He too has all the necessary qualifications to enable him to judge righteously—"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."—John 5: 22, 23.

Being now the owner of the race, having purchased it, He is proceeding to deal with them along certain lines notwithstanding Satan's opposition. But soon He shall reign without any outside interference whatever, for He will bind Satan for 1000 years, that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are complete, and will throughout the thousand years carry out His office (in respect to those on the earth at that time), after the manner in which the judges of Old Testament times were instructed to rule. They were to instruct the people and assist them to know the Lord and His ways.

An Orderly Systematic Judgeship

As Judge, He proceeds with His work in an orderly way. First of all is the Judgment which began after His resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand of which the apostle Peter wrote—"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."—1 Peter 4: 17.

Those who are His followers are under test or trial now, under the present adverse conditions. The messages to the Seven Churches, as given in the Revelation (chapters 2 and 3), make promises for faithful service. It would be well for you to turn up these chapters at home and read the rewards that are promised for faithfulness.

The Apostle Paul also speaks of judgment and reward—

> . . . a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. —2 Timothy 4: 8.

As the great Judge He is watching over us now, taking into account not only our actions but our thoughts also, as we can see by following the subject of our Conference topic, "The Sermon on the Mount." He knows all about us, and will not miss a point. A cup of cold water given in His name will not lose its reward.

The Mote and the Beam

Therefore when it comes to the matter of our judging, we must remember that we do not now possess the qualifications of a judge perfectly, so that we must be very careful in our judgment of others, taking into consideration our own weakness and frailty. Perhaps the fault that we can see in another brother is in comparison a mote beside the beam which is ours.

It is not wrong to see the mote in our brother's eye and desire to help him to be rid of it. But first examine self. What is the motive behind our actions? Is it for the glory of God and the advancement of His cause? or is it in any way in self interest?

The undertaking of thus judging among the brethren must be approached with caution and care, because we have not the power which the Great Judge has to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. But there are some things which we can judge and are instructed to judge, because we have the divine standard by which to judge them.

Things We Should Judge

We must judge or distinguish between holy and unholy things, and people likely to scorn holy things.

There is a certain class of people who have the character of dogs and pigs with regard to holy things. They are a class who have no reverence for God. We must be able to judge this kind, and not cause the work of God to be trampled underfoot as it were.

> 6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

By Their Fruits Know Them

Mention is also made (verse 15) of false prophets or teachers—

> 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
> 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
> 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
> 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
> 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
> 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

We must discern that their sheep's clothing is only a pretence, their real character being to devour and make trouble. If their teaching is not in harmony with God's Word, we must reject them, come out from among them, and be separate. (2 Corinthians 6: 17.) We must judge between believers and unbelievers, for what concord has Christ with Belial, or righteousness with unrighteousness? says the apostle.

An illustration of this is given to us in the Old Testament. When the children of Israel went in to possess the land, they were told that God would send His angel to destroy all the idolatrous people in the land. They were to make no covenant with them, lest they turn them away to serve other gods. (Exodus 23: 20-33.) They were disobedient to this command, with the result that they themselves were

turned away from God to serve idols, and were removed from the land and punished time and again for their disobedience. So to us comes the command to judge on this point, and come out, and be separate.

Alas! how often do we see the result to some of our loved ones who have not been particular on this point, thinking perhaps they would be able to lead the friend with whom they had become associated to Christ, but instead they themselves had been weaned away. Let us take a firm stand in choosing our association.

The Correct Standard of Judgment

In verses 15-21 we are told that we must judge. We have the divine standard given to us whereby we can judge both teachers and doctrines, and that standard is the Word of God. Our attitude toward them is not left to our own opinions; we *must* do our judging by this standard.

In some cases the test is simple, as contained in 1 John 4: 3—

> And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.
>
> Also 2nd John 7—For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

This is a simple test, and if the teaching does not measure up to this we have simply to reject it.

There is also the doctrine of the ransom. The standard is: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." The judging on this point is simple, and our position is to reject anything that denies this great truth.

Many other points could be mentioned if time would permit, but this will be a start to go on from. Let us use this rule freely, and it will assuredly show us our position, so that we can take a firm stand. "By their fruits ye shall know them." —H. S.

KNOCKING AND ASKING

—Matthew 7: 6-11—

AMONG the multitude listening on the mountainside, many might have wondered how they could remember and grasp the meaning of all the Lord said. They had been told to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and not to seek after the things of this world. And some would think, Can this kingdom be for me? Or is it for someone else? We to-day might ask the same question, Is it for me? Am I included? These natural queries the Lord answered, as recorded in Matthew 7: 7, 8—

> 7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
>
> 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh *findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

If then we are told of a place to knock where something valuable is promised to be given, it is very evident that we have heard something to our advantage. But it remains with us to act on the information given.

For example: Suppose a business firm issued an invitation to call on a certain day and receive a valuable present; would we not take every care to note the correct time and address? Naturally we would, you will say. And, having found the address, we would want to know to whom to apply that we might receive the thing desired.

The Father's Invitation

This little illustration will, I trust, help us to see that all through His ministry the Lord was giving out an invitation to come and receive good things from the Father. That invitation is still being given to-day, and still we find that if we desire the good things we must "ask" at the right place. We must "knock" if we want the door opened.

But how do we knock? Answer, By prayer. Knocking is only another way of emphasizing the importance of asking. It means individual and personal application for what God is willing to give. The Jews were accustomed to pray to God, and Jesus encouraged them to keep on doing so. They expected great things from their Messiah, yet Jesus who was that Messiah, the Christ, here points them to God, to continued faith in God, and to look to Him for the good things. Should the inquirer not be sincere in his asking, he will not receive. Neither will those who "ask amiss," as the apostle James said: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your desires." (James 4: 3.) But God's favors are for those who are sincerely desirous to know Him, and are willing to believe His inspired Word. Hebrews 11: 6 states that "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

God's willingness to hear and answer prayer is also declared in John 7: 17, and here also a condition is attached—"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Faith and prayer and a willingness to do God's will all form part of the "knocking"—to which shall be opened the "door" to God's favors and gifts.

Giving Good Gifts

All God's favors and gifts are good, hence we need not fear to ask. Our Lord in His discourse draws the attention of the multitudes to the natural man with children, and puts it in the form of a question, comparing an earthly parent with our heavenly Father (verses 9, 10)—

> 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?
>
> 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

Do you think an earthly father, when his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? No, you will say. Or will he give him a serpent when he asks for fish? Certainly not! Well then (verse 11)—

> 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

And your answer to this must be in tune with the Lord—MUCH MORE abundant, and much more de-

sirable, are God's good gifts than those any earthly parent can possibly give to his children. The apostle James (1: 17) speaks of these good gifts—

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

The Good Gift of His Son

God's good gifts have been given freely without being asked for, in the sense that He devised and arranged them without our knowledge or request, unless the great need of the human race for His help may be thought of as a form of asking. Our asking comes in when we hear of these good things, and desire to have the benefit of them. Thus it was with the sending of His dear Son, as we read in John 3: 16, a well-known scripture—

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

This is the greatest of all God's gifts, for had the Son not been given, redemption would not have been accomplished, and we would still be in our sins. When Jesus spoke those words He was God's gift as Teacher and Revealer, and shortly afterward He became God's gift as the Sacrifice for our sins, and at His resurrection He became God's gift as Lord over all for whom He died, and as the one Mediator between God and men. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9: 15), which is the foundation of all other of His gifts.

The Gift of Forgiveness

The first of these other gifts which came as a consequence of our Lord's death and resurrection is the forgiveness of sins. We do not earn this; it is freely given when we confess our sins and accept the death of the Lord Jesus as having been on our behalf: so we can say with Paul—"who loved me, and gave himself for me."—Galatians 2: 20.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Another great gift which we receive from God through Jesus our Saviour is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Many things the Lord told His disciples during His earthly ministry they could not understand, but He promised to send them the Spirit to make all things clear, as related in John 15: 26; 16: 13—

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost upon the waiting disciples, who had been told to tarry in Jerusalem "until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24: 49.) The Spirit came upon them with "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind." "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak [the Word of God] with other tongues [that is, in other languages], as the Spirit gave them utterance." Other gifts of the Spirit were also manifested. (Acts 2: 1-11, 17, 18.) So that while the Holy Spirit itself is a gift from God, additional gifts or powers were given in connection with it, as mentioned in Romans 12: 6; 1 Corinthians 12: 4-13.

The Lord had said, "For every one that asketh receiveth" (Matthew 7: 8); and "how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." (Luke 11: 10, 13.) Therefore the good gift of the Spirit was not confined to the believers who received it at Pentecost. It was for each and all who would come unto God through Jesus Christ. Thus we read Paul's statement to the Ephesians (1: 13) regarding their experience—

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

Words fail us to express the certainty of receiving! Even as the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in the first epistle (2: 9, 10)—

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: . . .

The Gift of Sonship

Sonship is another of the great gifts which God is pleased to give to those who ask and come to Him in the name of Jesus, as shown in Romans 8: 14-17—

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are *the sons of God.*

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The sons of God are animated by the Spirit of God, and ultimately shall receive yet another of God's good gifts; they shall receive the reward in heaven, of joint-heirship with Christ in His Kingdom, and as kings and priests to reign with Him for the Thousand Years, during which blessings shall be extended until they reach all the families of the earth, including the dead brought out of the tomb. Is it any wonder that the apostle John wrote—"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God . . . it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—1 John 3: 1, 2.

Asking in the Name of Jesus

During most of His ministry the Lord told the Jews to ask good things from God, and to look upon Him and address Him as their Father in heaven. (Matthew 6: 10.) These prayers were to be offered at the temple (or looking toward it), in harmony with the custom in vogue under the law of Moses, and were acceptable to God when offered in sincerity. (Daniel 6: 10; 1 Kings 8: 44-49.) But just as He was about to leave His disciples, Jesus gave them a new way of approach to God, a new way to "ask." He said (John 16: 23, 24)—

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

This was a new way of approach to God, and is referred to by the apostle as having been consecrated for us by the blood of Jesus. (Hebrews 10: 19-22.) All our prayers and thanksgivings, as well as all our requests, should therefore be offered in the name of Jesus. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." All our words and deeds should be such as can fairly be done in His name. (Colossians 3: 17.) "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Ephesians 5: 20.

And seeing we know these things, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip [or, literally, glide away]." (Hebrews 2: 1.) Undoubtedly one way of showing our gratitude and our appreciation of all the good gifts which our heavenly Father has showered upon us, is to grip them well and never let go. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."—Ephesians 6: 10-18.

—F. McK.

THE GOLDEN RULE

—Matthew 7: 12.—

HAVING PROCLAIMED the readiness of the Father to give good gifts to them that ask Him, our Lord gave His hearers a rule for their guidance. It is briefly expressed, but full of meaning—

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

This rule given by the Lord is well known as "the Golden Rule," and is praised by the infidel and the skeptic as well as by the Christian. It is praised by everyone alike. Some even speak of the practice of this rule as though it were in itself a ground of salvation. That, however, is saying something more than the Lord said. Acceptance of Jesus is the ground of our salvation.

This rule was given by our Saviour as a rule of life for those who love God and who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and become His followers. When we have done this, then Jesus enlightens our minds on what we should expect from others and what we should do to them.

The Golden Rule and the Law

Verse 12, then, contains a good rule or standard which commends itself to all. The last part of the verse, however, is seldom if ever referred to, and yet it is part of our Lord's statement. After giving the rule—"all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:" He adds the words—"for this is the law and the prophets."

What is meant by this concluding clause?

Previous speakers have shown us that the Lord in this great sermon on the mount set forth the principles of the New Covenant, which would supersede the Law Covenant. Why then did He introduce the Law in verse 12? We must remember that the Lord had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.—Matthew 5: 17.

The Lord did not come to urge the Jews to disobey the law, for it was "holy, and just, and good," and was given, among other things, to teach righteousness. (Romans 7: 12.) We must also remember that the Lord was speaking to people living under the Law and more or less familiar with it and with the inspired writings of the prophets. He was giving to the assembled multitude of Jews this great rule which we are now considering. He gave it to them as an important principle of the New Covenant, and then added His comment, "for this is the law and the prophets." By that He meant them to understand that the Law and the prophets taught the same things as this rule, though not, of course, in the same identical words.

If we would do to men whatsoever we would that they should do to us, we would be kind and thoughtful towards each other. In the same way, the Jews under the Law had to be kind and thoughtful, for the Law contained many commandments obedience to which involved kindness and loving thoughtfulness for others.

The fact that the law and the prophets were largely concerned with the application of this rule of kindness and love to the children of Israel in their various relations with each other is further emphasized by the Lord in another place, Matthew 22: 34-40.

The Great Commandment

A Pharisee said,

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?
37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
38 This is the first and great commandment.
39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

If the Jews rightly understood these words, they would have realized the great importance of these two commandments. The one taught them what their true relation to God should be, and the other taught them about their proper relation to their neighbour. These two commandments expressed the fundamental principle of love and thoughtfulness to God and to others, and upon them, said the Lord Jesus, "hang all the law and the prophets."

The children of Israel could not justly expect God's love and thoughtful consideration for them, unless they in turn had the same for Him, and the same is true under the New Covenant.

Do We Expect Sacrifices From Others?

When we consider what is involved in doing to others as we would that they should do to us, the question might arise, Do I wish them to make a sacrifice on my behalf, shall they put themselves to loss and inconvenience in order to do something for me?

I might answer, No, I would not expect them to put themselves to loss and inconvenience on my account, therefore I shall not be required by the Golden Rule to put myself to loss and inconvenience for them. Is that the way the Golden Rule works out in practice? Our answer is, The Golden Rule would not in that case be golden, it would be trash.

This we can see when we look at the Lord who is our great Example in doing to others as we would be done by. Seeing us in condemnation and death, He made a tremendous sacrifice in order to do good to us; and He said to the disciples that they "love one another, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."—John 15: 12.

Hence sacrifice of self is inseparable from a proper observance of the Golden Rule.

Give Good Gifts

The word "therefore" at the beginning of Matthew 7: 12, being a connective word, joins the rest of the verse to what was said previously (verses 7-11).

The teaching set out in these verses (7-11, which were taken by a previous speaker) culminates in verse 12. If we wish to have given to us when we ask, have opened to us when we knock, receive bread when we ask and not a stone, receive fish when we ask and not a serpent, receive good gifts from God; then we should give our best to God, the Giver; give good things to others as we are able and we see their need.

In accepting from God the great Gift of His Son, with the gifts of forgiveness and life, already mentioned as good things we receive, we in fairness (if not in love and appreciation) should do the same to Him; give our best, our life, our love and devotion to Him.

Further: "that men should do to you."

All our life time we are receiving benefits from others —parents, teachers, friends, and sometimes from strangers.

These benefits, if rightly appreciated, will teach us to extend benefits to others, according to our desires as to what they should do to us, whether near relations, friends, or strangers; always remembering that "your Father which is in heaven" desires us to be like Him.

The Golden Rule a Treasure

In this Golden Rule we have a great treasure—not a treasure to be laid away or perhaps looked at from time to time and put away again, but something to be in constant use every day of our lives. It will help us to forget ourselves; we will not always be looking expectantly to others to see how much they will do for us. Rather we will look around for those whom we can help. We will get the spirit of blessing which actuates God and Christ. The great need of all men is enlightenment in the Truth. We know how glad we were when someone brought the good message to us. Let us seek others to assist in that way. Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, will glorify your Father which is in heaven.

—J. McK.

THE STRAIT GATE AND THE WIDE GATE

—Matthew 7: 13, 14—

THE LORD'S INVITATION to enter the way to life should have been received with great joy by His Jewish listeners. Every word He uttered demanded their utmost attention and obedience, for this was He of whom Moses had spoken when he said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."—Acts 3: 22; Deuteronomy 18: 15.

Moreover, here was one pointing them to a way that led to life, a narrow way, certainly, but it was a way nevertheless. Whereas under the law there was no such way. True, the law carried with it a promise of life, for it had said, "The man that doeth them shall live in them." (Galatians 3: 12; Leviticus 18: 5; Romans 10: 5.) But not one could do them perfectly, consequently no one received the life promised.

The Strait Gate

But the Lord comes with a new way to which He invites them. "Enter ye," He said, "in at the strait gate"—

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

We notice first that the word is not "straight" (with "gh"), which means without deviation, running in the same direction, as a yard-stick or a road without turns; or which, applied to "gate," would mean "upright." The gate is described as "strait" (without "gh"), a word which has quite a different meaning.

The word "strait" in this place is a translation of the Greek word "stenos," which occurs only three times in the New Testament (twice in the verses under consideration, and in Luke 13: 21), and is rendered "strait" in each case. "Stenos" is defined by Strong's Concordance as meaning "narrow (from obstacles standing close about)," lending color to the thought of "difficulty," although the Emphatic Diaglott renders it "narrow" in both verses (13 and 14). In any case the thought seems to be that the gate or entrance which leads to life is an entrance made narrow by obstacles, hence difficult to enter, and is in marked contrast to the wide entrance, easy to enter, which leads to destruction.

And so we are confronted with two entrances and two ways leading in opposite directions: one is a narrow entrance to a narrow way, the other a wide entrance to a broad way.

The Wide Gate and the Broad Way

The way of the Jewish nation under the law may be aptly represented as a "broad" way. They had travelled for hundreds of years along that way, and were well aware of the truth of the Lord's words that it was indeed a way leading to destruction. Ever since the institution of the law at Mount Sinai and the people's ready acceptance of it when they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, not one single Jew—no matter how pious he might have been, and notwithstanding the good intentions he might have had, or the earnestness of his desires —not one single Jew (with of course the exception of the Lord Jesus) was ever able to keep that law; they all died, every one of them. The promise of life was sure, God had promised that, but the terms were too difficult. Man in his imperfect state is not able to keep a perfect law; which consequently became to all under that covenant "the ministration of death."—2 Corinthians 3: 6-11.

The Apostle Paul shows this clearly in his epistle to the Romans. He says (7: 10, 11)—

And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

The fault, then, lay not with the commandment, but with the sinner; the commandment being the means of magnifying sin, making an open demonstration to those under it, and to all outside observers, of their utter imperfection and their unworthiness of life, and also of their helplessness and the hopelessness of being able to obtain it by their own works. Verse 13 shows again that no blame could be attached to the law, for, as he had stated (verse 12), "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." It was not, as some think, the law that worked death. No indeed; it was sin which did that. But it was through the law that sin was *forced to reveal itself, and, as we have seen, did so* by the fact that none under the law could keep it. Viewed from this aspect that way leading to destruction was for the Jews indeed a broad way; it involved the whole of the Jewish nation from first to last.

The Broad Road of Self and Disobedience

The broad road may perhaps also be explained of the Jewish nation as a whole going down the easy way of selfishness and sin and disregard of their covenant. Prophets were raised up at different times to point them to the right way, and also to warn them of God's wrath which would surely be visited upon them for their disobedience and idolatry. Not that God found any pleasure in inflicting punishment, for He had said that "as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." (Deuteronomy 8: 5.) It was for their own profit if they would but take heed; but sad to say not many of them did. Had they allowed themselves to be led by the law, they would have been drawn to Christ (John 6: 44; Galatians 3: 24); but the majority, preferring the broad road of disobedience, were not disposed to receive the invitation to life which was extended to them.—John 5: 40; 10: 10.

The majority were condemned by Moses, who had written of Christ (John 5: 42-47), and the destruction at the end of the "broad" way was the loss of their inheritance in the promises, the loss of such semi-independence as they had enjoyed in Palestine under the Roman governors, and their rejection by God as His favoured nation.

In addition, such of them as wilfully opposed the Saviour were in danger of the condemnation of Gehenna.—John 9: 39-41; Matthew 23: 33-38; 1 Thessalonians 2: 15, 16.

Later on the apostles urged the Jews to choose the way of life by believing in Jesus, rather than the broad way and their loss of the promises.—Acts 2: 38, 39; 3: 22, 23; 4: 11, 12; 13: 46; etc.

Death Passed Upon All

There is also a third interpretation, which is far more comprehensive than the two already mentioned, involving not only the Jews but also the Gentiles. Although the Gentiles were not under the law as were the Jews, nevertheless they are in Adam, and as his children are inheritors of the condemnation passed upon him in Eden. For that condemnation rested not only upon our first parents but upon all their posterity—both Jew and Gentile. Says the Apostle, "as in Adam all die," and again, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that [or, "in whom," margin] all have sinned."—1 Corinthians 15: 22; Romans 5: 12.

It is a woeful picture that we have set before us. The Gentiles burdened with the sins of inheritance, and the Jews burdened not only with the Adamic sin, but also with the additional curse of the law, all wending their way down a road that offers nothing but destruction at the end of it. The Gentiles "having no hope, and without God in the world."—Ephesians 2: 12.

The Narrow Way to Life

The way to life, if there is such a way, is far preferable, and by far to be desired; but is there such a way? And how do we get on to it? The Lord Jesus says there is such a way, but there is only one gate. Only through the "strait" gate can one get on to the narrow way.

Though in previous ages rays of hope were dimly seen in types and shadows, which were joyfully hailed and acted upon by a few, yet life and immortality were not brought to light until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the news of this constituted much of the subsequent preaching of the apostles. (2 Timothy 1: 10, 11.) Had the human race been left to itself, the position would have been entirely hopeless. The creation was made subject to vanity, or frailty, says the Apostle (Romans 8: 20 E.D.), and, as we have seen, too frail even to grasp everlasting life when offered under the law. Therefore, being too weak to help ourselves, it remained for God to move. Had God remained inactive, there would have been no possible escape from the bondage of sin and death. But we are thankful to say and realize that God did intervene, for "in the fulness of the time" God sent forth his Son, "in due time Christ died for the ungodly."—Galatians 4: 4; Romans 5: 6.

The Redemption Price

God's plans and arrangements for man's deliverance did not depend upon circumstances; but, having foreseen the course man would take, He had already made provision in advance with a view to his redemption. We read of Jesus Christ as being "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13: 8), and it was on account of this that the Lord Jesus was able to say while on earth, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14: 6.) He was the Way, because He was to be the Purchaser of the race, and also the Sacrifice without which there could be no remission of sins. Because of His own perfection in righteousness God could not look upon sin with tolerance, nor could He alter the death penalty, which was a just punishment for the sin. Before the sinners could be received again into His favour, certain steps were required to be taken. And the plan was devised by which His Son would purchase the whole condemned race by the payment of a price—that price being Himself. As a perfect Man He corresponded to the perfect man Adam who had sinned. Our Lord Jesus came to earth for the express purpose of paying that price, as He himself said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10: 45; Matthew 20: 28.) And this was carried out on the cross, as Paul subsequently wrote—"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom [literally, "a corresponding price"] for all, a testimony in due time." (1 Timothy 2: 5, 6, margin.) By Him the entire race was redeemed.—1 Corinthians 1: 30; 1 Peter 1: 18, 19.

In plain terms, the race was bought, and became the Lord's property; as we read in 1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20. Having been bought with a price, we are not our own. We belong to Him who bought us. The two parts of the redemptive work are referred to in the ransom and the propitiation for sin. God's wisdom and righteousness were fully vindicated, as we read (Romans 3: 23-26)—

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
25 Whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The purchase price was made also the satisfaction for sins, being at the same time the antitype of the sin offerings offered under the law.

The Perfect Sin Offering

The blood of bulls and of goats, offered under the law, says the Apostle, could never take away sins, the reason being that under the law they were only of temporary value, requiring to be often repeated; thus showing that the sins were not removed. (Hebrews 10: 1-4.) But Jesus has obtained the right to grant eternal deliverance from sin to those who will believe and accept it on His terms. (Hebrews 9: 12.) Neither, according to Hebrews 9: 9, could the blood of animals cleanse the conscience from dead works, but the blood of Jesus can do so, as we read in verse 14—"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" and again (10: 14), "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified"—literally, "being sanctified." Perfection of mind and body is not here referred to, but perfection in the sense of completeness as regards their acceptableness to God, and as regards the cleansing of the conscience from the guilt of sin, and so, the requirements of a righteous God having been met, He is able to forgive and forget, as provided for under the terms of the New Covenant.

Acceptable Worship

Of this New Covenant Jesus is the Mediator, His shed blood having been the ratifying "blood of the covenant," which is now "sprinkled" on all who acknowledge Him as Mediator and Reconciler. (Ephesians 2: 13-17; Hebrews 8: 6-13; 7: 22-25.) "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."—2 Corinthians 5: 18-21.

The perfect accord between God and His beloved Son made this arrangement possible, by which we may now draw nigh to God in acceptable worship, our sins being forgiven, as stated in Hebrews 10: 19-22—

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
And having an high priest over the house of God;
Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

The "holiest" represents heaven itself, into which Christ entered with the atoning blood (Hebrews 9: 22-24). This was a "new and living way," different from that of the Aaronic high priest, who entered the most holy with the blood of bulls and of goats which remained dead. But

in the case of Jesus, our Lord was raised from death, and was made High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, *so that He entered heaven "now to appear in the presence of God for us."* (Hebrews 9: 24.) Hence the way of approach to God through Christ is both a new and a living way "through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." This refers to the worship which it is the privilege of believers to practice, and it comes after they have entered the "strait gate," not before.

The "strait gate" which gives entrance to the narrow way that leads to life represents faith in the finished work of Christ and complete consecration to Him, to follow in His footsteps.

A gate is used not only as a way in, but also as a barrier to keep out; those not conforming to the terms of entry are barred by those same terms. Faith or consecration—or both—without recognition of the Cross God will not accept. Those claiming to have entered the narrow way through another gate are only deceiving themselves, for there is no other gate; "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."—Acts 4: 12.

Few Find It

The terms are not impossible; every one can comply with them; this being so, we might ask ourselves, Why is it that only "few there be that find it?"

If we keep in mind the definition of the word "strait," the answer is not far to seek. It is the obstacles standing close about which make it difficult: unbelief, self-will, riches, desire to be rich, selfishness—all of which are barriers to faith in, and full consecration to, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Unbelief is perhaps the greatest obstacle, and, as we all know, Satan is the chief cause of that; he is "the god of this world" who blinds "the minds of them which believe not," and with blinded minds, not having seen the light of truth, his subjects cannot see the "gate." But once they are enlightened the responsibility is laid upon them to enter the strait gate, as it was laid upon those whom the Lord Jesus directly addressed. The condemnation incurred by such as refuse to respond to the call is clearly stated by the Lord in connection with His announcement that God "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He said of those who refused to recognize Him (John 3: 19)—

> And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The account of the rich young man, as related in Mark 10: 17-27, might be taken as an example. Here was a young man desiring eternal life, and seeking for it at the right place, yet the answer he got caused him to turn away sorrowful. His riches formed too great an obstacle at the "strait gate;" he was not willing to make the sacrifice of self involved in becoming a disciple of the Master. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

The Lord requires our full and complete consecration, nothing less will do. If we want the pleasures of this world, then we cannot have the Kingdom; if we wish to serve God, then we cannot serve mammon. Riches, whether consisting of friends, relations, ambitions, or money, or other worldly consideration, have kept many from entering the "strait" gate; also the fear of man, false pride, etc. The Lord did not mince matters, neither should we. A proper, grateful response to His call means surrendering our wills to Him, consecrating our all to follow and obey Him even unto death; for—

> He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
> And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.
> He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.—Matthew 10: 37-39.

New Creatures in Christ

The way to lose our life is to give it up, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus. The will represents the entire person, it controls our whole body. It has control of our possessions, our time, our talents, our influence, hence when we surrender our will to the Lord, or, as the Scriptures sometimes represent it, our "hearts," we give Him our all, and like Paul we say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This burial of our will into His is spoken of as being "baptized into Jesus Christ," and if we have thus put on Christ, we necessarily die to all else—"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."—Romans 6: 3; Colossians 3: 3.

Having therefore forsaken all, let us conduct ourselves as new creatures; let our walk in life be new, and let our light so shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify God on our behalf. This is the spirit of God, and, says the Apostle, "as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Romans 8: 14.

Life More Abundant

To those who become such in this age there is offered not only eternal life but an heavenly inheritance, and as kings and priests they shall reign with Christ a thousand years. (Romans 8: 17; Revelation 20: 6.) It is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." (1 Peter 1: 4, 5.) Incorruptibility not only of character but also of substance is the promise. Jesus said concerning those called to the heavenly inheritance and incorruptibility (John 10: 27, 28, 9, 10)—

> 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
> 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.
> 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out [the fold], and find pasture.
> 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Our Lord Jesus since His resurrection is, we are told, a Spirit being, the "express image" of the Father's "person," or, as the Diaglott renders it, "an exact impress of His substance" [Hebrews 1: 3, see also Variorum footnote]; "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (John 5: 26.) Life in himself means life independent of food or other outside sustenance. That sort of life the Lord did not have while on earth, for He partook of nourishment necessary to human life. Now He is exalted far above angels and powers and every other name that is named. Like the Father, He is now self-existent.

All these descriptions of our Lord's present life, position, and glory help us to realize to some extent at least the height of honour to be bestowed upon the overcomers of this Gospel Age, when we read the Apostle John's statement that we are to be made like Him—

> Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—1 John 3: 2.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" nevertheless we can realize at least to some small extent the magnitude of the prize which God has so graciously offered. Realizing it, may we be the more sanctified by it, and the more determined also to press on in this narrow way, striving daily to make our calling and election sure. —R. E. C.

(Conference Addresses to be concluded)

Back to the Bible **You are cordially invited to the Bible Talks given every Sunday Evening at 6.45, in the Foresters' Hall, Chapel st., between Toorak and Malvern Rds., Melbourne. These addresses are undenominational, and they take you "Back to the Bible." The Editor of this Journal is usually the Speaker. COME, and WELCOME!**

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Voluntary donations to this fund have been received as under, since our last report. As the "Advocate" is regularly published at a financial loss, it is obliged to depend upon the loving co-operation of its friends until it shall become self-sustaining. Let the good work continue!

1, 5/-; 2, 2/-; 3, 6/-; 4, 6/-; 5, £1; 6, £1; 7, 12/-; 8, 2/-; 9, £1:5:0; total to January 31, £4:18:0 ($23.82). As stated in the Report in January issue, the N.C.A. account then had an Adverse Balance of £23:13:11, besides which there were unpaid printers' bills amounting to £63:5:8, making a total Deficit to January 14, 1935, of £86:19:7. The donations above reported reduce this Deficit to £82, with nothing as yet to apply on the work for 1935.

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Voluntary Donations, as under, have been received since our last report for the spread of the Good Tidings concerning the Grace of God in Jesus, our Mediator and Intercessor under the terms of the New Covenant.

1, 18/6; total for month, 18/6 ($4.50). The estimated expenses of the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1935 amount to £200 ($1000); though more than this sum can be beneficially utilized should it be available. The small Credit Balance reported in January issue will be applied to this year's work with Free Tracts, etc.

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The Field is the World

EACH TIME we place these words at the head of a review of world events, we are impressed with the wonderful accuracy with which our Lord described events and conditions to arise many centuries after His parables and prophecies were spoken to His disciples in Galilee and Judea. By linking these together we find ourselves now living at the very time and under the very conditions described in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Before His ascension the Lord told the disciples to go and teach all nations. In the parable He had forecast that that work would be accomplished, for the field was no less than the world. As the age progressed, more and more nations came under the influence of Western civilization, with which the Gospel (with various admixtures of tradition) has been mostly associated.

By giving the Revelation to John at Patmos for the instruction of the Church throughout the age the Lord manifested His interest in all who would believe the Gospel when they heard it, and He prepared them for the trials that should come by giving in advance under symbolic visions a clear outline of the attitude they should take in relation to the influences and powers that should arise in the world which was to be their field of operations.

The Two Witnesses and Their Testimony

Prophecies, parables, plain teaching and symbolic visions supplement one another, giving many sidelights on the different situations to arise. For example, the period of 1,260 days (fulfilled as years) and its events are mentioned by Daniel the prophet. The Revelation mention of the same period enables us to locate accurately those events and still others. And while Daniel 7: 25 tells us that the saints were to be given into the hand of the beast for a time and times and the dividing of time, that is, 3½ times (equal to 1,260 "days," and fulfilled as years), Revelation 11: 3 tells us that God would give to His "two witnesses" that they should prophesy during that period. They would prophesy (that is, publicly expound) the true worship, which the Antichrist system would vitiate with its false theology; thus showing that the religious hierarchies with all their persecution and "counter reformations" could not obliterate the truth nor suppress its preachers entirely.

How heartening is this revelation of God's will to uphold the true believers throughout that long period! Yet the two witnesses are described as giving their witness "clothed in sackcloth." These two witnesses we understand to be the Word of God and the Church of Jesus Christ. The Word of God has been written or printed in the languages and dialects of the people to whom the witness was to be given. The devoted believers have testified by preaching and mode of life the same things that the Word declared. Both are lights, and both are sustained by the oil, the Holy Spirit, which has never failed them, and the Spirit's guidance has enabled the devoted believers to interpret the Scripture doctrines and also the events as they developed.

Of the written Word (at that time the Old Testament only) the Lord said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." (John 5: 39.) To those scriptures were afterward added the Gospels, the book of the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation, all given by inspiration of God.

Of the disciples as witnesses the Lord said in His prayer to the Father shortly before His crucifixion, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." "I have given them thy word; . . . As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John 17: 8, 14, 18.) His commission to be bearers of the word was given direct to the disciples after His resurrection (Luke 24: 47, 48)—"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."—See also Matthew 28: 19, 20; Acts 1: 8.

Sweetness and Bitterness

Revelation 10 describes the Great Reformation movement of the 15th and 16th centuries. Many truths were uttered on all phases of doctrine, but all did not become widely accepted, and so the Protestant Reformation in general crystallized on less truth than was known to the few. However, that truth was sweet to the taste, though its declaration brought the bitterness of ostracism and persecution.

With the translation of the Bible into English by Wickliffe, the preaching of Tyndale and his translation of the New Testament, and the work of Huss of Bohemia, the Reformation had its beginnings. With the conversion of Luther and the nailing of his Ninety-five Theses on the door of Wittenberg church October 31, 1517, the preaching became electrified. All these and their converts were part of the living human witness, and the work of this witness was greatly accelerated by the translation of the Word of God into the vernacular—German. French, etc.*

The 1,260 years of the testimony of the "two witnesses" was partly in the past when the Reformers began their work, but the vision gives us to understand that the testimony never ceased in all that time, notwithstanding the persecutions and tribulations, poverty and ostracism represented by the "sackcloth"—in strong contrast to great "Babylon," clothed in the purple and scarlet of regal power.—Revelation 17: 4.

Measuring the Temple

By the authority of God the Reformers measured "the temple of God [i.e., the worship of God], and the altar [the sacrifice], and them that worship therein." (Revelation 11: 1.) The measuring "reed" was the Word of God. All these were tested by the Reformers, and the people were called upon to "come out" and join those who bore the true testimony from God. Going against the rich, corrupt, and seemingly all-powerful Papacy, the Reformers and their successors might at times have trembled at their own temerity; but it was by God's endowment and in His strength that they stood out against the hierarchy; God sustained them in their witness. Other great names among the human witness were Melancthon, Zuingli, Calvin, Farel, Knox, Cranmer, Cromwell, Latimer, Ridley, William of Orange. But the whole of the testifiers, great and small, are included under the One Witness which, besides the Word of God, testified to the truth by the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of God Almighty.

Featuring "Dramatic Moments," the Melbourne "Argus" (Feb. 15) does honour to a great reformer—

Luther Gives His Answer

It is possible that in all the history of the Reformation no moment stands out with such splendour as that in which Martin Luther, Europe's Elijah, gave his answer to the Council of Worms.

The trouble was brought to a head about 1519 by the sale of indulgences. Luther, that rugged, undaunted figure standing alone in Europe, was summoned to the Council of Worms, and, although he knew he had every chance of being burned, as John Huss had been burned, at the stake, he went fearlessly. "Though there should be as many devils in Worms as tiles on the roofs, yet will I go," said he.

He went. He was called before an august assembly, including the six Electors of the German Empire, 80 dukes, rulers of large territories, 30 archbishops, many Roman prelates, princes, barons, counts, and knights, seven ambassadors (among them those of France and England), the Papal nuncios, the Archduke Ferdinand, Frederick the Wise, and the Emperor Charles the Fifth. It was a mighty company for one man to face.

"Will you or will you not recant?" he was asked.

Without hesitation, Luther replied [April 17, 1521], "Since your Most Serene Majesty and your High Mightinesses require a simple, clear, and direct answer, I will give one. It is that I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the councils, because it is clear as noonday that they have often fallen into error, and even into glaring inconsistencies with themselves. If, then, I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture, or by cogent reasons, I neither can nor will retract anything, for it cannot be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience."

Having said this he looked round the illustrious assembly which held his life in its hands. "Here I stand," he declared. "I cannot do otherwise. God help me!"

The Council of Worms condemned Luther and all his works, but the German princes were not inclined to carry out the sentence, and under the protection of Frederic the Wise Luther spent some months at a castle in Saxony, engaged in translating the Bible into German. As he proceeded, portions were printed and circulated among the people, while the princes themselves were glad to see this fearless onslaught upon the great Papal system with its tyranny, idolatry, sale of indulgences, superstitions, and many other implements for enslaving the people and suppressing thought. All of which illustrates the fulfilment of the prediction that the Two Witnesses—the written Word of God and the devoted People of God—continued their testimony; under difficulties it is true, but still without fear and without failure.

This testimony since the Great Reformation was to be given in this way, the Two Witnesses still clothed in sackcloth, yet faithful and courageous in spreading the knowledge of God and of Christ in all Europe and even across the seas, with the Papacy angry and inquisitorial but unable to stop it.

The 1260 years ended in 1799, and then the Two Witnesses were killed, and for 3½ years the nations rejoiced over their dead bodies. This is figurative language, and indicates the powerful influences of rationalism and the war spirit which dominated the nations for a time and caused many to think that Christianity was dead. However, this was as the nations wished it; neither the Word of God nor the consecrated People of God was wanted. But the Lord had agencies preparing which should exalt the Two Witnesses to heaven.

*For more details on the Great Reformation, please see "Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days," as per Book List. This is a handy volume to have on your bookshelf for ready reference on names, dates, and events.

Testifying from Heaven

A great voice from heaven said, "Come up hither." And they ascended up to heaven in the cloud. (Revelation 11: 12.) Heaven signifies the position of governmental and spiritual control over the affairs of men. The time had arrived, foretold by Daniel (12: 1), when Michael was to "stand up;" signifying that the Lord Jesus would take up His power to reign and would subdue the nations. With the Lord in that position and setting various forces to work, His Two Witnesses were given new life and enabled to speak with greater power than ever. The formation of Bible Societies with a renewed sense of responsibility to carry the gospel to all nations and give them the Scriptures in their own native tongues and dialects was undoubtedly the Lord's doing.

And with the written Word was required that other Witness, the consecrated people of God, to what is written. This they have done according to the degree of knowledge they have possessed. Much of it was and still is tinged with the false theology of nominal Christendom. But the sincere truth seekers have been given more and more light on the Word, and they have been able to bear witness concerning the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the events mentioned as occurring under it.—Verses 15-18.

Increased interest in prophecy relating to the Lord's Second Coming and the setting up of His Kingdom has marked the course of the believers in Jesus since the Two Witnesses were revived and called up to the higher sphere of influence in association with the Lord in the work which was to follow the end of the 1260 years. While the Lord is engaged in conflict with the beast and the false prophet, His Two Witnesses testify to the fact. And must keep on doing so. Theirs is not to engage in political strife and worldly measures, but to continue in their own sphere as Witness.

Not only was this the duty of the Lord's children in the early years of last century, when the zeal of God's servants was manifest in worldwide movements for Bible study (and other things took second place or no place at all), and they came to the end of the 1290 days (1829); this was their duty also as His Witness in conjunction with the Word up to the end of the 1335 days (1874). And if the Two Witnesses faithfully performed their part during the 1260 years, when "clothed in sackcloth," and boldly challenged the corrupt religious systems of their time; if the devoted Christians of the 19th century carried forward the Witness with the added truth they were able to give out concerning the Kingdom, what about us to-day, when the Witness is given from heaven, with the presence and power of our Lord Jesus Christ at the back of it?

The truth is ours to enjoy, but that is not all. The function of the witness is to testify, to **tell out.** If we do not tell it out we are not a witness, and cannot be in the company of those invited to "Come up hither." None of us is Luther called before the Diet at Worms; nevertheless we each have certain truths to uphold, and we may be called upon to retract or to hide our belief on some important doctrine for the sake of friendly association with those who deny that true doctrine. What shall we do? Shall we say as he did, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise," and decline to be quiet on that great truth? He risked his all, his life, gladly and fearlessly: cannot we risk the loss of friends who persist in the error? Again we say, To be silent while others preach error and make no declaration against it is not to be a witness. Luther's memory is revered because he spoke out.

Let us realize the power of heaven as our energizing force, also that though we are still living in "the field, which is the world," and a great work is to be done, for now it is "harvest" time, the end of the 1260 years is 135 years in the past. Think of it! There is not much time left, and the field is large; everywhere is ripe grain standing among a mass of tares waiting for some one to come along with the sickle of truth and gather it in.—Matthew 13: 30.

As for the many events taking place in the world, our interest is to see in them fulfilments of prophecy. The "beast" can still be seen, also his "image," ready to put their mark on our forehead or in our hand and keep us from the work of the Master.



For the Children

THE NOBLE BEREANS

As we have come along in these stories of what the Apostles and early Christians did and said and of what happened them we may have noticed how much alike the stories have been. If we take Paul's experiences as an example, it was nearly always a case of enter a city, preach in the synagogue on Sabbath days, make converts and friends but mostly enemies, undergo more or less persecution and suffering, and then flee all in a hurry.

We have seen something of that order of events lately happen in Philippi and Thessalonica, and before this again in Iconium and Antioch. And we believe that the Jews of those cities felt the force and truth of what Paul said, and they listened with interest and attention up to a certain point. Then, if there were not several things that offended them, there was at least always one; and that was the truth that the time had come for them to make a change from being followers of Moses who was not

really now their leader, and become followers of Jesus. As soon as that was said they lost interest, would go no further, and began to oppose Paul and get violent.

They thought that Paul was speaking against Moses and the laws God gave through him, and they argued like this:

They said, God appointed Moses to lead us and through him gave us His laws, and we will not depart from them; we will have nothing else, no matter what is offered or what is done or what persuasive argument is brought that we should leave him and follow another. For, if God appointed him, who is to put him out? Would God even, having once appointed him? No; we must retain Moses whatever else is done. It would be disobeying God to put him aside entirely to follow another.

They acted in the same spirit and from the same motives as those Jews who said to the man born blind whom Jesus had healed, "Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow [meaning Jesus], we know not from whence he is."

Some day, dear boys and girls, you may learn how wrong all this reasoning and nearly all those words of the Jews were. For if they had been really Moses' disciples, they would have been turning to Jesus as Moses instructed them and as Paul could have shown them if they had but listened. But they would not hear. So the opposition began, persecution followed, and Paul would have to leave the city.

But one good thing at least always came out of these persecutions. While God did not cause them, He overruled them to further Paul on his way; for we may be sure that he would have stayed longer in the cities he visited if he had not been forced to leave them on account of violence. So, moving on in this way, he was going "far hence unto the Gentiles," and that was in accordance with God's will.

Some Refreshing Experiences, Too

But now when Paul reaches Berea, and is there for a while, there are all the signs of a delightful change from the order of events as they occurred in other cities.

For when they went into the synagogue to preach they met with Jews who were different in important respects from those they had met in other cities. Here in Berea they were more reasonable: willing to listen to all Paul had to say. They gave him the closest attention as he spoke, and every day they searched the Scriptures for themselves to confirm as right, or to prove wrong (if they could), what he said, and they found him right in all his statements.

And what else should be expected? For when an inspired apostle, such as Paul was, goes out to teach the truth of God, he speaks with authority. The Old Testament, which formed "the scriptures" from which Paul preached, and which the Bereans searched, makes no mistakes, the same Holy Spirit of God which inspired Paul having long before caused men to write the whole of it. Hearing Paul, then, and reading their Scriptures were like one and the same thing, Paul having been sent to give them the inspired explanations, to be received as readily by the Jews as the Scriptures themselves, for neither contradicted the other.

But you may say all that holds good wherever there were Jews, wherever the Scriptures were read, and wherever Paul preached. How then are we to understand the great difference in his reception at Berea and at, say, Thessalonica?

If such a question has been in your minds, it is a good one, and we can only say in answer that there must have been something wrong somewhere—but not found in Paul nor in the Scriptures. The wrong lay in the Thessalonian Jews themselves; their hearts were wrong. For when they heard their Scriptures explained, and Paul's inspired words, they did not "turn . . . with all your heart" to the Lord, but fought against Paul and so of course against their own Scriptures, and against God who gave them and sent Paul.

Had they taken the opposite course and believed, as a few of them did, a different story might have been told of them. But now we can only repeat what Paul said of them—"they please not God, and are contrary to all men."

Why the Bereans were More Noble

But the Bereans heard Paul "with all readiness of mind," and there was the difference between them and the Thessalonian Jews. We think they must have been very keen all along to know more about their Scriptures. So that when Paul showed them what was properly to be expected of the Messiah of whom those Scriptures told, he was listened to, even though his teaching on some things was quite new to them; and they searched the Scriptures to see for themselves. This the Thessalonians (except a few) would not do; and so we hear of the Berean Jews being "more noble than those in Thessalonica."

What that searching meant we can well imagine. It would doubtless gather them together in groups often, and keep them busy for days, perhaps even weeks. For Paul would lead them in his teaching through the prophets, the psalms, and all that was done at the temple, to show that what was said and pictured by them about the Messiah was all fulfilled in Jesus. It would be no light task to search through all that. God would greatly bless them in their searching or seeking, and, according to His promise, they would "find." It would accordingly become the most lovely and delightful occupation, and the hours of seeking and finding a real joy, added to which was the presence of Paul and Silas to assist them and to answer enquiries on what might be "hard places" to understand.

But believing was really the next thing. Would they, once having received so much light, heard so much irresistible truth, accept with the heart what their minds were so convinced about? Would they say, "We are now 'all on' for this; we can see it

is the real thing, and we want to be all in it?" We are told that many of the Jews in the synagogue did, and many honorable women and men who were not Jews by birth but Greeks also had come now to know and to love the Truth, which Paul preached.

As we are told that "many" Jews in Berea believed (there were only a "few" in Thessalonica), that would still leave some unbelieving. It would be a marvellous thing if there were no exceptions. This small number were holding back for one reason or another. But not one of them seems to have offered open opposition to Paul and Silas nor grown violent. Under these circumstances peace and freedom to preach seemed reasonably certain for a long time in Berea if left to itself.

Thessalonian Jews Stir up Trouble in Berea

But it was as true then as it is now, if we are not for the Truth we are against it, and Satan will use us against it if it suits him. We cannot think, then, of the few in Berea remaining idle. There would not be enough of them alone to stir up the population against the missionaries and their work. But when we learn that by some means the Jews at Thessalonica came to know that Paul and Silas were in Berea carrying on their "nefarious" work, and with great success amongst the Jews and Greeks alike, we can see who would be likely to send that information to them.

This "knowledge" was like putting a spark to gunpowder; for action by the Thessalonian Jews seems to have been immediate. A number of them were soon on the sixty mile journey to Berea, ready to put into practice again the method by which Paul and Silas had been driven out of Thessalonica; and with possibly even harder thoughts against Paul than merely driving him out.

The arrival of such a number of visitors in the city (which was not a very large one) could hardly escape the notice of the Christians; nor could the purpose of their coming. For they openly troubled and excited the crowds against the missionaries, seeming to single out Paul for special attack. All this was at once known to the brethren, and to them it seemed certain there would soon be a commotion with violence in Berea as there had been in Thessalonica. As Paul's life would thus be in danger, they thought it wise to send him away immediately.

The Jews thus had all their trouble for nothing. For it is probable that they did not even see Paul, and certainly they had no opportunity to ill-treat him. On their return home again, they might well have reflected on what good they had done after so long a journey, and have considered that all their efforts had so far been without serious result in staying the progress of the Gospel. What they did only spread it further, and had the ill effect on themselves of leaving them still more hardened against it.

About two hundred miles south of Berea there was a city named Athens, and it was to this city that Paul was conducted by some of the Berean brethren, who seem first to have executed a little ruse, by going "as it were to the sea."

But Paul seems to have been disappointed in having to leave Berea and go southward. It was his great desire to go back to Thessalonica again. But with those violent Jews in the city he could neither stay in Berea nor go along the same road with them to Thessalonica. The direction he took was the only one practicable; and, now that we know of all that followed his visit in the south, we think it was in agreement with God's good will and was over-ruled by Him. He was really being led in the way God would have him go, although his own wishes at the time were to take another direction.

Paul said "Satan hindered" him from going back to Thessalonica, and doubtless that was true, for Satan was behind all the opposition he ever received including that offered by the Jews who came wildly over to Berea. But, while "Satan hindered," it was only because God allowed it. He sometimes over-rules the evil of evil spirits and men to carry out his own designs.

Paul would not detain those who were kind enough to go with him to Athens, but sent them back without delay, first giving them an urgent message for Silas and Timothy. So at length we hear of Timothy again as having met with Paul and Silas at Berea in time at least to see the great Apostle sent hurriedly away. He and Silas were thus left in the city to continue the teaching concerning their Messiah and the "wonderful words of life" which He brought. Great indeed were the things the noble Bereans had learned and were still learning; and sending some of their number to accompany Paul on his way was but a small expression of their love for the Truth and their gratitude to him as its messenger.

But the sudden and unexpected departure of Paul from amongst the earnest Bereans must have been a cause for much regret. Deep as that may have been, Silas and Timothy were still left, and so the intense time of teaching went on until Paul's message from Athens was delivered. The message was that Paul's companions should "come to him with all speed."

How easily the Bereans might then have said "all these things are against us." But it was the Lord who ordered all their comings and goings, and even how long they should stay in one place; and He was able to keep all who believed whether the first missionaries were with them or not. It was for them now to do as their neighbours, the Thessalonians, were doing—sounding out the word of the Lord in every place, and thus to show their faith. The purpose of Paul's visit to Berea would thus have been attained; and although we hear no more of the Bereans we may be sure that some at least remained faithful.

So, by the visits Paul made to Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, we see how the cry of the man in the vision—"Come over into Macedonia, and help

us''—was answered; and the help given was abundant. But Macedonia was only a beginning in Europe. Other great cities in other parts of Europe were yet to hear the Gospel; and already Paul is in Athens, the capital of Greece and the home of the learned men of the day.

Please read Acts 17: 10-15 for this Story.

What the Jews once said of Moses and Jesus, John 9: 28, 29.

What Moses wrote of Jesus, Deuteronomy 18: 18, 19.

Of Paul being sent "far hence," Acts 22: 21.

How God caused men to write the Scriptures, 2 Peter 1: 21.

Of Paul's words concerning most of the Jews, 1 Thessalonians 2: 15, 16.

Of God's promise to the seekers, Matthew 7: 7-11; John 7: 17; Ezra 8: 21, 22; Psalm 119: 2-11.

About believing with the heart, Romans 10: 9.

Of Paul's desire to revisit Thessalonica, 1 Thessalonians 2: 17, 18.

—UNCLE FRANK.

The Descent of Man

"Browning . . . did not absorb the new faith which, right or wrong, came to men through the hypothesis of evolution. This is a pity . . . Until poets have brooded upon its implications and made fables of its story and songs of its aspiration, many will remain ashamed of an assumption which they tacitly accept."—Osbert Burdett, "The Brownings."*

What! Was my great, great (many times removed)
Grandfather but a monkey? Is this true?
OH! That's a pure hypothesis, you say?
And what, I ask, is a hypothesis?
A fact established past all possible doubt?
A great discovery of the scientist
Patiently toiling in his laboratory?
Ah! 'tis a mere assumption, after all?
A reasonable assumption, too, at that!
It hinges on a mystic "missing link"
Which none has yet discovered—no, nor will,
I dare to say! And are we to enthuse
In story and song on this *hypothesis?*
"Honour thy father," says the Holy Book,
(Wholesome advice, from a discredited source).
I ask you—could you truly honour that?
Or as one, new-rich, pays agents to enquire
Into his line of ancestry, and then
Pays more for them to keep the matter secret,
Should we, O Scientist, suggest to you . . . ?

Well! This hypothesis, we'll say, is true,
And we are all progressing with the years.
Are our laws better than Moses' Laws of old,
Our songs more sweet than Psalmist David sang?
Is any wiser now than Solomon was,
Despite his ignorance of car and 'plane,
'Phone, radio, torpedoes, and the rest?
Modern inventions! Do they indicate
Actual progression within man himself?
Are we less cruel than Cain (of the "allegory"),
More kind than Christ (or is He, too, a myth)?
Do not the archæologists even yet
Unearth their silent testimonies to the truth
Of those old records which we now condemn
(We, the "enlightened" students of to-day)
As "myths" and "fables," "allegories"—no more!
Not so "advanced," nor such a theme for song
As our grand upward journey from the ape!
But even that's a mere hypothesis!
Well! He who runs may read—the moral's plain.

—J.L.S.

*Browning, Robert (1812-1889), and Elizabeth Barrett (1806-1861), wife of Robert; English poets.

The Sermon on the Mount

(Conference Addresses Concluded from February issue)

FOR MY SAKE

— Matthew 5: 11 —

PROBABLY you have all heard these words used in a manner similar to this—

Look friend, I'm not in a position to help you as much as I would like to; but you go and see Bill, tell him I sent you and he will be only too pleased to help you out "for my sake."

Now what would give him that confidence in Bill's willingness to help for his sake?

It would be through knowing Bill's love for him. Maybe he had helped him out of some serious difficulty, even to risking his life for him. If so, then it would be because of his gratitude as well. But supposing some friend gave his life for Bill, and he, before dying, requested him to do so and so "for my sake." How Bill would put up with all sorts of hardships to carry out the wishes of his late friend, and more so because the father of Bill's friend was the one to whom he owed all he possessed and was ready still further to help Bill as the one who does things for his son's sake.

The Rallying Point of the People

Now God, to whom we owe everything that is good and beautiful, sent His Son Jesus to do certain wonderful things on our behalf, and Jesus uses these words, "for my sake." They are to be found in Matthew 5: 11. By it He placed Himself as the rallying point of the people. On certain conditions they would have the approval and blessing of God, who was the Ruler of Israel and had given Israel a law for their governance; and now Jesus was calling out disciples, who were going to have all *kinds of hindrance and affliction from evil men* because of their allegiance to Him. But God will reward these disciples, for we are told in Matthew 5: 10—

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Truly a grand blessing; and this righteousness Jesus linked with Himself, when He said, as stated in next verse—

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Those who love to do things for Christ will first have believed in Him as the Messiah, the Anointed of God,

will have become His disciples, heeding His admonitions and obeying His commandments, and will be prepared by our Lord's own words to become **very unpopular**; for they will suffer reviling and all manner of false speaking against them.

True disciples of Jesus will gladly endure this hatred of men for His name's sake, and they should in fact rejoice at the privilege.

Some one might say, "How could a disciple gladly endure these trials when the persecutors are those of his own household—his father, mother, brother, sister, or perhaps a wife (or husband), or son, who set their hearts against him (or her) because of fidelity to Christ and the truth of His teachings."—Matthew 10: 21, 22, 35-37.

Now this is a fair question, but it should be borne in mind that when the loved ones of the Christian's own household turn against him they mostly do it in ignorance. The disciple will know too that God will some day open their eyes, and then, having come to know the truth, these persecutors from his own family will regret their past actions and will rejoice in the knowledge that their boy (or their girl) endured and went on to receive that greater, glorious inheritance in heaven.

Yes, the disciple can rejoice with great joy, because he knows that this great and wonderful Lord, this blesser of all mankind, will not forsake him in his trials, and has privileged him to assist His cause by preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Timothy 2: 3-7; 1 Peter 1: 3-9; Hebrews 13: 5, 6; Acts 10: 42; 1 Peter 4: 12-14.

The Faithful in Ancient Times

Many in ancient times suffered for righteousness' sake and their obedience to God. Abel is the first mentioned in Scripture. Cain was jealous of Abel because of his obedience to and approval by God, so slew his brother.—Genesis 4: 1-15; 1 John 3: 12.

Noah, a preacher of righteousness, when building the ark would have to suffer the scoffing of a very wicked world, but God did not forsake him; he and his family were delivered from the destructive flood waters.—Genesis chapters 6 and 7; Hebrews 11: 7; 2 Peter 2: 5.

Take Job as an example of suffering for God and for righteousness' sake. The plague of boils Satan brought on him caused him to suffer much, then his friends deserted him in his time of trial and distress. God did not forsake him, though, and he was able to rejoice, for God rewarded him handsomely and removed his severe trials. It will do us all good to read the book of Job, and to realize how great his faithfulness was.—James 5: 11.

Daniel and his three brethren worshipped God and were persecuted for His sake. The three, refusing to bow down to idols, were cast into a fiery furnace, but God delivered them. Daniel kept on praying and serving God when the command went forth not to; he was cast into a den of lions, but God stopped their mouths and they did him no harm. God is a wonderful helper to those who serve Him, and Daniel would rejoice in the manifestation of His care.—Daniel, chapters 3 and 6.

For further examples of suffering for God's sake under the law of Moses, please read Hebrews 11.

What God has Done for His People's Sake

Now let us briefly run over some of the mercies and wonderful things God did for the people's sake in ancient times.

When our first parents transgressed in the garden of Eden and the sentence of death was pronounced upon them, leaving a very black outlook indeed. God did not leave them in an utterly hopeless condition. In His mercy He gave them a ray of hope when He promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.—Genesis 3: 15; Galatians 3: 16.

When it came to pass in process of time that the children of Israel were groaning on account of their enslavement to the Egyptians (Exodus 2: 23, 24), God did something for their sake. He delivered them from this oppression by performing many wonderful miracles. Note particularly the passage of the Red Sea, when He completely stopped further pursuit.—Exodus 14.

When in the wilderness did He leave them unprovided for? No! He sent bread from heaven in a miraculous manner to feed them.—Exodus 16.

When entering the land of Canaan, God caused the walls of Jericho to fall down through the blowing of trumpets and the great shout.—Joshua 6.

Later on, when they were oppressed by the Philistines, God provided David who, by the use of a sling and a stone, slew the giant Goliath and commenced the deliverance of His people from the oppression. (1 Samuel 17.) Nevertheless, though they were continually in trouble for not heeding God, God still continued His activities for their sakes.

Last of All He Sent His Son

Through His prophets God promised a New Covenant (Jeremiah 31: 31, 32), also a King to sit upon David's throne, who would be the Redeemer of Israel. (2 Samuel 7: 16; Isaiah 9: 6, 7; 49: 6-8; Luke 1: 32, 33.) A prophet would be raised up—whom Moses spoke of, whom God said they were to take heed of.—Deuteronomy 18: 18; Acts 3: 22; 7: 37.

Then, just before this great Deliverer would appear, He sent another messenger—John the Baptist, as the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, to proclaim Him as the Messiah, so that they might be prepared to receive Him and not be taken unawares.—Malachi 3: 1; Matthew 3: 1-3; Isaiah 40: 3.

Then came Jesus preaching the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—Matthew 15: 24.

This special privilege of His exclusive ministry was given to them for their sakes, so that they first might have the opportunity of becoming the royal priesthood, the joint heirs with Christ.—1 Peter 2: 9; Revelation 20: 4, 6.

And after all God's loving care and special favours bestowed upon them for their sakes, how did they act toward His beloved Son when He came with the glorious message of salvation, inviting them to be His disciples for righteousness' sake, for the Kingdom of God's sake, for My sake—He, the One who was about to make this wonderful salvation possible by giving His life for them?

As a race, the majority of them turned Him down; rejected Him, they did not want Him, He was not popular; and so they went out of their way to persecute Him. (Matthew 21: 33-39.) Jesus entreated them to believe on Him, and after performing many wonderful miracles among them He said, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."—John 14: 11; John 10: 37, 38.

Then they sought again to take Him. (John 10: 39.) It was history repeating itself with these stiffnecked people. But it was the love in Him for them being unrequited that brought forth these words, recorded in Matthew 23: 37—

> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

A beautiful picture, this, of His loving care for them, if they had only taken heed of His words, "for my sake."

The Good Shepherd

This Jesus, the Messenger of the New Covenant (Malachi 3: 1), spoke a parable relating to the effect of the New Covenant taking the place of the Law Covenant and also the New Covenant as a blessing for the Gentiles. You may read it in John 10: 1-16. It is called the Parable of the Good Shepherd.*

*See book, "The Parables of Our Lord," for full explanation.

If you consider this parable carefully, you will find that the sheep first referred to are the children of Israel. The sheepfold would then represent the Law Covenant given at Sinai; but this Law which was ordained unto life only brought death. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Romans 7: 10, 11; Galatians 3: 10.) In other words, the sheep in the law-sheepfold were prisoners.—Compare Zechariah 9: 11, 12.

Then the true Shepherd, Jesus, came to deliver them out of this bondage; the porter, John the Baptist, opened the door of the Jewish sheepfold to Jesus, whose personal ministry was confined to them.—John 1: 29-33; Matthew 15: 24.

The New Covenant is also a fold, the Good Shepherd's fold, and Jesus came to lead the sheep of Israel into it; but they had to come in by the one and only door, and that door would be the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ, for He said, "I am the door," and "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."—John 10: 7; 14: 6.

But there were other sheep who would come into the New Covenant fold, who were not of the Jewish fold. That is, the Gentiles, who were never under the Jewish law, were going to be permitted to enter into the New Covenant fold too. For He commanded the disciples to go *into all the world and make disciples through preaching* the gospel. Paul said when the Jews refused the Gospel, "lo, we turn to the Gentiles."—Matthew 28: 19, 20; Acts 13: 46, 47.

All the sheep who enter into this fold have the care and protection of the Father as well as of the Good Shepherd (John 10: 28), and they will be those who follow Him, heed His voice, and do as He commands. These faithful followers are the ones He said in the Sermon on the Mount should suffer persecution "for my sake."

Suffer With Him

Now when Christ called upon His disciples to suffer "for my sake" we have to remember that He was tested in all points like as we are; even some of His brothers jeered at Him. (John 7: 1, 5; Hebrews 4: 15.) But never fear. He has promised us that we will never be tempted beyond what we can bear. (*1 Corinthians 10: 13.*) And when we are called upon to endure for the elects' sakes (2 Timothy 2: 10), and to suffer for righteousness' sake (1 Peter 3: 14), and all manner of hardships for Christ's sake, let us do so with a will, as willing as Bill was for his friend's sake with love and gratitude; for Christ died for us. Said the apostle Paul, "I take pleasure in infirmities, *in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in* distresses for Christ's sake."—2 Corinthians 12: 10.

The Father will reward us handsomely for doing these things for Christ's sake. We will receive eternal glory, and will reign with Jesus in His throne. We will become, *as the sons of God, members of a wonderful* glorified family.—Romans 8: 14-19; 2 Timothy 2: 10-12.

Words can not express the magnitude of this wonderful blessing, so let us take hold, as it were with all our strength in our arms and with all the willingness and love our hearts and minds can demonstrate, of the opportunity of giving heed to the rallying words of our Master—

"FOR MY SAKE." *Amen.*

—C. M.

NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH, LORD, LORD

—Matthew 7: 21-23—

IN SOME instances already mentioned by previous speakers the phrases "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" refer to the call Jesus gave out, and the invitation to become His followers, separated from all others, and united in one fold under one Shepherd, or as subjects under Him as the King. In John 10: 11-16 we read—

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own *the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep,* and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.
The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.
I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.
As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.
And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one *fold, and one shepherd.*

These words were addressed by our Lord to the Jews, *all but a few of whom rejected Him. The few were willing* to hear the voice of the Shepherd, and they were included in the sheepfold. But Jesus said he had other sheep which were not of the Jewish fold, and them He would bring also, so that there would be one fold only, consisting of sheep who know Him and His voice, and who are ready to rely on and trust in their Shepherd who laid down His life for them.

The sheep indicated as being not of the Jewish fold are the believers from among the Gentiles to whom the gospel went after the expiration of the special period of favour to the Jews. These Gentiles also recognize Jesus as *the good Shepherd and as their King, and willingly* become His subjects, and followers of His wonderful example of life and submission to His Father's will. They realize that to become followers of the Lord they would have to be separate from all others, and to be united with like followers and believers in Him in the one sheepfold.

In concluding the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns His hearers of the seriousness of their position, and of all who profess His name. He says (Matthew 7: 21)—

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Confession that Jesus is Lord and calling on His name will not ensure salvation. It is necessary to know and perform His will if we would be successful, and ultimately enter the glorious kingdom.

Heart, Not Lip, Service Required

If a man love the Lord, he will follow Him and realize that it will be pleasing to the Master as well as beneficial to himself to do His will in all things. If he does *this he will manifest the fruits of his efforts, and the effect* will be seen in his life, in his words, actions, and general conduct. The believer will realize that in doing the will of Jesus the King, he is doing the will of the Father who placed Him in that exalted position; and if this is not done now, the believer will not be qualified to enter into the presence of God in heaven.

Jesus points to the Kingdom of heaven as the ultimate reward of His followers, but this will be missed by those who have rendered only lip service. The service must be actuated by love in the heart, which the Lord can read. And indeed this is not much to expect, seeing what He *did for us when we were as yet estranged from Him.* A realization of something of the love of God and of Jesus Christ for the creatures of their creation should spontaneously produce a reactive effect in the believer's heart, which will have a culmination in sincere heart service for the Lord and the work of the Kingdom of heaven, and not in lip service, which will be proved unavailing. The true believer hears the voice of the true Shepherd, and will strive to be guided always by it.

Many Wonderful Works

Not only do those whom the Lord condemns misuse His name hypocritically with their lips. They also misuse His name by attaching it falsely to their own unauthorized teachings and works. Some of these the Lord specifies—

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

The Lord seems here to be referring to the great fact that as King He is also Judge over His people during the present age when the prospective joint-heirs are being invited to enter the Kingdom as now constituted. As illustrated in the parables of the "pounds" and the "talents," those now enlightened are counted as servants to carry on His work during His absence. But at the end of the age He returns to reckon with His servants, the faithful being approved, and the unfaithful cast out. The wicked servants in the parable protest, just as He represents them as doing in the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Many will endeavour to plead their cause, pointing to all they have said and done. They will plead that they have preached and have done great things in His name, as if by His authority. Let us give brief consideration to a few of these wonderful works which the Lord disowns.

The Wonderful Work of Governing the World

One of the earliest corrupt movements on the part of the Papacy as well as the earlier Eastern Roman forms of Christianity which constituted nominal Christendom in the early portion of the Gospel Age was to enlist the aid of the earthly governments in dealing with alleged heretics and with all who opposed its unscriptural doctrines. This was done without any respect whatever for the Word of God, which clearly states that the Christian believer is to be separate from the world, but is to remain subject to the powers that be. In pre-Reformation times the Papacy was notoriously guilty of affiliation with earthly governments, and since then has continued the same practice wherever possible. While Protestantism largely imitated the Papal practice by setting up State endowed and directed churches, thus making what the Revelation (13: 11-17) calls an "image" of the "beast."

Contrary to the Scripture teaching that the church was to be a humiliated body during the Gospel Age, only a little flock being chosen, which would be unrecognized by the world, Protestantism (even where not established as a State institution) thinks that its task is to convert the world now; or, as a common expression has it, "to take the world for Christ," and when it has succeeded in doing this and making the world a fit place to live in they say Christ will come. Thus the false prophesying or teaching in His name and the wrong "wonderful works" go hand in hand.

To attain such an end as the conversion of the whole world, Protestantism can see its hope is forlorn without power from without, even as the Papacy continues to use wherever possible the "secular arm;" and endeavours are being made by means of the ballot box, which belongs to the secular governments, to permeate the governmental institutions with the influence of nominal Christendom.

This unholy alliance, which is in absolute antagonism to the commands of Christ, is described in the Scriptures as spiritual "fornication," and is hated by God.—Revelation 17: 1, 2; 18: 2-5; 2: 6, 15.

Because the aim is not in accordance with the Divine purpose, and is opposed to God and to His Son, the effort to make the world a vast Christianized State will not succeed, and nominal Christendom will have to suffer the same fate as the earthly powers, which is destruction.—2 Peter 3: 7; Revelation 18: 9, 21.

This "wonderful" work of bringing in the Kingdom of God is one of the live teachings of the present time in Christendom, but it is not to be found in the Scriptures of truth, which declare that this is a time for choosing out from among the nations a little flock to be joint heirs with Christ, and at the completion of this His own work God will set up the kingdom by His own action, and not as the result of any efforts on the part of man.—Acts 15: 14-18; Daniel 2: 44.

Many of the adherents of nominal Christendom are very zealous in their work to make the church the governing power in the world, and some indeed are trusting in their efforts in this direction to ensure their own salvation. Hence their protest when at the end of this age they are cast off as unfaithful and workers of iniquity.

The Abomination of Desolation

The setting up of the Papal power and exaltation of the bishop of Rome as universal bishop over the whole Christian church was a wonderful work in the eyes of millions, and still is at this very day. The Lord had prophesied through His apostle Paul that a system of iniquity would arise during the Gospel Age, and by His own mouth He spoke to His disciples of the "abomination of desolation" which would stand where it ought not. By granting this information, He intimated that this thing was to be seen and understood by His people when it would arise; but, with the exception of a few who suffered greatly—even to death—for their faith, the majority of the people were quite ready to bow down and worship a man-made hierarchy with its fallible head claiming to be the vice-gerent of Christ on earth and demanding that all men carry out its directions as though it were the Lord Himself.

Another of the "Wonderful Works"

With the setting up in power of the Papacy came the compulsory recognition of the awful abomination of "the mass" as an institution necessary to salvation, whereby a biscuit or wafer made of perishable produce by sinful human hands is alleged to become the veritable body of the Lord Jesus Christ as soon as the words of "transubstantiation" are spoken by the officiating priest. In the so-called "sacrifice of the mass," the Lord, who it is claimed is present in the wafer, is said to be offered again on the altar as an "unbloody" sacrifice for the sins of the people, and as many times again and again as the priest or priests desire. Thereby is the simple ceremony of the Memorial Supper, which the Lord commanded His people to observe once annually, converted into a make-believe magical performance, to be foisted on credulous millions as a doctrine to be believed in and to be observed in order to eternal salvation under penalty of everlasting torment according to the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

All this was done, and still is done in Roman Catholic and some other churches all over the world, in entire antagonism to the Scriptures, and in disbelief of that which is written, namely, that Jesus gave Himself ONCE FOR ALL as a sacrifice for sins, and nothing can be added to or taken away from that fact.—Hebrews 10: 10-12.

This pernicious doctrine of the "mass" is believed in and observed at the present time by something like 400,000,000 people, it is said. But numbers do not make it either true or proper. The Lord calls it a work of iniquity.

Another Wonder; Fire From Heaven

Still another wonderful work which has engrossed the attention of many is that of making fire come down from heaven. The false prophets and teachers of the Papacy incorporated in their teachings penalties for disobedience, stating that wilful disobedience to the doctrines of the church would bring damnation and endless torment after decease. In Revelation 13: 11-14, after speaking about the beastly Papal system, John was caused to write—

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth: and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

This shows that after the Papacy received the wound at the time of the Reformation an image of it was erected, as already said, by Protestants adopting the Church-State or State-Church form of government. While free-

ing itself from some of the errors of the Papacy, Protestantism continued to hold and teach many of its anti-scriptural doctrines, and then by force compelled those who essayed to obtain salvation to believe in them under penalty of Divine wrath in everlasting torment; "fire from heaven." Not that the bringing down of this fire from heaven was literally performed during any part of the age; but these false, misinformed and iniquitous teachers claimed to have the favour of God, and convinced their adherents that disobedience to the commands of the church would culminate in the receipt of Divine wrath in everlasting flames.

This was a very wonderful work, in which thousands are today still engaged with activity, endeavouring to save souls as they say, but nothing is to be found in the words of their professed Master and Lord in regard to such a method of preaching.

Turned From the Truth to Fables

Others have found new bases of salvation, entirely discarding the fundamental truth that Christ died for their sins. Do not the Scriptures speak of this? In 2 Peter 2: 1 we read—

> But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.
>
> And in 2 Timothy 4: 3, 4—For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears;
>
> And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

During the whole of the Gospel age there have been those who denied the Lord, and their numbers have increased to the present time. Many today believe Jesus was a good man, and they think He did the best He knew, etc., but they will not have the teaching that it was necessary for Him to die for their sins. They therefore simultaneously invent a new basis of salvation and preach goodness of life and purpose as being the only essentials. Nevertheless, their basis is false; God will not recognize it, and to them Jesus is the great barrier to the way of approach to God, for the Lord himself said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."—John 14: 6.

The true basis or foundation is the Lord Jesus, and life is offered only to believers in Him, as the following scripture shows—

> And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
>
> He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—1 John 5: 11, 12.

Many other alleged wonderful works could be cited, which reject in whole or in part the Lord Jesus Christ as the King and Lord, and the one Mediator between God and men. Yet individuals taking part in these movements congratulate themselves as being among the saved, although they have not begun to realize the real work of this age at all, not knowing the Scriptures, but have more or less pinned their faith to the social order and the institutions which have grown in it, ecclesiastical and otherwise; and to the social order they will have to look for a reward, if any.

Some have even claimed to have earned a special salvation and saintship by works of merit. The adherents of the Papacy believe this in regard to their works of supererogation, whereby it is claimed that as a result of the number of their pious deeds and actions they have performed works which are really superfluous for their salvation, and which can be applied through the miraculous powers of the Holy Roman Church for the benefit and salvation of others less fortunate.

The Scriptures, however, prove that justification and salvation cannot be obtained by works. The law covenant experimentally proved that there is no such possibility. No one surely would need a more convincing demonstration of the futility of a human being's effort to gain justification by his own works. (Galatians 3: 11, 12.) In addition, the New Testament teaches that justification and salvation are possible only through faith in Jesus; and as a result of that faith works will follow, but works alone are no means of salvation.—Romans 5: 1.

To all those who will follow the will of anyone rather than that of Jesus Christ, their professed Lord and Master, He will say in that day, "I never knew you, . . . ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7: 23.) Notwithstanding all their alleged wonderful works, He entirely ignored them. How He hates hypocrisy, deceit, and disobedience!

His Friends: Keeping His Sayings

Jesus said He would build His church on the rock foundation that He was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and He will be the decider as to final admission into His kingdom. He will build His church. (Matthew 16: 16-18.) It is not to be a matter of our personal decision as to what it is necessary to believe, and what works we shall do to gain admittance; it is a matter of professing faith in that foundation truth, and, having come to that point, then to do the will of the Lord Jesus Christ in all things, looking unto Him to the end of our earthly course as the perfecter of our faith.—Hebrews 12: 1, 2.

The Lord said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words:" and again, "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." (John 14: 23, 24.) Also, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."—John 15: 14.

Let us trust in God that we may not be moved away from the truth wherein we stand, that in all humility we may still realize our smallness and personal unworthiness, and rejoice in the free favour of God in His consideration of us, praying that He will give us grace to continue to understand things relating to our salvation, that we may be brought with joy into His glorious Kingdom, which is soon to be set up in power in the whole earth.

—H. H. F.

A HOUSE FOUNDED UPON A ROCK

—Matthew 7: 24-29—

THE LORD MAKES CLEAR the way we may gain an entrance into heaven. It is by doing "the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7: 21.) What the will of the Father is, is made known to us in verse 24 as being contained in "these sayings of mine"—

> 24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

But many other texts tell us plainly that these words spoken by the Lord Jesus were not His own—that is, not His own invention or composition, but that He spoke whatsoever the Father gave Him to speak. (John 12: 49.) He was therefore the Father's mouthpiece, and we should recognize the importance of the words of this wonderful sermon as well as the necessity of being doers of the word and not hearers only. (James 1: 22.) And we may be thankful that the Sermon on the Mount is so fully given in the New Testament that we can be in no doubt as to what the Lord expects of those who profess to be His people.

The Rock Immovable

In the illustration, which begins at verse 24, the doers of "these sayings of mine" are likened to a man who built his house upon a rock—

> 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Everyone knows that a rock is the best possible foundation for a house. Storm waters may rage around it and the winds may blow, but it does not shift nor disintegrate, and a house built upon it will not be thrown down through the loosening of its foundation.

The Lord is here using the Rock to represent "these sayings of mine," and of course the will of God of which

His sayings are the expression. The illustration is intended to teach that God's will is immovable, indestructible. This is absolutely necessary to the maintenance of order in the universe and to His own supremacy. Only by building upon it can our "house" endure.

How to Build upon The Rock

What then is the "house" which a man may build upon this impregnable, immovable Rock? Whatever it is, it is accomplished by doing "these sayings of mine."

By hearing and doing to the extent of ability the precepts of Jesus there can be but one outcome in the life; viz., the development of a character like that of the great Teacher.

The house then may represent a Godlike character which it is within the power of men by the grace of God to build with the certainty that it will stand against all the tests human and Divine that can be applied to it.

Peter and the Rock

A rock has also been used in another connection as a foundation.

When Peter made the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Lord called that confession a rock and the foundation upon which He would build His church. He is now choosing the members who are to compose His church. They consist of those who hear and do "these sayings of mine;" who are developing the right character for its membership. Each having begun by acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ, such acknowledgment must be adhered to throughout the Christian life. There must be patient and continued building up on the rock-confession.

The Shifting Sand

If we find this much then in the house built upon a rock, what may we understand by the illustration of a house built upon sand? The contrast between the two foundations is about as complete as it can be—

> 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:
> 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Sand consists of non-cohesive grains in decided contrast to the solid rock. The one is immovable: the other easily shifted and carried away by wind or waters.

If the solid rock represents the will of God and His purposes, we may understand the sand to represent the will of men as contained in their savings or teachings, their theories and ideas on matters religious.

Of these there was an abundance in our Saviour's day, and there still is. And even though our Lord brought the true words of God which were as a solid rock upon which the peoples of the nations and kingdoms might build, the great mass of those who hear the Lord's sayings prefer the sand. They hear but fail to do "these sayings of mine," and go on with their own.

Great the Fall

An insecure foundation for a building presages its fall. And these, the many, taking their own theories instead of the words of God, have a foundation so insecure that it must give way under stress and all that is constructed upon it be destroyed.

The Rock was presented to men to build upon: the words of God were sent to be believed and lived, that there may be characters formed which would have His approval and blessing.

Men do not become sanctified by, nor develop Godlike characters upon, their own theories. Hence these theories must be swept away; and the universal proclamation of the Truth will do it. In another figure, "the hail [sometimes very effective in destructiveness] shall sweep away the refuge of lies."—Isaiah 11: 9; 28: 17.

When the sand is washed away and the house upon it has fallen, the Rock with its house alone will stand.

A House Built for a Purpose

The house on the Rock will not fall; neither will it be idle. It has a purpose.

The hearers and doers of "these sayings of mine" during this age are to be greatly rewarded. And the reward is in heaven, where the Great Rewarder lives.—Matthew 5: 12.

The present time is not the time for rewards. It is a time of preparation, of instruction and training; a time of refining. To this end persecution and hardship are sometimes allowed that the qualities of patience in suffering and sympathy with other sufferers may be developed in us.—Malachi 3: 2, 3; Romans 5: 3-5.

If we ask what is the need for these developments in patience and sympathy if our reward is in heaven, the answer is that we may be qualified for one important feature of our reward, which is the reigning with Christ for the thousand years during which He will complete His great work of blessing all mankind. The need for perfect sympathy and patience in such a position is obvious. For with such qualities (and others besides) here developed, but then made perfect, we shall be able rightly to deal with the millions of the human race yet to be blessed.—Revelation 20: 4.

The Lord Jesus in His perfect manhood healed and patiently dealt with the multitudes: which was but a small scale manifestation of what is to be done upon the earth on a grand scale in the Kingdom Age.

Those of us who are willing to submit to the preparation and the refinings required will find it an abundant reward to be given a part in the great work of assisting and blessing others; assisting them to a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation offered through Him, and to develop a godly character, the same as that in which we have been trained, and so to gain the Father's approval and blessing, and everlasting life. And all this apart from any other consideration.

And what are some of the other considerations?

Glory, Honor, and Incorruptibility

As we have heard today, the Lord opened the Sermon on the Mount with the pronouncement that the pure in heart shall see God. (Matthew 5: 8.) That most wonderful privilege and prospect is more than worth every sacrifice we may be called upon to make and every endeavour to keep "these sayings of mine."

John informs us that the sons of God shall be made like Him. Paul says we shall be changed from natural to spiritual; from corruptible to incorruptible. (1 John 3: 2; 1 Corinthians 15: 42, 44.) Of what a spirit being is like we know little, nor have we had any experience of incorruptibility so far as our present bodily existence is concerned, since death still works in the human race. But we have some knowledge of incorruptibility as it pertains to God and His dear Son, particularly in regard to their characters of unimpeachable and incorruptible honor and trustworthiness, goodness and holiness. The things of the Spirit God has revealed to us by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 2: 9-12), and the apostle exhorts, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.—Romans 12: 2.

The changed life and character are wrought in us now by the influence of the truth and the Spirit of God. The prospect of the incorruptible life in its fulness in the heavens is transcendent. (1 Peter 1: 4.) It seems therefore almost superfluous to say that the doers of the words of God are the "wise" ones of this order of things; but the Great Teacher has said it, and so may we again and again.

In view of all the rich promises of His grace of which we have heard so much today, let us take heed to the words of authority from the lips of the Great Teacher

and continue to build our house of character on the rock, the words of God, "these sayings of mine." Human ideas and theories shall fall and go the way of the house built upon the sand. But the Word of God abides forever; and so shall they who put their trust in His words.—1 Peter 1: 23.

Astonished at His Doctrine

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:
29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

The people perceived a difference between the Lord and the scribes, who with the priests, Pharisees, and Sadducees were prominent as teachers among the Jews, and were employed by these others to transcribe the writings. The scribes it would seem had gained a reputation for uncertainty, perhaps a willingness to cater to all shades of thought. We can see in the accounts in the gospels how the scribes were often associated with the Pharisees and priests and others in their endeavours to trap the Lord with their questions. In being friends with all, the scribes necessarily modified their teaching more or less to please and ingratiate themselves with all.

The Lord was different: as the people could see. The Lord spoke out without fear or favor. Necessarily so, for He spoke the words of God, and God's words are an expression of His unchangeable will, the solid rock upon which the hearers should build rather than interest themselves in houses built on sand.

To the multitudes came the responsibility of choosing whether to believe and follow Jesus or to continue to look to the scribes and Pharisees for instruction. They could see the difference; how would thy act, how would they build?

The question now comes to us. Of what use is all this instruction in the Sermon on the Mount to us? to you? to me? Is it going to be heard, thought of as wonderful for the time, and then dismissed from the mind? And we answer, No; we shall endeavour by the grace of God to DO these things, and so gain the Divine approval and the incorruptible inheritance set before us in the Gospel.

—F. S.

Encouraging Words from Far and Near

Most of our correspondents have been suffering from the slack times and inclemency of the seasons, but through all their letters there sounds a note of joy and confidence in the Lord. A reader of many years standing writes from the West—

"Please find enclosed a cheque for two pounds. Will you please deduct what may be owing on N.C.A. subscription. I greatly appreciate the N.C.A., and have tried to get others to read them, but they tell me they have no time. However, there is one who takes an interest, so I give him my spare copy, telling him to pass it on. Use the money that remains just as the Lord directs. The work is the Lord's; let us partake of the great privilege He has given us of being workers together with Him and with one another. We are all feeling the effects of the depression, but with God nothing shall be impossible."

[That is true. The Lord has never yet deserted His people labouring to tell out the glad message, and He never will. It is for us to go forward, doing what our hand finds to do, in both active service and financial co-operation.]

Vicissitudes

Dear Brother Henninges: Your annual report is out again and like many balance sheets these times does not show a credit balance. That is not hard to understand if all subscribers have restricted their donations as I have. Money (credit) is still hard to get, the past season has been a hard one again.

Firstly, scarcity of rain, till it looked as if few would get much grain for sale at all. After they had cut hay sufficient to keep their stock alive through the year, and sheep were sold off at a price that showed no profit, then abundance of rain, more than the most sanguine could hope for. Bringing a period of abundance of feed for the stock that were retained, making a most marvellous recovery in the crops; the very abundance of moisture causing the disease, rust, to attack the wheat plant so severely that the ultimate yield was restricted by almost fifty per cent. Then the grasshoppers to cover the land and quickly turn what was good feed for stock into unpalatable food which the animals did not like. And finally the wind storm which swept a great quantity of the grass right away after the locusts had severed its connection with the ground and thrashed out the grain from oat crop that was not harvested, and much of it from the wheat crop. This was not all waste as the sheep have been able to lift the grain off the ground and have been sent to market fat.

Through all this we still have as much as we can eat, a fair measure of health and strength, and a little money to get the necessities of life.

I enclose P.N. for twenty shillings to pay my subscription to the N.C.A. I would like you to send a copy of April '34. I was greatly interested in the article "Gog and Magog" in that number, and went through it many times.

With Christian love, I remain, Yours faithfully,

———, *Victoria.*

[Although we have begun the year with a large deficit, we are confident that the Lord will provide what is still required to "catch up," and not only so but to extend still more widely the message of truth for our time.]

Done for the Master

Please find enclosed P.N. for 10/-. I think my N.C.A. ended last September, so please take out the

three months to Dec. '34 and a year's sub. to Dec. '35, and use the rest to go to whichever Fund you think best. [Placed in Cheerful Givers' Fund, with thanks.] I would have liked to be able to send more, but owing to illness and other circumstances, it is with a thankful heart I am able to do anything for the Master. The N.C.A's are a great help and comfort to us as the years are closing in. With good wishes for the New Year in your labour of love, and praying God's greatest blessing may rest upon you and your good wife and upon all those that are labouring for the same cause of Christ, I remain, Your sister by His grace,

———. *Queensland.*

As the Loaves and Fishes were Increased

I notice a special offer to readers in the book "Parables"—the N.C.A. for one year and a complete list of books. I have longed to have the lot of these books; and, although I have several copies, I would like you to send them, as the books I have are continually on loan, and I'm sure thousands of people would be glad to read them.

The small amount over will help the cause a little [1/3 placed in C.G. Fund]. As we know what our Lord did with the loaves and fishes, He can do the same with a few pence. I hope to write again later, for I know that although there are great tribulations yet help is very near, if we bear patiently. Yours sincerely, ———. *Victoria.* P.S.—Please send me the book "Armageddon."

From the Islands of the Sea

Dear Brethren: Greetings in the name of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. I am truly thankful to you all for the benefits I have received since reading your paper and trust it may continue to distribute the good news.

I am sending you money order for $2.50, renewal of N.C.A. subscription for two years. Hoping to hear from you soon of the receipt of this amount. Yours in the Lord, ——— *West Indies.*

[It is good to receive letters from the far-off Islands, testifying that God has His earnest followers there who confess the name of His dear Son Jesus Christ. To know Him is eternal life; to serve Him is to have the greatest honour possible in this world. May His blessing rest upon those who are bearing witness to the truth that they may have in addition the joys of fellowship of kindred minds.—1 *John* 1: 3, 4.]

Out of the Tangle

Dear Bro. Henninges: About three years ago, while having some correspondence on the Covenants of the Bible, the truth on the subject got into clearer focus in my mind. Thoughts and questions which had arisen years before were revived, and by the aid of the Divine Word and Spirit the subject got much clearer in my mind. I differed from my correspondent on the subject, and that is why I felt compelled to write him, pointing out how unscriptural were his conclusions in the matter.

I was an elder in quite a large Associated Bible Students' class in Glasgow at the time, so as my turn came round to give an address I did not miss the chance of telling the best news I had, the "good news," that the New Covenant, long foretold, was now in operation, and that those who had "fled to Jesus" for salvation, through faith in His blood, were even now partaking of the blessed provisions of that New Covenant. As you might expect, this testimony aroused opposition, for this class prided itself on being the best exponents of Pastor Russell's views in the city.

To let you understand, there are four different brands of Pastor Russell Students in Glasgow. The first break-away from the I.B.S.A. occurred in 1922. The class, which was a large one, divided. Two sections "came out" at the same time and shortly afterwards amalgamated, and the consequent strengths for and against the Society were about equal. I was living near Glasgow at the time, in Ayrshire, and the class which I attended there had parted company with the Society six months previous to the Glasgow disruption, and on much the same grounds. I came to live in Glasgow the following year, and attended the dissenting class.

Things went on normally for about six or seven years till at last another disruption took place among the dissenters. A faction arose who were hot on the Anglo-Israel doctrines. There was much useless contention on these points in our midst for about a year and a half, and at last when the Anglo-Israelites got militant and wished to inculcate "A-I" into our Christian faith, a number, perhaps about a quarter of the total, withdrew and formed another meeting. I was again among the dissenters.

We again carried on under the name "Associated Bible Students," acknowledging no "headquarters" or "dictators," although accepting the passing services of the "Pastoral Bible Institute" and its English branch or agency, the "Bible Students' Committee." We were all thoroughly in the position where we imagined we knew all about the Bible and its message. We imagined that the Bible interpretations of Pastor Russell were unassailable, and that because we were "faithful" to them we were indeed "the very elect" (to use a much misunderstood phrase).

Naturally enough when I came forward at that supposedly late hour and pointed out the fact that the Bible plainly taught that we, believing Christians, were being blessed at the present time by the New Covenant, it caused quite a furore. The veterans in our midst declared that they had "decided this matter 25 years ago," and so with about only two exceptions the doctrine was denounced, as also its exponent. As I continued to give more and more proofs that this doctrine was thoroughly scriptural, my prestige (poor little prestige!) fell, and soon I was no longer an office-bearer—only "a voice" crying in the wilderness.

But more was to follow. Up to this point, while I had got clear on the Covenants and the Mediator, I still fondly believed that the Church was a part of the Sin-offering. A Sister in our midst said she had a book "with views like yours on the Covenants," which she had received from her sister in the South of England, and would I like to read it? Of course I wanted to read it. This book was your "Comparisons and Contrasts." I greatly enjoyed that book, although I did not then see the same on the Sin-offering. I liked its sound and sober interpretations of Scripture, and it gave me many corroborations regarding the New Covenant. It also aroused my interest anew on the subject of the Sin-offering. I determined to have the matter out, and so I prepared my "strong reasons" to prove that the Church **was** a part of the Sin-offering (how fondly deluded we can be!). Gradually, however, my strongholds fell one by one, my "strong reasons" failed. A square look at Romans 6: 3 with an examination of the context was my first eye-opener. Romans 6: 3 was one of my "strongholds," my "strong reasons," that we were "baptized into his death"—but **we** added "Christ's sacrificial death," and then we **put into that** that thereby we were parts of the great sacrifice for sin. Surely our wits were wool-gathering when we were so careless in our study and loose in our reasoning! The next eye-opener was Hebrews 7: 27—"this HE did once." We were very proud of our proofs of the bullock and the Lord's goat being types of the Lord and the Church respectively, but when I saw that our blessed Lord's sacrifice on Calvary was the complete fulfilment of both these types, "once for all," another "stronghold" went, another "strong reason" failed. Then 1 John 2: 2 came along, and an honest interpretation of that only corroborated the other Scriptures. Once the light got in it rapidly increased as I continued to search my Bible with **open eyes.** The "eye salve" which the Lord provides enabled me to see the truth that our Lord's sacrifice for sins is complete and perfect in itself, and that the "good news" concerning it is indeed "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—Romans 1: 16.

My Bible study is now alive with new interest and life, as also is my whole Christian experience. My love and worship to God and His Son Jesus Christ have greatly increased through an increasing knowledge of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Since proclaiming the truth as I know it, and by experiencing the foretold "sufferings" thereby, I feel a closer union with our Lord in his experiences, and also with the members of the Church, which is His body. So, brother, may the Lord richly bless you, and may I also include your dear wife and faithful fellow-labourer.

I came into contact with what we were pleased to call "present truth" in the year 1909, while studying in Glasgow (my native town) to be a medical missionary in the service of the United Free Church of Scotland. The "truth" terminated these studies, as also my connection with that Church in the same year. When I first came among the "truth" brethren in 1909 I remember there was a controversy raging re the Covenants and the Sin-offering. Being young in the truth, most of the talk was above my head. I was more interested in the new light on immortality, eternal torment, etc., to give much thought to the more advanced subjects. The dissenters from Pastor Russell and the Society were "everywhere spoken against," and I was well warned by my new teachers that such had "gone out of the truth." I innocently enough thought that these new teachers (I.B.S.A. elders, etc.), who knew so much (as I thought), must be right, and that the New Covenanters were reprobates.

The dissenters from the Society in Glasgow did not seem to form into a class—they were only a handful anyway—and they seemed to scatter, and their witness seemed to be silenced. The brethren (in Glasgow, at least) got themselves to believe that this matter was "settled," and any mention of the "heresy" that Christians were under the New Covenant was met with a dark look and a shrug of the shoulder. I well remember your name and Brother McPhail's name being mentioned as ringleaders of the reprobates. We were all taught to think of you brethren in the same way as when children we were taught to shun and fear "the bogey man." And so this state of affairs has continued in Glasgow for full 25 years! During my 25 years of experience of Bible Students in Glasgow and district I have found that all with whom I have come into contact, with few exceptions, have thought it "the proper thing" to accept the interpretations of the "Watch Tower," and to believe that its Editor was a "channel" who could make no mistakes, "that servant" who was ruler over all the Lord's goods (truths). To be quite candid, I never committed myself to any of these conclusions, and many a time I noted "that servant" making some queer mistakes in Bible interpretations for such a supposedly infallible "channel."

When I come to think over the strange happenings of the past two or three years, and especially of the past two or three months (for only since August of **this** year (1934) did I get quite clear of all the 25 years' wrong teaching on sin-atonement!), I cannot help marvelling. It shows quite conclusively that we can be fast asleep on some things which to those who are awake are very, very evident and apparent. It also shows what a powerfully soporific effect false doctrine has! I am sure the Lord wishes us to be well instructed by these sad experiences, that we may not **repeat** them ever again, in any form. We ought to be thoroughly chastened by them, and purified from all idol-worship, and hero-worship. God grant that we have all learned these lessons!

And *now*, may we "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—*Colossians 1: 10-14.*

May the Lord bless you richly, dear brother, as you seek to minister to the Lord's saints, and keep you ever in the narrow way of humility and obedience to the Divine will as it is revealed in the Divine Word.

I am glad to say that I too have a faithful fellow-helper in the way, my dear wife, who earnestly joins me in sending both you and Sister Henninges our *sincere Christian love and greetings.* Yours in the Master's service of love, ———, *Scotland.*

Taking a Stand for the Truth

Dear Bro. Henninges: Greetings in the Saviour's Name! I am writing to ask if you would send a copy of the book "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," for which I enclose P.N. I am hoping this Brother, who has recently come to see the truth in regard to the New Covenant, will become a subscriber to N.C.A.

We have started our new class, and pray that through God's blessing others may be brought to see how gross are the errors they have been upholding. May we have the sympathy for others, but withal the firmness to stand for the Truth.

Praying the Lord's blessing for yourself and Sister Henninges in your work of faith and labour of love, Yours in His service. ———, *Queensland.*

Dear Brother: Our little class has been split up. We have withdrawn ourselves; i.e., 6 are now meeting in a separate place. Several are still on holiday, but will be home this week-end, when we expect other two or maybe three will be added to our number. Not that we reckon on numbers. For we believe the Lord is with us. But we have taken a definite stand on the New Covenant under the guidance of our Lord, who is its Mediator, and of His apostles, who were its able ministers, and their teaching.—2 Corinthians 3: 3.

Nothing we could present from the Scriptures made any impression on the opposers of the truth. So we decided that the wisest course was to "come out" from among them. This has been a great testing time, and we trust that our stand on the principles of truth and righteousness will have our dear Lord's approval. And we do not forget your labour and teaching of these same principles and the stand you took in connection with them. So we trust that in due time we shall be exalted with all saints to—

". . . an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Your brother by His grace, ———, *Queensland.*

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ANOTHER year of the N.C.A. is now completed. As most subscriptions end with the close of the volume, this notice is given to all Readers so that they may promptly send us their orders and payments for the renewal for another year. The subscription price is 4/- per year including postage in Australia and New Zealand; 5/- ($1.25) elsewhere. Readers are requested to accept this general notice as though it had been privately addressed to each one personally. Promptness in responding will be greatly appreciated, and will be a great help to the work. Therefore, please let us hear from all at earliest opportunity. Those who have been receiving the N.C.A. free on special terms because of inability to pay are cordially welcome, as ever, to the paper on the same terms. But we must hear from such yearly, so we may know they still live and desire to continue reading.

TRIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS will be received as a co-operation in the work. Send us the price of a year's subscription with the names of four friends you desire to interest in the Good Tidings; the N.C.A. will be sent for three months to each address in the hope that they will wish to continue as readers. Trial Subscriptions sent now or very soon will include this issue.

All orders and remittances may be sent to Melbourne, Bristol, or Brooklyn.

The "Advocate" Sustaining Fund

Voluntary donations to this fund have been received as under, since our last report. As the "Advocate" is regularly published at a financial loss, it is obliged to depend upon the loving co-operation of its friends until it shall become self-sustaining. Let the good work continue!

10, 2/-; 11, 2/-; 12, £20; 13, £1; 14, 14/-; 15, 16/-; 16, 10/-; 17, 2/-; 18 (Odd coins in Little Box), 4/-; 19, £1:10:0; 20, £3; 21, 2/-; 22, £2:10:0; 23, £2:6:3; received at Bristol, 97, £1:5:0; 99, 10/-; 100, 10/-; 101, 8/-; 102, 10/-; 103, 5/-; 105, 5/-; 107, 5/-; 108, 5/-; 109, 2/6; 110, 5/-; total for month, £37:8:9 ($181.94); previously reported, £4:18:0 ($23.82); total for 2 months, £42:6:9, reducing the Deficit on N.C.A. account to £45, with nothing as yet to apply on the work for 1935.

The Cheerful Givers

Voluntary Donations, as under, have been received since our last report for the spread of the Good Tidings concerning the Grace of God in Jesus, our Mediator and Intercessor under the terms of the New Covenant.

2, 5/-; 3, 8/-; 4, 6/-; 5, £5:5:0; 6, 6/-; 7, 6/-; 8, 1/-; 9, 11/6; total for month, £7:8:6 ($36.08); previously reported, 18/6 ($4.50); total for 2 months, £8:7:0 ($40.58). The estimated expenses of the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1935 amount to £200 ($1000); though more than this sum can be beneficially utilized should it be available.

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BIBLE CONFERENCE—EASTERTIDE, 1935

CHRISTIAN AND UNDENOMINATIONAL

Foresters' Hall, Chapel St., bet. Toorak & Malvern Rds., Melbourne

Subject: "THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS"

CONFERENCE TEXTS

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name":—" . . . that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."—"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."—" . . . ye are called in one hope of your calling."—"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."—"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—"And I saw a great white throne."—Philippians 2: 8, 9; Hebrews 2: 14; Colossians 2: 14; Ephesians 4: 4, 8; 2 Peter 1: 11; Revelation 20: 11.

Good Friday, 19th April

A.M.

10.45—**PRAISE AND PRAYER**

11. 0—**The Son of God and the Cross**

Scriptures show that our Lord Jesus expected to die on the Cross—The Centre of God's great Plan of Redemption—Something more than mere Martyrdom—Jesus, the Son of God in a Way in which no one before or since was or will be.

Mrs. E. C. Henninges

(Paper to be read on her behalf by Mr. Henninges)

11.30—**Acclaimed in the Days of His Flesh**

When the Days of His Flesh Began—Experiences of Sorrow and Suffering—Triumphs and Victories—Miracles—Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem—Earthly Mission Successful—"I have Finished the Work Thou Gavest Me to Do."

Mr. P. C. Giles

12. 0—**Satan's Failures when Tempting Christ**

In the Wilderness—Satan's Lie—Satan Leaveth Him—Christ Casting Out Demons—Wicked Men Described Him as an Agent of Beelzebub.

Miss J. McKenzie

P.M.

2.45—**PRAISE AND PRAYER**

3. 0—**Binding of Angels that Sinned**

Christ's Firsthand Knowledge of Satan and Evil Angels Before He Came to Earth—Who were the Angels that Sinned in Noah's Day?—All had to Obey Him—Art Thou Come to Destroy Us Before the Time?

Mr. R. E. Chrimes

3.25—**Christ's Obedience Unto Death, Even the Cross**

Death Foretold in Psalm 2. Christ's Humility—Meditated not a Usurpation—Difference between Humility and Humiliation—Made a Curse.

Mr. A. M. Anderson

3.55—**The Triumph of Christ in His Resurrection**

Reward of Obedience—The Father's Triumph—Christ Highly Exalted—Firstborn from the Dead—Dieth No More—In the Likeness and Substance of the Father—"Days of His Flesh" Ended—Christ's Resurrection Necessary for Our Salvation.

Mr. E. L. Chrimes

4.20—**Blotting Out the Handwriting**

Peace by Jesus Christ instead of by Works of the Law—What was the "Handwriting of Ordinances?"—What Means "Blotting Out!"—How the Law was Against Them—Making a Shew of Principalities and Powers.

Mr. H. Shallcross

5. 0—**TEA SERVED IN HALL**

6.45—**PRAISE AND PRAYER**

7. 0—**Triumph over Sin the Taskmaster**

Jesus Christ Had No Sin in Himself—Sin and Death Behind the Law—Was there a Law in Eden!—Is God Restricted to Giving Only One Law!—A Triumph for Sin!—Conquest by the Cross.

Mr. E. C. Henninges

7.25—**Jesus Conquered Death through Death**

Made a "Little Lower than the Angels"—Corresponded to Adam—Ransom Price—Deliver Them who through Fear of Death Subject to Bondage—Death Abolished—A Merciful and Faithful High Priest.

Mr. A. Kennedy

7.55—**One Hope of Your Calling**

"One Body" does not Antedate the Cross—None can be in it except those since the Cross who Hear and Answer the Call—Manifold Wisdom of God—Called by the Gospel—High Calling—Only One Hope in Gospel Age.

Mr. C. Majewski

Easter Sunday, 21st April

P.M.

3. 0—**PRAISE AND PRAYER**

3.20—**Present Triumph as King of Kings and Head of the Church**

Splendor of Christ's Present Position—All Angels of God Worship Him—"Thy Throne, O God, is for Ever and Ever"—Priest after Order of Melchisedek—Mercy in New Covenant—Church a Triumph of Organization—Bride of Christ.

Mr. H. S. Winbush

3.50—**Christ's Final Triumph over Beast and False Prophet**

Identity of Beast, Image, and False Prophet—Protestant Reformation—Protestants now less Keen—World Unrest and the "Four Winds"—"Peace and Safety"—Christ's Complete Triumph by Casting Beast and False Prophet into "Lake of Fire."

Mr. E. V. Catford

4.25—**What God Expects of Us**

Self Denial—Looking for the Blessed Hope—Washing of Regeneration—What God Does not Desire in Us—Examples for Our Avoidance—Snared by Strong Delusions—Thyatira—Laodicea—Remember Lot's Wife—Loyalty and Gratitude Expected.

Mr. H. Fleming

5. 0—**TEA SERVED IN HALL**

6.45—**PRAISE AND PRAYER**

7. 0—**Triumph of the Great White Throne**

John's Vision—Who Sits in this Throne!—A Great Government—What It will Accomplish—All Nations Gathered before Him—The Dead, Small and Great—Judged Out of the Books—"The Rest of the Dead"—Justice and Mercy.

Dr. F. Shanasy

7.35—**The Enduring Triumph of the Cross**

Foretold from Beginning—Deliverer Promised—His Death Foretold in Prophecies and Types—Sacrifice on Cross Succeeded where Others Failed—Why!—Does Triumph of the Cross Mean Universal Everlasting Salvation!—The Final Test and Its Consequences—Not Only Triumph of the Son, but of the Father, to Whom Kingdom will be Delivered Up that He may be All in All.

Mr. E. C. Henninges

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The Stony Heart

"I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."—Ezekiel 36: 26.

ONE of the most noticeable features of the Bible is the way it uses symbols and figures of speech of a simple and familiar kind to teach great lessons. In a dozen words is expressed what in ordinary language would require hundreds. This fact is useful to the student; at the same time it lays the inquirer open to false teaching, for often quite erroneous inferences are drawn from the symbols and illustrations. The above words are a good example of this—saying much in little, and being widely misinterpreted.

When Spoken, and Concerning What Time

In seeking an interpretation of Scripture it is always necessary to note by whom written, under what circumstances, and at what time, in order to see if the passage has a local, well-defined application to the time in which it was written or shortly after. If it has, it is of course a mistake to ignore that application and invent one for hundreds or thousands of years later. The context of a prophecy in most cases shows whether the fulfilment is near or remote.

Jeremiah was a prophet who foretold the descent of the King of Babylon upon Jerusalem, and the carrying away of the children of Judah to Babylon. He predicted a servitude of seventy years, and that at the close of the seventy years the Lord would return them to their own land, raising up special deliverers for the purpose. Much of this was fulfilled during Jeremiah's lifetime. Compare Jeremiah 25: 11, 12; 34: 1, 2; 38: 17; 40: 1-6, etc.

Ezekiel, on the other hand, prophesied in Babylon during the captivity, urging the people to adopt the correct demeanour toward their conquerors. He told them to settle down peaceably, and to be ready at the expiration of the seventy years to return to their own land according to the promise.

Some Jews fled to Egypt and to other countries during the unsettled time in Palestine, and these also would have the opportunity to return, the heathen being punished in their turn.—Ezekiel 36: 1-24.

The reason for punishing the Israelites was stated by Jeremiah (and previously in Leviticus 26: 43); namely, they had not observed the sabbaths of the land. With neglect of the sabbaths, that is, the system of sabbaths, including weekly, monthly, and yearly rest days, as well as special sabbaths in connection with the day of atonement and other "feasts," and the sabbath years of rest for the land, went indifference to the worship of God and to the law in general. We may gather, then, that when Ezekiel says God will take away their "stony" heart, that stoniness has something to do with their attitude toward the Lord and the law He had given them.

What is a Stony Heart?

A stone is hard. It cannot be melted like wax. Neither can it be, like a vegetable, boiled soft. It can be pounded to bits, but each bit will partake of the hardness of the whole.

The heart is the organ circulating the blood, and is therefore vital. It is a soft muscle, and in touch with it are numerous nerves which make it extremely susceptible to emotion. The ancients spoke of the "liver" and of the "reins" or kidneys in the same way that we moderns speak of the heart, both these being very important in the physical economy, powerfully affected by the emotions, and also exercising influence over the whole bodily system. Speaking literally, a stony heart would be one that had become hardened and had ceased to function, with dire consequences to the person concerned.

But the prophets, when reproaching the Israelites for their stony hearts, were speaking figuratively. The Jews were a healthy race, particularly when they avoided the excesses of the heathen and observed the sanitary measures contained in their law. What concerned God was their figurative "hearts"—the seat of their emotions, their inner thoughts—which dictated their attitude towards Him and their degree of susceptibility to His instruction.

Wherever the stony heart is mentioned its manifestations are defined as filthiness and uncleanness, idolatry, disobedience, evil ways, doings that were not good, iniquities, abominations, profaning God's holy name among the heathen. (Ezekiel 11th and 36th chapters.) Jeremiah (32: 23) says—

And they came in, and possessed it [i.e. the "land flowing with milk and honey"—vs. 22]; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them:

A stony heart therefore is a selfish and disobedient disposition and habit of life. Our Lord used "heart" in this sense when he said—

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

These are the things which defile a man: . . .—Matthew 15: 18-20.

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. —Mark 7: 21-23.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied before the Jews. Our Lord spoke to Jews. Were Jews the only people with stony hearts?

No; there were, and there are, others with stony hearts.

Gentile Stony Hearts

All the Gentiles had, and still have, stony hearts. The Apostle (Romans 1: 18-32) describes the condition of the Gentiles, showing that they manifested the same evil disposition as was in the case of the Jew described as the "stony heart." Many of the sins specified are the same in both lists—

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:—Romans 1: 29-31.

Because, prior to the founding of the Church, the world was divided by the Scriptures into two parts, Jews and Gentiles, it is seen, by these scriptures, that every member of mankind is included as having a stony heart. If a Jew says the Apostle means the Gentiles, and a Gentile says he means the Jews, we have only to read Romans 2: 1-10 and 3: 9-19 to see that the description fits both Jews and Gentiles. **All** are "**guilty before God**."

These are the characteristics of the "natural" man; that is, of every member of the Adamic race since our first parents fell from perfection. But some one may say in horror, "Why, I never was like that! I never killed anyone, was never immoral, was never this, or that." But that is not the point. Each individual man may not have sinned in all the particulars in which it is possible to sin. The fact remains that each and every one has sinned in one or more of the manners described. For example, what child—not to say what man or what woman—can say he or she has never been disobedient to parents, or covetous, or proud, or boastful? Who can say that never since infancy has any idol come between God and himself—not necessarily a wooden or stone image, but money or some other object which for a time absorbed too much time and thought to the detriment of his spiritual character and life? No one can truthfully say this, because even Christians are described as having had these characteristics before they became Christians, and some Christians still retain them notwithstanding their profession of the name of Christ—

And you . . . were dead in trespasses and sins;

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, . . . the children of disobedience:

Among whom also **we all had our** conversation [conduct] in time past in the lusts of our flesh, **fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind**; and were **by nature** the children of wrath, even as others.—Ephesians 2: 1-3.

Other Scriptures to the same import are—1 Corinthians 6: 9-11; Colossians 1: 21; 1 Peter 4: 2, 3; and many others.

The Heart of Flesh

Through Ezekiel the Lord said to the Jews—"I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."—36: 26.

Flesh is soft, yielding, impressionable. Examine an ox heart that you may get at the butcher's, and see that, though the flesh is firm, it is not hard or stony. With the heart of flesh the Lord associates characteristics the opposite of those listed under the stony heart. He says—

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and . . . cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. . . . I will also save you from all your uncleannesses. . . . Then shall ye . . . lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.—Ezekiel 36: 27-31.

This change—from the stony heart to the heart of flesh—was to take place during the captivity, and also when they realised the goodness of God in mercifully opening the way for their liberation at the close of the 70 years. As a consequence of the lessons learned, many thousands of Jews humbled themselves before God and gratefully accepted the opportunity to return to their own land, where the worship of God was again established at the rebuilt temple. And it is worthy of note that the former idolatries were never repeated to the same extent. Nevertheless Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, declares that the people had again fallen away, for they robbed God in tithes and burnt offerings, and the priesthood was corrupt, so that the Lord said He would "come near to you in judgment."

The stony heart was still in evidence, and the need for the heart of flesh as great as ever. The return to their land, to the law, and to the temple worship witnessed only a temporary reform. Besides, this touched only a fragment of humanity. Where could the power be found **permanently** to change the stony hearts to hearts of flesh? The answer is found in Malachi 3: 1-3. The "messenger of the covenant" would be sent, who would "sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," to purge and purify the sons of Levi, "that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Giving the New Heart

When the Messenger of the Covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, came, He delivered a message exposing afresh the evil nature of the stony heart. But He did more. He told how the stony heart might be softened. Thank God for that, says every one who has realised the blessedness of being delivered from the stony heart and of receiving the new heart, soft *and humble, and teachable.* Cried Jesus—"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matthew 11: 29.) The soft, loving heart of Jesus is our best example of what the "heart of flesh" spoken of by the prophet means. His heart was humble, loyal to God, obedient, pure, unselfish. We read how His heart was continually "moved with compassion." He saw the people as it were sheep without a shepherd, exploited by the scribes *and Pharisees and doctors of the law.* Of His tender compassion the prophet spoke—He shall carry the lambs in his bosom, and gently lead the ewes. The bruised reed He would not break, nor quench the smoking flax.—Matthew 9: 36; 12: 14-21; Isaiah 40: 11; John 10.

Our Lord Jesus had never had a stony heart. Never was He disobedient or covetous, or any of the things belonging to the stony heart. As an example of the pure heart His life is inspiring to His followers. Yet His life alone would never change our hard, stony hearts into loving hearts of flesh. Concerning this, the Lord said through Ezekiel that He would be "*enquired of*" by His people. What is necessary is a **new** heart, a regeneration, a new birth. And this can take place only under the New Covenant. The law covenant having proven ineffective, the Lord arranged to take it away, and give a new one in its place. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." (Hebrews 10: 9.) Is it not significant that the Jews, who had the ten commandments of the law on tables of stone, had as a nation stony hearts? The law given them was *beyond their ability to keep.* It was something apart from themselves, engraven in stone by the finger of God, and preserved in the ark as a testimony against them.—Exodus 31: 18; 32: 15, 16, 19; 34: 1, 4; 40: 20, 21; Deuteronomy 31: 24-26.

When Jesus said, Come unto me, and take my yoke upon you, He uttered no empty phrases. His yoke was different from the yoke of the law. So we read—"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1: 17.) The Apostle Paul speaks of the law given at Sinai as "the ministration of death," and as being "done away" in Christ; "abolished," nailed to the cross.—2 Corinthians 3: 7, 13; Colossians 2: 14.

How then is the change made from the stony heart to the heart of flesh? The Scripture answers, On the terms of the New Covenant—by repentance, confession and repudiation of sins, and acceptance of Christ as the Saviour from sin. When this is done, God cleanses the heart by forgiving the past. But first the light must shine in—"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4: 6.) When the light shines, some may receive and some reject it. Those who reject it retain the stony heart, as stated in Romans 2: 4-6—

4 *Or despisest thou the riches* of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy HARDNESS AND IMPENITENT HEART *treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day* of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God:

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

On the other hand, those who open their hearts to the light, acknowledging the goodness of God and His mercy toward their hard and sinful condition, are led to repentance, as Romans 2: 4 states. Repentance means turning away from sin, as well as expressing regret for the same. Acceptance of Jesus as the Christ, the Anointed King and High Priest, through whose sacrifice the way is *opened to escape* from sin, brings the penitent into relation with God. He is then reconciled to God, and accepted as a son, having been begotten by the word of truth. (Luke 24: 47; Ephesians 2: 13-17; 1 John 5: 1; James 1: 18; 1 Peter 1: 23; Romans 8: 15.) Such an one is called "a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5: 17.) Thus—by this process—God takes away the "stony heart," and gives the "heart of flesh."

Writing on Mind and Heart

This change to a new heart means a new bent to the mind, a new course of life, with the forgiveness —or "remission"—of "sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3: 25; Hebrews 8: 12; 10: 12), and now makes possible the fulfil*ment to the penitent of that precious promise of the* New Covenant—"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." (Hebrews 8: 10.) The Holy Spirit is the antitypical "ink" used to do the writing. The Lord's children may help each other by serving as pens, as did the Apostle Paul—

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but IN FLESHY TABLES OF THE HEART.—2 Corinthians 3: 3; compare Jeremiah 31: 33.

Clearly this shows the New Covenant in operation since apostolic days, and makes plain the privilege of every messenger of the gospel. Not only are we, who are already reconciled believers, privileged to preach the gospel as the message whereby the light may enter the stony hearts. We are also, when, in any case, the stony heart has been taken away and the new fleshy heart [note: not flesh-**ly**, according to the natural inclinations, but flesh-**y**, that is, soft] substituted, privileged to inscribe on this susceptible surface the holy will of God. How do we do it? In the same manner as Paul did: by repeated admonitions and reminders of what the will of the Lord is, and contrasting it with the reverse, so that His children may discern the difference between good and evil and pursue the good.—2 Peter 1: 12, 13; Romans 15: 14.

The "new creature" is at first a "babe," unlearned and inexperienced. Much if not all his pre-

vious experience was on wrong lines. Though his body and the old mind are now reckoned dead to sin (Romans 6: 11), they have an uncomfortable way of coming to life and asserting themselves to the detriment of the "new creature," and often bring disgrace on the Lord's cause. The effort of all must be to keep the body under, and not allow the old mind and disposition to intrude on the new. (1 Corinthians 9: 25-27.) The convert must unlearn many of his old ideas and moral concepts while learning the principles of the new life; hence may sometimes exhibit inconsistencies in word or act. Perseverance is necessary in putting on and putting off, as exhorted to do by the apostle. (Colossians 3: 5-17.) In order to do this successfully we must always keep before our minds the perfect pattern set us by our Lord Jesus—

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [or mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—2 Corinthians 3: 18.

Can the Soft, Fleshy Heart become Stony Again?

This is a question of great moment because, if it can, then each one of us is facing danger. We are face to face with the necessity of keeping our hearts soft, and thus susceptible to the Holy Spirit's influence. A few scriptures answer the question.

Addressing Christian believers, the Apostle says—"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED through the deceitfulness of sin. . . . harden not your hearts, as in the provocation . . . in the wilderness." (Hebrews 3: 13-17.) Here it is shown that the brethren can again harden their hearts, and that *the hardening comes "through the deceitfulness of* sin." Further he says, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in DEPARTING FROM the living God." (Hebrews 3: 12.) How plain this is! When we retain the soft heart and humble spirit we are near the living God, who writes His laws on our minds and hearts. When we suffer ourselves to be led astray by the deceitfulness of sin, developing a hard heart of unbelief, then we are departing from the living God, *consequently taking ourselves away from the writ*ing of the Holy Spirit. The harder the heart gets, the further from God and the less of His Spirit.

Again, notice how the Apostle warns us against those in the last days who "creep in" among the brethren—having a form of godliness, but denying the power. That is, they pretend to be Christians, but do not submit to the power of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. In other words, they have stony hearts. Either they were never converted from their original stony condition, or, after having been for a time softened, they have again become hard. We know their hearts are hard because they have much the same character as those described in Romans 1 and 3—

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; **having a form of godliness,** but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.—2 Timothy 3: 2-5.

Without the last words, one might take this to be a description of openly fierce and wicked people, the very sight of whom would raise terror and disgust in the minds of God's children. But the last words quoted show that, to the contrary, they are very nice respectable-appearing people, who make a profession of Christianity, and who mingle with the brethren. They are described in Acts 20: 28-31 as "grievous wolves," and by our Lord as wolves "in sheep's clothing." (Matthew 7: 15.) It is because of their sheep's clothing that they are able to make *merchandise of God's people. Their stock in trade* is "good words and fair speeches"; nevertheless, the Apostle graphically says, "such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly." (Romans 16: 18.) In other words, they make association with God's people a matter of earthly gain. (1 Timothy 6: 5, 9, 10.) "A good tree cannot bring forth evil *fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good* fruit. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."—Matthew 7: 16-20.

But how could association with God's people, most of whom are poor, be a means of worldly gain? There are various ways in which this has been done. Great institutions of learning have been founded *in the past by Christian men, who have held to the* cross of Christ, and have conducted daily prayers and Bible instruction for the youth in attendance. A high moral tone pervaded these schools and colleges, the effect of which was seen all through their after life. But how is it today? In many of these the professors now, while retaining the name Christian, repudiate the cross of Christ, deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, and foster an atmosphere of insincerity and deceit. Thousands of young men have gone to theological schools with the purpose, after training, of giving their lives to Christian work, and have come out infidels. The professors have their living while robbing the students of their faith.

Again, worldly gain may accrue in the manner described in Revelation 18. Here is pictured great Babylon, whose downfall is deplored by the "merchants" because they made gain by her. Some of the gain might refer to the honour and prestige which the vendors of false teachings have obtained. Other of the gain would be "hard cash" by the sale of luxurious fittings and ornamentation of various kinds for ecclesiastical structures. In the poorest and dirtiest villages in the world are to be seen fine churches with priceless stores of images, jewels, gold and silver vessels, etc. Fortunes are made out of candles supplied to the poor whose religion obliges them to purchase and burn them on innumerable occasions.

Then there are the individuals who find it helpful to worldly advancement to be attached to some Christian denomination. A graduate of a medical school was so advised, as the best means of obtaining a practice. But, in this particular case, the truth was considered of more value than the prac-

tice, and so a connection was obtained more slowly and laboriously, though with much blessing from the Lord.

The stony-hearted one bent on satisfying greed sometimes finds a congregation of the poor a good hunting ground, because the poor have no redress. If robbed of wages or otherwise imposed upon, they have no money with which to prosecute. The Lord spoke of the Pharisees as devouring widows' houses. Most widows are inexperienced in business matters, and the unscrupulous are quite willing to deprive them of any little means or furniture they possess.

The stony hearts bent on satisfying their own greed find association with Christians to their advantage for another reason. Many of the Lord's children are simple minded "sheep." They would not think of doing injury to another, and find it hard to believe that any one else would do so. A little skilful flattery puts them completely in the power of the stony-hearted one, and they do not "wake up" until money or goods are gone and the supposed "friend" turns away for a fresh victim to be flattered and inveigled into the net.

Our Lord places "thefts" among the issues of the stony heart. And as dishonesty is one of the most common evils of our time, it may not be amiss to dwell further on that phase of the subject. One who was dishonest before becoming a Christian might continue more or less so for some years, if his attention were not particularly drawn to the matter. We have seen Christians appropriate articles that did not belong to them without the slightest qualms of conscience. This did not make the theft any less a sin. What the Lord calls sin is sin, and it is not for any of us to say theft is justifiable when He places it with murder, false witness, etc., as an evil work. A professing Christian who can deprive a friend or neighbour, or even (as has happened) a member of his or her own family, of keepsakes and other accumulated treasures of a lifetime is stony-hearted indeed, notwithstanding the religion professed.

The thief is ruthless. He does not care who is hurt so long as he gets what he wants. Even if he knows that coming into a house that has been "rifled" will give the owner a shock that may throw him (oftener her) into a serious illness, that makes no difference to the stony-hearted intruder. Moreover, some trespassers needlessly destroy or damage what they do not take.

One person may steal thousands of pounds or dollars, another may take another's frying-pan or gardening tool. It is a difference of degree, but not of kind. The apostle John says, "All unrighteousness is sin." No Scripture says you may not take another person's house off the lot, but you may take his gate, or a lock off a door, or some other movable portion of the property. Yet some people —Christians, too—seem to think they may take anything **small**, as though the size made wrong right. Others think they may help themselves to anything they please so long as **no one is looking.** The only deterrent to their depredations is the fear of discovery, and if they are robbing a good-natured Christian they will have little expectation of exposure; for is it not said in Scripture that love hides a multitude of sins?

Another form of dishonesty fairly common is to borrow an article and not return it; or borrow a good article and return an inferior one in its place. The borrower may argue that if the lender wanted it he would ask for it, but some "borrowing" is done without the knowledge of the owner. As for borrowing one thing and deliberately returning another, that undoubtedly is theft. It is certainly a hard, stony heart that will so abuse a kindness as to keep the loaned article and return something else of a fraction of its value.

Israelites Borrowing from the Egyptians

Should anyone attempt to justify "borrowing" without returning by reference to Exodus 12: 35, we would call attention to the fact that "borrowed" is an unfortunate translation. The primary meaning of the English word "borrow" is, according to the Standard Dictionary, "To obtain on promise of return." If one goes to a bank to "borrow" £100, it is not only understood that the money is to be returned, but security is required, as well as interest for the term of the loan. Anyone who approaches a neighbour and asks if he may "borrow" the spade, by the very use of the word agrees to return the spade. In the case of the Israelites leaving Egypt there was no thought of "borrowing" in the minds of the Israelites, for they were leaving, and did not expect to return. Nor did the Egyptians give the gold, silver, and jewels with the thought of receiving them again; they well understood that the Israelites accepted these things as gifts.

Moreover, a few weeks later, at Sinai, the Lord gave the Hebrews a code of laws, one of the principal of which was "Thou shalt not steal." Neither were they to "deal falsely." "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." (Exodus 20: 15; Leviticus 19: 11.) Will anyone dare to suggest that one of God's first acts in connection with their departure from Egypt was to command them to "deal falsely," and "lie," and "steal"?

The Hebrew word rendered "borrow" in Exodus 12: 35 means "ask," and is so rendered by the Septuagint, the Revised Version, Leeser's Translation, and the Variorum (footnote). It was not a question of each Israelite deciding he wanted an Egyptian's wealth, and pretending to "borrow" it when his intention was to steal it. The action was a national one performed under the direction of Moses, who had received instruction from the Lord; and the Lord so arranged it that the Egyptians gladly gave to the Israelites, being anxious for them to depart before another plague came; for they said, "We be all dead men."—Exodus 12: 33; Psalm 105: 36-38.

The Lord's first words to Moses on the subject were (Exodus 3: 20-22)—

> 20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.
>
> 21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the

Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:

22 But every woman shall **ASK** of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

Here the favourable disposition on the part of the Egyptians is given as one of the miracles associated with the deliverance of the Israelites. By this means a necessary provision was made for the clothing of a people held for centuries in abject slavery in a hot country where but little raiment was required, and now being called out to the wilderness of Sinai and the mountains of Palestine. They were not to go out naked, but decently clothed.

Just before sending the tenth plague, whereby the firstborn of Egypt were destroyed on Passover night, the Lord repeated this promise, commanding Moses that this was the proper time for the people to approach the Egyptians and ask for these gifts. (Exodus 11: 1, 2.) From verse 3 it is clear that the Egyptian people were not unfriendly. Apparently they did not share Pharaoh's obstinate resistance to the Israelites' departure. It states—

And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

The command of Moses, therefore, was respected by the Egyptians as well as by the Israelites, so that they willingly gave what was desired to help them on their journey. Exodus 12: 35, 36 records the accomplishment of this gift giving—

And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they ASKED of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked.

The Authorised Version has "lent unto them such things as they required," but the Revised Version rendering above quoted is more in keeping with the original, and more consistent with the word "ask." Leeser renders the last clause—"so that they gave unto them what they required."

It is clear then that no one, least of all a Christian, is *justified in taking* these records of Exodus as sanctioning the borrowing of articles and then departing without restoring them to their owners. In all our intercourse with friends and neighbours, and in removing from one house to another, great care should be exercised. It is better in the first place never to borrow anything; but, if urgent circumstances seem to require it, the article—very same article—should be promptly returned. If some other article is returned in its place to deceive the owner, even if it closely resemble the borrowed one, the transaction is changed from borrowing to theft.

Other Stony Conditions

One might profitably analyse the other stony conditions characteristic of the unregenerate heart, with a view to recognising to what extent, if any, they still exist in ourselves, that we may the more readily purge them out, and more earnestly pray for the Lord's assistance in their removal. Covetousness, deceit, pride, and all manner of evil thoughts the Lord condemns (Mark 7: 21, 22), and therefore we also must condemn them. But space forbids an examination of each in detail. Sin is a chain, one sin leading to another, as theft to lying, covetousness to theft, anger to murder, pride to self-righteousness, etc.

Scripture takes people as they are by nature—with stony hearts, indulging in sin—and shows the arrangement of God to take all that away and give instead the new, fleshy heart upon which His will may be inscribed.

Let us then not trust to our own imperfect conceptions of right and wrong, but heed the Scripture exhortations, and submit our hearts to the influence of God's Holy Spirit. When the Scripture says, "Let him that stole STEAL NO MORE," that should be sufficient to call forth our best endeavours to be absolutely honest, straightforward, and above board. When it says, Purge out anger, malice, etc., put away lying, etc., these are commands to be studiously obeyed. Daily renewing of our minds is required. (Romans 12: 1, 2.) Thus, says the apostle, we shall "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." —Ephesians 4: 17-32.



Shall Never See Death

Question: I would like some enlightenment on these two verses, which appear contradictory. In Ecclesiastes 9: 10 the dead are said to know nothing—"there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest"—which seems to indicate that the dead are unconscious. In John 8: 51 we read our Lord's words—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death"—which seems to indicate that one will be forever conscious. I will eagerly look forward to the Editor's answer in the N.C.A.

The State of the Dead

The state of the dead is determined by many more passages of Scripture than the two quoted. The quotation from Ecclesiastes 9 is part of a considerable comment, beginning at the end of verse 3, where death is said to be the lot of all human beings, and the following (vss. 4 to 10) contrast the state of the living who can think and act with that of the dead unable to do either. As a statement of fact it is true of all Adam's descendants. Nowhere in Scripture is there a hint that the dead do know something. Sheol, hades, means the grave, the state or

condition of death. Compare Psalm 6: 5, where those who do know God while they are living on the earth and giving thanks to Him are said to be unable in death to remember God or give Him thanks. Many more occurrences of the words sheol, hades, hell, Gehenna, death, dead, etc., are examined in the books, "The Dead—Where are They?" and "Everlasting Punishment," which will be posted for 6d each postpaid to any address, or loaned free to *any applicant.*

Under the law the Jews were promised long life on condition of obedience. This was merely a prolongation of the present life, and then they died like the rest of humanity. Children were commanded to —"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This applied to Jews of all ages, for another commandment required respect for the aged. The fidelity of all to the "fathers" who had had faith was thus enjoined. If the parents departed from God, the obedience of the children would be expected to continue towards the Lord, *and would give honour to the ancients who received* the law at the hand of God.

The Lord's Promise of Life

When our Lord Jesus gave a promise of life there *was no suggestion of prolonging the present life,* although it is a fact that Christians who by reason of their faith live lives of uprightness are able to avoid at least some of the diseases which bring their victims to an early grave. The apostle John wrote to Gaius, "Beloved, I wish [marginal reading, "pray"] above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 2.) Good health is an asset in God's service. But the Lord's promises of life relate to the salvation which is promised to those who believe and follow Him.

Another thing to bear in mind in this connection is *that the Lord does not include every detail in* every utterance; therefore it sometimes happens that, in endeavouring to understand some one statement, additional information must be gathered from other statements.

In John's gospel, verse 51, chapter 8, must be placed beside verses 12, 21, 24, 34, 44, and compared with other statements in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Verse 12—"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Verse 21—Jesus tells the Pharisees who opposed Him that "ye shall die in your sins." Verse 23—"Ye are of this world; I am *not of this world.*" Verse 24—"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Verse 34—"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Verse 44—"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

When therefore the Lord said, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death," we must understand him to mean that death which He had predicted the self-willed and self-opinionated Pharisees would die—"ye shall die in your sins." They were not only self-willed and self-opinionated, but "liars" of the same kind as Satan himself; that is to say, wilful deniers of truth and light unmistakable, and perverters of the Word of God. Abraham and others living centuries before had looked forward with joy to the Delieverer and Blesser whom God had promised to send. But they, the Pharisees, despised that Great Blesser who stood in their midst. Therefore they made what might have been and were in the case of some sins of ignorance—these *sins they made wilful, and thereby incurred fresh* condemnation. To them in that state of mind and heart there was no promise of life.—John 8: 52-55.

On the other hand, those who believed, and accepted Jesus as the Son of God and the Deliverer from sin, would not see death in its aspect as a penalty for wilful rejection of light.

The same truth is taught in John 3: 14-16. Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and whosoever looked thereon in faith did not die of the plague sent on the transgressors. It was not a question of what might be called the everyday, ordinary death to which all of Adam's race were condemned. *It was a matter of avoiding a death sent as punish*ment for wilful sin.

Similarly in regard to those who look upon Jesus in faith and turn away from sin; "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish." The "perish" is something apart from that death on account of the sin in Eden which has been inherited by all of us. The "perish" referred to is a decree of God that wilful sinners—those who make sin and lies their own by wilful rejection of the truth when they hear it—such wilful sinners must perish as unfit to live. God's mercies are for those who detest sin (or who come to detest it when the gospel shows them what *a dreadful thing sin really is) and are grateful for* the provision made for forgiveness and life through His only begotten Son. In John 3: 17-21 is explained the method of distinction between those who love and those who hate the light when it shines upon them.

Passed from Death Unto Life

Here, then, we must compare what our Lord said, *as recorded in John 5: 24—*

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

That our Lord did not in this statement mean that at the moment of death the believer would receive the everlasting life is shown by what follows. He speaks of a time to come when the dead would *be called forth by the Son of man, thus allowing* for a longer or shorter time in the grave, before the appointed time would arrive. But in the meantime the believers receive a distinct classification, in that by reason of their faith they are taken out from among the unbelieving and unforgiven, and are promised that when they "come forth" it will be "unto the resurrection of life."—John 5: 24-29.

Life in His Son

This shows conclusively that a believer in Jesus by reason of his faith inherits a promise, and so it

may be said "hath everlasting life," a present and real possession, for God's promises are inviolate. Then, to learn just when the "life" will be actually received, other portions of Scripture must be considered.

For example, 1 John 5: 11, 12—"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." John wrote many years after our Lord's death and resurrection, and He knew that a resurrection was promised to His followers—a resurrection in the very image of our risen Lord. (1 John 3: 2.) Yet John speaks of none as having already been resurrected to that position of honour and glory. To the contrary, his language shows that the life had been entrusted to the Son, who would give it at the proper time.

At That Day

The life of all faithful believers who had died before John wrote was in God's Son; likewise the Son has had entrusted to Him the life everlasting to give to those faithful believers who have died since John's day.

It is clear then that God's purpose has been not to give the reward of life everlasting to each individual as his life in the flesh was laid down. Instead, God's plan is to reserve this favour until nearer the end of the Gospel age (the length of which was unrealized by many in the early days).

Other scriptures, we find, tell us just when the faithful shall receive that life. Paul wrote (2 Timothy 4: 8)—

> Henceforth there is LAID UP FOR ME a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me AT THAT DAY: and not to me only, but unto ALL THEM ALSO that love his appearing.

Paul also wrote Timothy of some who misrepresented the matter—"Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." To the Thessalonians Paul wrote of the rise of the mystery of iniquity, and showed that the resurrection would not take place until the time would come to deal with the "man of sin" who in the meantime would exalt himself and usurp authority in the worship of God. And 2 Thessalonians 2: 8 sets the time—"whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming [literally, presence]."

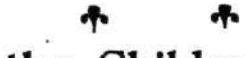
In 1 Thessalonians 4: 14 we read of those who "sleep in Jesus," which refers to the believers of this Gospel age, while toward the end of this age will be some (vs. 15) "which are alive and remain unto the coming [literally, presence] of the Lord." These should not prevent [i.e. precede] "them which are asleep."

All this shows that in the grave there is no continuity of the believer's conscious existence—agreeing perfectly with Ecclesiastes 9: 5-10, that "the dead know not any thing."

Those of the dead who sinned wilfully against light while on earth—sufficient light to bring responsibility (as the Lord said of the opposing Pharisees)—had no promise of life, rather the reverse. A future life was the promise to sincere and faithful believers. The Pharisees by their attitude brought themselves under fresh condemnation, and the Lord on another occasion said to them—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation [condemnation] of hell [i.e. of Gehenna, symbol of the second death]."—Matthew 23: 27-33.

Wilful sinners who are traitors after enlightenment during the Gospel age receive a like condemnation. They have no promise of a resurrection, having wilfully rejected the Son of God. (Hebrews 6: 4-8; 10: 26-31.) Those who were sufficiently enlightened to incur this condemnation to the Second Death, the Lord said should "perish." Some of such are referred to in Jude's epistle (vs. 13), and elsewhere in the Gospels and Epistles. Such will "see death," by which is meant that the death of the wilfully wicked will be their portion; they "die in their sins," and they shall "perish." But as the whole number of persons who have heard the gospel during the gospel age is comparatively small, we can realize that the number of reprobates consigned to the second death is comparatively small.

As for the great mass of the population of the earth, the majority have never so much as heard the name of Jesus; they have gone to the grave unenlightened; consequently their eternal destiny remains to be decided by the great Judge who will reign over the earth for a Thousand Years for the express purpose of enlightening the ignorant and oppressed of mankind. And though countless millions have been in the grave for hundreds and others for thousands of years, they have not "perished," inasmuch as the Lord bought and owns them and is prepared to call them forth and enlighten them. For more on this subject the reader is referred to "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," mentioned in Book List, wherein God's purpose concerning the as yet unenlightened dead is fully set forth.



For the Children

PAUL AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

During his travels Paul had seen many idols and idol worshippers; but in no place were idols so numerous as in Athens. Everywhere he looked he found temples, altars, and statues to the gods. But amongst all the hundreds there seem to have been, there was one altar which impressed Paul more than all the rest put together, and that was the one dedicated "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."

Preaching in the Market Place

While he waited for Silas and Timothy, Paul went to the Synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews on the Sabbath days. There was, of course, no need to tell the Jews of the folly of worshipping idols, but they did need to be told of the New Arrangement which God now invited them to enter, because Jesus had died and risen again, and become the Mediator (instead of Moses) between God and men.

During the week days he visited the market place, and there used all his knowledge and powers to instruct *all* who would *listen*. *Idlers*, *laborers*, business men and learned men, all sorts heard Paul preach in the market place.

It is not usual in these days for learned men to meet in market places to talk over and listen to the newest ideas in learning; but in Athens it was. And as all the Athenians were ever wanting to hear some new thing on any subject, and especially about religious things, most new things were brought to Athens. Here was quite a new thing then brought by Paul, and the learned men, along with the rest, were gathered around him to listen.

There seem to have been two lots of learned men present, but neither was able to understand or grasp very well what Paul was teaching. They thought that he was someone who had picked up little bits of knowledge here and there (something like a bird may pick up odd seeds) which he did not quite understand himself and was giving it out in a muddled-up kind of way. So as the muddle went on (in their own minds, for that is where the muddle really was), they turned to each other and had a little talk between themselves about Paul and the new teaching.

One lot of the learned men said to the other, "What will this babbler say?" or, as we might put it, "What is he trying to say?" And the others answered, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." One could not see any sense in what Paul was saying; the other had got an idea only—that he was introducing some new gods.

But, notwithstanding these first impressions, there seems to have been something about the speaker and his message that attracted them. Ordinarily these learned men might meet many speaking, listen for a moment, and pass on—as not being worth further *attention*. But *this one*, Paul, was *different*; they had not before heard such things as he was saying. Yes, they must hear more; and in a more suitable place where probably only such as themselves would be present. They therefore took him from the market and "brought him unto Areopagus."

Areopagus was a hill close to the market. On it there stood a temple to one of the gods named Mars, and so it was also called Mars' Hill. On this hill there also stood the court house of Athens, where the judges sat to pass sentence on criminals and to decide matters connected with religion. The judges sat in the open, for there was no roof to the court; but there was a platform within, which was reached by climbing up sixteen steps. Here the learned men took Paul, and asked him, "May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean."

What the Areopagus was, then, and what was on it, we now understand. We also know what a market is generally—a place where buyers and sellers of goods are found. While that was true of the one in Athens, we have also learned that there was more to the market in Athens than that, for it was the meeting place for all the talkers and listeners on every conceivable subject.

The Philosophers' Ideas of God and of Life

But now we want to say that the "learned men," of whom we have been speaking so much, were better known by the name of "philosophers." There were many sorts of philosophers in the world, but those who were listening to Paul in the market were the "Stoics" and the "Epicureans."

Here then are three words quite new to us; and, as it is very important to understand what they mean, we must say a little about them. Let us begin with "philosopher."

The word philosopher means "a lover of wisdom." But every lover of wisdom must first know what he is to be wise about; and that means again that he must go searching for knowledge. What every philosopher wishes to know (first of all) is how everything in creation began, and how it keeps going. That would be the knowledge he must search for. Then, when he has found that (to his own satisfaction), he thinks out how to use the knowledge he has gained while he lives. Shortly then the philosopher is one who seeks knowledge and tries to make what he thinks is the best use of it.

The Stoics

The Stoics were philosophers, and the name was given to those who believed in the teaching of a man named Zeno. They were called "Stoics" because Zeno taught them in a large porch, the name for which amongst the Greeks was "stoa." As they met in the "stoa" to imbibe the teachings of Zeno, they got the name of Stoics.

Zeno was a searcher and a thinker; but that does not mean that he knew everything nor indeed much of anything necessarily. Some of the simplest things now known by us were not known by him or by anyone then, and the true knowledge of God was entirely wanting. That being so, it is plain that whatever he might say about God could not be relied upon and might indeed be entirely wrong.

Let us see then what he believed himself, and taught others in the Porch.

Zeno lived and taught about 300 years before Paul arrived at Athens, and at that time of course no one knew anything about the Christian faith. Still Zeno might have learned something about God from the Jews, who were in Athens with their Synagogue; but he, like nearly all the rest of his nation, despised them and the God they worshipped. Being a philosopher, he thought out ideas of his own about the cause of everything, how it is kept going, and how to live in this life. He believed in a great God, but his idea was that God is not a living personal Being separate from and greater than the things He has made, but that all the universe itself is God. Zeno himself then, as a little part of the universe, was also a little part

of God. From this we can see that the first thing his teaching led to in the minds of his pupils was Pride.

Zeno also taught that when a man died he only changed his form: he was still a part of the universe: still a part of God. So to the mind of the Stoic the teaching of a resurrection of the dead would look foolish. For what need would there be for a resurrection if man after death were still living in another form?

All who joined with Zeno as Stoics were taught by him not to allow such impulses as love, fear, sympathy, pity, etc., to act in themselves, but to suppress them. It was good reasoning, he said, to do that; and if we reason well we are wise, perfect, and need nothing from anyone outside of ourselves: everything necessary is in ourselves.

Thus were their pride and self-sufficiency flattered, and the teaching that we need a Saviour and Redeemer would be despised, and could not be entertained by the Stoic.

The Epicureans

The Epicureans were the followers of a philosopher named Epicurus, who lived and taught about the same time as Zeno. They were just the opposite to the Stoics in their ideas. If the Stoics believed there was a God, and that He was in everything—everything was God—the Epicureans said there was no God at all. Everything came by chance, they said. The universe was a great accident; it was not created by a great God over all; and so there was no living, powerful Being to punish sin or reward right doing.

Epicurus applied his philosophy to his own life. What, said he, would be the best thing to do while we have life? And he answered by saying it was to get all the Pleasure we can; to make our own pleasure our chief aim; to let it be the chief good: "let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die" and there is nothing more. Eating and drinking was one of their greatest pleasures, but we may suppose not always without some pain.

What the two classes of people of whom we have been speaking believed about God made all the difference in their manner of life. The Stoics were stern, self-denying, and resisted the awful evils of their times. That was really good; we honour them for it, and we are not surprised to learn that nearly all the greatest men of those days were Stoics. The Epicureans were self-indulgent, followed their feelings into all pleasures, and many of them sank deeply into sin as a consequence of their very wrong "knowledge."

The True Knowledge of God

Philosophers are men who imagine, invent; they are often keen observers. But there is one thing no inventor can ever find out, and that is the true knowledge of God. That is what the philosophers have for long been trying to do, and from what we now know of the Stoics and Epicureans we see what a bad failure they made of it.

It is because the true knowledge of God can never be discovered by a man's own efforts that God has been kind enough to reveal Himself to men—not to let them see with their eyes what He is like, but to let them know much about Himself while He is still unseen by them. This is the knowledge He gave to Paul, and sent him forth to make known throughout the world, and which he had now brought to the philosophers and all at Athens.

Whenever men try to gain knowledge about God and will not receive what He has revealed, they show themselves to be without wisdom, and only foolishness can follow. That accounts for all the idols in Athens and everywhere else; as well also for the foolishness in the teachings of Zeno and Epicurus. But with Paul in Athens came the opportunity for the idlers, laborers, business men, philosophers, all the people of Athens to have the truth they seemed so desirous of knowing but could never discover. So far were they from having right ideas about God, that even what they had heard in the market place were "strange things" to their ears.

What Paul will say to them as he stands on the platform in the court of Mars' Hill we must leave for another story. But we may now say that when they have heard him preach the true knowledge of God, if they are really wise they will forsake Zeno and Epicurus and become followers of the true Teacher, and the Greatest of all teachers, who was neither a Stoic nor an Epicurean.

Please read Acts 17: 16-21 for this Story.
Of how God revealed Himself, John 14: 7-9.
That Jesus only has seen God the Father, John 6: 45, 46.
That we can learn about God only through Jesus, Matthew 11: 27.
Of the Great Teacher, John 3: 2.

—UNCLE FRANK.

Brains and Bodies

ELZEVIR was the name of publishers, of Amsterdam and Leyden (1592-1681), celebrated for their beautiful editions of the classics. A modern "Elzevir" has made a name for his embellishments of, and reflections upon, passing events, with an occasional survey of the past and of the bearing of each upon the other; his rostrum, the Melbourne Saturday "Argus." One could not wish for a more interesting and pointed parable than that of the mouse that grew to an extraordinary size. From this we are privileged to make some extracts, as follow:—

If I belonged to that unfortunately extinct species, the tellers of fairy tales, I should certainly write a story about a little animal, say a mouse, which found, somewhere in the enchanted woods, a strange and

miraculous food, . . . feeding upon which, it grew and grew, and kept on growing, till it was the size of a hippopotamus, all except its brain, which remained exactly the same size. I don't quite know how the tale would end, but somehow I don't think it could have a happy ending; I rather fancy that a hippopotamus with a mouse's brain would get on rather badly in the struggle for existence. The extinct prehistoric monsters we read of, and see queer, fancy pictures of, seem to have been animals with vast, unwieldy bodies and diminutive brains; and that is why they are extinct and prehistoric. They died out because much smaller and feebler beasts, with better brains, were able to outwit them and kill them, and possibly to eat them. That, I fear, would have to be the sad fate of my hippopotamus. Yet that enormous growth of bodily powers, from mouse to hippopotamus, is but a faint parable for what has happened to man in the last few centuries, and especially in the last half-century.

. . . . . .

For, if you come to think of it, our wonderful discoveries and marvellous inventions are simply additions to the size and strength and capacity of the human body. Every tool is an extension to some part of the body, or an addition to some power of the body. When somebody invented the hammer—the ordinary hammer that you can buy for a shilling or two—he extended the power of the human fist a thousandfold and more; but that extension of our power was a small thing compared with the modern steam-hammer weighing many tons. You can dig the soil with your hands, if you want to, but nobody does, because the invention of the spade extended the power of the hand a thousandfold and more; and the spade is a trifle compared with the modern multiple-furrow plough. The applications of science in the last half-century—this wonderful half-century, so immeasurably more marvellous than any earlier period of twice the length—all our astounding devices and incredibly ingenious mechanisms—yes, all of them—are extensions of the bodily powers of man. The motor car is an extension of our legs; it enables us to whizz from place to place as if we had the legs of some fabled giant. The aeroplane has given us wings; the X-ray has so strengthened our eyes that we can see through solid objects; the big gun has so strengthened our arms that we can fling a ton of metal at an enemy many miles away; the high explosive has so strengthened our muscles that we can remove mountains with ease. Wireless has given us such long ears—I mean, ears of such long range—that we can sit in Melbourne and listen to a man who is quietly talking in London. Hands, eyes, ears, legs, arms, even wings—part of the bodily frame, all of them. Can you think of any great modern invention, any great application of science, which is not in some way an extension of the powers of the body? If you can't, don't you think that my fairy tale of the mouse growing into a hippopotamus is very much of an understatement, a pitifully poor attempt to picture the development, during the last half-century, of the human race on the physical side—the growth, as it were, of man's body?

. . . . . .

Well, but what about the mouse's brain—is that part of the fairy tale a just picture? . . . I think he would be a blind optimist who believed that our intellectual and moral growth had in any way kept pace with the astonishing extension of our bodily powers. The mouse has indeed grown into a hippopotamus, but its brain has remained the brain of a mouse. Our progress in material things has altogether outstripped our progress (if there has been any), in things of the mind. . . . I believe it is because we have *forgotten these other things* that our world to-day presents an appearance which would lead a visitor from Mars to conclude that we had all gone mad. He would see a world drifting toward war in spite of the fact that the vast majority of its inhabitants ardently desire peace and loathe the idea of war. He would see a world suffering from poverty and even from starvation in spite of the fact that it knows how to produce food, and everything it needs, in quantities unexampled in history. He would probably say that our inventions were indeed wonderful, but that in the matter of controlling those inventions and turning them to a proper use, for the improvement of the life of the race, we seemed to be mere lunatics. Of course, he would be wrong: that is too *simple an explanation; you and I know that we are* not lunatics. But we have fallen into a fatal fallacy; we have set our hearts on the wrong things. It may be that only through blood and tears shall we learn a truer scale of values—that only after a bitter experience shall we be brought to renounce our worship of false gods. Experience, the poet has said, is the best schoolmaster; but his fees are high.

. . . . . .

At the present time the majority of mankind have to think of their material needs, and have little chance of thinking of anything else. . . . Through all past ages, so many millions of persons have lived on just enough to keep body and soul together, and so many millions have lived lives haunted by the fear *of unemployment and consequent starvation for their* wives and children, that we can scarce wonder that the term "standard of living" has come to mean mere food and clothing. And yet, even in the ages of scarcity, it was a wrong use of the term. We can see, looking back, that in the great days of Athens men living in poor huts in a poor country managed to achieve a higher standard of living, in the true sense of the term, than was reached by the most luxurious Roman noble in the palmy days of the Empire. We can see that Socrates, one of the poorest citizens of Athens, achieved a higher standard of living than the wealthiest of his fellow-Athenians. . . . But these things could hardly be appreciated in an age of scarcity, when men's whole thought, so far as the vast majority was concerned, had to be concentrated on the question of where the next meal was coming from. Australia has been such a comfortable country that perhaps we have found it hard to realise what the pressure of hunger has meant for

whole populations during whole centuries, and how impossible it has been for the mass of mankind, wringing a subsistence from a niggard world, to think of anything but the material needs of life.

. . . . . .

I have uttered so many platitudes and truisms that one more will not do you any harm. It is the stark undeniable fact that the age of scarcity is over—that at last, after all these centuries, we have entered on the age of plenty. If we have not plenty of everything we need, we have the power to produce it; we know how to produce it; we have the machines ready to produce it if we like to set them going; and we have the men ready and able to work the machines if we like to give them the chance. But we don't give them the chance; we don't set the machines going; and that is where our visitor from Mars would see the clearest sign of our lunacy. The other day a school teacher informed me, casually, that one of her chief difficulties was that practically all the children in her class were plainly under-nourished; and we are talking of the need to restrict our acreage of wheat. At a time when the children of the world are underfed, the world decides to reduce its production of food! I prophesied that the story of the hippopotamus with the brains of a mouse could have no happy ending. Obviously, our failure to use the tools that science has given us means a failure in intelligence. There, then, is one thing we forgot when we took "standard of living" to mean material goods; we forgot intelligence. Education, which means (among other things) the stimulation of the intelligence, has been neglected; and we are paying the penalty. Henceforth, let us not say that any country has a high standard of living unless it is doing its very utmost to give its people the very best education it knows how to find for them.

* * *

Come, Follow Me

Undoubtedly Elzevir is right that intelligence needs stimulation by proper education before men can realize the best use to which these wonderful modern inventions can be put. But he leaves it an open question as to just what such desirable education should consist in. His remarks on that subject would have made interesting reading. However, we have some ideas on the subject based on our own observation and experience and the experience and teachings of others.

The best education, we should say, is: to be taught the will of God. That is all comprehensive, and suited to the needs of all nationalities and all classes of people. Believing, as we do, that modern inventions have come into existence because of God's appointment—His providence overruling both their time and their nature—we consider it highly desirable and altogether necessary to study what God's will is in regard to them. Properly to appreciate that aspect of God's will (re the "tools"), we need to be taught what is God's will in regard to the men who use the "tools." And surely the very first item of education is the knowledge that there is a God, and that He communicates His will through His Word—the Holy Scriptures. Further, that all men owe a duty to God, who rules the Universe, and who set mankind on the earth. And, thirdly, that everyone who knows the true God and understands something of His purposes should actively proclaim those purposes for the benefit of all they can reach.

Now let us ask the question, What is God's object in giving these inventions at this time? Is it that men may use them to their own selfish ends? Elzevir says not; for a man to use them selfishly is to exhibit the brain of the mouse, that knows nothing better than to feed itself—good and necessary though that may be to sustain life. Granted that one sees they should be used to the benefit of all, the question extends itself to this: Who is to make it his business to organize such arrangements as will give the benefit to all? And here is room for another parable, which we venture to put forth for Elzevir's consideration.

A Super Brain

The "World" is often represented in cartoons as a globe with a human face. Now let us suppose the World with a single brain—a human brain. Let us suppose that it has reached a full development, and is free to act.

The human brain, spoken of as one, is not in fact a single institution. It is composed of a number of parts, each charged (by the Creator in the first place) with a separate function. In a perfect brain there would be perfect balance among all the parts. An imperfect brain would show unequal development. We see this demonstrated in the people around us and in ourselves. Some have a particularly large development of combativeness and destructiveness, while others are deficient in these qualities. Some are good at mathematics, and their memory for figures is correspondingly good. Some have a large development in the "language" faculty; they like to talk, and often talk to good purpose, sometimes not; but this faculty also gives facility in acquiring foreign languages. Then there are faculties which when well developed give excellence in drawing and other mechanical arts. There are also parts of the brain devoted to the emotions, and other sections include benevolence, reverence, spirituality, conscientiousness, firmness, etc. These mental qualities and gifts assert themselves in various directions, and, uncontrolled, would make a multiple-minded person, not knowing what to do because each faculty would clamour for a hearing and assert its claim to have its own way. Consequently the necessity of a will to control the whole of the mind and select what shall and shall not be said or done. Besides these, there are portions of the brain giving automatic control of bodily functions, such as breathing. One may hold his breath a long time, but "click," the brain centre says, Enough, you must breathe out, and in again. Or you may try to keep your lungs empty, and can do so, but sooner or later inbreathing starts again, automatically—impelled from the controlling nerve and brain centre.

Now let us apply our parable. Let us say our World Brain has large perceptive faculties (composed of scientists, newspaper correspondents, the medical

fraternity, social workers, trades unions), always seeing a thousand things out of joint and telling us what is wrong, but never agreeing among themselves as to the remedy. But they all call upon benevolence, love, hope, kindness, to "do something." The statisticians are "quick at figures," always ready to back up any argument with an array of statistics. The acquisitive faculties (composed of economists, bankers, business men, free traders, tariff-ists) show the "World" how it may make gain, but each with its own theory as to method. Another section of the World Brain says the best and quickest way to make gain is to fight for it, and points with pride to the rich spoils of conquest in the past. The faculty of music (composed of peace-workers, etc.), says all that is required is a "better understanding," so as to resolve the dissonances, whispering hush, hush, to all who ask how there can be "understanding" between peoples and organizations and nations contending for opposite principles or no principles at all.

Then we must not forget the critical faculties (composed of politicians, publicists, emotionalists, all of them so busy examining and comparing and finding fault with the panaceas of the opposite party that they forget to bring forth anything properly constructive themselves). Again, there are the constructive qualities (composed of empire builders, trade negotiators, founders and supporters of clubs and organizations of all kinds to promote social intercourse as a stimulus to business and prosperity, together with leagues national and international, all building up, and building up, without noticing that they are building on sand).

These various what we may call faculties of the World Brain are exceedingly vocal, and each in conflict more or less with the others. Besides this, the single faculty often carries on a discussion within itself. Take the Economic Faculty in the World Brain. One would naturally expect of it only one opinion. But what do we hear from it? Suggestions and Theories as opposite as the poles. To help the World Body out of the rut, one economist or group of economists suggests that two countries exchange commodities on a 50-50 basis, thus each obtaining *benefit both ways.* (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the British Foreign Minister and Trade Expert, in a notable speech, called this the "Balanced Trade Myth.") Another economist group says, If you limit trade to that extent, there is no real advantage, but likely a *progressive loss.* Each should sell to the other, or strive to do so, considerably *more* than commodities of equal value, thus gradually *increasing trade.* As for crops, one economist recommends limitation of sowings, acreage, etc. Another says, That would mean progressive loss of trade, with no reserve stock to take advantage of any unexpected demand from somewhere or other.

And so the endless discussions go on, each faculty of the World Brain (and numerous voices within each faculty) loudly passing judgment for and against. And such methods as are tried lead to other endless discussions as to whether they are or are not a success.

But there is no finality.

How to Reach Finality

What is wanted before the World Brain with its multiple faculties can function as a whole, and reach finality on any subject, is not far to seek. We have the pattern in the human brain, in which, as before said, the Will holds all the threads of thought, passes judgment on them, and decides which are right and practicable and which it must reject. In practical life we cannot do two opposite things at the same time, as illustrated in the popular sayings, "You cannot have your cake, and eat it too," and "You cannot have it both ways." And, whatever the appetite may say, the Will holds it to one or the other.

A World Will is required that will gather up all the theories, schemes, and plots of the World Mind, sift the pros and cons, adopt the good and practicable, and reject the unsuitable. Then there will be Finality as far as a final decision can go. Then it would remain to *compel* the World to carry out this "final" decision. And we hear some one ejaculate, "It cannot be done without a Super State to make the decisions and a Super State Army to compel obedience to its Decrees." And immediately another voice puts in, "And that cannot be done because the nations could never agree on a Super State, and, if they did, there is no guarantee that any international army would carry out its Orders, if it ever got as far as issuing them on any important matters bearing on the prestige of the chief nations in the Body Politic. And so discussions would begin afresh, new problems would arise, new schemes to solve them, new forces to impose the remedies, new critics to tear them to pieces; perhaps new wars to prove that, after all, "Might makes Right."

The knowledge of God and His Purposes is the only means of piercing the confusion and arriving at a right estimate of the present and a correct understanding of the outcome of it all. As we shall see.

An Age of Plenty?

One other remark by Elzevir requires some comment. He says we—the World—"have entered on the age of plenty." From the context we take him to mean the age when plenty is possible if all the men and the inventions of our day were put to work and fully utilized.

But another factor remains to be taken into account, a factor which has been emphasized in the last two or three years, and even as we write these lines. That factor is Divine Providence in the control of climatic conditions. Men must never forget that weather conditions are in the hands of God. Paul told the Greeks that they owed their rains and fruitful seasons to God—not to their imaginary gods, but to the true God, whom he preached to them. That is a sublime truth which all men should remember when they lay their plans, and not merely when they suffer loss through drought and flood. For these often succeed each other, as a South African correspondent of the Melbourne "Age" wrote from Johannesburg in November, 1933, as follows—

Rain at last. Only those who have lived in dry countries can appreciate the sense of thankfulness that swept across

South Africa in the first days of November, when a succession of heavy thunder storms brought relief to a farming community on the brink of ruin. All save a few districts received a rainfall sufficient to revive the veldt and so provide feed for the stock that had managed to survive the months of scorching sun. As is so often the case, flood succeeded drought. The baked earth could not absorb the downpour. Rivers that had for a year or two been so only in name were changed in a few hours into raging torrents. Lightning and hail did immense damage. At least twenty people, mainly natives, were drowned or killed by lightning, and thousands of cattle and sheep perished, while there was a widespread destruction of crops. Still the breaking of the drought was welcome even at this cost, and a more cheerful spirit extends over the whole country.

This experience of drought led the South African Government to frame a new Farming Policy, and farmers were given much good advice as to what crops to plant and when, in order to avoid loss in case of another drought.

In 1934 came the great drought in the Prairie States of the U.S.A., the great wheat and corn (maize) growing states, with tremendous crop losses. But this was not the only damage. Strong winds blew away the top soil—which had been for years kept in a highly fertilized condition for quick and abundant crop growing—leaving in vast tracts of country only hard clay. Of what use to those farmers was then the multiple plow, the machine scarifiers, reapers and binders, etc., etc.?

That was bad enough. But, as we prepare this issue, news comes of another drought in the U.S.A., with strong winds blowing away the top soil in the States of Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. Two years in succession! In a country of good rainfall and hitherto abundant production!

Crop failures in one continent help to sell grain grown in other countries and at a better price. Australian wheat growers profited by the dearth in South Africa and in the American West. However, this hardly justifies calling the present an age of plenty because of an abundance of labor and of mechanical aids, when not acres but many thousands of square miles are devastated, farms blown away, and farmers left destitute with their mortgages still hanging over their heads. A Super State organized by men could not, with the best of intentions, bring down the rains, restrain the winds, protect from grasshopper and other plagues, and say "halt" to the floods, by a worldwide wireless connection and an appeal to the people to stand still and see the mighty power of the Will that controls the world Brain and the Super State!!

The Mouth Speaking Great Things

It would hardly do to go on to the examination of the Will that shall guide the destinies of the World Brain, and that shall be powerful enough to provide rains in season and bounteous harvests, when none shall be hungry in the midst of plentiful possibilities, without referring first to a Personage who would like to be the Head and controlling Will of a Super State having the whole world of mankind in subjection. Everyone will recognise the description. For centuries a claim to world rulership has been made with repeated attempts to exercise such claimed rulership. For some centuries that Personage (holding office by election of certain cardinals at Rome) was able by his political agents, his ecclesiastical officers exercising civil authority, numerous secret orders of all descriptions, and unnumbered other agencies, to exercise absolute control over many countries and millions of subjects.

Some of these countries have broken away from this controlling Will; others, like Portugal and Spain, more recently broken away (in part at least), have put themselves again under the bondage ecclesiastically and politically. Others, like some of the South American so-called Republics, which once, a long time ago, rejected Rome's interference in political affairs, are now again practically subject both ecclesiastically and politically. And it is in these lands and the villages and country districts of some European countries that are still to be seen the real meaning and effect of Rome's Will to rule as viceregent of Christ on earth. Ignorance, poverty, superstition, and other conditions undesirable in the eyes of any intelligent traveller, prevail. Yet, in the face of all that, he boasts of the benefits of Roman Catholic "education" and seeks to impose it on all countries of the world. He now sends out by wireless his messages to all "the world," and tells "the world" what is good for it; including, of course, intimations that a Super State with himself as the controlling Will would be "the thing."

But can the Pope with all his interdicts and curses and prayers and incense stop the winds that blow away the soil from the great American Granary? Can his prayers prevent the droughts that precede the desolation of thousands of miles of fair regions? Can he by a word cause the floodwaters to subside and the people to be saved from ruin?

How much increase of world influence the Pope will likely gain we need not go into here. But is it not well to reflect that with all his claims he can never be the blesser of all the families of the earth, since he cannot control the droughts and the winds and the floods? Is it not as if the great God of heaven were speaking to the whole world of mankind by these calamities, to remind them that He and He alone is the Great Provider, the Great Sustainer, the Great Over-ruler, the Great Will to which all men must bow?

Daniel prophesied the failure in this our day of the Pope's efforts to bring and hold the world powers together under his control. Instead, the kingdoms are smitten. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."—Daniel 2: 40-45; 7: 11-26.

Even the Winds and the Sea Obey Him

Yes, that is the One! He who by the power of God commanded. "Lord, save us: we perish," the disciples cried. "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." (Matthew 8: 23-27.) By the same power the Lord could have prevented the tempest;

He could have commanded the winds that they should not blow. But He did not. The tempest burst in all its fury, and then He spake.

The World Body, with its World Brain, is working itself up into a tempest. Its conflicting interests, with always behind it all the corruption of sin in a thousand forms, the wonderful inventions of our time, most of them, used selfishly; the motor car, the electrical contrivances, the massive machinery, the towering buildings, all wonderful in their construction and operation, yet all at the use of the ungodly, and all taking more or less a toll of death, as the "accident" columns testify. Yet faster and faster rush the cars, higher and higher mounts the wave of pleasure, stronger and stronger blow the "four winds" which shall lash the sea of mankind into a fury. And He shall speak the word, "Peace, be still." (Mark 4: 36-41.) To Him, raised up to the Father's right hand, has been given authority over the nations. That authority has been somewhat in abeyance while another work proceeded. But now we are nearing the time when He as Prince of Peace will manifest that His must be the controlling Will over the world's affairs. He will not need to take the threads of thought and theory of the World's Brain to sponsor one or another of them. He already has inscribed in the prophecies the threads of a great plan for world reconstruction on better lines than the kings and potentates and philosophers and theorists and economists have ever thought of. And He has, what they never have had, the power to compel obedience to the laws He promulgates; while at the same time the earth shall be relieved of the curse of sin and death and storms and floods and every other evil thing.

"And I saw a new heaven [controlling power] and a new earth [world social order]: . . . And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW. . . . I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."—Revelation 21: 1, 4, 6.

Let us say then that the wonderful discoveries and mechanical inventions of our day are not in fact the product of the World Mind of the Old Order about to be done away, but rather the foretaste of and preparation for that New Era toward which we are told to look, "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3: 13), when the Will of the new King of kings and Lord of lords will be supreme, and when men will learn how to use the facilities to make the new era truly "the age of plenty." For that age will supply not only the physical needs of men in plenty, but also their intellectual and moral needs, together with the knowledge of the way of salvation and the opportunity to worship God in spirit and in truth. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Isaiah 11: 9.

Beginning a New Year

THE Calendar new year began with January 1. The New Year to which we refer is the year of publication of this journal, "The New Covenant Advocate." With this issue we enter upon our 27th year of publication, and we desire to record our gratitude to Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for His loving watchcare over us during the past twenty-six years—not to mention the previous years of our individual lives. A number who saw the beginning of this effort to Glorify God, and Honour His Son, and Comfort His People are still with us in the same desire and endeavour, and besides them there are others who have believed on Jesus through our words. For the Lord in His prayer (John 17) so referred to the activities of His disciples; and these prospective believers right down to our own day were commended by Him to His Father's care.

How blessed is this thought of having been prayed for so long ago by our Lord himself—in the midst of His agonizing experience of man's perfidy! May we who do love Him and appreciate His work on our behalf try to make up to Him to some extent what He lacked in appreciation while in those trying days.

And we recall His words that, though we may not be able directly to salve His wounds, we may do so indirectly by ministering to His disciples, and by carrying His gospel to others who as yet have not heard it, or, having heard something, are still perplexed over the meaning of much the Scriptures contain.

This responsibility rests not with the Editor alone and a few tried helpers; it rests also upon all who have heard the truth and realize it to be truth. And so it seems not amiss to mention the reading matter available for circulation, books in cheap form, and tracts and leaflets free for the asking. These are in handy form for reaching out to others. And as we know not which will prosper, this or that, it behooves us to scatter the good seed as far and wide as possible. (Ecclesiastes 11: 6.) If you know of earnest Christians or truth-seeking skeptics, send us their names and addresses and we will send them reading matter free.

Another item of responsibility is the financial one. The Lord could have supplied us by a special miracle with thousands or millions of pounds or dollars; as the Lord drew the coin from the fish to pay the dues at the temple. But for Him to have done so would have allowed His people no share in that part of the service. His method is to unite us all into a oneness by both doctrine and service. Hence we again remind friends of the cause of this

their opportunity to give the Work of Faith an uplift, so that we may not, as in the past two years, finish with a Deficit. Let us begin now our united effort to make this a better year from the financial as well as from every other viewpoint. Below are the Receipts up to the end of March. April figures will appear (D.V.) in our next issue.

The "Advocate" Sustaining Fund

Voluntary donations to this fund have been received as under, since our last report. As the "Advocate" is regularly published at a financial loss, it is obliged to depend upon the loving co-operation of its friends until it shall become self-sustaining. Let the good work continue!

24, 2/-; 25, £1; 26, £3:2:0; 27, £1; 28, 2/-; 29, 2/-; 30, £5:7:0; 31, £1:8:0;; 32, 2/-; 33, £1:6:0; 34, £3:2:6; received at Brooklyn, 464, $3.75; 465, $2.50; 466, $5; 467, $8.75; total at Brooklyn, $20 (£4:2:4); total for month, £20:15/:10 ($100.94); previously reported, £42:6:9 ($205.75); total for 3 months, £63:2:7 ($306.69), reducing the Deficit on N.C.A. account to £24, with nothing as yet to apply on the work for 1935.

The Cheerful Givers

Voluntary Donations, as under, have been received since our last report for the spread of the Good Tidings concerning the Grace of God in Jesus, our Mediator and Intercessor under the terms of the New Covenant.

10, 12/-; 11, £1; 12, 12/-; 13, 18/-; 14, £20; 15, 5/-; 16, 3/-; 17, 3/6; received at Brooklyn, 335, 50 cents; 336, 71 cents; total at Brooklyn, $1.21 (5/-); total for month, £23:18:6 ($116.28); previously reported, £8:7:0 ($40.58); total for 3 months, £32:5:6 ($156.84). The estimated expenses of the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1935 amount to £200 ($1000); though more than this sum can be beneficially utilized should it be available.

A Suggestion

For many years some of the friends have laid by weekly a regular sum, such as they could afford, and have sent in the proceeds monthly or quarterly. Possibly new readers would like to join in this method, which in some cases may entail self-denial, but in all cases is received by us as a testimonial to the Lord. Regular giving is good for those who do it, and it is often found that the regular sum is little if any missed. It will be noticed by the above Report that we are still £24 short of meeting the Deficit on last year's N.C.A. Fund. Thus the expense of publication for January, February, March, and April issues of this year 1935 are still to be met.

Shall we all make a special effort this month and next to wipe off these arrears? Say £125 by June 1. It can be done if all follow the apostle's direction to the Corinthian brethren concerning a sum to be raised—each "as God hath prospered him."—1 Corinthians 16: 2.

In Old Testament times the Lord promised a blessing on those who brought their tithes to the temple; that is, a tenth of their increase in crops or stock, or of the proceeds of their sale, or a tenth of their salary or income. We do not now suggest one-tenth, but leave it to each reader to consider what he or she can do to make this year a balanced year for the Budget. To lay aside 3d. per week will produce 13/- in the year; 6d. per week, 26/-; a shilling per week, 52/-; five shillings per week, £13; ten shillings per week, £26; one pound per week, £52 per year; and so on. After clearing the 1934 Deficit, the estimated expenses of the Advocate Sustaining Fund for 1935 are about £400 ($2000).

We firmly believe that the Lord desires us to prosper in publishing the N.C.A., since we are continually receiving letters which express the writers' enjoyment and profit from the various articles and letters published. The age is drawing to a close, but IT HAS NOT CLOSED YET. There is a GREAT WORK STILL TO BE DONE, and the saints everywhere need the help and encouragement the regular monthly visits of the N.C.A. afford them.

The wall of the temple was rebuilt with sword in hand. (Nehemiah 4: 17, 18.) Let us build with our sword well gripped—the Word of God, which is even more powerful than the literal sword.

Subscriptions Now Due

ANOTHER year of the N.C.A. is now completed. As most subscriptions end with the close of the volume, this notice is given to all Readers so that they may promptly send us their orders and payments for the renewal for another year. The subscription price is 4/- per year including postage in Australia and New Zealand; 5/- ($1.25) elsewhere. Readers are requested to accept this general notice as though it had been privately addressed to each one personally. Promptness in responding will be greatly appreciated, and will be a great help to the work. Therefore, please let us hear from all at earliest opportunity. Those who have been receiving the N.C.A. free on special terms because of inability to pay are cordially welcome, as ever, to the paper on the same terms. But we must hear from such yearly, so we may know they still live and desire to continue reading.

TRIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS will be received as a co-operation in the work. Send us the price of a year's subscription with the names of four friends you desire to interest in the Good Tidings; the N.C.A. will be sent for three months to each address in the hope that they will wish to continue as readers. Trial Subscriptions sent now or very soon will include this issue.

All orders and remittances may be sent to Melbourne, Bristol, or Brooklyn.

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The Triumph of the Cross

CONFERENCE TEXTS:—"I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."—"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."—". . . that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."—"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."—". . . ye are called in one hope of your calling."—"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."—"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—"And I saw a great white throne."—Galatians 2: 20; Philippians 2: 8, 9; Hebrews 2: 14; Colossians 2: 14, 15; Ephesians 4: 4, 8; 2 Peter 1: 11; Revelation 20: 11.

THE STRENGTH and vitality of the Gospel Message are shown in that for twenty-seven years we have been able, by the grace of God, to announce each time a new topic for our Easter Conference; and yet each and every one of them has promoted the setting forth of the same precious truths concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the great Plan of Redemption which our heavenly Father has been carrying out through His beloved Son our Lord. In the Conference this year particular emphasis has been laid on the triumphs of the Lord throughout His career, including that triumph most important to us, the Triumph of the Cross.

The Topic was divided into fifteen sub-topics, on which brethren and sisters took great pleasure in preparing their papers, which were read at the sessions on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Good Friday and Easter Sunday are the names of two compulsory holidays appointed by law, being a survival of two of the many holy days formerly appointed by the Papacy—when its ecclesiastical rule was accepted throughout Europe, with the exception of the Orthodox Greek Church, which appoints its own holy days. The name Easter is an adaptation of the name of a heathen goddess Eostre, goddess of Spring, whose festival, celebrated annually, was adopted by the Church of Rome and utilized as a Christian festival in celebration of the Lord's resurrection. For its own convenience, Rome arranged that Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday, and the crucifixion always on the preceding Friday, thus departing from the true method of reckoning—handed down by the apostles and early disciples—for the observance of the Lord's Supper on the anniversary of His death.

Observance of the Memorial Supper

The 15th of the Jewish month Nisan, which was the date of our Lord's institution of the Memorial of Himself (see our issue of February last, also, for greater detail, the book, The Church and its Ceremonies), and which does not always fall on the same day of the week—that it should do so being nothing less than a mark of Rome—fell this year on April 18, beginning, according to the scriptural method of reckoning days, after sunset on Wednesday, April 17; this being at the same time the day of His crucifixion a few hours later. Accordingly the church at Melbourne and many other places throughout the world met—in their twos and threes, or in larger numbers, and some isolated ones also—and observed the Lord's Supper on the Wednesday after sunset (which, as already said, was the beginning of Thursday the 15th Nisan), on which our Lord instituted the Supper. We here were blessed, and we know fellowbelievers elsewhere were also blessed in obeying our Lord's command to "Do this in Remembrance of Me."

On the preceding Saturday afternoon a Baptism Service was held, four candidates having presented themselves for immersion, in representation of their acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Leader and Commander. And, in so doing, they recognized also a baptism or burial into His death, and a raising up again out of death, to walk in newness of life. Pray that these dear ones may be strengthened with all might to perform that which they have thus signified, and follow the Lord faithfully, doing His will from the heart. And so of all of us who have pledged ourselves to the Lord: pray for us!

The Conference Sub-topics are as follow, and appear in the succeeding pages in this order—

1. **The Son of God, and the Cross.**
2. **Acclaimed in the Days of His Flesh.**
3. **Satan's Failures when Tempting Christ.**
4. **Binding of Angels that Sinned.**
5. **Christ's Obedience Unto Death, Even the Cross.**
6. **The Triumph of Christ in His Resurrection.**
7. **Blotting out the Handwriting.**
8. **Triumph over Sin the Taskmaster.**
9. **Jesus Conquered Death through Death.**
10. **One Hope of Your Calling.**
11. **Present Triumph as King of kings and Head of the Church.**
12. **Christ's Final Triumph over Beast and False Prophet.**
13. **What God Expects of Us.**
14. **Triumph of the Great White Throne.**
15. **The Enduring Triumph of the Cross.**

The Son of God, and the Cross

IT IS POSSIBLE in some parts of the world to witness the construction of garden cities and garden suburbs —the layout of the ground, preparations of foundations for buildings, erection of walls, etc. People come from miles around to see and admire as the plan develops, and neighbours chatter daily as to which house and which garden arrangement they like best, and why this or that is done as it is and not in some other way. Finally all is finished, the houses furnished and occupied, and the children play happily in the space provided for their games. From start to finish we know what has been done; and, if we have a nodding acquaintance with the investor, he may even tell us what he paid for the land, also the cost of construction, and his profit. So we have firsthand knowledge, and we can say we saw and heard, and we know. But of a century-old structure we can not describe the building operations, time of erection, etc., from personal observation and contact with the owner and the builder. We perforce must consult the Titles Office and any letters or memoranda left by the investor, the builder, and the original occupants of the buildings. Museums and private collectors are eager to get hold of accounts and receipts on clay tablets found in ancient Babylon, for example, and thus gain some idea of how business was conducted in those days.*

Applied to our Conference Topic, this little illustration suggests that in seeking information concerning the Son of God, and Calvary's Cross, we are dependent upon God Himself, the Deviser of the Plan, and upon the Son Who carried out the Plan; and we perforce consult the Records which they have made for our information.

Similarly concerning the earth on which we live—how it came into existence, with its wonderful provision for animal life, and how, eastward in Eden, was a garden all prepared to receive and sustain the two human beings whom God designed to fill the earth with a great family to enjoy its beauties and His bounties forever.

It is certainly most kind of God to be willing to explain to men the whys and wherefores of His actions, as well as the outcome to be expected through the triumph of His Son, and the Cross. Furthermore, if a human investor and builder require ability and foresight to plan and construct (say) a garden city, how much more wisdom and foreknowledge and power must God have possessed to plan and to construct a Universe!

Before the World Was

And when we marvel at the beauties of the earth and the wonders of the heavens, let us remember that nineteen hundred years ago there came to earth One who had been living long before our earth was made and man placed upon it. Our Lord stated the time as a matter of personal interest between Himself and the heavenly Father, whom He addressed in His prayer, recorded in John 17—

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Just previously the Lord had told the disciples that the Father loved them, and why He loved them: "because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." Confirming them in this belief, He told them that He soon would be returning to the Father (John 16: 28)—

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

The disciples commented on this as a plain statement; and so it is. His going to the Father was to be a personal return to heaven, where God dwells. That Jesus was raised from the dead and did ascend to heaven is often repeated in the Acts and the apostolic epistles, besides being recorded in the Gospels. Just as real and just as personal was the Lord's presence with the Father before He came to earth—"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world:" just the reverse journey from that soon to be undertaken: "again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."

How illuminating are these statements concerning the time "before the world was," when no human being was there to see! We recall that Job, elated at his victory over his three socalled "comforters," was ready to argue with the Almighty, and was humbled to his proper place by these pointed questions (Job 38)—

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.
5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?
12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;
19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof, . . .
21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?

Now consider; the Lord Jesus could have answered those questions. He was there. He knew all those things.

But some one may ask, Did John hear the prayer? and, if he did, how could he remember it and without fail record it accurately? The answer to this is that John and the other disciples (except Judas) were still present in the upper room, and heard the prayer. (John 16: 32, 33; 17: 1; 18: 1.) Besides this, the writers of the Gospels were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and thus were enabled to remember the things God designed them to recall to mind, and the Holy Spirit enabled them to record words and events accurately. Another function of the Holy Spirit was to guide the believers into all truth, and to show them things to come. (John 16: 13.) Hence John and the other apostles, who were specially equipped for their position as leaders in the Church, were also prophets. In addition to believing the Lord's testimony, we have therefore the testimony of the Holy Spirit as well, that Jesus was with the Father before the world was.

With the Father in Glory

His words to the disciples are sufficient in themselves to establish the fact of our Lord Jesus' prehuman existence. They also establish the fact that His position was subordinate to the Father's. We do not say the king, or the president, is "with" the secretary; we say the secretary is "with" the king, or "with" the president.

Before the world was, Jesus had a position of glory and honour "with" the Father, which the Father had bestowed upon Him; and in His prayer, during the distressing circumstances which beset Him on earth, He asked that He might be given again that position of honour and trust. Mentioning that He had finished the work the Father had given Him to do, Jesus expressed His longing to return to the presence of His Father in heaven, confident in the Father's affection; "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (Verse 24.) And God loved Him still, as He testified several times in the hearing of the people—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."—Matthew 3: 17; 17: 5; 2 Peter 1: 16-18.

Some, who deny that Jesus existed before He came to earth, say He was only, in those far-off days, a thought in the Father's mind. But in view of John 16: 28 that can not be. Our Lord did not pray that He, a man of energy and judgment and conscience, might be reduced to a mere thought. No, no! The fact is that He remembered His former life in heaven with the Father and in a position of honour, and desired to return to it. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." And since His desires were always in accord with God's will, we may be certain that the Father had assured His beloved Son, before He left heaven, that He would be received back again to a glorious inheritance. To this the epistle to the Hebrews refers (12: 2)—

". . . who FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

*Photographs of ancient stone and clay tablets are published in the Variorum Teachers' Bible.

Other passages referring to the fact that Jesus, before He came to earth, had been a living sentient Being in heaven are—

John 3: 13—And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man. [The words "which is in heaven" are not found in the oldest two Greek MSS, the Sinaitic and the Vatican 1209. Manifestly they are no part of the inspired Word, for when He said this the Lord was not in heaven: He had come down from heaven, and was on the earth.]

John 6: 38—For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 6: 62—What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

These statements testify that when in heaven with the Father the reasons for sending Him to earth had been laid before the Son, and He had intelligence to grasp the fact of the need. He had also the willing mind to carry out a definite work; *namely, to do "the will of him* that sent me." Intelligence to comprehend the plan and the need before He came were as necessary as the intelligence He displayed in carrying out the plan after He came to earth.

A Life of Activity and Power

God's Son was for a time the only Being in existence besides the Father. In His message to the church in Laodicea, He said—"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation *of God."* (*Revelation* 3: 14.) *This gives more light* concerning His life "before the world was." He was the first of God's creation. That this statement is a "faithful and true witness" is undeniable, for our Lord was qualified to tell the exact truth. The nature of our Lord's activities following His creation as the First and Chief of all, second only to the Father, is testified to by John 1: 1-3—

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; *and* without *him* was *not* any thing made that was made.

In speaking of the Son of God as "the Word," the apostle had reference to His office, for he immediately adds, "and the Word was a God." The English Authorized Version (also most others) does not sufficiently show the relation between God and His Son, indicated in the Greek by the presence or absence of the article "the." The Father is referred to as the God, hence the more important of the two. And this relative position is indicated again in verse 2—"The same was in the beginning with [the] God." In English translation this distinction between two Beings, both of whom are Gods, is well indicated by the use of the indefinite article "a" or "an" before the lesser in rank, it not being a usual practice in English to place the definite article "the" before the greater in rank. Hence the English should read, "the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." Verse 3 then describes the responsible work which the Father placed in the Son's hands—"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." This certainly was a high and honourable position for the Son of God to occupy; and faithfully did He carry out the creative work, as we read also in Colossians 1: 15-17.

The angels after their creation were called "sons of God," and some human beings are invited to become sons of God. (Job 38: 7; Romans 8: 14-16.) But the Lord Jesus has the distinction of being the only One in all the universe who was the direct creation of the Father himself.

After the creation of man on the earth, other activities of which we have been informed engaged the attention of the Son. For example, His service as God's Messenger in communicating on certain occasions the will of God to mankind, and in directing certain great operations, such as the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt.—Genesis 18: 1-33; Exodus 33: 1-3, 12-17; Isaiah 63: 7-14; Acts 7: 30-39.

The Cross

And now we shall endeavour to answer the very appropriate query of the seeker after truth—"Why did God send this great and wonderful Spirit Being to die on the cross for mankind; could not some one or other of Adam's descendants have endured those sufferings and performed that service?"

No, we reply; Adam could not redeem others, for he himself was condemned to death and required to be redeemed. *Nor could his descendants, or any of them;* for all his posterity were condemned because they were in him when he sinned, consequently inherited not only his condemnation but sinful tendencies as well. Psalm 49 states the position and the hopelessness of any member of the sinful race giving a ransom for another member of the sinful race. God's purpose in sending His Son was to provide a satisfactory ransom or corresponding price for the man Adam who had sinned, and our Lord Jesus as the man Christ Jesus was that corresponding price, being perfect, the Son of God, and hence not under the Adamic condemnation. Nor did our Lord come under condemnation for any sin of His own. The Scriptures assure us that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Hebrews 7: 26.) He was tempted, that is, tried or tested, "yet without sin." (Hebrews 4: 15.) "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2: 22.) He never for a moment entertained a thought contrary to the will of God which He had come to do. He did always those things which pleased the Father.—John 8: 28, 29.

What was accomplished by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross will be further considered at this Conference. At present we note the grand fact that the Son of God, who had been with the Father in heaven before the world was, who was accustomed to the glories and wonders of heaven (many of which He had himself created according to the will of His Father), and who possessed life of a much higher order than that given to men, came down to earth to suffer and to die. God gave the Son the honour and privilege of redeeming the lost race by the giving up of His perfect human self as the purchase price; and our Lord in love toward us, as well as in love to His Father, esteemed the privilege.

Transferred from Spirit to Human Nature

As a Spirit Being, perfect and obedient to the Father, Jesus could not justly have been condemned to death. And if in that glorious spirit condition of existence He had voluntarily died, that spirit body would not have constituted a corresponding price for human beings.

To some it might seem strange to speak of a spirit *body; but for this we have the* apostle's authority. He said—"There is a natural [or flesh] body, and there is a spiritual [or spirit] body." God and His Son were not vapours or myths; they were distinct Persons, with minds and wills, able to plan and create all existing things. But to become the ransom for all, and the perfect atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, the Son was given a body "prepared," as stated in Hebrews 10: 5-10.

That is to say, a miracle was performed, by which God transferred His Son from the spirit to the human plane of existence. Nowhere does the Scripture say that Jesus died when thus transferred; *His death occurred at the age* of 33½ years as a human being.

The transfer from prehuman to human did not mean that Jesus remained a spirit being and simply inhabited a fleshly body which was not His real self, as some Christians suppose. John 1: 14 says that "the Word [or Logos, His official title] was MADE FLESH." The flesh was real, He was a flesh being, yet He had no human father. By the power of God He was born of the Virgin, and He grew up to manhood absolutely perfect and sinless.—Mattew 1: 18-25; Luke 1: 26-35; 2: 5-7, 51, 52.

This transfer of the Son from heaven to earth was a marvellous miracle, and miracles can not be explained. But this miracle can be accepted on the authority of God and of our Lord himself, who retained His memory, and could speak the things He knew, as He stated to Nicodemus, as recorded in John 3—

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man.

Just in passing it may be remarked that if we were asked to say when in our Lord's earthly life His memory of the prehuman heavenly life and the things associated with it began to function, the answer is simply that we do not know. There appears to be nothing in Scripture giving this information, and groundless speculation is useless; indeed, may be injurious. Our own memories are preserved over-night throughout our unconsciousness in sleep, and thus the continuity of our identity from one day to the next is maintained. We have seen that our Lord's memory was preserved through His change from prehuman to human; and Luke 24: 44, in which it is recorded that our risen Lord reminded the disciples of "the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you," before His crucifixion and death, shows that His memory was still preserved through the item of death of the human and resurrection to divine glory, His personal identity thus being maintained throughout all these changes of physique and environment.

The Cross Expected

Frequently the Lord referred to His impending death, as the time drew near and the disciples needed to be safeguarded from surprise and sudden shock. As it was, they were dazed until they found He had been raised again and was still their loving Master and Friend.

It is necessary, however, to realise that our Lord's death was in every sense voluntary on His part. We read that God "gave his only begotten Son." Equally true and emphatic is it that Jesus "gave himself." (John 3: 16; 1 Timothy 2: 6.) He said to the disciples—

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.—Matthew 20: 27, 28.

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power [or, authority] to lay it down, and I have power [or, authority] to take [literally, receive] it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.—John 10: 18.

More than a Reformer

That He should die was not something that came to our Lord as His ministry proceeded and He saw the hatred and envy of the scribes and Pharisees and chief priests. To any reformer might come a foreboding or realization that the opposition would put him to death if circumstances worked their way. In our Lord's case, His death was provided for in God's purpose, and Jesus had deliberately and gladly agreed to His part in the arrangement. It was not that sin entered Eden, and then God hurriedly arranged with His Son to rescue men out of the pit of death. All provision was made in advance, before sin entered and the need arose.—Revelation 13: 8; Acts 15: 18.

By His wisdom and foreknowledge God knew, before they were created, that the inexperienced Adam and Eve would fall under Satan's blandishments.

To deliver them from their plight, God arranged to send One who was experienced in the knowledge of God, and established in the practise of righteousness.

Our Lord when He came and preached to the Jews was assisted to retain His integrity by the personal knowledge He had of God, and by His perfect desire to help sinful men back to harmony with God. (John 1: 18; 3: 17; 10: 9, 17.) As if to open the eyes of the Jews to their ignorance of God and His ways, Jesus said unto them, "Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen his shape." (John 5: 37.) On the other hand, He was continually reminding them that He (Jesus) had been in heaven with God, consequently could give a true account of God. And God bare witness that Jesus was indeed what He claimed to be—the Son of God sent by Him to be their Messiah, and they should believe and follow Him.

Our Lord at His first advent was neither a political nor a social reformer, although the gospel has affected both politics and society. He was not even a religious reformer; for He said He had not come to put a new patch on an old garment, or new wine into old bottles.—Matthew 9: 16, 17; Luke 19: 41-44.

Neither was His death merely the death of martyrdom, as has been the case with many of His followers, who were tortured, and burned at the stake. As already quoted from Matthew 20: 28, He came to give His life a ransom—something that no one else could do. After the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, events moved rapidly, as the hatred of His critics flamed higher and higher. And He said—"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name." And a voice from heaven encouraged Him.—John 12: 27, 28.

Lifted Up on the Cross

The crisis was drawing nearer, and Jesus said (John 12)—

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.
33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

Speaking to the twelve He had been still more specific, as reported in Matthew 20—

17 And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,
18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,
19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

And even before that—when Peter made his great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus told the disciples of what awaited Him, and Peter was so rash as to remonstrate with the Son of God. It was difficult to believe that so undeserved a death would befall their Messiah. They had yet to learn that THE CROSS IS THE CENTRE of God's great plan of redemption.—Matthew 16: 13-23.

Too often the Cross is belittled by those who place the symbol on their edifices and wear it on a massive gold chain as a token of episcopal office; yet who deny the significance of that Cross on Calvary which bore the Son of man. The Lord taught that every disciple should take up his cross and follow Him. Too often this is taken to imply that our Lord's cross was no more than a crossing of the will, and such self-denial as His disciples must perform.

The full significance of the Cross to our Lord Jesus was its service to us. It provided the place and the facility for the offering up of the Ransom for all, the perfect atoning sacrifice for sin, and moreover, He "bare our sins in his own body to the tree."—1 Peter 2: 24.

The Son of God came from heaven to earth to give himself a ransom for me? a sacrifice for my sins? to bear away my sins, that I need no longer carry the load?

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 14, 15.) Lifted up on the cross He was, that He might bear the curse for us. (Galatians 3: 13.) And lifted up as the cure for the plague of sin was He, even as the serpent was held up before Israel that they might look, and live. So may we look to Him, believing in Him as the Son of God, and glorying in His Cross, and receiving back the blessing of forgiveness and peace, and the promise of eternal life.

Bright shines the light on Judah's plain,
Where angels sing their glad refrain:
A Child is born, a Son is giv'n,
To turn our thoughts from earth to heav'n.

He came to earth, the Son of God,
To bear our sin, and ease our load.
And now, in heav'n exalted, He
A blessing sends on you and me.

—Mrs. E. C. H.

Acclaimed in the Days of His Flesh

CENTURIES before the birth of the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem, Isaiah the prophet wrote that He would be "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah 53: 3.) And so it came to pass that with our Lord's life on earth was associated much of sorrow and suffering. But in all the testings and trials, severe though they were, even to the giving up of His life on the cross—a cursed death for a Jew—there was never at any time a hint of defeat, as though the purpose of God, which Jesus came into this world to fulfil, were being left unaccomplished. The apostle (Hebrews 5: 7) speaks of our Lord's time on earth as "the days of His flesh"—

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared [or, marginal reading, for his piety];

The "days of His flesh" began with His miraculous birth as a babe in Bethlehem; but, as we have already seen, that birth was not the beginning of His existence. Previously He had occupied a position of glory with the Father from "before the world was." (John 17: 5.) Following the days of His flesh, God exalted Him to an even higher position, as the Scriptures show.

Our Lord's life on earth, notwithstanding the rebuffs and persecutions and sorrows, was a series of triumphs, of victories. This was the reason, more than any other, that the scribes and Pharisees hated Him.

Honoured at His Birth

Perhaps one of the seasons of most rejoicing in family life is that associated with a birth. Venerable customs are observed when many people extend greetings to the parents and convey presents to the new born infant. And so we find that at the birth of the Lord Jesus it was a time of gift giving. In Luke's account of the Nativity we read that, while the shepherds were keeping the night watch in the fields of Judea, the angel of the Lord visited them and announced the joyous news (2: 10, 11)—

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Then, after giving a sign unto them whereby they would be able to find the Babe, we read: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2: 8-14.) A high honour, indeed, was this, that the heavenly choir sang to announce His birth!

We also read that in those days there came wise men from the East to worship Him. It is not necessary to think of three men as comprising that company of travellers, as tradition has it; the Scripture does not state any number. These men came to Jerusalem enquiring: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Then Herod asked the chief priests and scribes, who answered: "In Bethlehem of Judea." Continuing their journey, the wise men finally arrived at the house where the Child was, having been guided by the star; and there they fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2: 1-11.) Gifts fitting indeed for a King!

Christ the Glory of Israel

Then again we read that when the Child was taken to the temple, to have done for Him those things according to the law of Moses, His parents were met by a devout man—the aged Simeon; to whom it had been revealed that he should see the Lord's Christ before he died. Simeon at once took the Child in his arms, and in giving thanks to God said:

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

A song of thanksgiving indeed were these words, in honour of the Glory of Israel—the Saviour.—Luke 2: 21-32.

Then came Anna, a prophetess, who "gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem," or Israel.—Luke 2: 36-38, margin.

Growing in Wisdom and Favour

At His birth the Son of God was indeed acclaimed; but of the period in which He grew up at Nazareth, there is little mention. Each mention we do have, however, does Him honour. Two or three incidents and statements give the only glimpses obtainable of this epoch. We learn that He was subject to His parents. He "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."—Luke 2: 40, 51, 52.

At the age of 12 years, at which age a Jewish boy was held to have finished his elementary training and began to learn a trade, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem, and at this time occurred the incident of His tarrying behind at Jerusalem when they were returning home; and after three days the discovery of Him in the temple, seated among the doctors, "both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." No ordinary boy was this, who could cause the learned ones of Israel to be astounded!

His Baptism and Revealing to John

When our Lord became about 30 years of age, we read He came to John the Baptist, to be immersed at his hands in Jordan. But the Baptist, recognizing the sinlessness of the Son of David, shrank from performing this ceremony, for the Lord had no sins for which to be repentant. But the Lord insisted, saying, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (Matthew 3: 15.) Then, when Jesus had come up out of the water, we read, "and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him [John], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matthew 3: 16, 17.

This was one of the greatest acknowledgments our Lord could have received—His heavenly Father's voice commending Him.

And we read that John bare record of this incident (John 1: 29-34)—

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away [margin, beareth away] the sin of the world.
This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.
And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptising with water.
And John bear record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.
And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Spirit.
And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

The next day the Baptist repeated the same emphatic testimony in the presence of two disciples, who, impressed by what they heard, dwelt with Jesus that night. One of these two, Andrew, then found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ"; that is, the Anointed. And Simon also recognised in Jesus the long promised Messiah. —John 2: 35-41.

Jesus Calling Disciples

Some time later Jesus called Philip, another young Galilean, who in turn brought to Jesus the guileless Israelite, Nathanael, saying: "We have found him of

whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Nathanael questioned this by asking the oft repeated question: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" to which the response was: "Come and see." And after Nathanael had both seen and heard, he exclaimed: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."—John 2: 45-49.

So much then for the reception which our Lord was accorded at the beginning of His ministry.

Cleansing the Temple

After some time spent in Galilee, Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover, and, while there, He cleansed the temple of its desecrating traffic, an act which caused the Jews to demand a sign as to His authority. His reply was: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And, although the true meaning of His answer was not manifest until some time afterwards, the words were remembered, for they subsequently formed one of the chief accusations against the Lord at His so-called trial.—John 2: 18-22.

During this passover miracles were performed, and, thus early in His public ministry, many believed in His name, among whom was Nicodemus, the Pharisee, with whom the Lord held at night the memorable discourse on the new birth.—John 3.

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

Jesus is then found on His way to Galilee, choosing the route through Samaria, and it was to the woman at the well that He delivered those wonderful words about the Water of Life, and Worship in Spirit and in Truth. Many of that city believed on account of the testimony the woman gave, as well as many more because of the words they themselves heard during His two days' stay with them.—John 4.

Speaking with Authority and Power

Although Jesus well knew that a prophet is often least respected in His own country and among his own kindred, He made His way, preaching as He went, to Nazareth. During His travelling, we read that His fame was spreading in the regions round about. After leaving Nazareth, He dwelt at the little city of Capernaum, and there, on the sabbath days, taught in the synagogue. "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power." He also healed the raving demoniac who was present in the synagogue, and they were all amazed, saying: "What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out."—Luke 4: 31-37.

The fame of this day rang throughout the country, and when He found that seclusion was impossible, He went from village to village in Galilee, preaching the gospel. It was about this time that He preached to the multitude from Peter's boat, having to resort thither on account of the dense throng.—Luke 5.

Then again, the Sermon on the Mount, spoken before a gathering of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from as far as the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon. (Matthew 4: 23: 5: 1.) From this time onward He was always surrounded by a thronging multitude. On one occasion when our Lord found Himself surrounded by a great company anxious to hear His words and see the miracles, He began to teach them in parables. (Matthew 13.) Again, on another occasion, after He had passed over the Sea of Galilee, the number of people who followed Him, and who partook of the miraculously increased loaves and fishes, was stated to have been about 5,000. (Matthew 14: 13-21.) All this—the multitude anxious both to see and to hear—showed the success of the Lord's mission in so far as the willingness of the people to receive it was concerned.

After more than sufficient had been provided to feed 5,000 from five barley loaves and two small fishes, the people said: "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world," and He perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him a king. (John 6: 14, 15.) On another occasion when Jesus was teaching in the temple, some of the people acclaimed: "This is the Christ." (John 7: 40, 41.) And when the officers of the Pharisees and chief priests returned without Jesus as their prisoner—for this was the purpose for which they were present—the Pharisees enquired the reason; and the officers answered, "Never man spake like this man"; to which the Pharisees replied: "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?"—John 7: 45-48.

Perhaps the most notable miracle which the Lord performed during His earthly ministry was that of the resurrection of Lazarus after he had lain in the grave four days. When our Lord questioned Martha on this occasion regarding her belief, she replied: "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world"—a recognition that He was indeed the anointed—the Christ—sent by God in fulfilment of the promises.

Peerless in Debate

In another aspect, also, the Lord Jesus Christ gained many victories, and that was in His debates with the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, doctors of the law, and others of like learning. On the occasion when, at Capernaum, the sick man was healed after having been let down through the roof, certain of the scribes who saw the miracle accused the Lord of blasphemy because He said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matthew 9: 2-8; Mark 2: 2-12.) It was then shown, conclusively, that this was not blasphemous, for the Father immediately honoured His Son in the healing of that poor man. Here we are reminded of Hebrews 2: 4, that God bore witness to the truth of the gospel "both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." In every case God bore witness to His Son, as is said also in John 5: 22, 23—"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Hence to forgive sins was the prerogative of the Son, as well as to perform works of healing.

Successful Exposing of Inconsistency and Hypocrisy

Another occasion on which the Lord came into collision with the rulers was when He healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, and thereby excited the bitter enmity of the Jews by ignoring the exaggerated minuteness of their own traditions, which made them regard it as a heinous crime to carry even the smallest burden on the sabbath day. The simple command to the sick man, to take up his bed and walk, aroused the Jewish leaders to fury, and henceforth they sought to slay Him because He had done these things on the sabbath.—John 5: 2-13.

Again and again the anger of the scribes and Pharisees was kindled on this point of sabbath observance. For the healed man to carry his bed on the sabbath was to them an offence, a breaking of the law. They indignantly challenged the conduct of the hungry disciples in plucking ears of corn and rubbing them in their hands on the sabbath day. (Matthew 12: 1-8.) They attacked Him for healing on the sabbath day the man with the withered hand (Matthew 12: 9, 10), and later on for healing on the sabbath the woman and the blind man at Jerusalem. (Luke 13: 10-17; John 9: 1-16.) On each of these occasions He exposed their inconsistency and hypocrisy.

When the poor wretch who was possessed of a devil, being both blind and dumb, was healed, the Pharisees attempted to check the astonished admiration of the people by asserting that He cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. (Matthew 12: 22-30; Mark 3: 22; Luke 11: 14-26.) This blasphemous accusation brought down upon their heads a very stern rebuke. Such words, addressed to men who were accustomed to unbounded admiration as infallible teachers, aroused them to the deadliest hostility.

On entering the temple (always a time of great agitation and spying by the rulers), just prior to His death, Jesus was met by a formidable deputation of priests and scribes, who demanded to know "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"—

questions He declined to answer until they answered His question regarding the baptism of John. Their confession of inability and unwillingness to answer this question was the reason why the Lord Jesus refused to answer theirs. —Matthew 21: 23-27; Mark 11: 27-33.

The Opposers put to Silence

On the next day Jesus was met with a plot of the Pharisees to embroil Him in trouble with either the Romans or the populace, their question being on the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar; then by a question from the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, and then by a question from a scribe regarding "the great commandment of the law."

In each instance the Lord's ready answer defeated the stratagem of the opposers. He then exposed their complete ignorance of the very subject on which they claimed the fullest knowledge, by their inability to explain why David in spirit had given the title of Lord to the Messiah, who was to be his (David's) son. So well answered were they, that we read, "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." (Matthew 22.) That battle was won; they could not catch Him in His words.

The Triumphal Entry

Some few days before the Lord's death He made His triumphal entry into Jeruaslem amid the enthusiastic throng, who shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." All this was of course galling to the Jewish rulers, and when those children who followed continued to acclaim Him, He was asked to silence them. But, instead, He replied, "Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"—Matthew 21: 4-16; Zechariah 9: 9; Psalm 8: 2.

Then, on the very last night of His earthly life, after He had met with the disciples and partaken of the Passover supper, He instituted the Memorial Supper. And, after singing a hymn, they went out and walked to the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus committed himself to God in prayer, expressing His complete submission to the Father's will. Then suddenly torches are seen upon the night, as the traitor and the priests and officers and the crowd make their way to the garden. There Judas betrayed Him with a kiss, and He resigned himself into their hands, rebuked the rash blow of Peter, and by an act of mercy healed the wound of Malchus, the servant of the high priest.

He is bound, first taken to Annas, who sent him to Caiaphas, the High Priest. After some questioning, Caiaphas adjured Him by the living God to say whether He was the Messiah, the Son of God. To this appeal Jesus replied—

"Thou hast said [that is, thou hast correctly stated my title and position]: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."—Matthew 26: 63, 64; John 18: 19-23.

Thereupon Caiaphas rent his clothes in wrath, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy." After further remarks and directions from Caiaphas, the council of the Sanhedrin declared Him guilty of death.

At the conclusion of this examination, Jesus was remanded until the break of day; and, after the chief priests had held their consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, they delivered their prisoner to Pilate, to obtain his sanction to the sentence, for they themselves had long been deprived of the right to put any one to death.

That morning, Pilate went out to hear a wild mob with blundering accusations. But after a brief examination of Jesus, he announced that the charge was not sustained. Then, in the wild clamour that ensued, Pilate caught the word Galilee, and when he found that Jesus belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he, thinking to be rid of the matter, sent Him to Herod.

But before Herod, as also before Pilate, Jesus maintained silence so far as the long list of false accusations was concerned. He knew it would be useless to show their falsity, for the determination of the chief priests and rulers to encompass His death was increasingly manifest. Questions He considered relevant, such as His right to call Himself the Son of God and King of the Jews, He answered without demur. Herod contented himself with a mockery, and then sent Him again to Pilate with a practical acquittal.

Although Jesus answered nothing concerning the accusations made against Him, when Pilate inquired: "Art Thou a king then?" Jesus answered and said, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."—John 18: 33-37.

In all this distressing so-called trial, alike before the High Priest and Pilate and Herod, the Son of God remained dignified—no cringing, no withdrawals of His claim to Messiahship. He was, even as Nathanael had said near the beginning of His ministry, the King of the Jews.

Finally, Pilate, at the incessant demand of the mob—hounded on as they were by the chief priests and rulers—delivered Jesus to be scourged. Pilate made one more appeal to their compassion, in the words, "Behold the man!" and, still later, "Behold your King!" After publicly washing his hands, in token that he was innocent of His death, Pilate pronounced the fatal order for crucifixion. The Jews were greatly annoyed when Pilate placed over the cross the inscription: "King of the Jews." On the cross Jesus hung for some hours in agony, while the Roman soldiers parted His garments, and cast lots for His coat, and the mob, the priests, even the crucified malefactors, joined in taunting Him. But He answered not.

After His prayer to the Father, quoting the opening words of the 22nd Psalm, Jesus spoke only a few words to His mother, to take John as her son; to John, giving His mother into John's care; to the attendants, "I thirst." He commended His spirit into the Father's hands, and, lastly, uttered one victorious cry, "It is finished."

Thus the work which His Father had commissioned Him to do had been accomplished—not one iota left undone or incomplete. He said of himself that He did always the things that pleased the Father, and at last, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—John 17: 4; 19: 30.

The cross, whilst the culmination of hatred on the Jews' part, was the triumphant completion of God's holy will by His beloved Son!

—P. C. G.



Satan's Failures when Tempting Christ

THE MISSION of the Lord Jesus to the Jews was successful from the divine standpoint, for He accomplished all that the Father had sent Him to do. Jesus called the disciples to follow Him, taught the people about the coming kingdom of God, gave them the principles of the New Covenant, explained how that it was necessary for Him to die, healed the sick and raised the dead; and in all these things He revealed the Father's will.

Satan did his best to tempt the Lord from His work and prevent Him from carrying out the Father's will. He was tempted by Satan through the scribes and Phari-

sees, through His own disciples, and even directly to His face at the very beginning of His ministry, as related in Matthew 4: 1-11.

In Christ's temptation in the wilderness are seen Satan's subtle daring and lying propositions on the one hand, and our Lord's triumphant conquest, with Scriptural answers, on the other.

Appeal to Physical Wants

Firstly, Satan tried Him on His physical condition, the Lord being hungry after forty days' fast: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

The subtlety of this temptation consisted in the endeavour to get the Lord to prove His sonship by doing something God had not commanded Him to do. God did not send Jesus into the world to turn stones into bread to satisfy His own physical wants. To the contrary, He came to do the will of God, as He indicated in His reply to Satan—"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Matthew 4: 4.

God had fed Israel in the wilderness by speaking the word and the manna came. With equal ease could God by a word have sent Jesus manna or other nourishment by speaking the Word. And Jesus was content to wait upon His Father to supply His needs in His own time and way.

Appeal to Pride and Bombast

Then the Evil One tried Him on another line of attack. Knowing that the Lord had been sent on a special mission to the Jews, Satan sought to get control over Him and His mission by inducing Him to begin His work in the manner dictated by him the Evil One, and not as directed by God.

Satan said, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down:" There are two points to be noticed in this second temptation. As in the first temptation, the Evil One wanted Jesus to demonstrate that He was the Son of God by doing something God had not told Him to do—on the principle that one is the servant of the person whose orders he takes. Instead of demonstrating by such an act that He was the Son of God, Jesus would have demonstrated that He was the tool of Satan.

The second point to be noticed is the subtle manner in which the Evil One sought to cover up the temptation to sin against God, by apparently giving God as authority for his demand. Notice how Satan misapplied portion of Psalm 91, wherein promises are given to him who dwells in the secret place of the most High and abides under the shadow of the Almighty.—Verse 1.

Verses 9 to 12 declare that if he made the Lord the most High his refuge and habitation God would give his angels "charge over" him, to keep him in all his ways, and to bear him up. But Satan was endeavouring to induce the Lord to make him (that is, Satan) His refuge by carrying out his (Satan's) wishes, that God had not commanded Him. Jesus' reply was to the point—"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."—Matthew 4: 7; Deuteronomy 6: 16.

For Jesus to have assumed that God promised to preserve Him while doing the will of Satan would have placed God in an awkward position; for in order to preserve His Son, God also would have become the servant of Satan.

Our Lord's replies in these temptations are a good lesson to us; namely, to adhere closely to God's will and not presume that God at any time sustains us in doing the will of the Evil One.

God's way for Jesus to conduct His mission to the Jews was to preach the gospel in an unostentatious manner. Isaiah (42: 1, 2) wrote: Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." Jesus began His work quietly teaching and preaching, while healing the sick and maimed in evidence that He was sent by God, by whose power the miracles were performed. This prophecy is quoted by Matthew (12: 14-21) in connection with an incident which caused the Lord to withdraw himself from the crowds. It was not then the time to have the Pharisees and the Council stirred up in efforts to secure His death.

Satan's way, that our Saviour should cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, savoured of pride and bombast and foolish sensationalism, and would have placed the Lord in line with the practices of false teachers and worshippers of false gods. The support promised in the Psalm was not provided for sensational display, but for those who hide themselves under the shadow of the Almighty. This Jesus did, and He was upheld and preserved throughout all His trials and sufferings.

Whose are the Kingdoms to Give?

The third temptation was a desperate effort by the Evil One to secure the Lord's obedience to his will, for he uttered a lie (which the Lord would recognize as a lie), when he said if the Lord would fall down and worship him he would give Him "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them."

Satan's lie consisted in claiming that he had the kingdoms to give.—Matthew 4: 8, 9.

Satan had usurped a certain amount of power over mankind, and has been called "the god of this world," who blinds the minds of them who believe not. (2 Corinthians 4: 4.) But he had no real authority, for God had already promised the kingdoms of this world to His Son, as we read in Psalm 2: 8—

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

And the prophet Isaiah (42: 4) said—"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."

Again the Lord Jesus emphatically proclaimed that He came to do God's will and not Satan's—"Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—Matthew 4: 10.

A good lesson is here for us, not to encourage the tempter by dallying with his propositions. "Get thee hence" is the proper way to deal with the Evil One.

Although Satan on this occasion left the Lord, it was not for long; for he continued in various ways to seek to entice Him through the instrumentality of others.

God did not suffer His Son to lack the necessary provision for His needs; for the angels of God came and ministered to Him. So will He do with us.—Matthew 4: 11; Hebrews 1: 14.

Satan's Rash Presumption

In thus attempting to turn the Lord Jesus against God, Satan exhibited not only great pride in his own skill, but also the extent to which he was self-deluded; for this was not the first time that the Lord Jesus had had a contest with him.

Satan knew very well that our Lord Jesus was the Son of God, and that He had come to earth to carry out a certain work. And the Lord Jesus, while yet in heaven, had observed Satan's evil work.

As the Father's agent in creation Jesus knew all the angels in heaven, including Satan. He saw Satan's evil work in Eden, and knew that He, the Son of God, should be the "Seed" promised who would yet destroy the arch-enemy of mankind. The Lord Jesus had equal opportunity with Satan to seek dominion over Eden contrary to God's will, but He would not usurp God's authority over the newly created pair.

All through the centuries the Lord Jesus was steadfast in devotion to the Father, and so when He had come in the flesh as the first step in the deliverance of mankind Satan sought to trap Him in the wilderness. But the Lord knew His adversary, and rebuked his misquotations and misapplications of Scripture.

Satan used the scribes and Pharisees in his endeavour to turn away the Lord from His mission—by making things unpleasant for Him.

They laid traps to catch Him in His words, to make Him appear as a false teacher in the eyes of the people. But in these attacks the Lord triumphed over Satan in

the wonderful answers He gave them, so that the people standing around and hearing the discussions, instead of being turned against the Lord, marvelled at His wisdom, and said, "Never man spake like this man."—John 7: 46.

Even the disciples Satan tried to make use of to discourage the Lord in His work. No doubt he was largely instrumental in stirring up the disputations among them. And when near the end of His mission the Lord informed them that His hour was near to be delivered up. Then Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."

In opposing the Lord on this matter of His going to death, *Peter made himself an agent of Satan. The Lord* so viewed it, for He said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." —Matthew 16: 23.

The Lord's Attack on Satan's Stronghold

It had been foretold in Genesis 3: 15 that Satan would *endeavour to injure the Lord Jesus*, but that the Lord Jesus would triumph over him. God said to the Evil One who had used the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The Lord's mission on earth included an attack on one of Satan's strongholds. Many people were suffering from devil possession. These devils or demons were Satan's servants, doing his work, afflicting the human race wherever possible, as illustrated in the various cases recorded where persons so possessed were afflicted with diseases, dumbness, insanity, convulsions, throwing themselves into the fire, and so on.

Satan showed his character by the works which he directed his servants to do. Hence when the Lord came doing miracles and casting out demons, the Lord showed His superiority over Satan.

When some accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the Lord said (Luke 11: 20-22)—

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.
21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:
22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils:

This shows a definite attack on Satan's dominion, which Satan was unable to resist. The Lord demonstrated that He was stronger than Satan.

The Lord at this hour did not altogether dispossess Satan, but it was sufficient demonstration of His supremacy over Satan to show that He was the One mentioned in Genesis. Further bruising of Satan's head and his entire destruction are still to come.

Mark 3: 28-30 shows the culpability of those who saw Jesus' holy life and wonderful miracles, and yet described Him as agent of Beelzebub.

In the Lord was manifested the Holy Spirit of God, His works being deeds of kindness and benevolence—"who *went about doing good, and healing all that were* oppressed of the devil."—Acts 10: 38; Matthew 4: 23, 24.

The opposite spirit was shown by the evil angels who took possession and brought suffering and misery and distress everywhere they could gain an entrance. The people should have been able to discriminate between the two, and should have recognized the Lord as the Son of God and their Messiah.

The fact that they allowed themselves to be swayed by the scribes and Pharisees into opposition to the Lord to the extent of crucifying Him was a serious matter. The Lord said—

All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.
And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world [or, age], neither in the world [or, age] to come.—Matthew 12: 31, 32.

The people were excusable for some of their mistaken actions toward the Lord personally as the despised Nazarene, but there was no excuse for confusing good works as demonstrated by Him and the evil works of Satan, the evil angels, of the hypocrites and envious scribes and Pharisees.

Through all His ministry and the contradiction of sinners against Himself, the Lord never wavered.

Even though the children of Israel and the evil angels and Satan himself thought they had won a victory when they saw Christ crucified on the Cross, yet we know that such thoughts on their parts displayed deep ignorance of the power of God, for through the Cross Jesus Christ won a marvellous triumph, and has been placed in a position to deal much more effectively with Satan and His works.

—J. McK.

Binding of Angels that Sinned

DURING OUR LORD'S MINISTRY He often rebuked *the evil spirits or demons who had abused God's* leniency toward them by taking up their habitation in human beings for shorter or longer periods. At the Lord's command they were bound to come out, and they often resented His interference with their impositions on humanity.

But this was not our Lord's first meeting with these spirits. As we have already heard to-day, the Scriptures teach that our Lord had a prehuman existence; that is, that before coming to earth He had lived in heaven as a mighty spirit being. Consequently to leave His glory and be made flesh a great miracle had of necessity to be performed.

He knew Satan, and had been a witness of his transgressions. He knew also those angels which the apostle Peter tells us had sinned in the days of Noah. Let us review briefly the history of those angels.

Angel Messengers to Men

It appears from what we read in the Old and New Testaments that the angels as heavenly spirit beings had been given the knowledge and ability to create for themselves fleshly bodies, thus enabling them to appear before men in human form. This power God had granted to them not that they might use it according to their own will or desires, but rather in order that they might in this way be used by God to act as messengers from Himself to men. It is to be understood that the Almighty in sending His messages is not restricted to this method alone; His ways are many and varied; even the winds and the flames can be used by Him for the accomplishment of His purposes. (Hebrews 1: 7.) But this angelic visitation was one of the ways by which He chose to convey His messages.

We read of Abraham as one who was honoured by such a visit, and it is probably he who is referred to in Hebrews 13: 2 as having "entertained angels unawares." (Genesis 18.) Lot also is mentioned as having had a similar experience. (Genesis 19: 1.) Then there are the parents of Samson, Manoah and his wife. In this instance will be remembered the peculiar way in which the angel departed. How Manoah took a kid with a meat offering and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord, and we are told that "the angel did wondrously" while Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, that the angel ascended in the flame, and thus disappeared from their sight.—Judges 13: 16-20.

This evidently was the duty of the angel or angels concerned: having delivered the message, they were to discard the body assumed for the purpose, and return to

their right and proper estate. These messengers from God, who appeared to Abraham and Lot, Manoah and his wife, and other of His people, mentioned in Scripture, were angels who respected their Creator—being obedient to His will, and not going beyond it in their visitations to men. But not all the angels continued to be obedient.

Disobedient Angels

In Genesis 6, we read of some self-willed angels who misused the powers God had given them by leaving their original estate, preferring to live and carry on as men. Hence we read that there were giants in the earth in those days. Such conduct, which was indeed a grievous sin and an act of absolute disobedience, did not go unpunished. The deluge which subsequently followed was of course no punishment to them, they were able to escape that by forsaking their assumed bodies, which by reason of the rising flood they were forced to do. Nevertheless they received punishment, not the sentence of death, no such pronouncement having been made against them for their sin, as was done in the case of Adam.

But their punishment was none the less adequate and severe. They were not permitted again to enter heaven. Peter described their punishment: God "cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."—2 Peter 2: 4.

Neither Hades nor Gehenna, which are elsewhere rendered *"hell" in the Authorized Version, occurs in this* passage. The four words "cast down to hell" are a translation of the one word employed in the text; namely, "tartaroo," which is the verb corresponding to the noun "tartaros," defined by Strong as meaning abyss; tartaroo therefore would mean incarcerated in an abyss. Of similar meaning is the Greek word "abussos," defined by Strong's Concordance as meaning "depthless," i.e. (specifically) abyss. Abussos is translated "bottomless pit" no less than seven times in the book of Revelation, but there is no justification for the use of the word "bottomless" in English, there being no corresponding term in the Greek. An abyss is not bottomless, and in Luke 8: 31 abussos is correctly rendered "the deep." A deep fissure in the mountain is an abyss; so is the basin of the ocean, which is commonly referred to as the "briny deep," "the deep blue sea," etc. But the "deep" of Luke 8: 31 is neither of these; neither is it, as many suppose, a place of eternal torment. Whatever it was, the "legion" of demons had been able to leave it to take possession of this man, and they implored the Lord not to send them there. Evidently it was a place or condition to which they anticipated the Lord would command them to go.

Jude (vs. 6) referring to these evil spirits as "angels which kept not their first estate," says they are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of *the great day." Everlasting may mean never coming* to an end, or it may mean continuous for a long term—signifying "lasting" or "enduring," the length of time being indicated by the context, which in this instance is "unto the judgment of the great day."

That literal chains are not here meant is evident, for chains of iron or steel would be inadequate to bind a spirit being. The word chains should rather be taken to indicate restriction, and one of the restrictions since the flood has been their inability to create human bodies for themselves. Another reason for referring to these restrictions as "chains" is that though by God's command restrained from creating human bodies, yet they perversely endeavour to come as near to it as possible, and find satisfaction in taking possession of human beings. Therefore the "deep" to which they are confined, and which they are forced to inhabit, is the atmosphere of our earth, which is also correctly described as an "abyss."

Thus we have the full meaning of the Greek word "tartaroo," and further information is given by 1 Peter *3: 19, 20, where these evil angels are called "the spirits* in prison."

Everlasting restriction "under darkness," physical darkness perhaps, but certainly mental, constitutes their "prison." Being banished from the presence of God, the Father of lights, having as it were their line of communication cut, mental darkness is the inevitable result.

Present Activities of the Fallen Angels

This state of mental and spiritual darkness is demonstrated in their works; for, although rendered unable to appear as men, these fallen angels have been continually active in their evil associations with mankind. As far back as the records of nations go, there are ample indications of their wicked activities. Idol worship, witchcraft, soothsaying, necromancy (which means claimed communion with the dead), are all ways and means by which these evil spirits have sought with a great measure of success to impose on human credulity.

A desire to worship is part of man's makeup, and is profitable, if the desire be cultivated, and rightly directed; *for God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* But to worship natural or manufactured objects is not only a reflection on the mentality, it is also very unprofitable. Yet, notwithstanding this, men throughout the ages have persisted in it.

It is believed that among the earliest objects of worship regarded as symbols of deity were the meteoric stones. Later, regard was transferred from these to rough unhewn blocks, to stone columns or pillars of wood, in which the divinity worshipped was supposed to dwell. The sun, moon, and all the host of heaven were also worshipped, either separately or collectively, at one time or another. But we have not many traces in the Bible of the forms given to idolatrous images.

The God of the Philistines, "Dagon," is thought to have been a human figure terminating in the form of a fish, and kept in "the house of Dagon" (probably a huge temple).—1 Samuel 5: 1-5.

There were also the golden calf that Aaron made for the children of Israel while Moses was in the mount, and the brazen serpent that Moses made, and which we are told was afterwards applied to idolatrous uses, but subsequently destroyed by the good King Hezekiah.—Exodus 32: 1-4; Acts 7: 40, 41; 2 Kings 18: 1-4.

An early allusion in the Scriptures to idolatrous practice is the mention of Terah the father of Abraham as one who served other gods (Joshua 24: 1, 2); then there is the account of Rachel stealing her father's teraphim (Genesis 31: 19), possibly a relic of the worship of other gods whom the ancestors of the Israelites served in old time. It is thought that by these household deities Laban was guided, and these he consulted as oracles.

By this it will be readily seen that the evil spirits lost no time in beclouding men's minds, binding them up in superstition and ignorance. The law given to the children of Israel revealed idolatry for what it was. The whole of Deuteronomy 13 is devoted to exhortations and warnings against idolaters and idolatrous practices. Anyone seeking to entice another away from the worship of the true God to worship idols did so under the penalty of death. Nevertheless, although the Israelites were fully informed, not only of the sinfulness of idolatry but also of the consequences, they repeatedly fell into the same iniquitous practices as their evil neighbours. Pointing out the vanity of idols, and the folly of idol makers, the Lord through the Prophet Isaiah (chapter 44) says—

10 Who hath formed a god, or molten an image that is profitable for nothing?

14 He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

15 Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; Yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it; and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

18 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

19 And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

Yet through the six to eight thousand years of human experience men do not seem to have learned any better.

Right in (as it were) the heart of present day civilization people still bow down to images and pictures in their churches, and have even gone so far as to worship a piece of bread, the most strange of all gods.—Daniel 11: 39.

Various Idols

But idol worship is not necessarily confined to the religious realm, as some may think. In Colossians 3: 5 we are told that covetousness is idolatry. In this way one can be an idolater without performing the ceremony of bowing down to the stock of a tree, or a picture, or the wafer as practised in the mass. Greed is covetousness. The word "covet" means "a strong desire to obtain." By this means the mind or heart can set up its own idol; it may be money, position, sport, alcohol, or anything else that the mind or heart sets its affection upon. The whole world more or less pursues a course of idolatry; therefore to keep free from idols we must be dead to the world.

There is only one thing which we as believers in Jesus can, should, and indeed must earnestly covet, and that is to do God's will. So earnestly occupied should we be in this, as to have no time at all to covet anything else. By so doing we will be taking heed to the Apostle John's exhortation when he says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."—1 John 5: 21.

The Demons and Idolatry

Idol worship is demon worship; hence any one offering a sacrifice to an idol sacrifices to the demons who are at the back of the idol, and not to God; and, says the apostle, "I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."—1 Corinthians 10: 14-20.

To have fellowship with the true God, through true worship, transforms the character; making the worshipper more God-like, more pure in heart and mind. To have fellowship with devils or demons through idol worship is to be drawn closer to them, moulding the character to their shape, which (according to Romans 1) is anything but desirable.

Enchantments and Divination

But, as has been already said, the wicked operations of the fallen angels are not exclusive to idolatry. The account of the magicians of Egypt in their effort to defy Moses reveals their activities in a slightly different light. It shows us something of their powers of enchantment, and how directly concerned they are in opposition to God. The narrative is also an encouragement to us, in that it demonstrates how they are allowed to go so far and no farther, being obliged to recognize the superior power of God. However, they have not been prevented from taking possession of human beings who are willing to submit to them. It is by this means that necromancy was, and still is, practised. The word "necromancy" is defined by the Standard Dictionary as meaning, "Divination by means of pretended communication with the dead." A necromancer means literally one who seeks the dead. Among the abominations which Jehovah forbade His people Israel to practice are several which correspond exactly with the manifestations of modern spiritists. From this it may be seen that it is no new thing to seek the dead. In Deuteronomy 18: 9-13 we read—

9 When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.
10 There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,
11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necremancer.
12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.
13 Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God.

There can be no doubt about the meaning of this prohibition. The description, "a consulter with familiar spirits," is appropriate to the medium of to-day, who in a trance goes under the control of a superhuman power mentioned here as a "familiar spirit," but now known as the "control." From what we read in Isaiah 8: 19-22, this seeking unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter, became so bad that in time the light of truth disappeared from among the people; hence they were left in a serious state of mental darkness. It indicates that spiritualism, and supposed communion with the dead, was then as now obtained by the same means; namely, through mediums. The case of Saul and the witch of Endor, as related in 1 Samuel 28, provides a striking parallel between the doings of necromancers then and the spiritists of to-day.

Saul may be likened to the enquirer of to-day;
The witch of Endor, to the modern spirit medium;
The impersonation of Samuel by a fallen angel, to the modern impersonation of a dead relative or friend by the same.

So we see that the activity of the fallen angels in modern spiritism is nothing new; it is the old deception adjusted to present times. Spiritists do not know that the supposed relation or friend is in reality a fallen angel; they do not know that the supposed relative or friend is over 6,000 years old, but we do, and when we tell them what we know they will not accept it. We know because we believe what the Scriptures tell us.

The Scriptures also tell us that the Lord Jesus was God's active agent in creating those angels which later on fell away and became the "fallen" angels, for "without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1: 3; Colossians 1: 16.) It was in those ancient days that our Lord occupied the highest position in the heavens next to the Father, and while in this position witnessed the angelic rebellion and the condemnation which followed.

The Angel of His Presence

Not only was our Lord the agent of the Father in creation, but He was also the Archangel who supervised the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their settlement in the promised land. He is spoken of in Daniel 10: 21 as "Michael your prince"—evidently referring here to His office as Captain or Leader of Israel, thus identifying Him with what we read in Isaiah 63: 9, which speaks of Him as "the angel of his presence"—

9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. [Compare Exodus 23: 20; 33: 14; 40: 36-38.]

The "days of old" is no doubt a reference to Israel's deliverance from Egypt and their subsequent wanderings in the wilderness, where they were led by the cloud in the day, and fire by night. In 1 Corinthians 10 we have further confirmation as to who is meant by "the angel of his presence." The apostle, speaking of Israel's journeyings, says (vss. 3, 4)—

And [they] did all eat the same spiritual meat;
And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them [or, went with them]: and that Rock was Christ.

Herein is the pre-existence of our Lord clearly established, and it would be during that time that He would acquire first-hand knowledge: not only of the character of the people to whom He subsequently came, but also of the unchanged character of the evil angels who pestered them. When therefore He travelled Galilee and Judea casting out demons, He knew full well what He was doing. He knew of their disobedience in the days of Noah, and of their being bound in chains of darkness; He knew of their association with idol worship, and of their imposition on humanity through spiritualism. He knew also that they were being reserved unto judgment, and that all judgment had been committed unto Him. (John 5: 22.) The fact that He cast them out is a proof in itself that they should not be there; it shows also that He had been given authority over them. We read of His sending out seventy disciples, giving them also the same power. The result caused great rejoicing, for they returned saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." And Jesus said unto them, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke 10: 1-20.) It was a great triumph indeed, yet only a foretaste of the ultimate triumph when all enemies should be put under His feet.

Evil Spirits Acknowledge the Son of God

It has been asserted by some, that persons possessed of an evil spirit were not really so, but were merely afflicted with insanity or some other form of disease. But such a view ignores the fact that the spirits recognized the Lord, calling out, and sometimes answering Him. We have evidence of this in the gospels, how at the very beginning of His ministry, while Jesus was in the synagogue at Capernaum, one of them cried out with a loud voice saying—

Let us alone: what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

On another occasion unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, "Thou art the Son of God." (Luke 4: 34; Mark 1: 24; Mark 3: 11.) In Luke 8 we read of a man possessed of many devils. It will be remembered that the Lord Jesus with His disciples had arrived at the country of the Gadarenes; and beginning at verse 27 we read—

27 And when he [Jesus] went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.
28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.
29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)
30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.
31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.
Compare Matthew 8: 29; Mark 5: 7.

Higher critics and others would have a difficult task to explain away the narrative just quoted. What does a lunatic know about "the deep," the place which Peter tells us the fallen angels are confined to? We who believe the Scripture teaching concerning the existence of spirit beings can realise that the evil spirits knew something about it, hence the request, "torment me not." Apparently it is torment for them to be "cast out" of the human being they are in possession of. Anyone having a strong longing desire without any immediate hope of gratifying it may well be said to be in torment, and such would be their experience if "cast out"; they would be forced to look for another tenement.

Rather than go into "the deep," they asked to be allowed to enter a herd of swine. The result was disastrous; the swine ran down the bank into the sea and were drowned.

Here we might pause to reflect on the spirits' request. It reveals to us, does it not, how degraded they have become; they who were once perfect, holy angels showing a willingness to stoop so low as to wish to enter swine. Nevertheless, at the Lord's command they were bound to come out of the man; and, the swine providing only a temporary respite, they would thus find themselves back in "the deep" or "abyss" where for the time being they rightly belong.

The Almighty in His great love and mercy has left a ray of hope even for them, in that they are being reserved unto a day of judgment. The fact that the spirits came out at the Lord's command proves to us that He is Lord not only of us, but also of them. The record is that numbers of persons possessed of evil spirits were brought to Jesus to be healed, and when called upon to "come out" the devils did so, thus recognizing an authority they perforce had to obey. All corroborating that our Lord Jesus while on earth had for a time a royal progress, not only as King of the Jews, but also as Lord of the fallen angels.

Those who think of Jesus as a man like other men make a grave mistake. If He was, then He would not have been a corresponding price to Adam, hence could not have redeemed us. Then again, how could we understand such scriptures as John 6: 62, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Also John 17: 5, where He asks the Father for the glory He had with Him before the world was. No ordinary man could say this, for no human being has ever lived before the world was. But the Lord Jesus could, and did. Therefore let us not be of those who think of Him as being no different from anyone else, but let us recognize Him in His true position. Let us realize that He who was the agent of God in creation emptied Himself of that glory, and became a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. Instead of making light of His work, let us seek to magnify it—not only in our verbal testimony, but also in our lives; endeavouring to say and do only those things which are according to His word and will.

—R. E. C.

Christ's Obedience unto Death, even the Death of the Cross

OUR CONFERENCE TOPIC, The Triumph of the Cross, is centred round that Great One who was crucified upon the cross of Calvary, with this inscription, by Pilate's order—"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." (John 19: 19.) His death was directly brought about by the action of the leaders of the Jewish nation in combination with the Roman power, as had been foretold in Psalm 2, words being cited and so applied by the disciples at one of their earliest gatherings after the event (Acts 4: 25-27)—

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen [Gentiles] rage, and the people [or, tribes] imagine vain things?
26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.
27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people [or tribes] of Israel, were gathered together.

In this scripture the word "heathen" should be rendered "Gentiles," and in verses 25 and 27 the word "people" should be "tribes." In verse 27 the Sinaitic, Alexandrine, and Vatican 1209 manuscripts add "in this city," and the Revised Version includes the words.

Our Lord's experiences and triumphs, from the beginning of His ministry to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, have already been reviewed and commented upon. It will therefore now be our honour and privilege to consider the culmination of His life upon earth: the severe trials and testings of His obedience to the Father's will; the wonderful courage and endurance amidst the great number of bitter enemies wholly intent on His death, and heaping every form of humiliation and indignity upon Him, in order to satiate their malice against Him; also the unswerving obedience which made possible His triumph over all.

The apostle Paul in a few words shows the grandeur of our Lord's character, His fidelity to the Father from first to last. We read (Philippians 2: 5-8)—

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in the form of God [or, in God's form], thought it not robbery to be equal with God [or, "did not meditate a usurpation to be like God"—Turnbull and Diaglott]:
7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

When we consider our Lord's high estate in His prehuman condition, as described in John 1: 1-3, that He was with God, that "all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made"; that He was a God—or Mighty One—the Father's sole agent in the creation of all things, we can realize that our Lord Jesus in His prehuman estate was the greatest and mightiest being in the whole universe next to God the Father, and subject only to the Father.

Having these thoughts in mind, we can realize also the marvellous condescension and humility of our Lord in laying aside this glorious estate and becoming a man.

Meditated Not a Usurpation

The apostle shows that our Lord possessed a humble mind while with the Father before He came to earth. It was not something acquired after becoming a man, but an integral part of His character as a Spirit Being in God's form. With all the honours and powers He possessed as the only direct creation of God and as the factor or deputy of God in the creation of all things, the apostle says He "meditated not a usurpation to be equal with God"; that is, He had no inward feeling of ambition or envy, no jealousy of God's superior position; no dissatisfaction with His own position as God's servant in the creative work.

On the contrary, He "made himself of no reputation," the apostle says (vs. 7), "and took upon him the form of a servant." Although His position was so high, the Lord in His preexistence ever remembered that a true son is a servant. This view of the relation of a son to a father is expressed in Malachi 3: 17—"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Instead of desiring to usurp the Father's position, the Son willingly divested himself of such glory as He had, in order to become a man, for such was the Father's will. So that from a position higher than the angels the Lord humbled himself to be made lower than angels; for that is the statement of the Psalm (8: 4, 5) concerning the relative positions of angels and men—"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." The apostle Paul quotes the Psalm, and shows that the Lord Jesus became a man—a perfect man—such as father Adam was before the fall.—Hebrews 2: 5-9.

As a Man He Humbled Himself

As a perfect man our Lord possessed a humble mind, and this He exhibited by His desire to carry out the Father's purpose in the redemption of mankind. His humility of mind was shown also in His attitude towards His mother and Joseph, and later by His consideration for His disciples, and His friendliness towards the poor and suffering.

In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh

The Lord humbled himself to do the Father's will, and to carry out that purpose "was made in the likeness of men." John 1: 14 states that Jesus was "made flesh, and dwelt among us." In Romans 8: 3 we read that God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." From the last statement some have assumed that the Lord took on Him sinful flesh. But that is a wrong inference. In 1 Corinthians 15: 39 we are informed that there are four different kinds of flesh—men, beasts, fishes, birds. Only one of these four kinds of flesh is sinful, namely, that of men, and our Lord was sent in the likeness of that flesh that was sinful, not in the likeness of any of the other three kinds. But there was not in Him any of the sinfulness of that sinful flesh, because He was in the likeness of that flesh as it was before it became sinful (by the transgression in Eden), as we have already seen from Hebrews 2: 5-9. Our Lord, as a man, a little lower than the angels, was crowned with glory and honour, as Adam was before he sinned. When Adam sinned, he lost that glory and honour; our Lord, never having sinned, was not deprived of that glory and honour; he laid it down voluntarily in death. Therefore, when the apostle says that our Lord was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, it is not to be understood that the likeness was to the sinfulness of the flesh, but to the flesh as flesh; namely, that our Lord became the man Christ Jesus; yet, as stated in Hebrews 4: 15, "without sin."

Philippians 2: 8 continues concerning His humility: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself," showing that the humbling did not cease with His becoming a perfect man in the likeness of father Adam before the fall into sin. The Lord voluntarily humbled himself still further, "and became obedient unto death." He gladly became a man in order to carry out God's purpose, into the spirit of which He had fully entered; God's purpose being that Jesus, by His sacrificial death, might redeem the fallen race of mankind from sin and death.

The Contradiction of Sinners

Our Lord's perfect human nature must have been continually in a state of suffering from His contact with sinful beings, with their wicked opposition to the sublime truths He taught. The apostle very strikingly depicts our Lord's experiences with fallen humanity in these words (Hebrews 12: 1-3)—

> 1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
> 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
> 3 For consider him that ENDURED SUCH CONTRADICTION OF SINNERS AGAINST HIMSELF, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Evidently our Lord's experiences under this contradiction of sinners were a test of the depth and sincerity of His consecration to do God's will in all things. We can all understand how easy it is to float with the current. No effort is required to follow the line of least resistance; but strength and courage are needed to stem the tide of opposition and adversity. Thus we can clearly understand how adverse circumstances contribute to the building up of a character for righteousness, and overcoming the evil spirit of the world in God's people.

Became Obedient unto Death

Notwithstanding all the opposition and adversity the Lord Jesus, the Just One, "became obedient unto death." The same apostle wrote to the Hebrews (5: 8)—

> Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.

This is not to say that the Son of God was ever disobedient, and for that reason had to learn obedience. He was perfect and sinless all through. Rather, as each experience of trial and testing and contradiction of sinners came upon Him, He learned obedience in that set of circumstances by adhering rigidly to the Father's Word and Will—as He knew them from the Father himself. His faithful obedience continued "unto death." This perfecting of the Lord Jesus in obedience, while in distressing conditions, is referred to also in Hebrews 2: 9, 10—

> 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.
> 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING.

Difference between Humility and Humiliation

Our Lord manifested His humility by enduring patiently these bitter experiences. It may be asked, What is the difference between humility and humiliation? The Standard Dictionary defines humility as "The quality of being humble." Hence a state of lowliness of mind. To humiliate any one means "To offend the pride or self-respect of." We can see, then, that the revilings, misrepresentations, discourtesies at the hands of the scribes and Pharisees and others were intended to humiliate the Lord. But the Lord, because He was humble of heart and mind, was not in himself humiliated. He knew God and His assured position with God. In the eyes of others, however, He was often humiliated by the fact that He endured these things without retaliation. The people had desired a great warrior and conqueror, not a man of humble (lowly) birth and humble demeanour, to rule over them. Then came the false accusations, arrest, mockings, and cruel scourging (Matthew 27: 26-31), and eventually the cross, with more mocking and reviling, and finally death, all of which His trust in God enabled Him to endure with true humility.

How the Lord humbled himself to become a man! To live in uncongenial surroundings! Exposed to an atmosphere of hatred, lying, selfishness, and all manner of

evil! And then to suffer further humbling at the hands of the people He had come to redeem!

He was obedient unto death. To die was a great humiliation to One who had kept the law perfectly; who therefore according to the law was worthy of everlasting life; in whom there was not the slightest cause for the cruel treatment He received. For He said truly, "The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." And the Father in a voice from heaven testified to the same.

Even Pilate, though a heathen man, could find no fault in Him; His innocence was so clear to the unprejudiced mind. Pilate said, "Behold the man," and found no occasion of death in Him.—John 19: 4-6.

Even the Death of the Cross

Our Lord's defence at His trial included His reiteration of His position as King, and the right to have an army (twelve legions of angels) to fight for Him, which they, His judges, would have been unable to resist. (Matthew 26: 53; John 18: 36, 37.) Thus the complete voluntariness of our Lord's death is shown. It was not in the power of man to take away His life. He gave up His life willingly, knowing that only by so doing could mankind be redeemed from the power of sin and death. That His perfect human nature shrank from that cruel *and ignominous death we are assured.* That sorrowful scene in the garden of Gethsemane is abundant proof of this. Not that He wished to draw back, but because He felt the terrible injustice of the proceedings. Then the step further, even the death of the cross; crucified as a criminal; "made a curse." As the apostle states it concerning himself and his nation, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."—Galatians 3: 13.

In order to redeem the whole Jewish nation from the curse of the law, it was necessary for our Lord Jesus to endure that ignominious form of death.

The entire Jewish nation, by their sins against that law covenant under which they were bound, were under that curse, quite apart from the general condemnation *of the entire race of mankind*—all in Adam. The apostle says—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body to the tree."—1 Peter 2: 24, margin.

Our Lord Jesus knew what manner of death He was to die, as He stated to Nicodemus—"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up"—thus indicating the manner of His death. That serpent in the wilderness represented or foreshadowed Jesus.

Yet even though our Lord in the garden at Gethsemane, confronted with this great and agonizing test of His obedience to the Father's will, prayed, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me:" yet He did not rebel against it, but added—"nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."—Mark 14: 36.

The Joy Set Before Him

Thus we can see the entire submission of His will to the will of the Father. His joy and delight were to do the Father's will, realizing that in these tests of His obedience to the Father there was set before Him a certain joyful prospect, as stated in Hebrews 12: 2—"who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." That joy before Him, we may understand, was—

(1) A joy to render service that was acceptable to the Father.

(2) A joy to redeem mankind and make possible their rescue from sin and death.

(3) A joy in the thought that by the accomplishment of this redemption He might be accounted worthy of the Father to be the mighty Ruler and Blesser of all the *families of the earth*, as *King and High Priest*, to lift mankind up from sin to divine grace, under the gracious provisions of the New Covenant.

(4) A joy that the Father had promised Him: not only to return to the glory which He had had with the Father before the world was, but something far beyond that—to be the "brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" with "life in himself" (John 5: 26), "whom he hath appointed heir of all things," to be in the Empire of the Universe next to the Father—"on the right hand of the Majesty on high."—Hebrews 1: 2, 3.

Our Lord knew that all this joy was dependent upon entire submission to the Father's will. He had always been obedient to the Father, and delighted to do His will, but never before had He been put to such a test as now. *It had always been a pleasure and delight to do the* Father's will, but now the test was to do something that would be very distressing and painful; conditions which would bring Him finally to death, even the distressing and ignominious death of the cross. We know how well He stood this supreme test, and without faltering or wavering manifested in every particular, and to the utmost, faith in the Father's love, justice, wisdom, and power, and without hesitation endured all the oppositions and contradictions of sinners against himself, with all the other devices of the Adversary, and by this means, through suffering, was made perfect. Thus we read—"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."—Hebrews 5: 8, 9.

Worthy is the Lamb!

The apostle thus explains that our Lord, already perfect and undefiled, already a "Son," already fully obedient to the Father under favourable conditions, learned what it meant to be obedient under the most unfavourable and adverse conditions; and, having been himself perfected in obedience, the Lord Jesus is now qualified and authorized to demand obedience of others. The apostle Peter says—"The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew *and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted to his own* right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour."—Acts 5: 30, 31.

Thus in His voluntary obedience our Lord Jesus has demonstrated to the Father, to angels, and to us His brethren, His faithfulness to the Father, and to the principles of Divine Government. We as Christ's followers may well rejoice in the words of Scripture—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."—Revelation 5: 12.

There is a very important lesson for us in the contemplation of our Lord's trials and sufferings in obedience to the Father's will. If the Lord Jesus who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," was required to render willing obedience under these severe testings, ere He could be approved of God for the great and high position He now occupies, as King of kings and Lord of lords, is it not evident that we, as His prospective joint heirs, must also be tested and tried, in order to prove our faithfulness to the Father's will?

Follow His Steps

And so the Scriptures clearly teach: that, even as Christ suffered in His faithfulness and obedience to the Father's will, so must His followers suffer with Him in serving the Truth—"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."—1 Peter 2: 21.

If we endeavour closely to follow Christ, we will be sure to find opposition. Sometimes that opposition will come from the most unexpected quarters, even from those bound by ties of friendship and relationship. When the opposition comes from that quarter it is especially severe, as it is perfectly natural that we should seek to have the good will of those who are near and dear to us, and bound by the earthly ties of friendship and relationship. The Lord has given instruction to His people how to act in these trying circumstances. We must be faithful to the Lord and His Truth, even if such faithfulness causes the severance of the dearest earthly ties. Our Lord inti-

mated the difficulties His followers would encounter in serving Him (Luke 9: 23-26)—

23 And he said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.
24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.
25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?
26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

Could anything conceivable be more disastrous to one who loves the Lord, than that He, Jesus, should be ashamed of that follower when He comes in His glory?

Our Lord stated that in some instances "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." And that "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."—Matthew 10: 36-38.

In pondering over these statements of our Lord, we can indeed realize that the way to life is narrow and difficult, BUT THE REWARD IS GREAT!

The Mind of Christ

The apostle exhorts us to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2: 5.) We can realize the necessity of our having the mind of Christ. His mind was set on doing the will of God the Father in every conceivable circumstance, and at whatever cost. As "new creatures" in Christ our attitude of mind must be the same as His. Nothing short of this will avail us, in seeking to make our calling and election sure, to the great prize of joint heirship with Christ in the heavenly inheritance.

The sufferings we may be called upon to endure on account of the Lord and His Word, the hardness which we each endure as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, while seeking not to do our own will but the will of the Father, will be the means of perfecting us each in character as "new creatures" in Christ Jesus, and will fit us for that heavenly inheritance, making us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—2 Corinthians 5: 17; Colossians 1: 12.

Let us therefore be encouraged to continue steadfast in the faith, knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."—1 Corinthians 15: 58; 1 Thessalonians 5: 24. And 1 Peter 1: 3-5—

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Amen.

—A. M. A.

The Triumph of Christ in His Resurrection

THE VICTORIES of our Lord Jesus were many during His life on earth, and several victories or triumphs are recorded in Scripture in connection with His pre-human existence when associated with the Father in heaven. These victories were personal achievements in which the Father often strengthened and sustained Him. But His triumph in His resurrection was more especially the Father's triumph, inasmuch as the Father raised Him from the dead.—Acts 2: 24, 32; 13: 30; Romans 4: 24; 10: 9; 1 Corinthians 15: 15; Ephesians 1: 19, 20; 1 Peter 1: 21.

The triumph of Christ personally in connection with His resurrection was in the fact that His resurrection was the reward of His previous obedience and faithfulness. Obedient, as the Apostle said and as we have heard today, unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2: 9-11)—

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And again we read (Hebrews 12: 2), "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

That our Lord Jesus experienced death in the full sense of the word is the plain testimony of the Scriptures. In order to gain a clear understanding of this truth we must go back to the beginning, when man was first created, as recorded in Genesis 2: 7, which reads as follows—

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

We are given the knowledge here that man was made a breathing creature, for God started the breathing process by uniting the breath with the body, and man became a living soul or being. His power to live, therefore, comes by breathing—inhaling and exhaling. This is true, not only of mankind, but of all other living creatures on this earth; they live by the same process of breathing, as Solomon says: "yea, they have all one breath." (Ecclesiastes 3: 19.) As soon as the power to breathe in and breathe out ceases, man dies. This fact is stated clearly in Psalm 146: 4, which reads—

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

To describe the moment of death, the words "yield up the ghost," or "gave up the ghost," are used in many places in the Scriptures. The death of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob is described in this way. (Genesis 25: 8; 35: 29; 49: 33.) That these words mean complete cessation of life can be seen, for example, in Job 14: 10 which says—

But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man GIVETH UP THE GHOST, and where is he?

The word "ghost" in these scriptures might be mis-English word "ghost" was used of things invisible. The same Hebrew word translated by "give up the ghost" is elsewhere in the Old Testament rendered simply "die," "be dead," "perish."

How Our Lord Expired

The Scriptures tell us plainly that our Lord Jesus left the glory which He had with the Father, and became flesh. He became a man, and though he became a perfect man, His life on earth, like that of other men, was sustained by breathing the air of earth's atmosphere. He was sent by the Father, but not for the purpose of living everlastingly as a man. He became a man for "the suffering of death."—John 1: 14; Philippians 2: 6-8; Hebrews 2: 9, 17.

The moment of His death on the cross is described in Matthew 27: 50, which reads—

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

He died, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; He died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh."—1 Timothy 2: 4-6; 1 Peter 3: 18.

Did Jesus Raise Himself from the Dead?

Being in this condition of death, how then could it be possible for our Lord to raise himself? as many would have us think. In support of the idea that our Lord raised himself from the dead, many use the passage of Scripture (John 10: 17, 18) which reads as follows—

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might receive it again.
18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

The word power in both instances in this passage, according to Strong's Concordance, does not mean physical power, but means authority, right, or privilege. This same Greek word which has been translated "power" has also been translated "right" in Hebrews 13: 10, and again in Revelation 22: 14. The words "take" and "received," in this passage under review, are translations from the same original Greek word. Therefore if we read this passage of Scripture again, using the word "authority" instead of "power," and the word "receive" instead of "take"—which rendering is given in the Emphatic Diaglott—it reads as follows—

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might receive it again.
18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to receive it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Thus we see clearly what our Lord meant; that is, He would give His life of His own free will, for which He had authority from the Father; He had also authority from the Father to receive it again. And He did receive it from God on the third day after the crucifixion.

Not Possible to be Holden of It

Another passage of Scripture which is generally misunderstood is Acts 2: 24, which says—

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Some think this scripture means to show that Jesus was a God-man, and could not die, seeing that the grave could not hold him. But the error of this view is apparent, for we know that only people who have died are laid in the grave. What then did the Apostle mean?

Consider the words "pains of death." We know by the Scriptures that dead persons feel no pains; they know nothing, they feel nothing, they go back to dust of the earth. But, whatever might be said of pain in connection with sinners, it is certain that the Lord Jesus was not in a state of pain while in the grave. It is evident, therefore, that these words are to be understood figuratively.

In this way: Having in mind that Christ Jesus is described in Colossians 1: 18 as "the firstborn from the dead," we can rightly understand in this case that Death is likened to a woman, and Christ while in Death is likened to a child unborn. The "pains of death" were therefore travail pains which require to be "loosed" or set in motion, in order that Death might be forced to deliver up that which it held; and so Christ was born; that is, raised from the dead. When the time comes decreed by nature for a child to be born, nothing can prevent it. By the like figure, our Lord Jesus was ejected from Death by the power of God. Death could hold Him no longer when God spoke the word calling Him forth. It was not possible, after the time had come for the birth, as decreed by God, which was the third day, for Death to hold Him any more. See also Acts 13: 32, 33.

The Firstborn among Many Brethren

Other passages, also, describe our Lord's resurrection as a birth. Romans 8: 29 describes Him as "the firstborn among many brethren." That is to say, He was the first to be raised from the dead in a permanent sense, and also He was the firstborn or beginning of the New Creation of God, for He was born in the likeness of His Father, being made of His substance, as it is written in Hebrews 1: 3—

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person [literal rendering—"an exact impress of his substance"], and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

There are many instances recorded in the Scriptures of persons being raised from the dead. We have the widow's son who was brought back to life through the prayer of Elijah; also Lazarus, and the woman Tabitha. (1 Kings 17: 8-24; John 11: 43, 44; Acts 9: 36-41.) But the resurrection of these people was only temporary; they died again. Of our Lord Jesus it is written that "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." He was raised a quickening (life-giving) Spirit, being made of the same substance as Almighty God, having "life in himself"; "death hath no more dominion over him."—Romans 6: 9; Hebrews 1: 3; 1 Corinthians 15: 45; John 5: 26.

Above All Angels, Authorities, and Powers

His position since His resurrection is one of great power and authority, for it has pleased the Father to place Him at His own right hand, above all angels, authorities, and powers. (1 Peter 3: 22; Philippians 2: 9-11.) His superiority to the angels is described in a very striking manner in Hebrews 1: 6-8—

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.
7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits [or, winds], and his ministers a flame of fire.
8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

All the angels of God commanded to worship the Son of God included not only the heavenly messengers, but all other agencies; for God can and does use even winds and flames to be His angels or messengers. Yet this statement is not intended to disparage the heavenly angels in any way. Rather it is to show in comparison the exceeding high position of our Lord Jesus. For God regards His Son, not as an angel, but as a mighty God, a King and Ruler, who sits on the throne of a vast Empire. And all the myriads of heavenly beings have been commanded by God to regard His Son as such; as it is written, "let all the angels of God worship him."

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

The Lord's greatness is further shown by the numerous titles He now holds. Isaiah 9: 6, 7 describes Him as Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Before He could occupy these offices, Christ had to give His life as a sacrifice. This work being successfully accomplished, the Father has raised Him from the dead so that He might occupy these high positions, giving Him all power and authority to carry out the various purposes which these titles represent.

His title as Everlasting Father is appropriate, for He is now the Lifegiver. Life comes directly from Him, for only through Him will the dead be raised to life; and everlasting life He will give to all who obey Him. (John 3: 36; Hebrews 5: 9.) In full accord with this is the prophetic statement of Psalm 45: 16, which reads—

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

Christ on earth was a Jew, a Son of David through Mary. His fathers would therefore be the patriarchs. But the very reverse is the position after His resurrection. Those who previously were His fathers will be His children; for He will, in due time, according to God's will, raise them from the dead. Thus Jesus will be their Father or Lifegiver.

Mediator and High Priest

Moreover, He also occupies since His Resurrection such high offices as Mediator and High Priest for the whole world of mankind. Moses was Mediator between God and the children of Israel, and negotiated the Law Covenant, which he afterwards administered. But Christ is now Mediator of the New Covenant for the benefit of all mankind; and all people must recognize and accept His mediatorship if they desire to be reconciled to God. The passage in 1 Timothy 2: 5 states this definitely—"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"; and Hebrews 9: 15—"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant."

His position as High Priest is declared in Psalm 110: 4—"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"—which is quoted by the Apostle Paul to refer to Jesus Christ.—Hebrews 5: 6.

The importance of His position in this capacity is shown by the reference to Melchizedek, who was in his time both king and priest, and who blessed and received tithes from Abraham, the man who had received the precious promises from God; so that Melchizedek was indeed a very great man. "Now consider," says the Apostle, "how great this man was."—Hebrews 7: 4; Genesis 14: 18-20.

The Melchizedek priesthood was a royal priesthood, for it combined both the kingly and priestly offices, and in this respect was far superior to the Aaronic priesthood, which was instituted under the Law Covenant. Other important distinctions between the Melchizedek and the Aaronic orders are explained by the Apostle Paul. (Hebrews, chapter 7.) The important and honoured position that our Lord Jesus now occupies as Priest after the order of Melchizedek can thus be realized.

Now we can see by these passages of Scripture that our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted by God the Father to the very highest pinnacle of power and authority, even next to the Father Himself, having been made preeminent in all things. (Colossians 1: 18.) What a great triumph for our Lord Jesus, to be placed in so high a position! a great victory for Him that eclipses all His previous victories! Let us worship before His throne, even as the angels have been commanded to do, laud and honour His great name, rejoice in His triumph, and join in the acclamation of the Heavenly Host—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."—Revelation 5: 12.

Infallible Proofs of His Resurrection

The wonderful miracle of His resurrection was not left without witnesses. These witnesses were His disciples, and they were actual eyewitnesses; for He appeared unto them many times prior to His ascension—which caused great rejoicing amongst them, not only in seeing Him, but also that their belief in Him as the Christ was justified, in that He was risen from the dead. His appearances unto them are described as "infallible proofs" (Acts 1: 3)—

> To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The disciples' testimony is recorded in the Gospels, where descriptions are given of the different times and manners in which He manifested himself to them. He first of all appeared to Mary, and gave her a message; and she came and told the disciples. (John 20: 14-18.) Then, the same day at evening, when the disciples were all gathered together in a room, He appeared suddenly in the midst of them, saying, "Peace be unto you." Then "he shewed unto them his hands and his side"—leaving no room for doubt whatever in their minds that He was Jesus their beloved Master. One of His disciples named Thomas, called Didymus, was not with them at this particular time, and when the disciples declared unto him, "We have seen the Lord," he refused to believe them, saying, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."—John 20: 19-25.

But the doubting Thomas was completely convinced eight days later, for Jesus appeared in the midst of them again, Thomas being present this time. And the Lord said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."—John 20: 26-29.

The Apostle Paul also testifies to the fact of our Lord's resurrection, stating that He was "seen of above five hundred brethren at once"; and finally Paul himself was a privileged eyewitness of His resurrection.—1 Corinthians 15: 3-8.

Thus there is sufficient proof to satisfy the most sceptical; and even though 1900 years have elapsed since these events happened, it cannot alter the fact that they did occur. And we recognise and believe the testimony of these eyewitnesses to be true, and rejoice in them, knowing that they have been written down for our benefit, in order that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing in Him we might have life in His name.—John 20: 31.

Let us not be like the doubting Thomas who would not believe the testimony of his fellow disciples until he saw the evidence with his own eyes, but let us always remain firm in our belief in these things and rejoice in the knowledge that we who have not seen with our literal eyes and yet believe the testimony of others who were literal eyewitnesses of His Majesty, are blessed in His sight—keeping in mind His reply to Thomas, for He said to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—John 20: 29.

Advance Testimony by the Transfiguration

The Lord's superior spiritual position was foreshown in the Mount of Transfiguration, where He was transfigured before three of His disciples—Peter, James, and John; "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." In the vision there appeared Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

This vision clearly demonstrated that the Lord Jesus superseded both Moses and Elias, who represented the Law and the Prophets. The authoritative voice out of the cloud gave the three disciples to understand that He, Jesus of Nazareth, is the one they must hear and obey now; previously they were to hear and obey the law and the prophets, through whom God had made known His will. (Hebrews 1: 1.) But now a greater than Moses is here. The law and the prophets were until John the Baptist, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.—Matthew 17: 1-9; Luke 16: 16; John 1: 17.

Peter mentions this wonderful vision in his second epistle. (1: 16-18.) He points out the fact that the things he and the other disciples are teaching concerning the power and presence of Jesus are not cunning lies and fables, but the truth, because they were actual "eyewitnesses of his majesty" and of the glory and honour bestowed upon Him by God the Father. His words are as follows—

> 16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming [presence] of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.
> 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
> 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

Difference between Flesh and Spirit

That the risen Lord is not a flesh being, but a "quickening," or lifegiving, Spirit—the days of His flesh having been ended at His death on the cross—is the plain teaching of the Divine Word; and yet a large number of Christians still maintain and believe that He was raised with a flesh body marked with the scars of His crucifixion. And to support this idea, they will mention the incident of Thomas as evidence to show that our Lord was raised with his earthly body; only that, instead of being flesh, bone, and blood, He is now flesh, bone, and spirit.

But this statement of theirs is in direct contradiction to the words of our Lord Jesus, for He said to His disciples that "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me having." (Luke 24: 39.) But they will say, the word spirit, here, means phantom, an apparition, or a ghost!

If we look up Strong's Concordance, we will find that their assertion in this matter is definitely wrong, because the Greek word for "phantom" or "apparition" is "phan-

tasma," whereas the Greek word for Spirit is "pneuma," an entirely different word. "Pneuma" was the word used by our Lord in this declaration, which proves decisively that He meant spirit being, and not phantom or apparition.

The apostle Paul shows (1 Corinthians 15: 35-50) that the spiritual and human planes of being are entirely separate and distinct. For he says (verses 44, 45)—

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.
45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

The beloved disciple John says (1 John 3: 2)—

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

If John taught that our Lord's body which He has possessed since His resurrection is flesh, bone, and spirit, then his words here would be very hard to understand. But John does intimate that it "doth not yet appear" what a spirit body is; we know not; there is no information anywhere in the Scriptures to enlighten us on this subject; therefore it is not God's will that we should know.

Manifestations after His Resurrection

Consider the appearances of Christ to His disciples after His resurrection. He could appear and disappear at will. Think for a moment of the incident when the disciples were all gathered together in an upper room—all the doors and windows being shut. Then, suddenly, the Lord appeared in their midst, talked with them, and then suddenly disappeared—simply vanished. If He could do this—appear and disappear—then it is logical to conclude that He could be present amongst them invisibly; and this fact is evident when we remember the incident of Thomas. For Jesus seemed to know all about his unbelief. He was most probably invisibly present amongst them, and had heard Thomas's remarks. All these facts go to show that Jesus was able to assume a flesh body at will, and He did this in order to reveal Himself to His disciples. Therefore, when He appeared in their midst and showed them the print of the nails in His hands and the wound in His side, we can rightly conclude that He used His earthly body, or created one like it, for the purpose, in order to convince His followers of His identity.

There are many events mentioned in the Bible which *reveal that the heavenly angels were able to create flesh* bodies for themselves; that they also could appear and disappear in a bewildering manner; but the power to do this was granted them by God, so that they might carry His messages to men.—Genesis 18: 1, 2; 19: 1, 2; 32: 24-30; Judges 13: 3-21; Luke 1: 28; Acts 1: 10.

And, if angels could do this, we should not think it strange or incredible that our Lord could and did make himself visible to the disciples' eyes by clothing himself with a flesh body, and thus giving them visible proof of His resurrection.

So we see that spirit beings are not flesh, but spirit, made of a substance unknown to us. Jesus is now a mighty spirit being, higher than the angels. His spirit body is not marked with the scars of His crucifixion, but is a glorious body, being the exact impress of the Father's substance, and which cannot be seen by man, for He dwells in "the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see."—1 Timothy 6: 16.

A Glimpse of His Glory

The Apostle Paul was graciously given a glimpse of His glory, shining above the brightness of the sun at mid-day, his eyes being miraculously opened on this occasion. *Even then the glory of that light struck him* blind. It was as if Paul had been born out of due time; as if he had been raised to heaven to see the King in His beauty before the time set when all the disciples shall be received into that glory. (Acts 9: 3-8; 22: 6-11; 26: 13-19; 1 Corinthians 15: 8.) All these events and descriptions are proof positive that our Lord is no longer flesh, but that He left His high estate which He previously enjoyed with the Father, and became flesh, in order to accomplish His Father's will, by giving Himself a ransom or corresponding price for all, and thus redeem or buy back the first man Adam, whose sin had brought the whole race down to death—"a body hast thou prepared me: . . . Lo, I come to do thy will, O God."—Hebrews 10: 5-7.

The sacrifice of Himself once for all was accepted by God; hence "the days of his flesh" ended at the cross, and Jesus understood this to be so; for He said in His beautiful prayer—"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He continues further in His prayer: expressing His desire to God for the privilege of receiving back again His former estate and glory—"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He also requests of His Father that His beloved followers may be with Him, and behold His glory.—John 17: 4, 5, 24.

The Ascension to Heaven

Forty days He remained in the vicinity of this earth, and when the time came for His ascension to heaven, He appeared to His disciples for the last time, and explained to them the various passages of Scripture—written in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms—which concerned Himself, concluding with the words—"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day," and gave them their commission.—Luke 24: 46-49.

He led them out of Jerusalem towards Bethany, giving them certain commandments and instructions, finally lifted up His hands, and blessed them. As He did this, He was parted from them, and received up into glory. (Luke 24: 50, 51; Acts 1: 9.) Suddenly there appeared two angels in white apparel (Acts 1: 10, 11), which also said—

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

The words, "this same Jesus," inform us that although He has been changed to a Spirit being and highly exalted, yet His identity has not changed. He still possesses the same distinct, superlative qualities of grace, truth, meekness, and loving kindness which He manifested on earth. That He was to come again to this earth personally was the plain statement of the heavenly messenger. Another similar promise was given by our Lord himself to His disciples just before His betrayal. This promise can be found in John 14: 2, 3—

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

The great majority of Christians think that Jesus will return to this earth as a man and sit on a material throne. But these words of our Lord confute this idea, for He distinctly says, "that where I am, there ye may be also," and not that where you are there I will be. Very soon, we believe, the remaining members of His body will be received unto Himself, to remain with Him for evermore. To be made like Him, and see Him as He is, is the aspiration of all true believers.—1 John 3: 2.

This Same Mind in You

But let us not entertain any lofty or ambitious ideas about this; for, if we do, rest assured we will never be received. Let us always strive to imitate that humbleness of mind which was exhibited throughout by our Lord Jesus. While on earth particularly was this quality revealed in the words of His prayer to God the Father, for *He said, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine* own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17: 5.) Here we see that although He voluntarily left His glory which He had with the Father, and became a little lower than angels, to accomplish His Father's will, even to suffering an ignominious death, yet He did not ask greater honour and glory as a reward for His obedience. On the contrary, He asked

for only the glory which He had given up. But, as we have seen, it has pleased the Father to place Him in a position of glory, honour, and majesty much greater than that He previously enjoyed—a position that had never been occupied by anyone in God's great universe.

Necessary for our Salvation

The importance of His resurrection will be realized when we understand that our hope of eternal life depended on this event; for the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms testified that Christ was to be raised the third day. (Psalm 16: 8-11; Acts 2: 25-32; Isaiah 53: 12; 49: 8-10; 2 Corinthians 6: 2; Leviticus 23: 10, 11; 1 Corinthians 15: 20.) Had Jesus not been raised, the plan of salvation would have failed. His remaining in death would have meant that His sacrifice on our behalf had not been acceptable to God—which would spell calamity for mankind, for we would still remain in our sins, with no hope of forgiveness and no hope of a future life, as the Apostle says—

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

And why? Simply as the Apostle explains—"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—1 Corinthians 15: 14-22.

Raised Again for our Justification

His resurrection was of vital importance to us for another reason. We could not be justified in the sight of God without Him; as it is written, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."—Romans 4: 25.

As Aaron the Levitical High Priest entered into the most Holy once a year, to present before God the blood of the atonement for himself and the children of Israel, by sprinkling it upon the mercy seat, even so our Lord Jesus as the Melchizedek High Priest was raised from the dead that He might enter into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us, and there sprinkle His own sacrificial blood on the antitypical Mercy Seat, thereby making reconciliation on behalf of all who will come unto God by Him. He now appears the second time, to all those who look for Him, with a blessing from God, which is forgiveness of sins on condition that we repent and be converted, recognizing Him as the Christ, the holy One appointed by God to be our Deliverer, Mediator, and High Priest.—Leviticus 16; Acts 3: 19, 20, 26; Hebrews 9: 6-12, 24, 28.

Having been raised from the dead, our Lord Jesus is now able to perform the various duties which belong to these offices.

As Deliverer, He can now deliver us from the bondage of sin and death, for He has the keys of Death and the Grave. All that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.—Revelation 1: 18; John 5: 28, 29.

As Mediator of the New Covenant, He is now able to reconcile us to God; only through His mediatorship can we approach the throne of Grace, as Jesus said—"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."—John 14: 6; 1 Timothy 2: 5, 6.

As High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, He is now able to exercise His mercy and compassion, and save us to the uttermost, for He ever liveth to make intercession on our behalf.—Hebrews 4: 15; 7: 24, 25; 2: 17, 18.

The great gulf that separates mankind from Almighty God can thus be crossed by the way that God has so graciously provided, even Jesus Christ, and this assurance has been given by His resurrection from the dead.

—E. L. C.

Blotting Out the Handwriting

WHEN THE APOSTLES travelled they astonished the Jews by preaching peace by Jesus Christ instead of by the works of the law. In letters to the churches established by them they repeated this information, with further explanations which proved helpful to the newly-made Christians. And no less helpful to us, as we read their clear and convincing statements, which we know were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and are therefore to be received as truth. One such illuminating passage is found in Colossians 2: 14, 15, which reads—

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;
15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

The "handwriting of ordinances" is sometimes taken to mean only the commandments referring to ceremonies, sacrifices, washings, etc. These interpreters take the Ten Commandments as being exempt from the blotting out, and as being still in force. But such a view cannot stand before a careful study of the apostle's words and their meaning.

The Handwriting of Ordinances

The Greek word **dogma**, here rendered "ordinances," is defined by Strong's Exhaustive Concordance as meaning, "a law (civil, ceremonial, or ecclesiastical)." It is translated in the Authorized Version, "decree," "ordinance." Translated decree in Luke 2: 1; "decrees" in Acts 16: 4; 17: 7, these uses of the term **dogma** in the inspired Word indicate that, far from being confined to ceremonies, sacrifices, washings, etc., it refers to authoritative and important laws. Hence the "handwriting of ordinances" which Paul said was "against" him and his fellow Jews referred to the entire law given at Sinai.

The word rendered "handwriting" means "something hand-written ("chirograph"), i.e., a **manuscript** (specially a legal **document** or **bond** [fig.])." The Ten Commandments were part of the handwriting or bond given to Moses for Israel, and both God and the Israelites entered into the handwriting of laws as described in Exodus 24, to which the Apostle refers in Hebrews 9: 19, 20—

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,
20 Saying, this is the blood of the testament [or, covenant] which God hath enjoined unto you.

In this agreement or covenant the Israelites agreed to keep the ten commandments and all the other commandments. It is therefore an error to attempt to use Paul's words as though they meant that only that part of the law referring to ceremonies was blotted out.

What is Meant by Blotting Out?

The English word exactly describes what is meant by the original, defined by Strong's Concordance thus—"to smear out, i.e. **obliterate** (erase tears, fig. pardon sin)." It is rendered in the Authorized Version, "**blot** out" and "wipe away." Other occurrences are in Acts 3: 19; Revelation 3: 5; 7: 17; 21: 4—

Acts 3: 19: Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be BLOTTED OUT, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; or, Emphatic Diaglott reading, "so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."
Revelation 3: 5: He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not BLOT OUT his name out of the book of life, . . .
Revelation 7: 17: For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall WIPE AWAY all tears from their eyes.
Revelation 21: 4: And God shall WIPE AWAY all tears from their eyes; . . .

Took It Out of the Way

Blotted out means that the law covenant ceased to be a legal bond between God and the children of Israel

when the Lord Jesus dealt with it on the cross, as Colossians 2: 14 proceeds to say—"and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross"; the cross permanently and for ever disposed of the law covenant and its commandments, all of which the Jews had found contrary to them. It is therefore useless for either Jews or Christians today to claim that they are in any sense under the law of Moses. That law and that covenant simply do not exist, and it is not in the power of men to revive them either in whole or in part.

How the Law was Against Them

When the apostle wrote "against us," "contrary to us," he was including himself with the other members of the Jewish nation; for no other nation had been recognized by God as participating in the law covenant arrangements, as Paul and others said on many other occasions. The whole of the law was "against" them in that it constantly accused them of transgression, and therefore as deserving of condemnation—of the curse, and of death—"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them."—Deuteronomy 27: 26; Galatians 3: 10.

Alive Without the Law

In Romans 7: 9 the apostle says—

For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

In that he says, "I was alive without the law once," the apostle Paul is stating his own individual case, although individually all Jews were in the same condition. He is referring back to a time before the commandment came; as he states, that was before the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai.

An illustration of how he could speak of himself in this way could be taken from Hebrews 7: 4-10. Verse 9 reads—"And as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, payed tithes in Abraham." Here we see that, although Levi was not born at the time, he is spoken of as having paid tithes.

Another very good illustration which comes home to each of us personally can be taken from our experience in Adam. We were all alive in Adam before the fall; we were then under no condemnation such as we were placed under by the fall. But when Adam transgressed, our condition was changed. We then died, although still unborn.

So the apostle says, "I was alive without the law once," because as far as the law was concerned he was not under its condemnation, it not being there to condemn him. Sin was there, but—not realizing its strength when the law was proposed to them—the people said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Exodus 19: 8.) In saying this, they placed themselves and their posterity under that law, with its prospect of life for obedience, or death for disobedience.

Before the law came in, there was no set of direct commands over them to say they were to do this, not to do that, as the apostle illustrates, "Thou shalt not covet." They simply did things without any fear of the consequences.

But when the law came, saying, Thou shalt do this and not do that, with the consequent penalty for infringement, the trouble started. The tendency to do contrary to its dictates on the one hand, and the divine command on the other! No wonder the apostle called the law "the handwriting of ordinances that was AGAINST us"! They were, as it were, chained to a corpse from which there was no escape.

Who Shall Deliver Me?

The fact of their inability to keep it, brought upon them the condemnation of the law. When the apostle or any other Jew learned his true position under the law, he longed for deliverance from the terms of it by which he was bound; which caused him to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" He thanks God through Jesus Christ, and continues (ch. 8)—

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, [who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit].
2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (or by an offering for sin, Diaglott) condemned sin in the flesh.

Spoiled Principalities and Powers by the Cross

Having blotted out the handwriting, taken it out of the way, nailed it to His Cross, what was left for the Principalities and Powers in connection with the administration of the law? NOTHING!

Here is a list of these dignitaries whom He "spoiled"—

1. The Jewish High Priest.
2. The whole of the Priesthood.
3. The entire tribe of Levi, dedicated to the service of the temple and to teaching the people the law.
4. Scribes for copying and recopying the Law.
5. The Sanhedrin, the Council and High Court of Israel.
6. Rulers of the synagogues; i.e., the Elders in charge of the services.
7. The leaders of the Jewish sects—
   (a) Pharisees.
   (b) Sadducees.
   (c) Essenes.

The Lord Jesus Christ by the Cross despoiled them of the law under which they flourished. Of their authority and dignity. Of the people whom they misled by their traditions and their perversions of the law.

All these became the spoil of the Lord's triumph by the Cross.

Made a Shew of Them

All these Principalities and Powers the Lord Jesus made a "shew" of, that is, He made an exhibit of them before the world, as a Roman conqueror in those days rode in triumph to the Imperial City with the chief of his captives chained to his chariot wheels for all to see, that his victory might be acclaimed.

So—from that day to this—all who know of the Lord's triumph marvel at the wonderful strategy by which the Lord Jesus by His Cross was able to gain the great victory over the very ones who had thought themselves victorious over Him when they nailed Him to the tree. In that very Cross He triumphed over them!

—H. S.

Triumph Over Sin the Taskmaster

THE TRIUMPH of Christ Jesus our Lord over Sin the Taskmaster means much—very much—to mankind. But when we speak of Christ's triumph over Sin we must not be misunderstood to mean that our Lord had sin in himself requiring to be conquered. The Scriptures have already been quoted to-day which declare that in Him was no sin; He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners—both in His birth, His infancy and childhood; up to His last breath on the cross, and now at the Father's right hand. Our Lord's triumph over Sin pertains to His conflict with that cruel usurper and taskmaster Sin, which had the world of men in its grip, and would not let go.

That sin is in the world is generally recognized. Every nation and every individual of every nation has a more or less intelligent idea that to say or do certain things is right; to say or do certain other things is wrong. The conceptions of right and wrong are based principally on tribal custom or on the law of the land in which one lives, with such other standards as the individual may

raise for himself for his own guidance as a result of experience or instruction. Christians find in the Scriptures a reliable guide on questions of right and wrong.

But there was a time when there was no sin in the world.

Adam was created perfect in body and mind, with no sinful tendencies, but in the image of God. As created, Adam was mentally and morally equipped to live in harmony with his Maker. Eve the same, specially created to be Adam's companion in a righteous life.

Was there a Law in Eden?

We are sometimes asked, Was there a Law in Eden? Also two other questions—(1) Was there a reward for keeping that law (if any)? (2) Was there a penalty attached to violation of that law?

In answer we would say, first, that a code of laws may be very simple, or it may be very complex. For example, a law may be passed forbidding all persons to assemble at a certain river bank under penalty. That would be a simple law. On the other hand, a law equally simple would be that they might come and go as they pleased. A complex law could be one compelling certain persons to gather at certain hours to perform certain services under the direction of overseers, provision being made for meals and camps, etc., etc.; not above a certain cost, and rules for the moral guidance of the people concerned. Or various regulations and various penalties might be imposed on different groups, giving all great concern to see that they kept their own rules and not those pertaining to others.

Some Christians, seeing the elaborate code given to the Jews, as recorded in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, have thought that the same law was given in the garden of Eden. They think that one human being is as greatly in need of all those commandments as another human being.

To this we reply, Such a view greatly limits the discretion of God the Creator. God is righteous, and could not give an unrighteous law; nor could He regard with indifference the transgression of any law He might give. At the same time even our finite minds can realize the unsuitability for the garden of Eden of the law given at Sinai to a people laden with sins and under condemnation to death. For in the Garden, on creation and for some time thereafter, Adam and Eve had not sinned in any particular, and death came only after they had been driven out of the Garden AFTER the sin. We are distinctly told that "sin entered," hence was not there previously. This is stated by the Apostle in various ways in Romans 5—

12 As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.
15 For if through the offence of one many be dead.
16 The judgment was by one to condemnation.
17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one.
18 By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.
19 By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

But before sin could enter there must have been a law, offence against which would constitute a sin. Moreover, that law was suited to perfect, sinless beings placed in a garden to dress it and keep it, and have dominion over the lower orders of creation. We shall presently consider what that law was. But, before doing so, let us note the absurdity of supposing that to Adam in the garden could have been given a command like the tenth of those written on the tables of stone, which said—"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ox, or ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's," Adam having under his control ALL the animals and (being the only inhabitant of the earth) having no neighbour. Adam could not have understood such a command. There was no need to command Adam not to steal and not to bear false witness, as in the eighth and ninth of the Ten Commandments given at Sinai, when all around belonged to him, and there was none to bear false witness against. Having named the animals, Adam realized that himself had no mate, and God created Eve for him. Even then the tenth commandment could have had no meaning, nor the seventh, had they been given, seeing Eve was the only woman in the world.

Seventh Day Adventists and some others say that God could not have more than one moral law, and they claim that the Ten Commandments prescribe the morals for all time, and for all the inhabitants of every portion of God's Universe, including heaven, His dwelling. This false claim is easily answered, because not all the moral laws given to Israel were in the Ten. The laws on marriage, number of wives, divorce, etc., were laws on moral subjects, yet they were not included in the Ten Commandments. And how could laws on such subjects, including the command not to covet the neighbour's wife, apply to the inhabitants of heaven, who neither marry nor are given in marriage? (Mark 12: 25.) Another law not in the Ten was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This is a law on morals, and the Lord called it "the first and great commandment." The second was like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." On the authority of our blessed Lord, these two, though not included in the Ten, were the most important of all, for "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22: 36-40.) Thus it is clearly to be seen that the Ten Commandments did not contain all the laws on moral subjects, and that they could not be universally applicable. Now we shall see that it was entirely possible for the Almighty to prescribe more than one moral code, and that in fact He has done so.

The Lord, when asked about "putting away" of wives, sanctioned by Sinaitic law, said that "from the beginning it was not so."

God did not say to Adam, You are lonely, and I will make you a mate that I consider suitable for you; but if at any time you are dissatisfied let me know, and I will make you another one according to your specifications. Nothing like that. God made both Adam and Eve perfect, and perfectly suited to each other, and while they remained perfect and sinless they were satisfied with God's work, and were interested in learning of the wonderful world in which they found themselves. It was only after the sin that Adam blamed God for having given him such a woman, and Eve passed the blame on to the serpent. Sin "entered," and we can see how, once in, Sin took the mastery, and induced further transgressions. The fact is that both Adam and Eve were inexperienced; they were righteous, but their characters had not yet been established in righteousness. Hence they fell victims to the wiles of the Evil One who spoke through the serpent. But Sin as Sin was now established in the human race, and would prove a hard Taskmaster indeed.

Adam had only one wife, and no law allowing divorce. Divorce was allowed Israel for the hardness of their hearts, the Lord said. Under the New Covenant, which Our Lord expounded, only one reason for divorce is recognized.—Matthew 19: 3-9.

Thus we have examples of how God could and did impose three distinct moral codes. The Ten Commandments have no directions as to the proper treatment of a wife; they have only the prohibition of adultery. Not a high moral conception, but suited to teach the Jews ideas higher than those prevailing at the time among the other nations.

Another Way of Stating the Case

It is belittling God to say that He could have only one formulation of law—even of a law on morals. For example, the law given at Sinai said that a man could put away his wife if after a time she no longer pleased him. (Deuteronomy 24: 1.) The law also permitted more than one wife. (Deuteronomy 21: 15-17.) Both these were laws pertaining to morals. They differed from the moral law given to Adam, which allowed for only one wife.

Our Lord, in giving His pronouncement on moral law under the New Covenant, said the Mosaic arrangement concerning divorce was so made because of the hardness of their hearts, and not because it was God's conception of the best. The Lord then referred to the law of marriage in Eden as God's will or law—one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh; and the Lord in His teaching allowed no divorce except for one cause—infidelity.

The fact that God in the Mosaic law made allowance for the general state of society at the time, with the prevalence of loose living, was not because He approved of the laxity, but was in a spirit of mercy for their weaknesses, and with a view to lifting the Jews to a higher standard of living. This is evident from a study of the Old Testament times, for the prevailing custom was to cast out the wife without a bill of divorcement or anything whatever to show her to be possessed of good character. The bill of divorcement which the law enjoined compelled the man to give to the wife cast out a written testimonial to her virtue.

But, we repeat: When created, a perfect man in the likeness of God, Adam was endowed with mental and moral faculties so attuned to God's that it was natural for him to do the right and proper thing. What Adam lacked was experience of life.

Eve also, as a perfect being in God's image, had no cause of death in her, and no tendencies to evil; but she had even less experience than Adam, and so Satan selected her to tempt and to secure as a vassal to himself. Eve was foolish to listen to Satan, and the Apostle says Satan "beguiled" her; he played on her what to-day would be called a "confidence trick"; causing her to believe that this plausible seducer knew what he was talking about, particularly as Satan used the serpent as his mouthpiece, and Eve was led to think the serpent should know, since he appeared to be very wise. Eve's desire for knowledge was a good desire; her fault was in allowing herself to be persuaded to gain knowledge in a way involving disobedience to God who had created her.

The Law that was Broken

This then brings us to the law that was broken in Eden. Eve partook of fruit which God had forbidden her to eat, and she gave some to Adam, who also ate of it. Thus they both became disobedient. And the law transgressed was God's commandment that they should freely eat of the produce of the garden EXCEPT that they should neither eat nor touch the forbidden tree.

This tree was called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"—not because there was something about the fruit itself which could convey knowledge, but because that tree was made a test of their loyalty and obedience to God. God had given them the knowledge of good. By entertaining unworthy suggestions against God in connection with the tree, and by partaking of the fruit, they became acquainted with evil.

In other words, the law over them was obedience to God; and by disobedience in a particular which God had defined, they broke that law, and became sinners against God. Thus they brought themselves under the penalty of which they had been forewarned—"in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Furthermore, there is no section of the law given to Israel at Sinai forbidding the eating of the fruit of a tree in a garden eastward in Eden. Consequently neither Adam nor Eve broke the law given to Israel, neither the Ten Commandments graven on tables of stone nor the multitude of other commandments Moses recorded in the book.

Adam and Eve doubtless repented of their sin; and, though driven from the garden to toil for their living under less favourable conditions, they still desired to serve God. God provided them coats, and a sacrifice, and they were instructed in a form of worship which they carried on, and later taught to their sons. But it was not possible to get back to their former state of perfection, and their descendants have inherited both sinful tendencies and the condemnation to death. Death passed upon all men. All in Adam die.—Romans 5; 1 Corinthians 15.

This appeared to be a triumph for Sin. The apostle Paul under inspiration writes of Sin as a tyrant whom we must resist: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the desires thereof." (Romans 6: 12.) Part of our Lord's mission was to deliver men from that Taskmaster. For we can readily see that to deliver from Death would be practically valueless were nothing done to dispossess the Taskmaster Sin, which got in its work in Eden and operates in all the children of Adam.

Conquest by the Cross

The task which our Lord was given to do was more than to turn sinners from gross black sins to sins of a "respectable" hue. His task was to do away with Sin itself, also to conquer Death. But Death would have no field of operations were it not that Sin passes its victims, as it were, into Death's prison.

Death, the penalty, was God's sentence against Adam and his race, and the sentence was in every sense just; but in view of the fact that Christ has died to redeem men from death, Death is rightly regarded as an enemy which had taken all mankind captive—an enemy from which men could not deliver themselves. (Psalm 49.) Hence unless God provided a way of deliverance the race would die, and remain forever dead.

That way of deliverance, God's Remedy, was our Lord Jesus, the Gift of God's love. God sent His Son to be the ransom from the prison-house of Death. But, as already said, to deliver from the grave and still let Sin remain in control over mankind would be to perpetuate Sin's mastery forever, and abandon the earth to be everlastingly a place of evil. Such a state of affairs God could not tolerate in the slightest degree. Hence the great Plan by which Sin is dealt with and his slaves turned over to a new Master.

Four of the finest chapters in the Bible—Romans Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth, are devoted to the exposition of this subject, hence chapter six should be studied not alone but in conjunction with what precedes and what follows.

Sin Abounded

Romans 5: 19 reiterates the truth of verse 12 as to how sin "entered"; namely, "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." God so overruled that the generation of our race began after our first parents had been driven from the garden, and they were no longer perfect in character and uprightness, and death had begun to work in them. Hence their children and all their descendants in turn inherit both imperfection and tendencies to sin and the penalty prescribed, which was death.

But that was not all, says the apostle. Matters were complicated under the law given at Sinai (verse 20)—"Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded." Evidently the law made the situation more difficult, with its long list of deeds that should or should not be done. Transgression of these multiplied commands meant increasing the number of sins to be charged up against the transgressor. And then the apostle utters that great truth which has brought joy and blessing to many penitent applicants for God's mercy—

> 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND:
> 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, EVEN SO MIGHT GRACE REIGN through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Reign of Grace

Chapter Six answers the spoken or implied contention of some who liked sin, that if grace abounds the more sin the better, that grace may much more abound. God forbid! Paul says. God's arrangement by grace is not to uphold Sin, but to get you out from under Sin. Sin as a Taskmaster over all is not yet destroyed, but through Jesus Christ a way is arranged by which you may become alive unto Him by taking Him as your Master. That, of course, involves death to the Taskmaster, Sin. A dead man is no use to the Taskmaster, Sin. And, if you are dead to Sin, that means Sin must no longer be acknowledged by us as proper or desirable.

The reign of Grace cannot operate in our favour if we presume upon the Lord's goodness, and continue to serve the old Taskmaster. WE MUST DIE TO SIN.

Reckon Yourselves

But as we do not actually suffer bodily death when we die to Sin, the Lord has given us a system of reckoning. Certain terms or words are given us whereby to describe

the transition from the service of Sin to the service of the Lord and Righteousness. Paul uses these terms or words in Romans 6: 11—

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is reckoning both ways: reckon yourselves dead, reckon yourselves alive. Since Christ died to deliver us from sin, we cannot consistently continue in it; hence we must be dead as far as sin is concerned. Also, since Christ is alive and doing the will of God, and seeking our development in righteousness, we must "reckon" ourselves very much alive in His service. If some one tempts us to commit a sin, say to steal or lie, we must immediately remind ourselves that we are reckoned dead to that sort of thing; therefore we cannot do it any more than could a man actually dead and in his grave. By maintaining this attitude toward Sin we are strengthened to live out that other reckoning, which is to be alive in right doing. We yield ourselves as instruments either to the one or to the other, Paul says.—Verse 13.

That Form of Doctrine

The Church at Rome was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, the former being freed from the law. Why then does Paul mention the law in verse 14—"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

These words say, as plainly as any words can, that while they were under the law Sin had dominion over them. These words also teach that it is impossible to be under the law and under grace at the same time. These are two truths important to the Jews, as well as to those Gentile believers in Christ who think that they should mix the law and the gospel. For he goes on to show them that if still under the law, and so under the dominion of Sin, then they were still "unto death." In that case, where was the life promised by grace to those who believe in Christ Jesus? Then he adds (verse 17)—

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE which was delivered you.

What made them free from the dominion of Sin? Faith in the doctrine of Christ and obedience thereto. "So now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." (Verse 19.) The fruit of serving Sin was of a kind to make them ashamed, besides which the wages paid by Sin is death. But "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Since the law was of such a character as to give Sin greater dominion over the Jews than he had over the patriarchs prior to the law, it followed that those who had been Jews must die to the law, which the gospel shows was a bondage bringing them not only more under Sin but also under the curse attached to the law as a penalty for disobedience. In Chapter Seven of Romans the apostle goes into this in detail, as we have heard to-day in connection with Colossians 2: 14, 15, where we are told of Christ's triumph over the law, nailing it to His cross.

In triumphing over the law the Lord Jesus dealt Sin another staggering blow. Under God's arrangement with Abraham and the other partiarchs their faith was counted to them for righteousness; consequently they were not slaves of Sin, but friends of God. (James 2: 23; Romans 4: 22.) Had he lived under that arrangement, Paul also would have had his faith counted to him for righteousness, as indeed he had when—in the loins of his father Abraham—he "was alive without the law once." (See Hebrews 7: 9 for illustration of this principle in another case.) But the law said, "The man that doeth them shall live in them." (Galatians 3: 12.) When that commandment came at Sinai, it found Paul (still in the loins of his ancestors) unable to comply. Therefore, he says, "sin revived, and I died." Behind the law was Sin as a Taskmaster, glorying in the difficulties of those under the law, and in the multiplication of bondages which the law imposed.

So that, he concludes in 7: 23, there was a law of sin in his members that he could not overcome by actual performance of righteousness in every detail, even though by his mind he hated the sin and approved of righteousness. So, being slain by the verdict of the law utilized by Sin (verse 11), Paul points out the wretchedness of the position under the law—like a prisoner chained to a dead body from which he cannot get free. And who shall deliver him? Paul answers, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

No Condemnation in Christ Jesus

The law condemned; Christ Jesus sets free. Then comes the wonderful Chapter Eight—

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, [who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit].

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

It is to be noted that the bracketed words in verse 1 are omitted from the most ancient manuscripts and the Revised Version; the same words being retained at the end of verse 4.

In Christ Jesus there is a new law, the law of the Spirit of life; and this law of the Spirit was made possible by God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh—not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of it (as an earlier speaker to-day has explained), and thus showing that flesh is not necessarily sinful. Jesus the perfect man, though human, was able to live absolutely without sin, without even a sinful thought. And now we, whether previously Jew or Gentile, under the law or not under the law, however sunk in iniquity, may be counted righteous if we believe in His finished work on the cross, and walk henceforth according to the Spirit.

Here again is room for presumption: if those set free by faith in Christ presume deliberately to continue in the old sins of the flesh. To live after the flesh is to bring ourselves under condemnation to death. Life is freely offered, but we must observe the conditions. Having received the Spirit, we must walk accordingly. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, THEY are the sons of God."—Romans 8: 14.

To those in Christendom who still hold to the law, and think all or portions should be kept because given at Sinai, we would say, Do you wish Sin to triumph? Do you wish Sin's dominion to be bolstered up with a show of power? Do you not realize that "the strength ["dunamis"—the power, the "dynamo"] of sin is the law"? (1 Corinthians 15: 56.) Why try to keep the dynamo of sin going?

Thank God, every effort of men to revive the law is a dead failure. For the Lord Jesus Christ triumphed over it more than nineteen centuries ago. He nailed the whole of the law, the Ten Commandments and all, to His Cross; thus liberating the Jews from that curse of bondage, and thus also giving Sin a decided set-back, from which he has not yet recovered, and never will.

Sin is by no means killed. He still has a dominion. But, thank God, such power as he has will soon be taken away.

In the meantime, let us who have been freed from that cruel Taskmaster remember that the state of reckoned righteousness is a favour granted us to make effective before God our deadness to Sin and our aliveness toward God. May we through all trials maintain that Faith which is counted to us for righteousness, so that through faith we may be preserved by the power of God unto "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1: 5-9.) Thus will some contribution be made by us to the Triumph of our Blessed Lord over Sin.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1: 21.

—E. C. H.

Jesus Conquered Death Through Death

WE HAVE BEEN TOLD how death has reigned over the human race for some thousands of years, death being the penalty on account of disobedience in Eden by our first parents. To one ignorant of God's purpose towards the race the position might well seem hopeless. Yet we are told that the Lord Jesus triumphed over death; and we shall now endeavour to see from the Scriptures just how this was accomplished; how He conquered death by the Cross.

The first man Adam had because of sin become subject to death; Death became a ruler, as it were.

Created perfect, with no sin in him, and with the prospect of living forever, Adam was given one prohibition: a certain tree in the garden, "thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." God decreed this punishment for the sin; yet Death is often spoken of in the Scriptures from the point of view of the human race as a tyrant lording it over them, and from whom there is no escape. No escape, that is, except in the one way which God himself has made possible—through Jesus Christ.

As our Lord Jesus triumphed over the Law, and over Sin the taskmaster, so also He triumphed over the enemy Death, and by the same means—by His cross. The Son of God, who was with the Father in heaven before the world was, Jesus humbled himself, as we have heard today, to become a man, and then still further: unto death, and then further still: even to the death of the cross. The apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians the reason for this procedure; concerning the status of man, and why Jesus became a man. We find the explanation in Hebrews 2: 5-17.

Made a Little Lower than the Angels

Quoting portion from Psalm 8, the Apostle says—

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.
6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?
7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:
8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. . . .

Verse 7 describes the estate of Adam when created, on a plane of life a little inferior to that of the angels, who are spirit beings suited to dwell in heaven, while men are flesh beings suited to dwell on earth. Adam was given abilities resembling those of his Maker, qualifying him to have dominion over all the lower creation. He was crowned with the glory and honour of being in the mental and moral image of God, and was set as a king over all the other creatures of the earth.—Genesis 1: 27, 28; Psalm 115: 16.

But, says the apostle, that perfect and desirable condition of things was disturbed (continuing verse 8)—

8 . . . For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

Sin is not mentioned as the disturbing factor. All things were put under man; Adam was ruler over all. But as we survey the world we find that now all things are not under the control of man. But what do we see?

Corresponded to Adam

Then turning to verse 9, the man Christ Jesus is described in precisely the same words—

9 But we see JESUS, WHO WAS MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS . . .

Why was He thus made?

9 . . . FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH.

Jesus took upon himself precisely the estate of father Adam in the beginning. Jesus left His former glory with His Father in heaven; not meditating to exalt himself to be equal with God (as Satan did), but "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." —Philippians 2; 6-8; Hebrews 5: 7, 8.

The Lord was changed by the power of the Father from a heavenly being into a human being. He became a man—perfect mentally, morally, physically, and without sin. Thus He as a perfect man corresponded to Adam in every respect. It was absolutely necessary that He should take this lower estate, as the apostle points out (continuing verse 9)—

9 . . . for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God SHOULD TASTE DEATH FOR EVERY MAN.

Because an angel is in a higher sphere of life, and could not correspond in value with the man Adam. On the other hand, an animal could not suffice, being of a lower order than man, therefore could not be a corresponding price; as the apostle tells the Hebrew brethren: "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

Nor could any man be found among the members of the fallen race who could be a corresponding price, and so be able to redeem, or buy back, Adam and his race. There had never a man lived who could fulfil this requirement, nor would there ever have been one such out of Adam's posterity, all of whom were born under the death sentence. This alone would preclude any from being a satisfactory price.—Psalm 49: 6, 7.

One must be found who was not under the original penalty; one who was entitled to endless existence. Such a one would never have been available had not the Almighty made some special arrangement to provide such a one; and this He did.

God had foreseen, before man was made, the awful predicament His human creation would become involved in; and that they of themselves would not be able even to begin to undo the difficulties which would arise. Here was the opportunity for the Almighty to manifest His loving kindness and mercy, and this He did by sending His well beloved Son. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3: 16.

The purpose for which our Lord became a man was, as He said (Matthew 20: 28)—

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister [i.e., serve], and to GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.
Compare Mark 10: 45.

The word "ransom" is used only three times in the New Testament. Its meaning is "something to loosen with, i.e. a redemption price."

That a ransom was required had been foretold by the prophet Hosea (13: 14)—

14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

That is, God's purpose to ransom from death and the grave would not be repented of; He would perform it. Referring to this prophecy the apostle wrote—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15: 55.) And this conquering of death and the grave he shows (vss. 3-21) was made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our Lord identified himself with this prophecy of Hosea when He said He had come to "give his life a ransom for many." He gave himself as the redemption price for the prisoners of death and the grave.

Further assistance to the understanding of the ransom is found by observing the use of the term under the law. In Exodus 30: 11-16 we read the command through Moses that every man from twenty years old and upward should give unto the Lord "a ransom for his soul." The rich

should not give more, and the poor should not give less; it was the same for all. Like many other things under the law, this arrangement was a type of the Lord Jesus as the ransom. The benefit of the one redemption price given by our Lord can now be availed of by all—the rich and the poor, the smallest and the greatest—all bring the same offering to God when they acknowledge the Lord's death as the ransom for their souls.

The law provided also for the redemption of land and of houses by payment of a ransom. If one became poor and sold his possession, any of the next of kin could redeem it. An Israelite sold into bondage for debt should be ransomed by his brethren.—Leviticus 25: 25, 49.

A Ransom for All

Jesus said "a ransom for many," and some Christians interpret this to mean a ransom for a few; for they think the majority of mankind are for ever lost beyond recovery, including those millions and billions who never so much as heard His name. But the Scriptures place no such limitation. Hebrews 2: 9, already referred to, says of Jesus, "that he by the grace of God should taste death for EVERY MAN." And 1 Timothy 2: 5, 6 says—

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;
6 Who GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL, to be testified in due time [or, as in margin, a testimony in due time].

Christ Jesus a ransom for all was the gospel carried by the apostles to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, their gospel including the fact that Christ Jesus the Ransomer is also the Mediator between God and all men who desire to approach Him. (1 Timothy 2: 7.) It is the ransom which makes possible the promise that "WHOSOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10: 11-13.) But to establish the fact beyond question the apostle not only said "ransom" (Gr. lutron), as a price paid, but "antilutron," i.e. a price set over against, a price to correspond; a corresponding price.

The question then naturally arises, How could one man be a corresponding price for thousands of millions?

This is simply explained in Romans 5: 12, 18, 19—

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:
18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.
19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Adam, as a father, by his action brought death upon all his posterity. The Lord, by reason of His payment of the "corresponding price," became the legal possessor of the purchased race, as we read (Romans 14: 9)—

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

His death, as the ransom price for all, is the basis of the blessings which have been offered during the Gospel age, and which very soon shall be offered to the people of all nations in the Kingdom age.

The Children God Hath Given Him

The payment of the ransom price involved the Lord Jesus in sufferings, to which the apostle refers (Hebrews 2: 10) as being appropriate to His perfecting as "Captain of their salvation" over the sons who are now being sanctified and called to glory. These called-out ones in the present age constitute the church, and are also spoken of as "the children which God hath given me," and He is "not ashamed to call them brethren." (Verses 11-13.) These "children" are chosen from the human race, as the apostle says (verse 14)—

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

But these "children" were in bondage; death had dominion over them. Hence, before they could be inheritors of the "glory," it was necessary for them to be delivered from that bondage. The Lord Jesus performed this service by himself becoming a partaker of flesh and blood. Thus He became their kinsman, and, as elder brother, had the prior right to serve as Ransomer or Redeemer by the payment of the price—which, as we have seen, was the giving of himself on their behalf. Not only has Jesus Christ by reason of His death as the ransom the right to assert His claim over all whom He purchased. He has a particular claim on these whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, they being a special gift of God to His beloved Son.

The apostle therefore mentions two things to be accomplished by the Ransomer—to destroy him who had His "children" in bondage, and to deliver His "children," as declared in verse 15—

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

All human beings are more or less in bondage through fear of death, and all who become believers in Jesus are delivered from that fear, whatever their previous religion and nationality. But the children of Israel were placed under an additional bondage by the law, which gave the devil added power over them and increased the measure of their fear of death. Hence the apostle says (verse 16)—

16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

The Jews were the seed of Abraham—Jesus being born in this line through His mother Mary; God being His Father.

Having been born a Jew under the law, Jesus was bound by the terms of that covenant given at Mt. Sinai. For a particular reason His birth was in the house of David; namely, that He might rightly inherit the throne of His father David, as foretold; David's throne being the throne of the Lord, who was the recognized Ruler of Israel. (1 Chronicles 29: 23; Psalm 132: 11, 12; Isaiah 9: 6, 7; Luke 1: 32, 33.) He was thus able to do the Jews a very special service. He came to do the Father's will.

Satan, on the other hand, is in active opposition to God; he lives for the one object, that of hindering men as far as is in his power from giving their rightful allegiance to God. (1 Peter 5: 8.) Over the Jew he was enabled to gain an especial advantage by reason of their law covenant, which constituted many actions sinful which were *not otherwise so.* They were by reason of the law in a particularly difficult position; and this had been foreseen by God who, through Moses, arranged a system of sacrifices in which animals were the victims. There were sin offerings, thank offerings, and peace offerings to be made, as prescribed, on suitable occasions and at specified places. The faithful fulfilment of these obligations brought forgiveness to the repentant ones for the transgressions and sins concerned. These offerings were shadows of better things to come; and were not the very image of Christ, who was to be the substance or antitype.—Hebrews 10: 1; 1 Peter 1: 18-20; John 1: 29, 36; Acts 8: 32.

But those sacrifices pertained only to sins against the law under which they were offered; they had no value or application in regard to the natural tendencies to sin common to the Jew as well as to the Gentile. The day of atonement sacrifices, offered for the whole nation, brought the fact of sin amongst them into prominence by their annual repetition; "for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."—Hebrews 10: 3, 4.

Jesus Christ Made a Curse

In addition to being shadows, these offerings were designed to teach the people that before sins could be forgiven blood must be shed, a life must be sacrificed; also that repentance was essential. Nor could the life promised under this law be obtained, because of their inability to comply perfectly with the requirements therein.

Instead of inheriting all its blessings, they came under its curse. Says the apostle (Galatians 3: 10, 12, 13)—

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.
12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.
13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

See also Deuteronomy 27: 26; 30: 15, 16, 19; Isaiah 11: 3-8; Exodus 19: 3-6.

To redeem the Gentiles, who were not under the law and consequently not under its curse, it would have sufficed for the Lord's death to have been brought about in a much simpler manner; but to redeem the Jew was another matter; He must become a curse, by being nailed to the cross.

Throughout the Jewish age there were few who realized their utterly undone condition; not only their being under the original condemnation upon Adam, but in addition being under the special curse of the law which had a promise of life yet in practice was proved to be an instrument of death.

The prophet Daniel realized this, and confessed his and Israel's sins and transgressions of God's laws, saying, "Therefore the curse is poured upon us, . . . because we have sinned against him." (Daniel 9: 11.) The apostle Paul said also—so far as the law was concerned—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Romans 7: 24, 25.

The faithful Jew was in constant fear of death by reason of his failures and the condemnation which the broken law brought upon him; and from which his offerings were powerless to deliver him. Therefore when our Lord offered himself both as the Ransom and as the One Offering for sin—complete without any repetition or addition of any kind; as the substance and antitype of all the sacrifices made continually under the law—by that One Offering the Jew as well as the Gentile was redeemed. When the Lord Jesus nailed the law to His cross the power of Satan over the Jews was destroyed in so far as the advantage the law gave the Evil One was concerned. Jesus Christ Himself became their actual possessor and rightful Owner, with a view to delivering them completely from the power of sin and death through faith in Him.—Romans 14: 9; 2 Corinthians 5: 14, 15; Acts 10: 34-43; 20: 28.

The word rendered "destroy" in Hebrews 2: 14 is defined in Strong's Concordance as meaning—"to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively." A person or a machine or an institution may be rendered entirely idle or useless by being destroyed. Or, while still in existence, he or it may be rendered idle or useless by having his or its powers or functions diminished or removed. Or the effect of an action may redound to benefit or injury upon the one who does the action. In this latter sense the word is used in Galatians 5: 4—"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." The action of these Galatians did not destroy Christ; it made His work on their behalf of no effect because they refused to avail themselves of it.

So with "him that had the power of death, the devil." Other scriptures show that Satan will be absolutely destroyed, and that death and hades also will be destroyed. But at the time Paul wrote the devil had been rendered idle or useless so far as the law was concerned by the Lord's action in nailing the law to His cross, thus depriving Satan of that field of operation.

And so down to the present time. Wherever the gospel is accepted the power of death is diminished; for each believer is set over from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and is "passed from death unto life."

The same word is rendered "bring to nought" in 1 Corinthians 1: 28 and 2: 6. In these cases the bringing to nought of the things and the wisdom of this world covers a long period of time. But the bringing to nought of these things in the mind and heart of the believer in Jesus should not take long. Acceptance of Christ should show the emptiness of the world and its ways, and their entire uselessness in the knowledge of God.

For "destroy" in Hebrews 2: 14 the Revised Version has "bring to nought;" the Diaglott word for word rendering is "make powerless." Any person or thing destroyed is made powerless and is brought to nought. But this is not necessarily done instantaneously. A person still alive may be rendered more and more useless and powerless; his power may be taken away in sections, or by degrees. So it is in the case of our Lord's conquest over Satan. Satan's power has been destroyed as far as it depended on the law. It has been diminished considerably by the release of believers from his control. And the Lord's possession of the ransomed race assures that all Satan's power will ultimately be taken away, and that finally his existence will be terminated. (Matthew 25: 41; Revelation 20: 10.) Hence, while rejoicing in all thus far accomplished towards Satan's undoing, we must not forget that he is still the enemy of God's people, and is still working to accomplish their downfall if possible.

Death Abolished

Death in the Scriptures is sometimes personified, also spoken of as a monster. The apostle says "death reigned from Adam to Moses;" meaning that the people were subject to the influence of death, and all died; in other words, they were swallowed up by death. Ever since the fall in Eden the whole race has been so swallowed up. Death is an enemy to mankind.

The Lord Jesus by the payment of the ransom purchased the race; they became His property to do with as had been pre-determined in the plan and purpose of God. And the apostle says further that God has shown His own power in the gospel (2 Timothy 1: 9, 10)—

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,
10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath **ABOLISHED DEATH**, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Here again (verse 10) occurs the same Greek word that is rendered "destroy" in Hebrews 2: 14; in the present case rendered "abolished." The Lord Jesus completely abolished death from the ownership of mankind when He died and rose again and secured the ownership. Also in the individual who accepts the gospel death is abolished as an enemy with power to frighten and domineer over the one who has been baptized into Jesus Christ and has the hope of His resurrection. But the complete abolition of death as it affects the world generally is a matter of time.

The Lord Jesus overcame death, and He has the "keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1: 18), and He has the authority to loose all the prisoners therein when the right time arrives. The Lord has the right by Divine authorization to raise the dead, and give to all who obey Him everlasting life. In the case of the Gospel age overcomers the life given is the incorruptible life with an inheritance in heaven. To those who received a "good report" in previous ages, and to the faithful and obedient of the kingdom age the reward will be human perfection and a home on the earth.—1 Corinthians 15: 49-54; 1 Peter 1: 3, 4; Hebrews 11: 39, 40; Psalm 45: 16.

The law promised life, yet that was unattainable on account of the inability of the people under it to fulfil the conditions imposed upon them.

The New Covenant has conditions which it is possible for men to measure up to.

Under the law the sacrifices required were unable to cleanse the conscience, or to render death powerless. That remained for the Lord Jesus to accomplish, and this He did successfully.

A Merciful and Faithful High Priest

The high priest of the Aaronic order had numerous duties to perform on behalf of the people, and all was to be done in a spirit of compassion—"Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the *people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.*" (Hebrews 5: 2, 3.) But when the Lord Jesus offered for sins, no offering for himself was required, for He was perfect and sinless. Nevertheless He had experiences which fitted Him to become a compassionate High Priest. Thus we read (Hebrews 2: 17, 18)—

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that he hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

The Lord Jesus by reason of His perfect offering of Himself on the cross as the all-atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, which was satisfactory and acceptable in every sense before God, was constituted High Priest of a higher order than Aaron's—not only to be a priest but to be a king as well. (Hebrews 5: 6; Psalm 110: 4.) And in this combined office He is the Mediator of the New Covenant with better promises, the covenant which was ratified by His own blood. Aaron entered the Most *Holy yearly with the blood of the atonement offering;* Jesus has not entered the tabernacle made with hands, "but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."—Hebrews 7: 22-28; 8: 6; 9: 7, 11, 14, 15, 24.

Not only was the Lord's death necessary on our behalf, that we might be redeemed from death, and by faith be relieved from the original condemnation, which father Adam brought upon his posterity of which we are members; but also that we on confession and repentance might have the past sins to the time of belief forgiven; also all the sins which, because of our imperfection, shall yet be committed by us—and repented of—while we are running in the race. His death was necessary before any of these things could be accomplished.

Yet something else was necessary also, before we could receive the full benefits even of His death. That something was His resurrection from the dead. A dead Redeemer could not bless those for whom He died. Had He remained dead, His sacrifice would not have been an acceptable offering for our sins; we should still have *remained in our sins.* Says the apostle concerning Jesus Christ (Romans 4: 25; 8: 34)—

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

34 *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,* who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

His resurrection by the power of the Father placed the seal of Divine approval upon His offering for sin. His position at God's right hand as intercessor for each one of us brings Him into a very close relationship continually *with us. His death was absolutely necessary, yet this* after service was also essential—giving us the assurance of forgiveness and a realization that indeed "we have an advocate [or comforter*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

The unsuitability of the law for dealing with sinful creatures was due to the weakness of the flesh, for which the law made little allowance. (Romans 8: 3.) On the other hand. the New Covenant of which the Lord Jesus is the Mediator has arrangements and conditions allow*ing for the desires or the will of the penitent one,* even though he is not able to perform perfectly.

This is shown in God's dealings with Abraham who lived before the law. Though he had weaknesses of the flesh, yet because he was strong in belief that God was able to perform all that He had promised, even though it would appear impossible to natural reasoning, and on account of his faith, God imputed righteousness unto him; that is, God reckoned him as righteous, though he was not actually so. Thus also the Almighty does with each one who believes on His Son: our faith is counted for *righteousness.—Romans 4: 18-24.*

We must realize that "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities [or weaknesses]; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Hebrews 4: 15, 16.

We remember our Lord's love for the fallen race, and His willingness to be made in the likeness of men, so that He might be put to death on the cross; and, during His *ministry on earth, His consideration and kindness towards* His disciples, His patience with their ofttimes failings, His considerate thoughtfulness for the temporal necessities of the multitudes which followed Him, His sorrow over the foolish unbelieving city of Jerusalem; He who is our great High Priest is this selfsame Jesus—the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

We may well to our profit consider His loving, patient, comforting attitude toward each one of us; desiring at all times to help us on in the narrow way which leads *to that heavenly inheritance; yet at the same time* we must not for a moment think that we can presume on His mercy, that He will overlook wrongdoing. Persistence in wrongdoing on our part will before very long cause the Lord to take corrective action which may be exceedingly painful to the wrongdoer yet necessary to help us to realize that that kind of thing can not be overlooked, and, if persisted in sufficiently long, will result in our loss of His favour, and the gradual loss of the rejoicings in the good things we now hope for.—*1 Corinthians 11: 28-32; 2 Corinthians 13: 5.*

It is our privilege to live in the time now present, when God's favour is manifested in such a way as was not known in former ages. It was father Abraham's privilege to be called "the friend of God." Moses and Joshua were "servants"—as indeed were all under the law. Moses' house was a house of servants, "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."—Exodus 14: 31; 33: 11; Isaiah 41: 8; *James 2: 23; Hebrews 3: 6.*

The apostle John expresses the greatness of this favour —"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Jesus himself said that all who do the will of His Father are His brethren. (1 John 3: 2; Matthew 12: 50.) It is now our privilege to be members of the Lord's new "house" of sons; which brings each one of us into the nearest possible relationship to the Almighty, as our Father, and to the Lord Jesus as our Elder Brother, who *loved us so much that He shed His blood for us on Cal*vary's cross; who is also our King and High Priest, as well as our Judge.

These exceeding great favours can be retained by us only on condition that we remain steadfast in the hope, rendering faithful service to our great High Priest. The members of the Divine household have been called from both Jew and Gentile; all must under the New Covenant come to God through the one Mediator. The Almighty's purpose during the present age is to train and discipline these *"sons," having arranged all things for their* assistance in making their calling and election sure.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

The Lord Jesus is designated the "Captain of their salvation." Himself, having suffered in the flesh, is therefore able to know the difficulties which beset those who seek to follow in His steps. There is this difference, however. The Lord's sufferings in the flesh were in no

*Same Greek word in John 14: 16 is translated "comforter"—"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." So that God's people in the Gospel age have two Advocates or Comforters—the One in heaven with the Father, the other within ourselves on earth —both making intercession for us.—Romans 8: 26, 34.

sense due to sin in himself. He had no sinful tendencies whatsoever, such as beset fallen men. His sufferings, as already explained, were due to the operations of sin in others, who hated Him, as the prophet foretold, "without a cause." (Psalm 35: 19; John 15: 25.) To be tempted means to be tried or tested, and our Lord endured faithfully and triumphantly throughout all the tests of His humility, His patience, and His obedience to the Father. But the Lord saw and experienced enough of the effects of sin in those around Him to be able to sympathize with them in their trials and in their efforts to resist the evil. In considering our High Priest, we must not focus attention on His Kingship to the exclusion of His duties as *Reconciler on the basis of the sacrifice* He offered on the cross, even as the apostle at the conclusion of Hebrews 2 emphasizes this feature, saying—

". . . that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, **TO MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE.**"

We who have received the reconciliation need to retain the reconciled state by making continuous use of our High Priest's office as Reconciler, else His sympathetic interest in our efforts to overcome our faults and failings as well as our serious transgressions would go unappreciated. Not only so, but we have the privilege of encouraging others to become reconciled to God through Him, as the apostle said in another letter (2 Corinthians 5: 17-21)—

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
18 And all things [i.e. all these new things]are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;
19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.
21 For he hath made him [Jesus] to be sin [i.e. a sin offering] for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Those who have become reconciled in this age, and who remain faithful to the end, will constitute the "overcomers" of the gospel age. It will be their privilege to be made like their Lord, they will be given abilities so that they will be enabled ably to assist the King of *kings in His glorious Rulership, which will extend to the* ends of the earth. Their authority will be over the thousands of millions of men who will, during that thousand years, be brought back from the dead to live on the earth under the exceedingly kind and helpful conditions which will then prevail on the earth. And not only so; they will hear, most of them for the first time, the good news, the like of which they could never have imagined—*the good news which the angel messenger* brought to the shepherds—"behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2: 7-14; 1: 32, 33; Isaiah 65: 21-25; 1 Corinthians 6: 2, 3; Revelation 3: 21.

Then all nations and peoples shall hear how the Lord was made flesh for the suffering of death as a ransom for all; the opportunity will be theirs, after hearing how the Saviour conquered death through His own death, to exercise faith in His Offering on the cross, as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2: 2.) If they exercise the faith and accept the terms offered, they will attain to human perfection, to live for ever on the earth in harmony with each other, and to glorify their God, who has done so much for them, and also His wonderful Son who redeemed them.

Let each one of us here who realizes these things and the opportunity which is set before us of the high calling: let us make every endeavour to attain to that glorious goal. Let us by every means at our disposal seek to build up one another in the most holy faith, confessing our trespasses in the name of the Lord Jesus, and seek to be **wholly** obedient to Him in every detail. If so, the prize will be ours.

—A. K.

One Hope of Your Calling

WHEN THE LORD GOD purposes to do something, He sees that it is completed, and not left half done, as some of us are apt to do.

When He set out to create the earth, it was accomplished. When He willed it to bring forth fruit, trees, etc., that, too, came to pass. The sun, moon and stars were created, the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, then the first members of the human race.

Nothing was done in the spirit of "that's near enough," but had to be perfect and complete in all details.

God warned this pair of human beings that, if they disobeyed Him, they would surely die (and it would naturally affect the whole of their posterity as well). They listened to the tempter (Satan), and we know only too well, to this day, how God put into effect that which He *said He would do.*

The prophet Isaiah tells us that when God created the earth He formed it to be inhabited (Isaiah 45: 18), and that by good obedient people who would serve and worship Him.—Revelation 7: 9-17.

Well, then, since He has condemned the whole of the human race to death, something truly very wonderful must be going to happen, before this habitation by perfect human beings could be accomplished. The Lord tells us through His prophet Isaiah (55: 11) about His word: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

"Now, what did He do, what was the wonderful thing that happened?" may be asked. It was this: When man sinned God had already formed a great plan of salvation through faith, whereby men might be delivered from this fallen condition.

At the time of the fall, in the Garden of Eden, the Lord said: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."—Genesis 3: 15.

Little enough was said about it, you might say. Yet it gave them hope, something to look forward to if they had faith in God.

As time went on, God revealed more and more of this plan to His people. His promise to Abraham: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 22: 18.) Moses told the children of Israel: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the *midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him* ye shall hearken."—Deuteronomy 18: 15.

Through Hosea He said, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."—Hosea 13: 14.

If ever there was a hope, a promise of deliverance to the people, it is here in these words. A price was to be paid; they would be purchased and brought back again.

Just note the ancients who had faith in God's promises (as recorded in Hebrews 11)—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sara, Isaac, Jacob, and others. They looked forward to the coming of the great Deliverer who would bring in the blessings promised.

Jesus the Son of God, referred to by John as "the *Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1: 29), and by Peter as "a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1: 19, 20), proved to be that great and wonderful Deliverer.

But, before fulfilling the promises of life and blessing given to the Ancient Worthies, one of which is that they were to be "princes in all the earth," an earthly calling (Psalm 45: 16), He began a new calling, or profession. He preached the Kingdom of Heaven, inviting His hearers *to be His footstep followers, and receive this new and* wonderful blessing—

A Heavenly Calling

because it would be the Father's good pleasure to give them, who are only a "little flock," the Kingdom.—Matthew 4: 17; Luke 12: 32.

The apostles spoke of it too. Let us read what Paul says (Ephesians 4: 1-6)—

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
3 *Endeavouring* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Paul addressed these words to the Ephesian brethren and others, who, as a called out body of believers (predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, to obtaining an inheritance according to the purpose of Him who worked all things after the counsel of His own will) should be to the praise of His glory, having first trusted in Christ.—Ephesians 1: 1-12.

When (verse four of chapter four) he *wrote, "one* body," that is to say, one body of believers in Jesus Christ, He had in mind the fact, that some had been Jews, others Gentiles, and finding that some had got wrong ideas into their heads about this matter, thinking that their nationality would make a difference, He *corrects* their mistake by giving them some very good instruction in the second chapter. Speaking of the Gentiles before the death of Christ, he said (2: 12)—

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

A sad condition for the Gentiles to be in—no hope, without God. Then He goes on to say—

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.
14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; . . .

In this we see a further step in God's great and wonderful plan of salvation.

Gentiles, as well as Jews, were now able to come unto God and make their peace with Him, both placed on the same footing. The law, which stood between the Gentiles and approach unto the Lord, was broken down, taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross of Christ; something of which you have already heard.

Let me illustrate this change. Here is a field surrounded by a high wall, we will call the wall the Law Covenant, and in this field are a number of sheep, the Jewish race, and plenty of good pasture to feed on, the care and love of God. Outside the wall are other sheep, *Gentiles, starving* as it were, without God, without hope. The Chief Shepherd, Christ, comes along, takes compassion on them, and breaks down this wall. He takes it right away, calls the sheep outside to come and mix with the others, as one fold, and to follow Him to a field where the feed is even more abundant in green pastures, he love and favour of God—placing both, now, on common ground, with the same advantages to each.

One reason why the law was abolished was that he might *reconcile BOTH unto God, in one body, by the cross.*

And this body is the church, built on Christ and his apostles. (Ephesians 2: 16, 20; Colossians 1: 24.) Both received on the same terms; and of the twain is constituted "one new man." That is to say, of the two separate *bodies, Jew and Gentile,* one new body was in himself, formed of believers in Jesus reconciled unto God.

By the cross, provision was made to slay the "enmity" between Jew and Gentile, existing because of the law, a very necessary preliminary to the making peace with *God on a common basis. And we must bear this in mind,* that reconciliation is impossible except on the terms stated; namely, the acceptance of Christ and His work on the cross.

If we realize all this, then it should be clear to us that *the "one body," mentioned in Ephesians 4: 4, does not* antedate the cross, and none can be in it except those since the cross who hear and answer the call.

The apostle evidently anticipated the objection raised by some, that all the saved before and since the cross *should have the same calling.* In one of his epistles he speaks of his knowledge in the "mystery," and his explanation of it upsets anything the objectors might try and bring forth in support of their views.—Ephesians 3: 3, 4.

Though some teachers of religion in our time use this word "mystery" to put to silence some of their followers who ask awkward questions, saying that certain teachings are part of the mystery which men's minds are not capable of understanding just yet, is this what the *apostle says?*

No; he tells us emphatically that the mystery is no longer a mystery, it had been revealed—"the mystery of Christ;" "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is NOW REVEALED unto his holy *apostles and prophets by the Spirit.*" (Verses 4, 5.) The mystery revealed was this—

6 That *the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same* body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

Fellow Heirs

Brethren, this call to fellowheirship, and the hope of glory, what riches! Did the ancients have anything like *this?* No; this wonderful calling was never given to them; and, what is more, they can never be made perfect until those who received this new and better calling are taken out and given their prize and become the first fruits unto God.—Colossians 1: 23-27; 2: 2; Hebrews 11: 40; *Revelation 14: 4.*

According to the third chapter of Ephesians, verses 8 to 11, Paul considered himself greatly privileged to be preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery—

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold [or, much diversified] wisdom of God,
11 *According to the eternal purpose [or plan of ages]* which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Much Diversified Wisdom

From these words we can see that God from the very beginning did have a plan formed, whose intent and purpose was the salvation of the race. In His much diversified wisdom He dealt with men differently in each age as He put into operation more and more of His wonderful plan.

In the Gospel age, the age in which we are now living, we, the church, have this new calling in Christ Jesus. There are some Jews, some Gentiles, but all one body of believers glorying in the cross of Christ. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." (Galatians 3: 28; Romans 9: 24-26.) And that, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Whereunto be called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus

Christ" [in the fellowheirship].—2 Thessalonians 2: 13, 14.

This call, which comes by the Gospel, is good tidings to all, both Jew and Gentile alike. Accept the one Lord Jesus Christ as your sacrifice for sin, your ransomer, the owner of the church, the Lord both of the dead and the living, and be approved of.—Romans 14: 9; Matthew 20: 28; Ephesians 5: 25; 1 Timothy 2: 6.

Dear friends, we should, and must, obey these conditions: For God has called us, with an holy calling, according to His own purpose in that great and wonderful plan, now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. Brethren, we are called to an eternal glory.—1 Peter 5: 9, 10; 2 Timothy 1: 8-10.

Set Apart by the One Spirit

All who are called in one hope are clearly and definitely set apart in their calling by the One Spirit from God through Christ at Pentecost; they are distinct from all the godly of previous times.—Acts 2.

Every member of the one body receives the same Spirit as a token of peace with God, the forgiveness of their sins, and as a demonstration of their sonship. (Romans 8: 14.) They believe in the one Lord Jesus Christ as the one and only Mediator. (1 Timothy 2: 5.) They have only one faith or doctrine, and it is that which was laid down by Christ and His apostles.—Ephesians 2: 20.

They are marked out very clearly as being separate from all others by baptism. Those who have been "baptized into Jesus Christ" show their complete consecration, for they "are buried with him by baptism into death:" and like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father to a new life, so those who receive and obey the call have died to their old ways, and to wills of their own; have become new creatures, doing only the will of God. And they do this in hope, believing, that if they have been "planted together in the likeness of his death," they shall be also "in the likeness of his resurrection."—Romans 6: 3-5.

What a wonderful resurrection that was too! He is now the exact impress of the Father's substance, sitting at His right hand, with all power in heaven and in earth given unto Him.—Hebrews 1: 1-3; Matthew 28: 18.

We, His followers, have been called to be God's children, joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him. (Romans 8: 17.) Never before was there such a call, or such a baptism, or such a body with such a hope! It is worth while putting up with the opposition of Satan and any suffering brought about through fidelity to the cross of Christ; so let us say as Paul did: "that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8: 18.) In giving to believers of the Gospel age this heavenly calling, there is no reflection on the people of faith in the past. It is simply God's will and wisdom to offer this greater blessing at this time.—Hebrews 3.

Paul recognized it as a new prize, a new race; none of his former Judaism counted in this "high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Philippians 3: 14.

The fact of this new calling being called a "high calling" makes it obvious that, whatever the calling the faithful ones had before, it was not so high, and therefore not the joint heirship and sonship given to the one body of believers, the church. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." And, as such, we are told, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Yes, like Him, a glorified heavenly being. To see Him, too? Yes, we will; but we must be in heaven to be able to do that; and, what is more, that is where the great and wonderful God dwells, who is the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Christ is our Elder Brother; then God is our Father. What a wonderful family to belong to!—1 John 3: 1, 2.

It might seem hard to believe, that we, poor weak imperfect human beings, some of us having the most humble of positions in everyday life, can be raised to such great heights, but it is possible; it can be done by divine power through faith in the cross of Christ.

You know how some people in poor circumstances have set out to better themselves in their callings in this life. To achieve this object they sacrifice many hours of pleasure amongst other people, they give up their whole time to strive for it, sometimes being jeered at because of their studious nature. When success comes on account of their efforts, they may be raised to a managership of some large firm, along with an increase in salary. It brings joy to himself, to his wife, to his parents, while thinking people would say he deserved his success.

Now each one called out from all the millions on this earth during the Gospel age, has heard that it is possible to become a King and a Priest, to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. (Revelation 20: 4, 6.) To receive this great prize they are prepared to give up their whole lives to it, not wavering, sacrificing everything to serve Jesus, putting up with all the jeers and sufferings, so as to hear those words which will crown their success and bring them great joy—

> Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.—Matthew 25: 21.

Try and imagine what it means to you and to me to run in this race and to receive the prize for overcomers; to sit in His throne, as Christ is in the Father's throne! It is more wonderful than our tongues can express—this to which we have all been called in one hope.

Bear in mind, though, there is no lesser prize offered, no choice permitted as to whether we will run the race now or be content to take something else that will be given in the Kingdom age. During the Gospel age there is only one calling, and it has only the one hope; therefore no such attempt to make a choice is sanctioned.

If you have been called by receiving a knowledge of the truth, obey it; don't cast it lightly aside—

> For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,
> And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world [age] to come,
> If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Those sins which come on account of our weakness in the flesh are forgiven if we confess them, the blood of Christ has made provision for that; but to keep deliberately casting the truth aside is a dreadful thing to do even if the opposition of others is great and persecution severe.—1 John 1: 7-9; Hebrews 6: 4-6.

Now there is no need for any of us to fall into such a serious condition as this because of our sufferings for Christ. We have this promise: That the Lord is always with us, never leaves us or forsakes us; never allows us to be tested more than we can bear. His grace, as it was to Paul, is sufficient for thee. Let us all love Him for what he has done for us through the cross.—Hebrews 13: 5, 6; 2 Corinthians 12: 9; 1 Corinthians 10: 13.

How can we show our love? We can show our love by obeying each and every command He has given to us, being diligent in His service and to make our calling and election sure: "for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We can show our love for Him by loyalty to our calling as the sons of God, for whom the whole creation waits, for it must eventually be brought to perfection as He purposed it in His great plan of salvation.—2 Peter 1: 10, 11; Romans 8: 19-22.

Dear friends in the One Hope of your Calling, and as partakers of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, you, the one body of believers, the church, let the whole world see how the CROSS OF CHRIST has TRIUMPHED in you! Amen.

—C. M.

Present Triumph as King of Kings and Head of the Church

GOD IS THE Ruler of the Universe. He holds this supreme position both by the right of creation and by the right of maintenance. He alone therefore can confer a permanent title and a permanent position of wealth, power, and authority. He alone is the one who "removeth kings, and setteth up kings." (Daniel 2: 21.) There have been very many earthly kings in the past, possessing varying degrees of wealth, power, and influence. All have demonstrated their failure and their inability to govern righteously and perfectly, and none has been permitted to hold his kingly position permanently. Even the greatest of the world emperors, like Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (Daniel 2: 37; Ezekiel 26: 7), and Artaxerxes king of Persia (Ezra 7: 1, 12), have had to relinquish their offices, power, and wealth at death—if not before.

There is One, however, who has been given ruling authority far exceeding that possessed by any earthly monarch at any time. His throne is for ever and ever, and His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness. (Hebrews 1: 8.) He was appointed "heir of all things." He is the Lord Jesus Christ. On account of His obedience and humility, God has decreed that every knee shall bow to Him. God, the supreme Ruler, has given His Son a name that is above every name. He has given the Lord Jesus the wonderful title—King of kings, and Lord of lords—not king over a few kings, not lord over a few lords, as were the mightiest emperors of the past, but King of all kings, Lord of all lords.

We heard on Friday last how our Lord achieved a triumph by the Cross, nailing there the Law, and making a spoil of principalities and powers; that is, of the arrogant, stiffnecked leaders of the Jewish economy, folding up and laying aside the Jewish "heaven" as a garment that has grown old. (Hebrews 1: 8-12.) God, in raising Jesus from the dead, established His Son's triumph over the Jewish law and traditions, as well as His great victory over death itself.

Splendour of His Present Position

Indeed, God established the triumph of the cross in the highest possible way, as the Scriptures definitely show. God raised the Lord Jesus to partake of the brightness of the Divine glory, and to be the exact impress of the Father's substance, and to sit at His own right hand. Jesus has been raised to a position "far above angels," and all the angels of God are called upon to worship Him. (Hebrews 1: 6.) He has been anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. (Hebrews 1: 9.) He has been exalted to be a "Prince and a Saviour," made both "Lord and Christ," ordained to be the Judge of all, is the Owner of the dead as well as of the living, and has all authority to command obedience.

Can we realize the splendour of the Lord's present position? Do we realize that there is absolutely no limit to the ruling authority of the Lord Jesus in the whole of the Universe, God alone excepted? Let us by all means avoid the mistake of the Jews, who failed to recognize Messiah the Prince, saying, "Is not this Joseph's son?"—Luke 4: 22.

He is indeed the Son of God, who—because of deepest humility, and faithfulness unto death, even the death of the cross—has been exalted as the triumphant King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

Recognizing then the high title conferred on our Lord by the Creator, the question will arise as to when Jesus will, or did, receive the power and authority associated with His high office.

The Scriptures supply the answer. It was at His resurrection, as indicated by the Lord's own words—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—Matthew 28: 18-20.

A question which naturally occurs to many inquirers may be asked: "Is the Lord reserving the use of all the power and authority which have been given to Him entirely for some time and purpose in the future? Is the risen and exalted Lord sitting idly in His throne, waiting until His heavenly Father makes a footstool of His enemies? The answer to this question is that to sit down at God's right hand is a phrase similar to that in use to-day, when a candidate is elected to "sit" in Parliament, in Congress, or other like position. It indicates the occupation of a particular office with certain privileges and obligations. To sit at God's right hand means to be established as God's chief Aid in the administration of the divine government.

If the prophecy in Psalm 110 is read carefully, it will be seen there that the Lord Jesus was to use His power and rule, and not sit in idleness. All the work of the Lord God was to be accomplished in and by the Lord Jesus—

1 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
2 The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Such titles and offices of the Lord Jesus as "the prince [or ruler] of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1: 5), "to reign over the Gentiles" (Romans 15: 12), "king upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psalm 2), "exalted far above all principality, power, might, and dominion" (Ephesians 1: 21), are not empty names, but indicate His position as a very powerful Sovereign.

How, then, is all this wonderful power and extensive authority being used at the present time?

The Lord's power since His resurrection is being used towards restraining, and overruling where necessary, the activities of the kings and lords of the earth, and will operate in the future to a wider extent, by entirely removing them. Even the Popes of Rome, who have usurped His position so far as they could, have been able to go only so far and no farther. Let us try to realize the full meaning of the apostle's description of the resurrected Christ, who is "gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Peter 3: 22.) God has raised His Son far above Satan and his evil angels, as well as above good angels, for, as we have already heard, Satan's power was shaken and the evil spirits were obliged to obey Him even while He was on earth, and the promise to the overcomers is that Satan shall be bruised "under your feet shortly."—Romans 16: 20.

The Son of God with Power

Christ in His resurrection glory has been given a spiritual or spirit body. (1 Corinthians 15: 44-49.) Paul writes to the Romans (1: 3, 4)—

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;
4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

He is therefore, though invisible, very real and potent. The Kingdom of God's dear Son is also very real, and one that is even now in operation. There is a King, and there are subjects. (Colossians 1: 13.) The subjects are the believers, who have been translated into it from the kingdom of darkness. They constitute "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." (1 Peter 2: 9.) It is chiefly because of them that their great King, Jesus, has been restraining and over-ruling the nations, for His great work in this age is the gathering together of His church, of which He is the Head.

Head over All Things to the Church

After describing in unmistakable language the mighty power which God wrought in raising Christ from the dead to a position far above all principality, power, and might, Paul adds—

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

All principalities, power, and might are subject to Jesus as Head, and to this headship the church is no exception.

The expressions "head of the church" and "which is his body" must not be forced in their meanings. We are not to think of a physical body separated from a physical head and use that picture to symbolize a bodyless Christ in heaven and a headless church on earth. The church members must be careful not so to exalt the church as to think that the Lord, as a bodyless head, could not get along without it. The Scriptures do say we are "complete in him" (Colossians 2: 10), but nowhere do they suggest that He or His Sacrifice is incomplete without us.

In what sense, then, is Christ the head of the church? The epistle to the Ephesians (5: 23, 28-30) supplies the answer—

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body.
28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.
30 For we are members of his body. (The remainder of verse 30 is omitted from the Sinaitic, Vatican 1209, and Alexandrine MSS.)

Christ's headship, then, is not to be illustrated by a head on a physical body, but by the marriage relation—a relation of leadership, of care, and of love—"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" (Ephesians 5: 25.) The selection of the church by the Lord is a grand triumph of love and grace, instead of being a triumph of despotic power. "But unto every one of us," says the Apostle, "is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."—Ephesians 4: 7.

Led a Multitude of Captives

Grace is given in accordance with the measure of the gift of Christ; Jesus Himself being God's gift to men, and He, in turn, gives good gifts—

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.—Ephesians 4: 8.

By "led captivity captive," or led "a multitude of captives" (as in the marginal reading), is meant the Lord's triumph over Satan and Sin and Death and the Grave, which had taken captive the whole of the human race. Hence the whole of the race, including all its rulers, kings, and emperors—living and dead, and those yet to come—is now His, as we read in Romans 14: 9—

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be LORD BOTH OF THE DEAD AND LIVING.

The bringing back of the multitudes from the captivity of death in the Kingdom age, and giving them an opportunity to obtain life, will be a grand manifestation of the triumph of the King of kings; but this future phase will be dealt with by a later speaker.

The Lord, nevertheless, celebrates His triumph even now, during the present age, by the giving of good gifts to men. Just before His ascension, He commissioned the disciples to go into all nations, making disciples by the preaching of the gospel message. This meant giving the gifts of enlightenment to many, with the good gift of forgiveness to all who would believe in Him.

The Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Just after His ascension, He poured out the good gift of the Holy Spirit upon the believers gathered in the upper room. Of this Peter said (Acts 2: 32, 33)—

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.
33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

The Lord had told the disciples to expect this gift of the Holy Spirit, and Peter clearly defines that God first gave it to Jesus after His ascension as a gift to be "shed forth," or poured out, upon the waiting disciples. This good gift of the Holy Spirit was not for those present at Pentecost only, but for all who would become believers after hearing the word of truth. (Acts 2: 38, 39.) Of this gift the apostle Paul wrote (Ephesians 1: 13, 14)—

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

At Pentecost and during the life time of the apostles the giving of the Spirit to believers was manifested by the bestowal with it of other special gifts, as related in Acts 2: 4-11; 10: 44-47. The apostle Paul afterward wrote about these gifts as exercised in the church; including prophecy (either public expounding or foretelling), ministry, exhortation, tongues and interpretation of tongues, healing, knowledge, the word of wisdom, etc. (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12.) And though miraculous gifts, which served the purpose of establishing the church in those early days, are no longer necessary, the Holy Spirit as the power or influence from the Lord is still among the good gifts being given to those who repent and believe in Jesus, and is called the seal of God in their foreheads. (Revelation 7: 3.) The Spirit "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1: 7.) The "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."—Romans 8: 14-16.

Instructors a Gift to the Church

In addition to the gift of the Holy Spirit given to the believers with all its benefits, those who served as instructors in the Church were also among the "good gifts." These are spoken of as gifts to the church "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4: 11-13)—

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek

Our Lord's present chief interest is the welfare and development of the church, and He has been successful in His choice of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—all good gifts for the edification and upbuilding of the church. But there are still more good gifts. If we know of and understand our Lord's positions as Ransomer and Sin Offering, as the Giver of good gifts, as the King of kings, and these positions only, it is well; but we have still more to learn, concerning our Lord's high offices. The New Testament teaches us that He is not only a King to rule, but a High Priest to show compassion and make conciliation.

His rule is the decisive, forceful rule of an absolute monarch, yet tempered with the loving-kindness of the priest. He is well fitted to occupy this high priestly position, having been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.—Hebrews 4: 14-16.

The writer to the Hebrews, quoting from the Psalms, indicates that Christ is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Melchizedek lived thousands of years ago—in Abraham's time. He was king of Salem, and "the priest of the most high God." To him Abraham paid tithes, recognizing Melchizedek's position.—Genesis 14: 18-24.

In Hebrews 7 the Melchisedec priesthood is strongly contrasted with the Aaronic priesthood, which was constituted under the Law Covenant. The Melchisedec priesthood was superior to the Aaronic in that Levi was said to have paid tithes to Melchisedec in his ancestor Abraham. Moreover, the Melchisedec priesthood combines the positions of king and priest, whereas the Levites were priests only.

Another point in connection with Melchisedec is that the Scriptures do not record his birth, nor his death, nor his parentage. This fact is used by the Apostle to illustrate the everlastingness of Christ's priestly office.—Hebrews 7: 3.

The gospel age church of believers constitutes, according to 1 Peter 2: 9, "a royal priesthood," hence its members are underpriests after the Melchisedec order. Their

work is not the offering of an atoning sacrifice, which has been done by the High Priest "once for all," but the worshipping of God, the doing of His will, and to "shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

The selection of the required number to constitute this royal priesthood—the "little flock" to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom (Luke 12: 32)—is one of the greatest triumphs of our Lord Jesus Christ during the gospel age. The members of this priesthood are trained, disciplined, and taught the way of righteousness. This is expressed under various figures, such as a good shepherd caring for the sheep, and as a master directing his servants.

The formation and development of the Lord's church are by the process, and under the terms, of the New Covenant—the Covenant of mercy and forgiveness. This Covenant and its broad principles were announced through the prophet Jeremiah; the covenant by means of which God is able to forgive sins, and remember them no more. This merciful provision is the central point of the gospel message—"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. See also Matthew 26: 28.

It is well also to remember in this connection that not only are the gracious provisions of the New Covenant definitely available now to the true believer, but his absolute need for availing himself of those provisions is also as definite—"There is none righteous, no, not one": "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."—Romans 3: 10, 23; 1 John 1: 10.

The Church a Triumph of Organization

A review of the church as an organisation compels us to realize in it another of the present triumphs of Christ in His resurrection power. This is so in all its details, from the calling of the members by the Gospel (as related to us by a previous speaker) and the sending forth of witnesses to find others, to the building up of the believers on the most holy faith, and keeping them from falling.—Jude 20, 24.

The Lord has preserved His church throughout the age—though unknown to the world, and despised by great nominal systems. He has, indeed, been building it up as a temple of the Lord. Ye are "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."—Ephesians 2: 19-22.

Rule Thou in the Midst of Thine Enemies

Though opposed on all sides, the exercise of our Lord's kingly power during the present age has never been checked. He has been triumphant in the organizing and building of His church, though He has allowed, but not caused, other and contrary organizations to flourish and to develop into world-wide systems. Even more than this has He allowed; He has allowed them to go to extreme lengths in their efforts to exterminate His own. Nevertheless, despite severe testings and trials, all true believers throughout the age can testify to the overruling care and protection of their Good Shepherd. They have also been able to derive comfort from the knowledge that, while the great anti-christian systems may seem to prosper now, the Lord will smash and entirely remove every system, every organization, every thing that is contrary to His rule of righteousness. The beast and his image (called also the false prophet) will themselves be completely exterminated. The King of kings will indeed triumph magnificently in the final conflict with them and their armies, as the next paper will show.

Throughout the age the King of kings and Lord of lords has had a firm grip on affairs. As the Psalmist was inspired to foretell, He has successfully ruled in the midst of His enemies. He has successfully chosen the members of His church, "the bride," and soon the "marriage" will take place, as portrayed in Revelation, chapter 19. Soon, too, after the "marriage of the Lamb," has taken place, there will be further developments of a world-wide character. The long-prayed-for Kingdom of our Lord will be established over the earth in its fullest sense; when all nations and peoples will be invited to the marriage feast; when the true position of the King of kings and Lord of lords will be fully revealed as the highest One in the whole universe, second only to the Father.

God grant that we, each one, may make our calling and our election sure, and so by His grace, as members of the bride, may be able to rejoice with the Bridegroom in the triumph soon to be celebrated at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

But as members of His church now; as subjects of His Kingdom now; translated out of the kingdom of darkness, let us be loyal in our allegiance to Him, faithful and diligent in His service, waiting patiently for Him to take us to Himself.

Let us, in our minds, recognize the splendour and the power of His present position, and, in our hearts, crown Him "Lord of All!" —H. S. W.

Christ's Final Triumph over the Beast and the False Prophet

WHEN JESUS DECLARED Himself to be the Bread of Life to all believers, many who had followed Him went back, and ceased to follow Him. Jesus sorrowfully turned to the twelve He had chosen as His own, and asked them, "Will ye also go away?" Peter's reply was instant and definite—"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6: 67-69.) The disciples had experienced the joy of association with their Master in His ministry; seeing the miracles which He performed, and hearing the wonderful words of life which He spoke.

It would seem to them incredible that anyone should ever desire to depart from the wonderful truths He taught. But it was not long after our Lord left this earth that many did stray far from the truth, and a spirit of rivalry and self-aggrandisement manifested itself amongst them.

Even in our Lord's day the disciples frequently caused Him sorrow by striving amongst themselves who should be the greatest. This was further manifest in the days of the apostles, when some ambitious members of the early church strove for power and authority over their fellow Christians. This was contrary to the spirit of Christ, but such a consideration did not deter some from exercising their influence in the church, and imposing their will upon others. Naturally the truth suffered considerably, and these wolves amongst the sheep introduced many errors; and thus there was a great falling away from the purity of the Gospel. Paul referred to this disposition as "the mystery of iniquity," and he predicted that it would develop its influence in the church and become a mighty system of error, and that it would make extraordinary claims to power and authority. This gradually came to be fulfilled in the Papacy.

The Rise of the Papacy

After the apostles died, and the Church was thus bereft of its inspired leaders, there was a marked development in this desire for power, and the Christian religion became greatly corrupted. Bishops, who were really over-

seers of congregations of believers, began to think what a great thing it would be to obtain power and authority over their fellow Christians.

Later, when the Christian religion as it was then, greatly corrupted, was adopted as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the persecutions against Christians ceased, and the Christian leaders were exalted to high positions and were honoured by the government—a pagan power which had become nominally Christian. The very thing which these Bishops had striven for was theirs. They had power, position, and authority—just what they wanted.

In due time the Bishop of Rome was exalted above other bishops, and he became Pope—which means Father; and thus he claimed to be the spiritual father over his fellow Christians, and a temporal ruler as well.

As Christianity became more popular, it also became still more corrupt; and, with its outward show and splendour, it was able to attract many, and was soon to dominate the world. The Church was supported by the Civil power, and its clergy ambitiously grasped for more and more power and worldly advancement.

The Papacy grew and expanded its labours throughout the world, exercising authority over kings and rulers of the earth. The Pope claimed to occupy the place of Christ, and therefore must be worshipped and obeyed.

The evil history of the Papacy identifies it with the "man of sin" spoken of by Paul, by its teachings, its dogmas, and its monstrous claims. The words used by the Apostle are recorded in 2 Thessalonians 2: 3, 4—

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The Papacy exalted itself above kings and rulers, commanding them to bow to its rule. It exalted itself above Jesus Christ by means of the "sacrifice of the mass," in which it claims power to be able to create the actual body and blood of our Lord Jesus out of bread and wine, and this as often as they assert He is required to be sacrificed for sin. It exalted itself above God Himself by claiming to be able to do things which God could not do; to be able to change sin into virtue, to "change times and laws," and it accepted worship which is due to God alone. The Papacy is a political power claiming the right to rule the world, and during the centuries of its supremacy it succeeded in dominating most of Europe and parts of America. The Papacy's iron hand bent the nations to its yoke, and its master mind moulded them into its likeness. Rome became the meeting place of the earth's idolatries; the greatest system of error on earth; the most skilful and subtle in its workings upon human emotions, and in its secret operations in political affairs.

Where is there any other system that has such an organisation at its service, so perfect in its machinery, and so far-reaching in its effects?

All these things identify the Papacy as the "abomination of desolation" described by Daniel, who foretold that this politico-religious system would arise out of the Roman Empire; that it would "speak great words against the most High," that it would "wear out the saints of the most High," and that by it the daily sacrifice would be taken away. (Daniel 7: 24, 25; 8: 9-12.) It is an "abomination of desolation" in the sight of God because it has set aside the true worship and has substituted a counterfeit.—Daniel 12: 11; 11: 36-39; Matthew 24: 15.

In the book of Revelation the Papacy is described under various symbols—Beast, mystery, mother of harlots, Babylon the Great, Jezebel, habitation of devils.

The thirteenth chapter of Revelation gives us a vivid picture of this dreadful institution; verses 2-7 read thus—

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.
3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.
4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?
5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.
6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.
7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Here is described a beast of unusual ferocity, having derived its power from political Rome, and which exercised its tyrannical authority for a period of 1260 years. Its power became so mighty and spectacular that people were overawed by its strength.

The Great Reformation

But Rome was not to have it all its own way. Within and without there were forces at work which were soon to cripple the power of the Papacy. Both Europe and America were concerned in this new movement.

The tyranny of the Papacy was so great that it had "power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." But there were individuals, few indeed, but sufficient to commence a great opposition to the Papacy. Thus began the Great Protestant Reformation of the 15th and 16th centuries. The truth had long been buried under a load of tradition and superstition, and the Lord's people had suffered long and severely under the oppression of the beast, and now God was raising up men of courage and determination to whom light was given, and these men were not afraid to let their light shine. Among the earliest of these were Wickliffe and Tyndale in England, and Huss in Bohemia. These men were within the Church of Rome, but they revolted against its iniquitous practices, and saw the importance of God's Word as a guide to a proper faith and consistent living. Martin Luther was the leading personality of the Reformation.

Luther was a monk in one of the monasteries, and he began to seek information in the New Testament; and as he studied his eyes were opened to the light of the Gospel, and this light very soon dispelled his doubts and led him to see that the Church of Rome had fallen away very grievously from the truth. He saw that God alone could forgive sins, and that the priest had no such power at all. He realized that justification came by faith in Christ, and not by works of penance which the Church of Rome commands. By degrees many other truths were unfolded to this sincere-minded man, his spirit was stirred up, and he was determined to stand forth and preach the truth and thus defy the Papal Hierarchy. This he did, nailing his "protest" of 95 theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg.

Soon the same change was working in the minds of other men in other countries, notably Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox. The Great Reformation began in a more or less obscure way, but as it spread it brought trouble because it disturbed the religious and political affairs of the time.

With the preaching of the Reformers and their helpers, and the translation of the Bible into English and German, the great awakening spread amongst the people. Schools were opened, and the Reformers taught the people to read the Bible; this enabling them to see for themselves the unscripturalness of the Papacy. The light of truth broke down many of the strongholds of error, and liberated the people from their former ignorance and superstition, giving them sufficient courage to throw off the Papal bonds. During this state of excitement and upheaval the rulers of many countries saw a great opportunity to cast off the power of the Papacy and to govern their own countries independently of the Pope.

This diverting of religious and political power from the Papacy was a great wound upon the beast, and (characteristic of a wounded animal) the Papal fury was

stirred up against the Reformers and their converts; and the protection of converted princes was accepted, leading to the formation of state-protected preachers and churches.

In their anxiety for political liberty and freedom of worship, the people did not realise that they were taking over with them many of the errors which Rome had imposed upon them. Nor did later generations realise that the successors of the Reformers were building up in the countries swept by the Reform movement State church systems teaching many of the erroneous doctrines of the Papacy. That this was the case is clearly shown by developments described in verses 11-15—

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.
12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.
13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.
14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.
15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Here is a two horned beast exercising religious and political power; it is an image of the first beast, which we have seen to be a religious and political power. It spoke like a "dragon," which symbolises a civil power.

The work of the Reformation spread out in two main branches—the Anglican in Great Britain and the Lutheran on the continent; and these two branches are represented in the verses just read as two "horns" or powers. As the Papacy—the "little horn"—had united to itself the civil power, so likewise the two horns—the two principal religious systems of Protestantism—undertook control over the governments which had established them and provided their financial support. And as the Protestant cause increased in popularity the established Churches frequently asked and obtained the help of the State to uphold their authority, even to the extent of imprisonment—and sometimes martyrdom—of their opponents.

The union of state and church is termed (spiritual) fornication, being contrary to our Lord's command that His church is not of the world, but must be separate from its affairs. Rather should the members of His church be "subject to the powers that be" during the Gospel age. —Romans 13.

The Church in England set up a religious rule and, after revising the Prayer Book, made its acceptance compulsory upon the people, and taught that salvation was possible only by obedience to that church. The Lutheran branch of Protestantism was allied with a number of states, and it reared up an institution holding to some of Luther's teachings but perpetuating as well many of the Papal doctrines. Evangelical churches and creeds also developed in some European countries, and accepted State support. Does not this show that Protestantism exercised all the power of the first beast? It does. The Protestant churches not only perpetuated many of the teachings of the Papacy, but the "image" formed was the State-Church or Church-State with church direction of the affairs of the State and the Church supported by the State.

Making Fire Come Down from Heaven

This two-horned beast worked "miracles" in the sight of the first beast, and called down fire from heaven. Having the aid of the civil power at the back of the established church, the Protestants were able to stand up fearlessly in opposition to the Papacy, and they paraded their newly acquired power openly in the sight of, and in opposition to and defiance of, Rome.

This shows that the rise to power of the two-horned beast did not destroy the ten-horned beast. They both continued to wield power and authority in their respective territories, both European and foreign. The second beast showed its ability to maintain itself as a powerful institution and to exhibit its prosperity in the sight of the first beast.

The "fire from heaven" represents the threatenings of the church of "everlasting damnation" upon those who reject its teachings, and the civil law was called in to aid in the punishment of heretics.

The "fire" also refers to other punishments, such as fines inflicted by the church, confiscation of property, and imprisonment, which the Anglican and Lutheran churches visited upon their opponents until fairly recent times. All this is in imitation of the first beast—the Papacy. Other established churches were the Presbyterian in Scotland, the Dutch Reformed in Holland, etc.

The people were thus subjected in fear, and threats of eternal torment were used to retain hold over them. As the methods adopted by the image of the beast were similar to those of the first beast, the wound inflicted by the Reformation, with the sword of truth, on the Papacy soon began to heal. So these State churches (all included under the symbol of the "image of the beast") ceased to inflict wounds on the first beast, though for the most part they have retained their independence of the Papal Hierarchy, and not only so, but the "two horned beast" continues to justify the action of uniting ecclesiastical authority with civil power and demanding the reverence of all the people: thus causing the "image" to be honoured and worshipped. The Revelator shows that the two "horns" of the second beast, by precept and example, encouraged the making of the "image" of the first beast in its desire to be a world-power. And it is to be noted that in countries having no State-Church system—i.e. no church established and supported by the state—there is a growing tendency to claim that the religious denominations should seek by organization and the power of the vote to influence legislation wherever and whenever possible.

Though Rome lost from the Reformation time onward a great deal of its former power and prestige, it did not cease to thunder its claims of authority and its right to rule the world. And recent Encyclicals issued from the Vatican still claim that right. One of the popes once said, "It is necessary to salvation for every soul to be subject to the Roman pontiff."

The Mark of the Beast and the False Prophet

In keeping alive the spirit of the first beast by perpetuating its teachings and practices, Protestantism teaches that no one shall buy or sell unless he has certain marks. The Revelator states this in vss. 16, 17—

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:
17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name, or the number of his name.

This mark signifies the activities of the person so marked benefiting the religious system to which he belongs, and that no one may teach religious doctrines without having ecclesiastical permission. The Pope claims for his church the sole right to teach, and that there is no salvation outside the church of Rome. In the Anglican Church it is necessary for one to be "licensed" by the bishop before he may preach the gospel, imitating the Papal claims that they are the true church, that they are ordained of God, and that their authority comes by virtue of the laying on of hands which they state was transmitted to them by succession from the apostles, and that none may teach unless he have these gifts conferred upon him.

Is not the two-horned Protestant beast an image of the first beast—the Papacy? But where do the non-conformist churches stand? It is not very long ago that dissenters were persecuted by the Anglican church when attendance at church was compulsory. Baptists revolted against the overlordship of the Anglican church, and withdrew to set up their own worship. John Wesley en-

deavoured to reform the Anglican church which had become corrupt, but the church would not be reformed, and so another denomination was formed. Likewise Presbyterians, Congregationalists, set up their own churches, but in all cases they carried with them many of the old errors of the Papacy and of the Anglican and Lutheran churches.

They set up churches which they considered sacred buildings; ordained clergy with privileges not granted to the laity; observed days and seasons not prescribed in the New Testament; preached everlasting woe to those who rejected their claims, and they are all carried away with the idea of becoming a power in the world, their plea being to "gain the whole world for Christ." They have a zeal, but not according to knowledge. Hear what the Revelator says concerning those who support the beast and its image (14: 9, 10)—

9 If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,
10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; . . .

Tradition blinds men's minds, and they have committed spiritual fornication by uniting state and church, both Papal and Protestant; and so drunk is Christendom with its mixed wine (Revelation 14: 8), that it sees nothing wrong; they refuse to believe that their arrangements are entirely wrong and out of harmony with God.

God is angry with Christendom; His cup of indignation is not pleasant; it is drastic. But they cannot get away from it; they must drink, and they are soon to experience great distress of mind as they see their systems being overturned while they are drinking the wine of God's wrath. Meantime the "wise" are warned to "come out" of Babylon.—Revelation 18: 1-4.

Protest Against Rome Weakening

The Protestants of our own time are not nearly so keen in their opposition to Rome as were those of earlier times, and many Protestants to-day co-operate with Rome in social work, and the protest against Rome is weakening as the years pass by. Rome's evil record is being put into the background, on the plea that Christians must be tolerant and show a Christian spirit; and Rome responds by saying pleasant things about Protestants and deluding them by feigned words and deceitful practices. Protestants overlook the fact that the Scripture tells them that the Papacy is the "man of sin" and the "mystery of iniquity."

But no, Protestantism is lulled to sleep and to a state of apathy towards Rome's evil record, i.e., in those countries—chiefly democracies—where considerable political liberty is enjoyed. Many, freed from political interference in its former tyrannical menace, do not trouble themselves about Rome's teaching on such subjects as mariolatry, trinity, purgatory, hell-fire, etc., and are content to drift religiously. But in European countries, where Rome's hand is still seeking to exhibit the old domineering spirit and compel the people to bow down to it both religiously and politically, strong protests have been made from time to time in the last 135 years. Germany's troubles since the founding of the Republic have been complicated by Rome's objections to the disestablishment of the Roman Catholic church in Germany and its loss of political power. And in this the Lutheran and other formerly State-supported churches are much concerned. But we do not find Protestant protests to-day taking the form of intense doctrinal propaganda based on the teaching of Scripture, as was the case in the Great Reformation of the 16th century.

At present the protest among Protestants is limited to a comparatively small section who are alive to the unscriptural claims of the Papacy, and who are well informed concerning its place in prophecy, and of whom some are enlightened witnesses of the consumption of the Papal system now proceeding. The Anglican church considers the Papacy a "branch" of the Christian church; and in some sections of Anglicanism the word "protestant" is repudiated altogether, on the ground that such a term is derogatory to the Roman "branch" of the Christian church.

In revising the Westminster Confession in recent years it was decided to eliminate those parts referring to the Papacy as Antichrist, because it was considered that this designation was offensive to Roman Catholics. Since Reformation times there has always been a section of the Anglican church showing a distinct "leaning" toward Rome—the Anglo-Catholic movement, whose practices are based upon Papal ritual—including the "reservation of the sacrament," which is downright idolatry. Some sections of Anglicanism have adopted the confessional in imitation of Rome. Surely the "image" is exercising all the power of the first "beast."

Coming nearer home, we have only to note the attitude of the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne to see how weak is the spirit of protestantism in the Anglican church in this city. During the recent Papal Eucharistic Congress held in Melbourne, the Anglican Archbishop was an invited guest of the Lord Mayor at a civic reception given to the delegates to the Congress, and was invited to speak.

The Archbishop said he was grateful to them for the way they had received him, and because their welcome showed him the real Christianity which binds them together. He also said that he had very great regard for the Catholic church, and he would like its members to know that he had tremendous respect for them. He knew their **wonderful history**, he said, and was thrilled to see how they were carrying on the Congress! All this from a Protestant in one of the highest ecclesiastical positions in the Commonwealth of Australia! What lamentable ignorance (?) of the Archbishop concerning the infamous character of the Papacy! The Archbishop has tremendous respect for this evil system which claims to be able to create the body and blood of our Lord Jesus out of a wafer and some wine! He has tremendous respect for a system of treachery and records of crime unparalleled in all history!

But the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne is not alone in this. From time to time supposed Protestants in high places break out in glowing terms of praise of the Papacy, showing that in Christendom many have lost the spirit of the great Protestant Reformers.

The False Prophet

We have seen that the whole system of Protestantism has imitated the Papal beast in teachings, practices, and politics, and therefore has been termed the "image" of the beast. Another symbol—the "False Prophet"—is also used to describe the Protestant "image." A prophet is a public expounder; and, as the Papacy expounded false doctrines, so likewise the Protestant "image" has done the same. Some Christians think that the "false prophet" mentioned in Revelation 16: 13; 19: 20 refers to Mahomet. The career of Mahomet and the invasions of the Saracens and Turks were foretold (Revelation 9), and the record shows that Mohammedanism was limited in time and location, and that it was openly hostile to Christianity; whereas the "false prophet" is shown to be an imitation of the Papal "beast," and therefore must be a religious system; and from what we have learned of Protestantism we can see that it fits the symbol perfectly. Mohammedanism was never a Christian power, whereas Protestantism does claim to be a Christian institution, and, following the lead of the Papacy, has deluded millions with the mixed wine of erroneous teaching.

Similar Pursuits and Methods

We have now established from Scripture that Political Rome was symbolised by a "dragon," the Papacy by a "beast," and Protestantism by an "image" of the beast, and as a "false prophet." In his vision, recorded in Revelation 16: 13, John "saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet."

Here we again have the symbols representing the Roman Political power, the Papacy, and Protestantism. Though outwardly opposing the Papacy, Protestantism fosters the Papacy in adopting nearly all the pursuits and practices and methods of the Papacy. But see what happens: An unclean influence comes out of the mouth of the "dragon," or world power, which speaks in a loud voice of Militarism, stirring up animosity between the nations, compelling them to arm and to have big navies and huge fortifications—all in the name of Peace. And the leaders of nations, in spite of all this war-like spirit, assemble at Peace conferences and sign treaties for disarmament, all of which seems contradictory; and no sooner are such treaties signed than there is a mad rush to re-arm, and so treaties and compacts are flouted. Some of the nations see the futility of war and desire peace and safety, and their leaders maintain that they stand for peace. From the mouth of the beast—the Papacy—an unclean influence issues; what is it this time? What does the Papal church aim at? Its aim is rulership of the world; a right which it has always boastfully claimed. And, as the Papacy in the past used the civil power to enforce its claims and doctrines, so it would use the same power now were it permitted to do so.

The False Prophet also has an "unclean spirit" issuing from its mouth, and its spirit is almost identical with that of the beast, for it has proved itself to be an image of the beast. Protestants take part in civil affairs and use their influence in political matters, and the clergy impress upon their flocks the desirability of voting this way or that. Protestantism endorses militarism and during the war preached millions into the firing line, leading them to believe that God was on their side and hated the enemy as much as they did. Their excuse is that they are fighting for right and good principles, but the Lord commanded His servants not to fight, but to be subject to the powers, with the hope of reigning with Him in His kingdom.

One of the prominent characteristics of the Beast imitated by the False Prophet is that they make a distinction between clergy and laity, conferring distinctions upon the former and addressing them as "reverend," "lordship," etc. But our Lord Jesus said, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."—John 13: 13; Matthew 23: 8.

The Church and the World

The interference of the nominal church in political matters has greatly contributed to the present world-wide unrest, and all because the church has persisted in meddling with things which should not concern her at all. The Lord has allowed both Papacy and Protestantism a great deal of latitude for a purpose, but they are not to be allowed to continue their evil course always. He is fully able to destroy them, and will do so in due time; and that time is very near.

World Unrest and the Four Winds

With the increase of wickedness as the years pass we might well wonder why the present social order has not been destroyed before now. Certain restraints have been placed upon the present system, and have held it in check. This is shown in Revelation 7, where four angels are holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. Then another angel cried with a loud voice to the four angels, saying, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." (Verses 1-3.) This explains why the Papacy and its Protestant image and the present social order have been allowed to go on with their deceiving work for so long. The four angels represent the control over the winds which may blow but not with enough force to do irreparable damage.

The earth, the sea, and trees represent respectively the social order, the restless masses, and righteous individuals. The seal is the Holy Spirit with which we are sealed or marked, as stated in Ephesians 1: 13, and we are told that God gives us this "seal" when we become believers. Therefore the restraint of the winds held by the four angels means that the Lord will not allow anything to prevent or interfere with the work of sealing His servants whom He is calling out during this present Gospel age. The winds represent the forces controlling and sustaining the social order—the political, the religious, the commercial, and the social. All these winds have blown severally in times past, but very soon they will all blow at the one and the same time, and with such force that the present social order will be completely wrecked. And when the sealing of the Lord's servants is complete, there will be no longer need for the restraint.

The rulers of this world, temporal and spiritual, are ignorant of the impending overthrow. The spiritual leaders, instead of looking into the Scriptures to ascertain the reason and the remedy for the present world-wide unrest, are taking upon themselves the task of renovating the world, and they seek the co-operation of the civil powers to uphold democracy, and to bring about a state of "peace and safety." They delude themselves and others into thinking that this can be done by their united efforts.

There is an undercurrent of hatred and mistrust underlying international negotiations for peace and safety; the rulers of the nations realize that "peace and safety" is very desirable; but every nation on earth utterly ignores the Scripture on this matter, and they are planning to do all this by purely human efforts.

But the Apostle shows that at a point when they think they are within sight of their aims—not that they will have achieved what they seek to do—but when they consider their goal is in sight, then—sudden destruction cometh!—1 Thessalonians 5: 3.

The unrest of the past has been localized, but the present unrest is world-wide. The four winds are blowing!

The world is heading towards its overthrow!

The past 20 years has seen the overthrow of some of the thrones of Europe, and they will never rise again!

The state religions of these countries have also suffered; as, for instance, the State Churches of Germany and Russia.

Since the falling away from the purity of the Gospel in apostolic times, the history of the church nominal is not a pleasant one, and we might well wonder if ever peace and safety will come upon the earth. The Lord himself gives the answer: He will soon destroy these systems of error and superstition, and will deliver the people from their bondage.

The Rider on the White Horse

Again we refer to the Revelation, which shows us just how this will be done. In Revelation 19: 11 the Lord is represented as a rider on a white horse going forth to conquer, with a sword which is the Word of truth; and we are told that His opponents are the beast, the kings of the earth, and the False Prophet; the beast symbolizing the Papacy, and the False Prophet being the image of the beast—Protestantism.

The penetrating eyes of the Lord are able to see through the schemes of men, and He judges the rulers of the world, temporal and spiritual, to be quite unfit to rule the world. And so He deprives them of their dominion, smiting the nations with His sword of truth (vs. 15).

His designation, "Faithful and True," contrasts vividly with the rulers of the world, spiritual and temporal, who have been neither faithful nor true. The treading of the "winepress" (vs. 15) refers to the crushing power of His rule with the rod of iron upon the nations, because they have united in opposition against God, and have kept the people in ignorance.

The Papal supremacy ended in 1799, when our Lord aimed a fatal blow at the Papacy, which had enjoyed 1260 years of almost unlimited power; and since that time the

Papacy has been steadily losing its power. The Papacy is being consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth—this is the sword of truth issuing from the mouth of the Rider on the white horse. The consuming process is to continue until "that Wicked" one shall be destroyed completely.—2 Thessalonians 2: 8.

First one country and then another has been awakened by the truth, and men have been raised up from time to time to expose the errors of the Papacy, and thus the people have been able to throw off the Papal yoke. In 1870 the last particle of temporal power was removed from the Papacy, and in recent years under the dictatorship of Mussolini the power of the Pope has been further curtailed.

When the Concordat with Italy was signed in 1929, and the Vatican City given over to the jurisdiction of the Pope, it was considered by Roman Catholics a great asset to the Papacy. The Pope thought this would give him the long-coveted opportunity to become ruler not only over Italy but over all nations, but the terms of the treaty when interpreted showed that the Pope had no voice whatever in the rule of Italy. The Pope is even considered a foreigner in Italy, and his authority is confined to the Vatican State comprising but a few acres of land. His influence has decreased, and the Italian government takes little or no notice of his commands and anathemas. He is no longer able to impose the Roman Catholic religion upon the people of Italy, they are free to choose their own religion. Even marriage is out of the Papacy's hands; in Italy, no Roman priest, not even the Pope, can legally marry a couple.

Nevertheless the Papacy still voices its right to rule the world. But to say that the Pope is out for world domination does not convey the full extent of his designs. He and his officers, the priests, want to know and to control the very thoughts of the people. This they do through the iniquitous system of the confessional, which saps the mental strength and morality of its victims. That such a system should be tolerated seems incredible; yet hundreds of millions have accepted it.

But the Papacy is losing its power; it has no control in Italy, and its grip is failing in other countries. What a contrast to the time when the Pope ruled over the kings and empires of the world! The Papacy is being consumed, and the Lord is invisibly present doing this great work, and its destruction means also the overturning of all its appendages.

But, while being consumed, the Papacy still continues to speak "great swelling words," calling upon the whole world for obedience, and claims to be a divine institution, but the world ignores its claims. The Anglo-Catholic section of the Anglican Church would impose the Papal claims and ritual upon the English people. Protestants have turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to the iniquitous history and practices of the Papacy, and they willingly enter into alliances with the Papacy in social reforms and similar work, thus hoping for union eventually; but the Scripture shows that real union will never be effected.

Overturning of Christendom

God's own people are apart from the world and its spirit; they are in the world, but not of it. They are witnessing the gradual overthrow of Christendom. They can see that this work is being met with great opposition, as vs. 19 says—

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

The Lord's progress on the white horse is opposed by the rulers of the earth, who unite with the spiritual rulers against the rider on the white horse, who comes to destroy the present social order which they are determined to save from overthrow. Those in high places of spiritual authority, the bishops and other clergy, are doing their utmost to preserve their position of power as lords over God's heritage.

Final Triumph of Christ over Beast and False Prophet

As a result of this warfare waged by the Rider on the white horse, the Revelator says (vs. 20)—

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

But this does not mean that individual persons are to be cast into a literal lake of fire, but the systems—Papacy and Protestantism—which commanded the support of the people, and which are contrary to Scripture in doctrine and practice, and which, as systems, cannot have feelings; these are to be cast into utter destruction from which there shall be no recovery. Cast alive means that while in activity, not waiting until they are played out, but while they are carrying on their usual work, they will be suddenly arrested and destroyed. The Papacy is to be destroyed, and with it all its offshoots—the various systems of Protestantism, so that they will never deceive again.

Men have reared up this organization known as Christendom utterly out of harmony with God. Many of their institutions bear the name of Christ and are dominated by the spirit of the world. Being destroyed as separate systems shows that their negotiations for union are useless.

Now, lest it should be considered that this criticism of Christendom is harsh and unjust, let it not be thought that these things are said in a spirit of bitterness; rather the reverse. Some of God's people are still in bondage to the various denominations, and it is our desire to enlighten them with the truth so that they may be able to get clear from the errors of these religious systems. The Lord commands His people to come out of Babylon. We have simply stated facts as they are; we have pointed out just what the New Testament says concerning Christendom, and these facts are fully substantiated by history. We recognize that some of the social work done by the Protestant denominations is done with the best of intentions, and that these workers believe they are doing God's will in helping to relieve the poor and oppressed. But, in concentrating upon the social work, the truth itself is left in the background, and their motto seems to be "practical work before spiritual."

The Papacy is Satan's masterpiece of iniquity; but the Lord was lenient, for He gave her "space to repent." But she would not. (Revelation 2: 21-23.) The Church was originally a "chaste virgin," but she fell away from the purity of the truth of the Gospel, and became corrupted; "her sins have reached unto heaven," and this shows that she is past recovery and must be destroyed.

Her judgment is foretold in Revelation 17, where the church is described as a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast full of names of blasphemy. The woman represents the apostate church and the beast in this instance represents Political Rome.

The names of blasphemy represent the bombastic titles applied to the Pope—"Vicar of the Son of God," "Our Lord God the Pope," etc.

The Papacy is designated the "mother of harlots"—a fearful title; this mother has harlot daughters, which can be none other than the various denominations which have imitated her in doctrines, practices, and methods.

A hard thing to say, yes, it is hard; but the Scripture says it, and History has proved that these systems have fulfilled all these things said of them by the Revelator. Together with the Papacy they are the "Babylon the Great," which is to be destroyed, and when the Papacy falls the harlot daughters will quickly follow.

The Papacy is being consumed! That gigantic system of greed and superstition; that proud and arrogant institution of error; that intolerant and persecuting engine of tyranny and oppression, which has reigned over kings and empires of the past centuries, is being fatally crushed by the mighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ! The Papacy is being brought down to the dust, never! NEVER!

to rise again. Her days are numbered, and her complete destruction will soon be accomplished. There will be not a finger lifted to aid the Papacy nor its image. The Papacy will go down with a crash, and with it will go all its evil offshoots—every branch of false religion which has deceived the people.—Revelation 16: 17-21.

They have been allowed considerable latitude, and they have risen to gigantic strength and proportions, but the Lord Jesus is far stronger than they are, and He will completely TRIUMPH OVER THEM because for centuries they have misrepresented Him, thereby leading millions astray from the truth.

What then? The New Era, the Kingdom of God on earth, when the people will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thank God, that deliverance is near, and that these systems of evil once overthrown will never again be able to deceive.

—E. V. C.

What God Expects of Us

AN IMPORTANT and interesting question may be asked at this stage of our subject. What does God expect of us, the believers and consecrated followers of His Son Jesus Christ?

We have been hearing of the action God has taken, and what great things He has done and will yet do for our sakes, but what does He require of us? and what are we able to give to God?

We have experienced His loving favour in that, while the race was in a helpless condition, and the members of it passing to death in millions, He arranged for the perfect Sacrifice to be offered, and thereby appointed a way in which it was possible for us to be lifted out of the distress. As a result we have come to know something of His character of love and mercy towards the creatures of His hand, and, further, that it is not His desire that any should perish, but that all should turn to Him and live. Our hearts should therefore respond with gratitude, and we should have a strong desire to ascertain His will for us in all things; and, as we find what it is, to give expression to it in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Our heavenly Father has freely granted us the opportunity to turn about from walking in a way in which all our desires, aspirations, and inclinations were according to the flesh, and with no end other than disappointment and finally destruction; to walk in a way that leads to eternal life and happiness. And it is only reasonable to consider that we should thereafter avoid all those things which pertain to the former life when we were without knowledge, and that we should reach forward to the things which belong to the new life, which is built upon the rock foundation of Jesus Christ, and will endure for ever.

The Grace of God and the Hope

Jesus is our pattern and our great Elder Brother, and after living His life on earth in a manner pleasing to God, He has entered beyond the vail into the Holy of Holies, there to appear in the presence of God for us, and to comfort us continually by the Holy Spirit so that we should not be left alone and without Divine aid. Let us read the apostle's words in Titus 2: 11-15—

> 11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
> 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts [or, desires], we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world [age];
> 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
> 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.
> 15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

We should therefore conduct our lives in a sober, righteous manner, not only in our relationship towards God and His Son, but in our relations with all those on earth with whom we have to do. And, in addition to pleasing God and helping to make our calling and election sure, we thereby provide a demonstration of our fidelity to Him, our sanctification by the truth we have believed, and our faith, as well as show unto others that ours is an active faith, that our profession is not empty, but deep and sincere, and that we have a good reason for the hope we entertain.

What is this sincerity? It is the state or condition of being pure, unmixed, without hypocrisy or of feigning to appear what we are not, but being in reality and in heart what we outwardly appear to be.

Sincerity is an important word, and means much to us, because it is one of the two elements which combine to make an acceptable worship of God, and it is good that we should have a proper understanding of what is required.

We must add to our faith fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge self control, and to self control patience, and to patience godliness or piety, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity (or love).—2 Peter 1: 5-7. Compare A.V. and Diaglott renderings.

The words quoted from Titus show that we are expected to renounce worldly desires: that is, to give them up, and not allow them to trouble us. This demands self-denial. It means that, although we are still in fleshly bodies, and we are concerned more or less with material things, yet we have to forgo those desires and cravings for things not in accordance with God's will for us, and which are superfluous or would retard our progress in the new and living way. Our citizenship is in heaven, and our allegiance and our affections should be directed there also.

Self Denial

Our Master said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." (Matthew 16: 24.) This self-denial not only means doing without things of the world that we would in our former life desire to have, it means denying oneself the thoughts, words, and actions which ordinarily proceed from the carnal or fleshly mind. It means suffering as a result of humiliation and even persecution of mind or body for the sake of maintaining a peaceful and quiet disposition, and living a godly life in the midst of an ungodly world.

The craving of the fleshly mind is for the things that appeal to the fleshly body; after these things the nations seek.—Matthew 6: 31-34.

God knows that we as fleshly beings have need of some of these things, particularly those which are essential to our existence in this life; and He promises that we shall not be without sufficient to sustain our bodies. But the everlasting anxiety and worry which grip the average man of the world to-day should not be ours, because we realize the futility and utter waste of time and energy there is in seeking these things which will not endure but perish with the using, and furthermore will not be of any assistance in our obtaining the great reward.

The reward is spiritual, of quite a different and separate substance to what we have known here, and our energy is better utilized in our endeavours to serve God in a spiritual manner, while it is yet day for us; for the night

cometh when we will of necessity finish our term of service to the Almighty on this earth.

It is our privilege and responsibility to read and understand the truth, because it is by the knowledge of it that our lives will be moulded, and it is the life that is being watched by God. The secret thoughts and intentions of our hearts must be controlled, so that the words and actions which follow the thoughts will be clean and upright, and therefore pleasing to God.

We can deceive others as well as ourselves, but it is impossible to deceive God and our Master who know what our thoughts will be before we have begun to think them, and it is useless to try and hide anything from Them—as Jonah was under the impression he could do, and as Ananias and Sapphira also tried to their disadvantage.—Jonah 1: 3; Acts 5: 1-10.

The affairs that arise for our judgment individually, and our decision and action one way or the other, and our attitude towards a wrong course and to temptations we become involved in: these are the things that matter, and require our best attention from day to day and from year to year until the time arrives when we will be finished forever with our striving against imperfection and sin.

In this we will not be left without aid; if we were we would not accomplish much in our own strength; but God, reading the heart, can see if it is right; and if our intentions are true and sincere His Holy Spirit will help us to bear all things and overcome all the difficulties and stumbling blocks that are in the way of the pilgrim on the narrow road which leads to life.

All the things endured are plainly seen by God, Whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good, and unto Whom all things are naked and open. (Proverbs 16: 3; Hebrews 4: 13.) And not one good thing will be lost, but recompense will be made by Him in due time. This fact is one of the incentives to us for submission to any present humiliations or deprivations we may suffer, and to all misunderstandings by minds untrained in Divine things. And the knowledge that God is so watchful and that His memory is perfect acts as an enlivening influence to our efforts to deny ourselves daily, and to look to God and the Lord Jesus Christ for eventual vindication and the fulfilment of the gracious promises.

The verses under consideration also enjoin us to look for the blessed hope. We must with God's help live righteously, prudently, and piously, whilst keeping our eyes set on the great hope, not allowing ourselves to become careless or forgetful of our profession; but, realizing that but few years intervene, we must press on even as people in a race, dispensing with everything that would tend to hinder us, and not relaxing until the goal has been reached, knowing that then only is our salvation sure. (2 Peter 1: 10.) As our verses point out, and as the Apostle Paul said of the Thessalonians, we have to exercise patience in our waiting for the Lord from heaven, knowing that then comes our deliverance, and that if faithful we will be made like Him and will see Him as He is.—1 Thessalonians 1: 3, 10; Luke 21: 28; 1 John 3: 2.

The New Birth

We read that the Lord gave Himself for us that we should be redeemed from all iniquity, and that we should be cleansed as a peculiar people for Himself, zealous of good works. Bearing all this in mind, we will have a continual appreciation of all He has done, as Titus 3: 5 says—

> Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

That is to say, all this has been accomplished by our being born again, regenerated and renewed by the Holy Spirit, having nothing within us to commend ourselves to God. Being therefore beneficiaries solely as a result of His mercy and loving kindness as well as that of His Son, we will be continually grateful and appreciative, and rejoice in mind and heart, that both the knowledge and the favour have been extended to even us, and that a way has been found whereby we can be cleansed.

This regeneration or re-birth is the work of God following the assent of our minds to the truth, and acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf; as it is written (John 1: 12, 13)—

> 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power [or privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
> 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The unwashed can have no part with Jesus Christ; but those who have humbly and submissively acknowledged themselves to be sinners, and have accepted forgiveness through His blood, may consider themselves no longer defiled but clean.

Religion without this bath of regeneration, without the new birth, is vain, is empty, is a mockery. The Lord said, "*Except a man be born again [or, from above], he* cannot see the kingdom of God."—John 3: 3.

We cannot rightly even assume the name of Christian unless we are born again from above, because God does not recognize any as such in whom Christ does not dwell. To be religious is one thing, to be a Christian quite another. Christian in name by virtue of membership in some church, or by virtue of subscription to some creed or system of belief, or by a most careful attention to the forms and ceremonies of a specific mode of worship—all this can be and has been done. But while it has manufactured a Christendom, it cannot make Christians. A Christian must be regenerated or born again, and so long as one worships with outward performance only, he is failing to worship in the way God desires, that is, in spirit and in truth.—John 4: 23, 24.

The spirit of thankfulness and gratitude we should all show will be reflected in our efforts to do God's will in all things, and will have its effect in making our task lighter in the midst of a world which cares not what God's will is, let alone being submissive to it.

What God Does Not Desire In Us

Whilst God has told us through His Word what He desires in us, He also tells us of the things not desired. It will be helpful to read 1 Corinthians 10: 1-12 in this connection—

> 1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
> 2 And were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
> 3 *And did all eat the same spiritual meat;*
> 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed [margin, went with] them: and that Rock was Christ.
> 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.
> 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.
> 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.
> 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.
> 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.
> 10 Neither murmur ye, *as some of them also murmured, and* were destroyed of the destroyer.
> 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [ages] are come.
> 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Here it is said that these things were made ensamples or patterns for us, that we might not be cravers after evil things as the children of Israel were. Not that God led them to do evil in order to make the patterns or examples. God tempts no man to do evil. (James 1: 13.) But since the Israelites were intent on doing the evil, God sent punishments upon them accordingly, on one occasion more than twenty thousand transgressors being destroyed in one day. What a wonderful advantage we possess in having these failings of Israel and their punishment brought to our attention in the Divine Word for

our admonition and instruction, that we may not desire to go in the same wrong direction!

It is well if we can fully realize this, and appreciate the privileged position we enjoy. What exactly is to be gathered in brief from what we have read? and is there any similarity between Israel and the present Gospel age church? Yes, there is: Israel was a specially selected and wonderfully favoured people, and was shown extraordinary attention and care by God, whilst all other nations were for the time being ignored by Him.

He expected from them in return obedience and faithfulness, and the verses quoted as well as Old Testament history show that He did not receive either.

Similarly—the Gospel age church is a specially chosen and favoured people, having the care and oversight of the Lord Jesus in the power of His Father. (Revelation 1: 16-20.) These people in return for simple faith in God and His Son have bestowed on them the Holy Spirit, and become the adopted children of God, separated from the world of mankind at large.—Romans 8: 15; John 17: 6, 15, 16; 1 John 2: 15-17.

He therefore expects attention and obedience to His will by all these His children, even as a son is expected to be obedient to his father. And as Israel was dealt with for disobedience and disregard of the Divine commands, so also will those be dealt with who lightly regard the indescribable forbearance and mercy of God under the New Covenant terms.

The children of Israel continually murmured and complained, debased themselves by idol worship, and tempted or tried God by presuming on His leniency and toleration. As a result many were destroyed by serpents, and others were slain by pestilence.

The same possibilities of presumption exist now, and it behooves us who know what happened to those who transgressed under the law of Moses to see to it that we do not murmur, but that we endure patiently.

We must not practice idolatry. Some one might say, "We are safe from that anyway, as image worship is unknown to us." But the Scriptures answer that covetousness is idolatry, and our Lord said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."—Colossians 3: 5; Luke: 12: 15, Diaglott.

Anything belonging to this world on which we set our hearts with earnest desire becomes an idol; we subject ourselves to its influence, and so to speak bow down before it; and this should not be. We must only lightly regard the things that are of this world.

Neither must we tempt or try Christ by presuming on His leniency, a thing which may very easily be done, in the following way—

We know that we all sin, and that when sins are confessed we have with the Father Jesus Christ as Advocate, who makes intercession for us and who pleads our cause. And if repentance is sincere we may expect forgiveness.—1 John 1: 9; 2: 1; Hebrews 7: 25.

But if we continue to commit the same sin over and over again, there may come a time when we try the Lord beyond what He will tolerate, and forgiveness may be difficult, and finally refused altogether. So that our endeavour must be to examine ourselves, and prevent that sin from recurring, and then we will have no fear of placing ourselves in the position in which the Jewish people were when they tempted or tried God by their oft committed sins and the demonstration thereby of their hardheartedness and stiffneckedness.

Let us benefit from these experiences of Israel, and by personal examination and scrutiny in the light and knowledge of the Scriptures see that we stand, and that we do not fall.

Receiving Not the Truth in the Love of It

Those who receive not the truth in the love of it become snared by some delusion. Speaking of such in his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul said (2: 11, 12)—

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned [condemned] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

These hear sufficient truth to bring responsibility, and for a time associate themselves with professed believers. But they do not love the truth; they do not prefer it to all else, hence lay themselves open to one or other of the many delusions which Satan subtly places before them; and they believe the lie. God has designed that this demonstration shall be made in the case of those who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.

With these the apostle contrasts the brethren described in verses 13, 14—

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These brethren were called by the Gospel, they believed the truth, and they had received the Holy Spirit which God gives as a seal and a token of sonship to all who believe. (Ephesians 1: 13; Romans 8: 14-16.) The effect of receiving the Spirit is to sanctify or set apart to holiness the one who receives it; and God is willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask it. (Luke 11: 13.) It is the Spirit of Truth, the Lord said, and would guide His disciples into all truth. (John 16: 12-15.) It is therefore in direct conflict with the spirit of the "man of sin," which is a spirit of deception and unrighteousness, and a working of Satan the father of lies.

Our possession of the Holy Spirit may be increased in various ways—By seeking to learn the mind of God and of Christ and to live in harmony with it. (Philippians 2: 1-16.) By study of the Scriptures, which were inspired by the Holy Spirit, which explain to us what are the manifestations of the Spirit, and which encourage us to cultivate its fruits. We can both "live in the Spirit" and "walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5: 22-25.) The Lord prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," but did not thereby discredit the Spirit which He promised to give the disciples—"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, . . . for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—John 17: 17; 14: 16, 17.

On the other hand, the Holy Spirit of God can be "grieved" by wrongdoing—misuse of our mouth, for instance. (Ephesians 4: 29, 30.) It can also be quenched, in so far as its manifestation in ourselves is concerned, by refusal to submit to its sanctifying power.

We are also admonished by the apostle, "be filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5: 18.) If we are filled with the Spirit, we shall the more readily obey all the instructions given us, and we may know that those beautiful words in John's gospel (15: 10, 11) apply to us—

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.
11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

If we fail in this regard, then we are not even sincere to ourselves, besides demonstrating our insincerity to God, and an awful condition of delusion may be allowed to come upon us.

A Lesson to Us from Thyatira

Of the many reproofs given in the Scriptures we might note at this point that given to the church at Thyatira.—Revelation 2: 18.

This message concerned the period of the Gospel age church from about the 6th to the 14th century. The Lord said He had much against this church because that wicked woman "Jezebel" was allowed to teach and to seduce His servants. To arrive at an understanding of this, we are obliged to inquire what is meant by "Jezebel." As no one of this name is associated with New Testament history, it is necessary to consider the name from a symbolic standpoint and seek for someone or something at

this period of the age with characteristics similar to those of the real Jezebel, the wife of Ahab. We have not far to seek. It is learned from the Old Testament that Jezebel used her influence to stir up or incite Ahab her husband to all manner of wickedness, amongst which was *the setting up and worship of idols.* She therefore was instrumental in leading him away fron the God of his fathers, and committed very grievous sin in this regard.

So we have in a similar manner the great Papal system, in the period of Thyatira, leading the people to worship an idol in the sacrifice of the mass, as well as using *compulsion that they might* believe many other false teachings, and inciting or stirring up the secular arm to deal with the dissenters or so-called heretics.

But to those faithful ones who resisted these teachings and adhered to the truth they knew, the Lord showed His sympathy. To them it was said (2: 25-28)—

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.
26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.
28 And I will give him the morning star.

So only to the overcomers—no others—will be granted the power to rule the nations.

Lukewarm Laodicea

None the less necessary is it to be overcomers even now—when the iniquities of the beast and of the false prophet (i.e. the image of the beast) are so plainly recognisable under the bright light of the present day, which clearly shows that Christendom is a counterfeit Christianity. Yet how many in this day allow themselves to become lukewarm Laodiceans, with the possibility of being rejected by the Lord. Hear the prophecy (Revelation 3: 14-22)—

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;
15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.
16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.
17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:
18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.
19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.
21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in his throne.
22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The Lord shows what He expects of us *in the last* period of the Gospel age church. He wants us to be not lukewarm, but either hot or cold. This means that we should be of positive convictions. Hot is positive, so also is cold.

We may think of the heat of an electric furnace and the severe cold of the Alps or the Arctic regions as illustrations of intensity. The illustration in the message is none the less arresting though the extremes of heat and cold are less. It is that of a man in quest of food, who desires a very hot dish, or a very cold one, and is served the food in that unpalatable state we call "lukewarm"—neither one thing nor the other; a morsel so tasteless and displeasing that the hungry one spues it out of his mouth; he will not have it, he spurns it. The Lord, the faithful and true witness, comes to Laodicea with every right to expect to find the church exemplifying His own faithfulness and zeal as a witness for the truth. But He knew in advance what He would find, and gave warning through this message. Heeding the warning, we will be fervent and zealous for the truth, in our life conduct, and in our anticipation of the great kingdom, the promise of which dates back thousands of years.

Even after exhibiting these desirable things—faith and zeal and energy in His service—we can only think of ourselves as unprofitable servants after all, since we cannot *bring any gain to our Master;* but the practice of these things means all gain to ourselves.

We are almost walking by sight and not by faith when we read these words to Laodicea and witness the fulfilment of them before our eyes. These days of Laodicea are subtly evil in their character, Satan has placed more and more obstacles in the way of believing the true faith and has covered the simple truth with countless fables, superstitions, and traditions, and succeeded in prompting men to manufacture a variety of self-devised dogmas and directions. Christendom has in all this confusion made many adherents, but has not made true Christians. It has promoted means of doing good externally, such as the establishment of benevolent institutions, help for the needy in material blessings, etc., and has endeavoured to make the world better by working from the outside of man; but God's plan is for man's regeneration from the inside.

These are the days about which Paul wrote to Timothy, when men should be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but *denying the power thereof.*

It is hardly necessary to say that the abovementioned things should not be found in God's people, they must resist them and denounce them as evil and as being opposed to godliness. This is part of their work as ambassadors.

Let us not be among those who have a form of godliness but deny its power, but let us be true and sincere in all our ways.

Apathy and lukewarmness are two of the great cankers of this the last period of the age. They have crept into every religious denomination and into every secular organisation, so much so that the leaders of these cry out and bemoan because of the lack of interest and enthusiasm of most of their adherents.

They seem to be two of the latter-day deceptions of Satan to blind still further the minds of the people, and, sad to say, they are present also amongst the professed *true believers.*

They creep in stealthily and act like a snare, affecting the very vitals of our existence, and need to be overcome in the same manner as all the other things which the Lord desires not to see in His faithful ones.

A phrase often heard to-day is, "It does not matter what you believe, so long as you do the best you are able." *In fact, this phrase seems to be almost a password in* the world at large, but it is not the advice of a friend; it is subtle and wrong. Why? Because we cannot do the best we are able unless we mind what we believe. The Lord said, "Sanctify them through thy truth;" set them apart by it; and we will not be presumptuous enough to say that these words are meaningless to us.

His words to Laodicea show that here again only the overcomers will sit with Him in His throne, even as He overcame, and sat down with His Father in His throne.

At the beginning of this talk we asked, What can we give to God?

We can give Him loyalty and exhibit the spirit of the martyrs who died rather than apostatise, and this is the least He expects of us, and it is not something which is impossible for us to do.

Renewed Earnestness and Zeal

There is not to be any looking back, and the striking words of our Lord come to our minds in this connection—when He was impressing on the disciples the need for

continued faith and confidence in Himself, and He said. "Remember Lot's wife." Also His words again, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—Luke 17: 32; 9: 62.

It is beneficial to grasp the proper proportions of things. Let us realize what we have done. We all came to the point of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we were thankful to find a way out of our sins which pointed to eternal life. We were carried over from one position as subjects in the kingdom of darkness to a new position as subjects in the kingdom of God's dear Son, under the Prince of peace and the True Light of the world. We then were encouraged with new hope and desires, reaching to heights previously not dreamt of.

We realized that salvation was not to be secured in one moment, but was to be obtained as a result of our successfully overcoming in a period of probation, which would be as long as the whole of our lifetime, because "he that endureth to the end shall be saved."—Matthew 10: 22.

If we realized this at the first, let us realize it now, and not tire of our vigilance and of our efforts to live the life out. Let us not turn back to the former things as the children of Israel did, or even to look back with longing or desire to the things of the flesh, but let us go forward and approach God continually by daily prayer and supplication requesting renewed earnestness, zeal, and determination to please our Master and King, and eventually hear Him say (Matthew 25: 21), "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

—H. H. F.

The Triumph of the Great White Throne

WHEN WE UNDERSTAND what the Great White Throne is and what it will accomplish we shall be more than glad that it is going to triumph gloriously; for its triumph means the bestowal of everlasting benefits on all of its obedient subjects.

A throne signifies "royal authority." White signifies "righteousness," "purity." A great throne means that it is strong, extensive in dominion, involving a large population, and having adequate administrative force.

This description applying as it does to the Throne which is to triumph, we may see that it is unique in some important respects; for what is said of it cannot be said of any other throne that has yet existed since the Fall of Man.

An account of it is given in Revelation 20: 11-15, but we shall read vss. 11, 12—

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God*; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Primary Function of the Throne

In regard to this throne many Christians have made one great mistake—if not many mistakes—and so they have come to a grievous misconception about it.

They have failed to notice what is its primary function; and this failure is due to another one. They have not noticed that the account of it which we have just read covers the same period as the first four verses of this chapter, which speak of the thousand year reign of Christ and some others associated with Him.

These failures have led them to think that the throne is for the purpose of passing a final sentence only, and is therefore of relatively short duration. But verses 1-4 show its operation to cover a thousand years; while verse 6 indicates its functions during that period. These are the words of verse 6—

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

From this, the functions of the Great White Throne evidently are to bless as priests, i.e., after a priestly manner, and to rule as kings. The first resurrection therefore is first not only in time but also in importance.

From what the Apostle Peter tells us of the priesthood, the "royal priesthood," it is easy to see who these are who will be so blessed in the first resurrection. They are the church of the Gospel age, for it is the church whom he calls a "royal priesthood." (1 Peter 2: 9.) Further confirmation of this is found in Hebrews 3: 1-6, with the additional information that above these priests and kings there is One designated the "High Priest," and elsewhere "King of kings, and Lord of lords," who is no other than the risen and glorified Lord Jesus.—1 Timothy 6: 15.

If the throne, then, represents the official position and authority of the Royal Son, and is occupied by the Greatest Personage in all creation, with whom will be associated the church—also given wonderful powers and authority—what can it suggest to our minds but that it is a great and efficient government which will have subjects to govern?

The power and authority vested in its personnel marks it as a government that will be utterly resistless and whose laws cannot be flouted with impunity.

And yet with all this might it will be here first of all to bless.

Coming in His Glory

Let us see then what this gracious, benevolent and powerful government will accomplish. In the Scriptures there is a word which is often used in connection with things that are wonderful and that show forth the beauties of God's character and purposes; and that word is used in connection with this throne—not in this place (Revelation 20), but in another with which we shall have occasion to deal. The word to which we allude is "glory," and it is found in Matthew 25: 31—"When the Son of man shall come in his glory." This is an allusion to the setting up of His kingdom in the earth; in other words, to the establishing of the Great White Throne which is, as we have seen, to have the long run of a thousand years. In that time, and under the ægis of the Throne, the beauty of God's character and that of His well-beloved Son and of their benevolent purposes will be clearly made known to all men. In the glory of this character and purpose the Son of man will come. In such a setting as this is His authority in all the earth to begin in the most public way which all eyes, in the sense of understanding (Ephesians 1: 18; Revelation 1: 7), shall see; which all systems and authorities that have hitherto controlled the affairs of men shall feel.

Until then we know that His rule has not been very perceptible. His few subjects throughout the age have suffered the opposing forces of evil, and the tyranny of evil systems, as He did during His earthly life. But He will come in the plenitude of His power and glory to reign and to rule. And His rule will be more public and drastic than it was when taking out the church. (Acts 15: 14). Then, it was a supervision of the church, and

*The oldest Greek MSS. read: stand before "the throne."

had no particular reference to the control of public affairs. But when the church is rewarded by the gift of authority in the kingdom, that rule will begin; openly established in the eyes of the nations, as Daniel says, "the God of heaven" shall "set up a kingdom." As also our Lord taught us to pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth."—Daniel 2: 44; Matthew 6: 10.

All Nations Gathered Before Him

It is to Matthew 25: 31-41 that we must now turn for more details concerning the accomplishments of this government. He first says that "before him shall be gathered all nations."

We know well what is the general idea about this gathering. Most Christians think and say it means gathered into one place. But that meaning is not necessarily involved in the Lord's words, and it is not, outside of a miracle, a feasible proposition. Moreover, there has been a gathering of the Lord's people throughout the Gospel age, even while they were separated by great distances and were of different nationalities. They have been gathered to Him to be dealt with by Him, and into fellowship with one another by His Spirit and the Word of Truth. And hence, to gather the nations before Him indicates that He begins to deal with them more specifically, as a governor may call his subjects to account; or as a conqueror may invite the allegiance of the inhabitants of the conquered territory, making plain to them that subjection to him will be in their own best interests.

A Great Proclamation

Being thus gathered, the ultimate purpose of it is to make a separation—not of Himself from them, but amongst themselves. In order to do this the people are first enlightened with the knowledge of His presence and the purpose of it, and invited—no; let us say something stronger than that—commanded to become His obedient subjects.—Daniel 7: 14, 26, 27.

This great proclamation will find its way into every nook and cranny of the world. Not only will there be hundreds of thousands of zealous missionaries to proclaim it, but all the facilities of science will be at their command, much of which is even now prepared, or in course of preparation, in order fully and perfectly to spread abroad the knowledge of His presence and commands.

Here then will be some light where hitherto had been but darkness to the multitudes of the people. Here will be the first class power taking control of human affairs in such a manner as had never hitherto been—if we except that brief period in Eden—which is indeed the kingdom of God set up in the earth. So complete and perfect will be its hold on all human affairs that men will not fail to appreciate to the full the message of the missionaries in explanation. Its demands for unconditional submission to it, if they wish to live, will be imperative, and the one pressing question of the hour with all of them.

How then are they going to treat this command for *their obedience*? An answer will have to be given; it cannot be escaped, and the people will be quite free to do as they like; but something must be done. And precisely according to the manner they treat the demand will their everlasting destiny be determined.

There are then two possibilities: obedience and non-obedience; and each individual will, of his own action, separate himself into this party or that. And on the whole it will be plain to the eyes of men where each one belongs. For they will see the obedient heart and soul in agreement with the Son of Man and His throne by the things they do.

A Time of Healing and Righteousness

This great age is a healing time; a time for the world-wide spread of the Truth; for the establishing of righteousness and love as the main operative forces in the world. And, with all these, the sympathies of the obedient will be abundantly shown.

But there is equally the possibility of disobedience; and such as prefer that course will show it by indolence, lack of sympathy with the King and His work; thus proving themselves to be of an entirely different category.

What will the Son of man do with these two classes? Manifestly they cannot be treated alike. Their spirit and conduct have been so diametrically opposite that only an extremely opposite judgment can be measured out to each.

The King's judgment will be life everlasting for the obedient, but everlasting death for the rebellious.

If you will read the section in Matthew referred to you will see these simple facts presented there in parabolic form.

An Era of Enlightenment and Opportunity

But there is something of importance the parable is not particularly explicit about. It does not answer a question that might be asked about the myriads of the dead still sleeping when the throne of His glory is set up. Do they participate in this enlightenment and opportunity?

We must go back to our text for the answer to that: "I saw the dead," says the apostle, "small and great, stand before the throne." The dead will all be accounted for, and will be present on earth in the day of His power and glory. But note that it is in this thousand year age that the dead small and great are seen by the Revelator. He sees them standing before the throne, nothing else can be got from his words. And yet there are some Christians who think and teach that nothing of that sort is going to happen during the thousand years. They get that idea from a few words found in this same chapter which entirely contradict what is here said. The words occur in verse 5—

> But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

Now, one of these opposite statements has to go; and by the providence of God we now know which one it is. Up till about the middle of last century we did not know. But at that time a manuscript, the most ancient of all in our possession, was discovered which does not contain the words of verse 5 mentioned, although it contains all the rest of Revelation. So we are not taking those words out: we only recognize that they were never rightly in. Thus by this grace of God the harmony of a multitude of scriptures concerning this great age of blessing and judgment remains.

In every consideration of the rulership of our Lord Jesus, there is one thing we must always keep in mind, and that is His love for those whom He rules. This will help us to get a right view of the Great White Throne. It means that under it the people will be dealt with according to the principle of Love.

But the qualities of Justice and Mercy are just as prominent, and we may therefore be assured that all who willingly subject themselves will have a wonderful time under the Great White Throne.

The love of God and of the Lord Jesus is proved by the fact that Jesus bought men with His precious blood. It *is further proved by the fact that all the millions who* have never heard of it are to be informed. The Lord said that "ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5: 28, 29); to be made acquainted with the Truth; with the knowledge of His love, justice, and mercy. He was "the true Light, which LIGHTETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE WORLD."—John 1: 9.

Isaiah the prophet (11: 9) confirms this, saying, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

For the purpose of this enlightenment they are said in *our text to "stand before the throne." That is the proper* attitude for the subjects of this powerful Ruler who are under His judgment. It is the attitude of respect; and indicates, outwardly at least, the desire of the dead small and great, as well as those living when the kingdom is set up, to fall in with the beneficent rule of the great King and Judge.

But it is from this point, from the establishment of the kingdom, that the thousand year judgment begins. Their conduct from then will be kept under observation by the Judge, and His assistants. And the lines for their conduct and work during the thousand years are well laid down and come within the mental compass and understanding of all. These lines are found in the books that were **opened**: the same books that have been the guide of all God's people; viz., the holy Scriptures.

And in this connection we wish to say here that we are told in the Scriptures of some peoples of the past who will be under the judgment of that time. We have heard of these peoples often: we have read about them in "the books" as having once been on the earth as we are to-day, but no one has seen them for thousands of years. Yet in the impending kingdom they are to be seen on the earth again.

It is foretold of them, as already quoted, that, wicked as some of them were, they will repent of their sins, and receive the blessings of the throne. These are the Sodomites, Ninevites, Tyrians, Sidonians, and others.

We are also told of some individuals, faithful men and women, who served the Lord in their day, who likewise have not been seen of anyone for thousands of years, who will occupy official positions under the throne on the earth. Such are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the holy prophets. (Luke 13: 28.) The presence of such individuals and peoples who have been heard of but never seen by later generations will be a tremendous event in the earth. So much so that if one wants to convince another of the presence and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, he might say, "Look at all these for the evidence!" Yet, notwithstanding all they will be able to see and hear with their natural eyes and ears, there will still be required the exercise of faith in the existence of God and of Christ in heaven, and faith in the promises then to be given of everlasting life to the obedient.

All the peoples then, living and dead, are to be subjects of the Great White Throne with its justice and mercy; and the New Covenant is the instrument by which these blessings will be conveyed to them, as it is for us now.

In the remaining two chapters of Revelation there is a picture of the New Covenant in full operation on the earth which simply glows with beauty and attractiveness. It is represented as a beautiful city, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21: 2), coming down from heaven "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

And a great voice is heard out of heaven which says (21: 3, 4)—

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

There the voice ceases. Then He that sat upon the throne—the Great White Throne—speaks. He says—". . . I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things (A.V. *marg.*); and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."—Revelation 21: 2-7.

Wonderful words these, that no man could ever have invented. And "these words are true and faithful."—Vs. 5.

It is not a few that will accept this loving invitation from the Throne, but many; so many that it is said that the creation itself shall enter into the glorious liberty of children (or sons) of God. (Romans 8: 21.) For the river of life will be flowing from the Throne, and leaves for the healing of the nations will be profuse and abundant—not to preserve sinners in their sins, but to heal them of sin—that great blight which brought the whole world of mankind to ruin and death. Here the Great Physician is ready to heal: but to obtain everlasting salvation the people must appreciate and use the medicines He prescribes, which will be the same then as now—repent, believe, become obedient, and give to God and His dear Son the love, yes the love, which their love should call out from them.

That is the medicine. It is not bitter; it is sweet to the taste.

And while we give thanks to God for so great and glorious a Throne, perhaps we can see from these few considered facts that its triumph will be not only glorious but permanent. The wonderful work of our Lord Jesus will stand for ever.

May it be our privilege to be associated with Him in His Throne as a royal priesthood: kings and priests unto God. —F. S.

The Enduring Triumph of the Cross

MANY HAVE BEEN the victories won by men in their conflicts among themselves, and great have been the glory and praise given to the victors. But their triumphs have been only temporary. Soon their colors and their armament, their thrones and their wealth, crumble to dust. With our Lord Jesus and His conflicts it is different. The triumph of the cross is enduring. From the beginning He overcame all His foes; and the glory of what the Lord accomplished by the cross will never grow dim or fade away.

Before ever our Lord came to earth, the Father entrusted Him with a great work; and, before man was created, God joined the Son with Himself in a great plan, by the accomplishment of which the earth would be peopled with a race of perfect beings. The entrance of sin was foreseen, and provision was made to expel the intruder, and rescue his captives, and the captives also of Death and the Grave.

Soon after sin entered, a Deliverer was promised who should bruise the serpent's head. Through all the centuries this promise has stood, and other promises and explanations have been given, so that today a fair knowledge of God's purposes may be obtained. He that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.—Matthew 7: 7, 8.

All along God has had some among men who have served Him, and to whom He has confided His promises, beginning with penitent Adam. Men hoped in these promises, but the time till their fulfilment seemed long. More and more was revealed, the next promise being the guarantee to Noah of the earth as man's home everlastingly. A great promise was made to Abraham, of blessing to all the families of the earth through the Deliverer to come.

Later on the prophets foretold many things concerning this great Deliverer to come. Strange it seemed, and not understood when foretold, the Deliverer must first die. Isaiah said (53: 7-9)—

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, . . . he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death [Hebrew, deaths]; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

To say "his deaths" might be misunderstood, as though He would die more than once. But in Hebrew the plural form is sometimes used to indicate importance. In this case, to indicate the immense importance and value of the death of a very important personage. Isaiah spoke also of His resurrection (vs. 10)—"When thou shalt make his

soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

For centuries the Jews wondered what this could mean, and it was not till after our Lord's death and resurrection that the disciples grasped its significance. The great man of Ethiopia riding home from Jerusalem wondered as he read, and the Lord sent Philip by the power of the Spirit to join his chariot and answer the inquiry, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" Then Philip "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." And the eunuch believed. Many others have also believed when they have been shown the completeness with which Old Testament prophecies about the great Deliverer were fulfilled in Jesus, and how the pleasure of Jehovah has prospered in His hand. God has given Him "a portion with the great," i.e. with God who made Him heir of all things; "and he shall divide the spoil with the strong"—with those called to be His joint heirs.

Moses as a prophet had foreshadowed the Lord's death in the sacrifices of the law which God had given to Israel. These sacrifices were types of various aspects of the Lord's life and work and death.

The daily sacrifice of a lamb, morning and evening, on the altar in the court of the tabernacle (later the temple) signified the continual efficaciousness of the One Sacrifice of the true Lamb of God. (Exodus 29: 38-43.) It was indeed a "sweetsmelling savour to God."—Ephesians 5: 2.

The many sin offerings brought by the children of Israel to atone for their sins represented God's disapproval of sin and the necessity of repentance and of forgiveness through the shedding of the blood of an innocent victim. These are prescribed in detail in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The day of atonement sacrifice showed how reconciliation with God could be obtained through faith and the carrying out of the prescribed offerings, upon which the High Priest pronounced that the sins were forgiven, the scapegoat having carried away the sins out of God's sight. (Leviticus 16.) All this was typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh [or, beareth] away the sin of the world." (John 1: 29.) And instead of entering an earthly tabernacle with the blood of the sacrifice, our Lord, after having shed His blood on the cross, entered into heaven itself, as the apostle says: "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."—Hebrews 9: 12, 24-26.

Eternal Redemption

Redemption has three parts. There is first the payment of the price, by which the thing, or land, or person to be redeemed is secured to the one who pays the price. There is, second, the taking possession of the thing, or land, or person, for which the purchase-price has been paid. And, lastly, there is the utilization or disposal by the new owner of the thing, land, or person that he has redeemed and over which he now has full control.

Under the law the sacrifices for sin were accepted by God as a basis for the forgiveness of sins against the law, and the persons thus forgiven had His favor restored to them. But the transgressions were repeated on account of weakness of the flesh, and so fresh sacrifices were required. By that arrangement sin could not be eternally taken away, on account of the ever recurring sins. Hence we see that where those sacrifices failed to meet men's needs, the Cross of Christ has succeeded. For only the One Offering was necessary, and the One Application of His precious blood upon the Mercy Seat in heaven. By which the Apostle does not mean to say that Christ bore a few drops of literal blood to sprinkle upon a literal mercy seat in heaven. But God accepted His sacrifice as a full atonement; and not (as were the typical) for Israel only, but for all people. This the apostle John states plainly (1 John 2: 2)—

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

By obtaining "eternal redemption," our Lord has become the antitypical Mercy Seat, through whom those who regret their sins and desire to draw near to God may be forgiven and received, and the SINS REMEMBERED NO MORE! Surely a triumph for the Cross!

Yet this merciful provision for dealing with sinful men and forgiving their sins requires for its proper outworking one other thing—a thing prefigured in type, and already referred to at this Conference. And that is, the Ransom. The complete deliverance from sin required that a ransom be paid, and that the world of sinful men become the personal possession of the Ransomer. (Matthew 20: 28; 1 Timothy 2: 5, 6; 1 Corinthians 6: 20; Acts 20: 28.) Hence the divine provision that the same offering of our blessed Lord on the Cross which was in God's sight the complete atonement for sin was at the same time a ransom-price for the purchase of the entire race of mankind. Never again will another sacrifice for sin be required; never again will another ransom be in order. That glorious work of Christ on the Cross is permanent. It stands forever a finished work, thank God!

Many scriptures testify to our Lord's proprietary rights in the human race. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. ... And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Philippians 2: 9-11.

But do Jesus' proprietary rights in the human race cease when the individuals die? may be asked. Romans 14: 9 supplies the answer: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and living." He is Lord of the dead, and that lordship over the dead is represented in the vision of Revelation 1: 18 by His possession of the keys—"and have the keys of hell [hades, the grave] and of death." While John 5: 28, 29 declares that "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice," and they will obey, for they "shall come forth."

It amounts to this, that the purchase of our race by the Lord Jesus was a genuine transaction by which all, living and dead, belong to Him. Whether they know it or not, all are His.

Righteousness Must Triumph

But some one may say, Why all this concern over a few puny mortals? Do not the Scriptures say that we are in God's sight as the small dust of the balance? Why not let the wicked remain in their graves, seeing they misused their lives when they had them?

There are some Christians who think that God will do just that—leave the vast majority of mankind never to rise. We have heard today the answer to this. The "saved," thus far in God's great plan, are those who have believed and have been obedient to His will as made known to them—patriarchs and prophets and other faithful ones previous to the cross to receive an earthly inheritance as "princes in all the earth"; the "overcomers" of the Gospel age—since the cross—to be joint heirs with Christ in His eternal inheritance, and to reign with Him for a thousand years for the benefit of the remainder of mankind. Christ died for all, and to bring that fact to the knowledge of all is only reasonable, besides which as Purchaser of the race it is only "economic" to get all He can out of His purchase.

But there is another consideration. God is a righteous God, and all that has been done thus far for the salvation of men has been in harmony with strict righteousness. The sin in Eden was rightly condemned, and death for the transgressors was a righteous punishment. Through Jesus Christ and His cross righteousness has triumphed, in that provision is made for God's vindication—"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness;" and also provision not for bringing God down to the level of sinners but through Christ lifting them out of sin; as the apostle proceeds to say—"that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [propitiatory—mercy seat] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3: 24-26.) None are delivered and justified against their will. Here comes in

that just and reasonable feature of the gospel that those purchased are still left free to choose whether they will love and serve their Deliverer or not. He desires voluntary worship "in spirit and in truth."

Thus far only a few have heard and believed and been saved, and this has been in accordance with God's plan of choosing only a few, for He has allowed the majority of men to go down into death unenlightened. As we have been told by the previous speaker, the True Light will shine during the Thousand Years, and all the dead brought forth will receive the benefits of living under the Kingdom age rule, when righteousness will be the prevailing influence instead of sin as in the governments of the past.

But the principles of the New Covenant then in operation (as now) will require all who desire God's blessing and everlasting life to confess their sins to God through Jesus Christ, with pledges to accept the Lord as their Saviour and Guide. Whereupon they will be accepted and encouraged in every way to go on to perfection in heart, mind, and body. For we understand that the dead brought forth in the Kingdom age will rise the individuals they were when they deceased.

Those who have exercised faith in this life and are accepted as overcomers can consistently with God's righteousness be given perfect bodies in the resurrection—whether spirit bodies as members of the church, or human bodies as those of "good report" in previous ages—because their minds had already been transformed, and their hearts purified by faith, and righteousness had been imputed or reckoned to them. Resurrection with perfect bodies will be merely to clothe them with a body capable of fulfilling the righteous desires they already possess.

But those raised to live again who had not had justifying faith would come up as they were. This the apostle Paul set forth as part of the gospel teaching, when called upon to answer before Felix (Acts 24: 15)—

And have hope toward God, which they themselves [the Jews] also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

This is in harmony with our Lord's statement that those who have done good will come forth to the resurrection of life, while those who have done evil will come forth (not to life, but) to an experience of enlightenment, correction, and instruction under the Kingdom rule.

Some have thought that the wicked dead would somehow come off scot free of all punishment for the sins committed in the present life, as though they left their misdeeds behind in the grave. But in that case they would have left all their good deeds behind also, for death ends all knowledge and every device.

Resurrection means a standing up again; a reliving of individuals who have lived before. In order to recognize themselves after being resurrected they must have memory of their past life, and the inspired Scriptures tell us this will be the case.

We are often asked, Will people know themselves and their friends when they rise out of death and find themselves under the reign of Christ and the Church during the Thousand Years? And we have no hesitation in saying that they will. Our reason for so saying is that the people temporarily raised from the dead by the Lord and the apostles came back with their memories and faculties as they had been: they knew themselves as themselves, and they recognised their friends and their surroundings.

What the Lord said about the Queen of Sheba, the Sodomites, the men of Tyre and Sidon, and the Ninevites, as well as the people of Capernaum and other cities that rejected Him, indicates that they will know themselves; and what inclinations they may have had towards good or towards evil, as well as the possibilities in their mental condition, will come back with them—all imperfect in body and mind, but all with the characters they had when they died.

God, who foresaw and planned that wonderful Kingdom age, with its reign for the blessing of all who had not already passed their judgment (John 5: 24; Hebrews 11: 39); also foresaw how some of these ancient unenlightened ones would conduct themselves; and so the Lord Jesus mentions their memories of their past and their regrets for their evil ways. The prophet Ezekiel was caused to write that the Jews would be confounded in the resurrection time, and would be ashamed of their former pride and the abominations they had committed, which were worse even than the deeds of the Sodomites. And in their shame and regrets they will have feeling for the Sodomites and Samaritans and will be a help to them. This may be read in Ezekiel 16: 48-63. See also Matthew 11: 20-24; 12: 41, 42; Luke 11: 31, 32; 13: 28.

The Travail of His Soul: Satisfied

After saying the Lord would "make his soul an offering for sin," which we see was fulfilled in our Lord's offering up of himself on the cross, Isaiah said (53: 11)—

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:

From this statement, and insufficient consideration of other scriptures, some have concluded that Jesus would not be "satisfied" unless and until every member of the human race were everlastingly saved. The questions therefore arise (1) Does the Triumph of the Cross mean everlasting salvation for every man? (2) Will our Lord Jesus in the glory with His Father be unhappy—dissatisfied—if, out of the thousands of millions for whom He died, one single human being were sent into everlasting destruction, never to rise again?

The answer to the first question is No: The triumph of the cross consists in that it accomplished all the Heavenly Father desired it to accomplish. And that, as already said, was to place a bankrupt race in the hands of His dear Son, that He might deal with them with a view to their release from the taskmaster Sin and the two enemies Death and Hades (the grave). God never gave up, and never will give up, the standard of righteousness which is the foundation of His Throne in which He has placed the conquering Lord Jesus, and by that act fully endorsed Him, and declares that all His work will continue to be based on righteousness.

Another thing: Nowhere in Scripture is it said that the Lord will at any time take away that quality of mind which enables human beings (and it may be seen in the lower animals as well) to make a choice between different lines of conduct. True, in the Kingdom age there will be compulsion in so far as outward compliance with the righteous rules of the Kingdom will be demanded. This is intimated in Psalm 66: 3 (margin), which speaks of "feigned obedience." But that is no more a compulsion of the mind than are the laws of present governments, which place penalties on theft, murder, and other crimes. The thief in prison or the murderer in his last moments on the scaffold or in the electric chair may still have his mind set on the proceeds of his crime or gloat over the destruction of his victim.

Scripture tells us, and we have heard it set forth to-day, that the New Covenant, under which we in this age receive forgiveness and blessing when we come to God through Christ and turn away from sin, will operate during the Thousand Years' reign. Under the New Covenant repentance and faith bring the blessing of God and of Christ. Under it there is no truce with sin; no saying that a so-called "small" sin does not matter. God has allowed Satan and Sin to flourish for a time, and thus has been demonstrated to men what the fruit of sin is. [See Romans 6, and previous articles in this special Conference number.] In every case God's appeal is to the mind and will and heart by setting before sinners the work of His Son Jesus on the cross, by showing them the advantages of righteousness, and by placing before them a reward for faith and obedience. Throughout, the persecuted believers have been counted righteous on account of their faith, and have been encouraged by the hope of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

That this voluntary feature will continue during the Thousand Years is shown in (to mention only two passages) Revelation 7: 9-17, where the saved of the Kingdom age are said to have "washed their robes [a volun-

tary action] in the blood of the Lamb." And Revelation 21: 5-7, where those who are athirst drink of the water of life freely, yet need to be "overcomers" in order to acceptance as sons of God to inherit eternal life. Contrasted with them are those who—in spite of all the light and opportunity—prefer sin in the forms mentioned in verse 8. They shall not live forever. They shall "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

No More Death

What then about verse 4—"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death." Exactly so. A little study of verse 4 should convince anyone that the death which shall be "no more" is the death associated with the tears, the sorrow, the crying, and the pain inseparable from the evil in the world and the curse which God pronounced upon man and upon the earth because of the sin which entered Eden and became the hard Taskmaster over our race.

It is from the curse of that death that the Lord came to deliver oppressed humanity—conquering death through death, as we were shown in one of the addresses; the death associated with Hades, the grave, the keys to which are held by our risen Lord. (Revelation 1: 18.) It is the death and grave from which the Lord called forth (for a time) the widow's son and Lazarus His friend; the death from which God through the prophet promised a ransom (and that ransom has been paid); the death He inflicted on the race as an object lesson that a righteous God can not and will not condone sin with its horrible corruption of His fair handiwork which He placed in beautiful Eden. God assures us that He cannot deny Himself.—2 Timothy 2: 13.

Death Cast Into the Second Death

The inseparability between the Adamic death and hell (the grave) is shown also in Revelation 20: 13, 14. By the power and authority of Him who sits on the Great White Throne, "death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." Death and the grave then were empty. In the great resurrection chapter (1 Corinthians 15), the apostle says that after the Church has been given its incorruptible inheritance,

> 54 . . . THEN SHALL BE brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
> 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Death and the grave lose some when the church and other "overcomers" are resurrected, but the great victory over death was won on the cross, and the bringing out of the great bulk of the prisoners follows as the work of the Millennial kingdom. This promise of deliverance from death and the destruction of death is limited to the Adamic death, which on being emptied is cast into the second death.

Disastrous to Open the Second Death

Death is destruction, and the Second Death is destruction. Out of the first death there is promise of a resurrection; concerning the Second Death there is no such promise, not even the least hint. The folly and absurdity of letting out what was cast and will yet be cast into the Second Death are manifest after a little reflection on what it would mean. It would mean that the beast and the false prophet cast into the Second Death (Revelation 19: 20) would be let loose to work their havoc again; undoing the great victory of the Rider on the White Horse and His armies. It would mean the letting out of our two great enemies, Death and Hades." If resurrecting the dead rendered them empty and useless, releasing these two enemies would mean that they would again take toll of those whom Christ died to deliver from their power; consequently would vitiate our Lord's great triumph over Sin and Death and the Grave. And since death and the grave prospered on account of sin, the release of death and the grave from the Second Death would mean also the release of the wilful sinners referred to in Revelation 20: 15, consequently a fresh campaign of sin, a disordered world, and God himself dishonoured as One who could not prepare and execute a plan to eradicate sin.

But some who realize how disastrous it would be to let out the wicked unchanged from the Second Death, and thus perpetuate sin and evil, invent the theory that those cast into the Second Death will be purified by it, because, they say, it is described as a "lake of fire," and fire is purifying, they say. But think again.

Did you ever see a fire in a house attacking one article of furniture after another? Have you seen how the fire "purified" that furniture? No, you have not. If the fire had good hold, that furniture was entirely consumed. Have you ever seen the refuse of a city dumped into the incinerator and come out purified or renewed? No, you have not. Nor would you, could you have stood beside the valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, the valley or "lake of fire" outside the city of Jerusalem, and seen the garbage and the bodies of dead animals and executed criminals cast in. Purified? No; destroyed! And the Lord used that lake of fire, Gehenna, to represent how thorough would be the destruction of all those persons, and systems, and other things cast into the Second Death.

And now the answer to the second question. Would the extinction of the wilfully wicked detract from the Lord's satisfaction in the work of redemption, in the carrying out of which He died on Calvary's cross? We should say, Just the reverse. While the payment of the ransom gave Him control of the entire race, and while His perfect offering for sin provided the means of cleansing from sin, and while His lordship gives Him the Thousand Years as a period of dealing with the vast majority of men with a view to their forgiveness if they will repent of their sins when the Light of His cross shines upon them, His death and resurrection and all the other arrangements of the great plan were designed because God foresaw that some members of the condemned race would hate the sin once its real nature were shown to them and they were assisted in their efforts to throw off the cords, especially when they came to know that the Lord Jesus can cut those cords and transfer the penitent one into the protection and benefits of His kingdom. For the destruction of the wilfully wicked, the Lord will have no regrets. Take Satan, who for thousands of years has opposed God, and has worked his hardest to interfere with the carrying out of the work entrusted to the Son; who even has to be bound a thousand years to prevent his interference with the great work of that long-waited and prayed-for era, in which the Lord Jesus will establish the will of God upon the earth; will the Lord regret Satan's absolute destruction, seeing He had already prepared "everlasting fire" for him and his angels? (Matthew 25: 41.) No; the second death—the destruction of the wilfully wicked—is as much a part of the divine plan as any other part.

Undoubtedly the Almighty is "long-suffering to usward," and that same patience will be manifested in the Kingdom age toward them who will then be enlightened and dealt with, with a view to their everlasting salvation, if obedient to Him to whom God has committed all authority regarding it. God and His Son do not will "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But it is of the very essence of repentance that it cannot be compulsory; to be genuine it is and must be entirely voluntary. And any who will not repent must perish. There is no other way, nor can there be in a Universe filled not with robots, but with affectionate subjects. (2 Peter 3: 9; Hebrews 5: 9.) Nevertheless, the Universalists believe (and often say) that the Almighty and His Son would not be able to rest satisfied and content if even one soul were unsaved. Were it permissible, which would be not unreasonable, to consider the Universalist expressing such a sentiment as the "one soul" (hypothetically, of course), one must be lost in amazement at

the spaciousness of his ideas concerning his own importance to the equilibrium of the Universe and the well-being of Almighty God and His Son.

Let none of us become involved in such wisdom in our own conceits. Let us gratefully recognize the great fact that God prefers our repentance and salvation rather than our unrepentance and consequent perishing. And let us recognize also that while He so loved the world as to GIVE His only begotten Son for our salvation, and has provided that every one that has come into the world shall be fully enlightened about the way of salvation (either in the present life or after the resurrection), it is, in the end, left to each enlightened one to determine whether he will or will not accept the Salvation provided and offered him. This is the significance of the last part of that favourite verse, John 3: 16—"that WHOSOEVER believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "WHOSOEVER"! Universalism cannot live in the presence of that word!

Then Cometh the End

Operating over a series of ages, God has carried out a definite work in each age, allowing men in general considerable latitude in arranging their manner of life. Romans 1: 20, 21, 28 tells us that they did not make a success of their lives because they did not retain God in their knowledge; which means that they departed from such knowledge of God and of righteousness as Noah the righteous and his family, saved in the ark, could pass on to them.

The history of the children of Israel shows that while some few descendants of Jacob the founder of Israel were men and women of faith, the majority rebelled against God, being self-willed and hard of heart.—Matthew 23: 29-37; Acts 7: 51-53; Isaiah 48: 4; Romans 11: 7-10.

The Gospel age has had its beginning, and is now nearing its end. God's purpose from the beginning of the age, as explained by the apostle James, was to "visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name," who, with a "remnant" from the Jews, comprised the church, the "one body" of believers, called to a heavenly inheritance. This work has proceeded successfully, and soon the "overcomers" will all have been chosen, and will have made their calling and election sure. But still the world of mankind in general has been allowed to go on very much in its own way, notwithstanding the announcement at the beginning of the age, that "now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent."—Acts 15: 14; 17: 31; Romans 1: 16.

Some are asking, "Will it always be so? Are there many ages still to come, in which God will secure only a few out of the millions and billions of mankind? and all the rest be lost forever? Must God try forever, and never succeed? Will Satan in the end prove himself stronger than God?

These questions have already been answered in the course of this Conference, and we have seen that while each age has had its special means of calling out from mankind a few approved of God, God has by no means overlooked the others still going on in their own ways. He has arranged the Thousand Years reign of Christ and the church, and the resurrection of those myriads from the dead, in order that they may be enlightened and given the opportunity of accepting the great Deliverer and the salvation He has to give. And we need have no apprehension of wickedness continuing beyond that glorious reign.

How can we be sure?

We are sure, because the Lord tells us exactly how the Kingdom age will end, and with what results. 1 Corinthians 15: 20 says, "But now is Christ risen, and become the first fruits of them that slept." Through Him others are to be raised to life, and verse 23 says when: "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits [the Anointed Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel age, as stated in verse 20]; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Literally, at or during His "parousia," or presence. His "presence" will include the time occupied in dealing with men during the Thousand Years, as verses 24 and 25 show—

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

What is meant by all enemies put under his feet during His reign is their destruction, as stated in verse 26—

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Clearly then to be "put under his feet" means their destruction.

The "end" referred to is manifestly the "end" of the Kingdom age, the end of the Thousand Years reign; for that is the kingdom for which the disciples were taught to pray: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6: 10.) This is the kingdom promised to the overcomers, in which they should sit with Him in His throne, and judge (i.e., rule over) the world.—Luke 12: 32; Revelation 3: 21; 1 Corinthians 6: 2, 3; 2 Peter 1: 11.

At the end of the Gospel age "all rule and all authority and power" will not have been "put down." At the end of the Kingdom age, "he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." (Vs. 24.) His reign will not end "till he hath put all enemies under his feet." As the reign of Christ and the church for the purpose of dealing with mankind generally, including the resurrected dead, is definitely stated to be a thousand years (and numbers in Revelation are not symbolic but literal), it follows that all opposing factors will have been destroyed before He hands over the Kingdom to the Father not only a successful work, but a completed work.

The Final Test

But the Kingdom age, like those preceding, will end with a final test; that is to say, before the Kingdom is handed over to the Father, as set forth in 1 Corinthians 15: 24, there will be a demonstration as to who of all the myriads who have enjoyed the blessings of Christ's glorious reign have profited by it in mind and heart, as well as outwardly submitted themselves to its authority.

The test takes the form of a deceptive compaign by Satan, whose activities had been restrained for a thousand years, but who at the end of the thousand years is "loosed out of his prison." One of Satan's main characteristics has been opposition to the rule of God and of Christ. Let loose, we are told in Revelation 20: 7-10, he is of the same perverse mind, and seeks to produce rebellion in the then inhabitants of the earth; "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." That is the reason for associating with the name of Satan the name of "the dragon" (Revelation 20: 2), which, we have seen is used elsewhere as a symbol of political power as distinct from ecclesiastical or religious rule. Satan has ever been willing to provide any sort of religion to please and tempt the people under any form of government—as the history of the world abundantly proves.

Can it now be said exactly what will happen after Satan is loosed? We read (Revelation 20: 7-10)—

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,
8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.
9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.
10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The "four quarters of the earth" is a way of saying the whole earth. All the nations living on the earth will be placed under a test by Satan's activities. These activities will consist in persuading as many as possible to

express discontent with the Kingdom rule. This is a symbolic picture, and the compassing of "the camp of the saints" and "the beloved city" is not necessarily a military operation. To "gather" those of the Gog and Magog disposition may consist in getting their sympathetic interest in a revolt, or merely in a decided mental state contrary to the King of kings and His throne.

The answer to the united rebellion will be that fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour all those who have part in it, whether openly or secretly. To "devour them" with fire from heaven is a symbolic equivalent of "the lake of fire, which is the Second Death." Both symbols represent the Second Death—"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."—2 Thessalonians 1: 9, 10.

Although the attempt will be made to mislead all the inhabitants of the earth who will have been enjoying the benefits of the Kingdom rule, there is no reason to believe they will get all, for that would leave the Lord Jesus with no subjects to hand over to the Father. We may well believe that the number who will yield to Satan's ruse will be small compared with the number who will remain loyal to the Throne. And thus the righteous and obedient who appreciate all that the heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus have done for them will be manifested as proper recipients of eternal life. For their characters will have been established in holiness. This dual result at the end of the Thousand Years is mentioned in Revelation 11: 18. The Kingdom will reward the saints of the Gospel age; they will sit with Him in His throne. It will reward the prophets and others of faith who lived before the Gospel age; they will be princes in all the earth. It will reward those who in the course of the Thousand Years repent and believe—"them that fear thy name, small and great." On the other hand the persons persistently wilful in opposition to the Kingdom are described and their deserts—"and shouldest destroy them which destroy [margin, "corrupt"] the earth." Their corrupting efforts cannot be allowed to continue forever.

Jesus "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

The Kingdom Handed Over to the Father

While the Lord Jesus Christ as King and High Priest, and as Judge or Ruler will be triumphant in His reign, verses 27, 28 of 1 Corinthians 15 indicate that the Father had put all things under the Son. It was the Father's plan and purpose all through that His beloved Son carried out, and manifestly the Father was not put under the Son. But the Son delivers up the Kingdom to God the Father, and is himself subject to the Father: "that God may be all in all."

The Triumph of the Son by the Cross is an enduring Triumph—a Triumph not for the Son only, or for the Father only, but a Triumph for both Father and Son, and for the Cross which must remain enshrined forever in the memories of the saved as the supreme exhibition of love and devotion both to the Father and to those whom He redeemed.

—E. C. H.

For the Children

PAUL AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

The Stoics and the Epicureans, as they sat in the enclosure on Mars' Hill, were now prepared to hear what more Paul would say about those "strange things" they had partly heard of in the market place below. And we may be sure Paul was pleased of this opportunity to preach "Jesus and the resurrection," as well to these philosophers as to others, for his message was for all alike.

When he ascended the steps then, and reached the platform, he "stood in the midst" with all the listeners about him or before him. It was an attractive event to have a teacher come amongst them setting forth "strange gods," and no doubt he would have a good audience. And Paul well knew how to handle these men. To say anything nasty or offensive at the beginning would only serve to irritate and annoy them, to ruffle their tempers, which no amount of talking afterwards would calm and soothe even if they allowed him after that to proceed any further. Thus, instead of being turned away from idolatry, as was Paul's hope, they might only be the more confirmed in it. But our story to-day will show us that although he spoke to them with faultless wisdom and clearness, the idols (or the demons behind them) were too strong for the most of them to be persuaded to acknowledge what was so plainly the truth.

In the wise use of words Paul had a great advantage over all his hearers. He had the special gift of prophecy which enabled him to speak with great wisdom, grace and truth; and none of them had that, because they were not believers. But he had an even more wonderful gift, he was able to tell what was in the minds of all those people looking at him! And in addition he also knew all about their philosophies, for he was himself an educated man.

Paul then was in a fine position with regard to them, and although they in their ignorance looked upon him as a kind of inferior, he was really and indeed their master.

Athens was at that time the most religious city in the world—so some have said. It has also been said that it had more gods than all the country put together; and we know from what we have read in the Acts that they were always talking about their gods and religious things.

I think we may believe they were a bit proud of their many gods and the mighty beings they thought they were, as well also of their own religious habit of mind. And proud people always like to have the objects of their pride noticed and thought well of by others. No one knew this better than Paul; and in his opening words he gave them full credit for their religious habit of mind when he said words like these—"Ye men of Athens, I notice how extremely devoted you are to the worship of the gods."

Now that was most agreeable to them, besides of course being true, for Paul said it; but it does not mean that Paul approved of that worship.

The Greeks had given names to their gods, as other nations had done, and knew what each one was supposed to do. But if some very unusual happening occurred amongst them, such as a great calamity or the like, they would immediately suppose that some god had done it, and the question would be, which one was it? And if after thinking it over they decided it could not be any of those they already knew, they could only conclude that it must be one unknown to them.

When Paul passed by on his way about the city of Athens, he saw an altar erected to an "Unknown God." The altar showed that they had been worshipping one of that sort to which as yet they had not been able to give a name, for they did not know who this god was. So they were worshipping him ignorantly. But Paul had full knowledge of the God whom they did not know, and here was his grand opportunity to announce His name to them, and to show them the strong reasons why they should worship Him and Him only.

This God whom you ignorantly worship, Paul said, is

the one that made the world and all things therein. That was putting the matter very plainly. It was only one God who had created all things, and He was the One unknown to them. And what did that mean? It meant that all their hundreds of gods were not real but false, and the worship of them sheer idolatry.

Now, said Paul, because God has made all things, He is of course greater than they, and is therefore the Lord or Master of them all; not only of what may be seen around us, but also of what is above. He is "Lord of heaven and earth." And a little thing like a man could not with his hands make a place for such a great One to dwell in—such a place as the temples where you have placed your gods. Therefore the true God is not in any one of your many temples.

In the worship of their idols men often brought gifts in their hands to them—sometimes to appease their fancied wrath, or to persuade them if possible to grant them special favours. So they paid for what they supposed they got from them. But Paul now tells them that God is not worshipped in that way, for He does not need anything. What was there in the world they could offer Him which was not His in the first place? It is He who gives everything—even "life, and breath, and all things," and we have nothing wherewith to pay Him for these things.

The Greeks were so proud of themselves as to suppose that they had a different origin from the rest of the world's people. They were Greeks; but the rest of the world were mere Barbarians! But Paul told them the truth about that. He said that God caused all the people in the world to come from one stock, "one blood" (that is, from Adam). He further said that God even determined when the different nations should exist, and what parts of the earth they should occupy. His Greek hearers should understand then, that wherever they found people on the earth they were of the same origin or blood as themselves, although they were truly "other nations."

That would surely humble their pride a little, for, as philosophers thinking they knew how everything began, they were quite wrong on the important matter of their own origin. But having heard that their very existence as men and as a nation occupying the beautiful country of Greece depended on the great God whom Paul was preaching there was only one course left for them to take if they were true "lovers of wisdom." And that was to acknowledge that Paul's God was the One who did all things, and not their stupid idols. They should therefore worship the true God, the "Unknown" One; "seek Him;" "feel after him." And, if they did, Paul assures them they would "find" Him.

And they would not need to seek far. For they had only to look at themselves as living moving beings to see the most wonderful work of the great Creator on the earth. And what could be nearer to us than ourselves? As Paul said, He is "not far from every one of us."

But even some of their own poets, who thought of the wonders of creation, long before had said that there must be a wise and powerful God who made us and all things, for they wrote, "For we are also his offspring." And Paul told them the poets were right; we are the offspring of God. If men, then, are wonderful creatures, would it not be foolish of anyone to think that an idol which they could make or "create" for themselves could have created them? Were men dependent upon them for their life, their nation, and their country? Did they "live, and move, and have their being" from their own created idols?

These words alone should have been sufficient to turn them right away from their worship of many false gods to the pure worship of the only supreme One. And in addition they might have reasoned that God could only be vexed by all the idolatry He could see going on in His world. But, if they thought thus, Paul had the encouraging word to say that while God is doubtless vexed by all sin, the times in which they had indulged their ignorance were allowed by Him to pass without taking action against them.

But it was not to go on for ever. For, even then, God's command had gone out for all men everywhere to repent; to turn away from their idols. And the reason for that command was that He had "appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness," when idolatry and all sin will be severely dealt with.

The Judge Appointed

And already the Man who was to do the judging was appointed.

As the philosophers had asked Paul to speak to them on Mars' Hill, it would have been very rude if they had gone on interrupting him; and they did not; they kept their part of the contract, and listened patiently. But that does not mean that they were in agreement with what he was saying. In fact, it was all foreign to their own ideas—of which they were so very proud, and they seem rather to have been waiting for him to say something they could ridicule or laugh at, and so end his speech for the present.

In our last story we said that neither the Stoics nor the Epicureans could tolerate the teaching that there was to be a resurrection of the dead, for that would have overturned both their philosophies. When Paul therefore told them that the judgment was certain because God had already raised from the dead the Man appointed to be the Judge (meaning Jesus) they were stirred!

Up to this point, as Paul's speech progressed, they seem to have thought—"Well, those are his ideas; he can have them; we will keep our own which are much better." But in the mention of the resurrection of the dead—the very thing that should have brought joy to their hearts and a song of praise to their lips—they saw only something to ridicule. Some of them mocked, derided, laughed him to scorn; others made the contemptuous promise to hear him again on the matter. It was useless for Paul to proceed further; his audience no doubt all rose up; and—"So Paul departed from among them."

The philosophers made several great mistakes that day. They did unreasonable things. They should have allowed Paul to finish in his own time and way. They should have asked him questions. What would have been wrong in asking, "How are we to know that all you have said is true?" and "What is your authority for saying that the Man who is now appointed Judge had been raised from the dead?"

If those philosophers had been genuine and sincere in such questions, it would not surprise us if Paul had performed some mighty miracle before them, to prove the power of the mighty God he was setting forth, and to show that He was the only One to be feared or reverenced. But the grand truth of the resurrection, with all that it meant for them and for all men, was so destructive of their own ideas that they were not disposed to make further enquiry.

It would have been more than remarkable, however, if there had been none amongst his hearers touched by the wisdom and power of his words. We have been given the names of two who were, and there were "others with them." These forsook the false teachings and attached themselves to Paul, becoming believers.

Please read Acts 17: 22-34 for this Story.
Of the special gifts of the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12: 7-11.
Of some gods, Acts 14: 11-18.
Of the earth belonging to the Lord, Psalm 24: 1.
Of God being vexed by sin, Psalm 7: 11.
Of how God will deal with sin, Revelation 21: 8.
Of the real temples where God dwells, 2 Corinthians 6: 16.
Of where true wisdom begins, Psalm 111: 10.

—UNCLE FRANK.

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As Simple as A-B-C

MANY people are constantly using figures of speech without knowing that they are doing so; never having had the term defined in their hearing. When one man says of a friend that he is "a horse for work," he is using a figure of speech. Nobody misunderstands what he means; everybody knows he means his friend is a good, hard, steady worker, and can "keep at it" a long time at a stretch. Everybody knows there are "bulls" and "bears" in the market, and no one would expect to see animals bearing those names operating on the stock exchange. The "bull" is the speculator or investor who seeks or expects higher prices; the "bear" seeks to depress prices. An illmannered or morose person is frequently called a "bear," but no one at all up in finance would confuse the one kind of "bear" with the other. Parents often call their children "kids" or "lambs"—terms of endearment; while at another time the same children may be "piggish."

The term "figure" is used in many ways. It is "the general word for representation of anything to the mind, as by illustration, metaphor, or symbol." A young lamb or kid gamboling on the green is an expressive figure or illustration of a happy child playing about.

Our Lord when preaching the gospel used animals, birds, and flowers in this figurative way, as did the prophets before Him. What a world of meaning there is in this from Isaiah (1: 3)—"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

A figure of speech calls up pictures before the mind; prophetically of Jesus the same prophet wrote (53: 7)—"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." At the same time our Lord was most eloquent when teaching the people the message of truth. One must learn where the dumbness fits into the scheme of His life. People of all nations and all classes can understand these figures of speech, for where over the wide earth is the sheep not known, useful for food and for its wool, which accepts in silence the loss of life, even as it accepts gratefully the tender care of the shepherd while life lasts? for God was His Shepherd.—Psalm 23.

In calling himself (as the prophet also foretold) the good shepherd, who cares for His sheep, the Lord Jesus used one of the simplest and most familiar of figures of speech; illustrating how He laid down His life for the sheep, how He led the Jews out of the law covenant fold into the new, gospel fold, to which also He gathers those Gentiles who become His sheep. This parable also gives us a hint on interpreting parables; namely, not to push them beyond what He purposed to convey. For instance, in commercial circles, sheep eventually are slaughtered after being shorn; then both meat and wool are sold in the markets. In the parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10), the figure, the comparison, the lesson is confined to the care of the shepherd and the security of the sheep, which no one can pluck out of His hand, or out of the Father's hand. In studying all symbols, comparisons, and parables, this limitation must be observed if we would learn the intended lessons. In Acts 10: 17-38 we have shepherd and sheep from another angle. Paul had done a shepherd's part to the Ephesian brethren, and the Holy Spirit had provided "overseers" or undershepherds to care for the flock. Addressing these elders Paul warned them to be watchful; that "grievous wolves" would "enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Verses 28-31.) The "flock" must be cared for and watched over, yet nevertheless evil persons—like "wolves"—would enter in among them and do grievous harm.

Simple as A-B-C

A modern figure of speech, used from one end of the world to the other, no doubt we have all heard and also used ourselves—"It's as simple as A-B-C." And this reminds us how necessary it is to give a little study and close observation to symbols and figures of speech.

When we say it is "as simple as A-B-C," we mean it is as *easy as the alphabet is to those who know it.*

The child just learning the letters—just think, 26 of them; and all different! Funny little marks, and here they are all in the copy book! Are they easy? Not to the child who does not know how to pronounce their names, or how to hold his pencil for the purpose of copying them. See how proud he is of himself when he can read and pronounce and copy six or a dozen of the letters! And what pains he takes to make the letters as they should be, as nearly as possible like the pattern. And what a nice little exhibition of achievement to say the whole 26 one after the other without missing or mispronouncing one!

The gospel is indeed as simple as A-B-C, once you know it and repeat it frequently, and write it, and sing it. But it takes a little studying of the copy-book, some learning how to pronounce the words (truth), and HOW TO ASSOCIATE the different parts to form connected explanations; and (also) how to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING the word of truth."—2 Timothy 2: 15.

The child must not stop when he has learned the names of the letters and how to draw the characters. He must learn to make use of this knowledge in the formation of words, then of simple sentences; later of more complex sentences. With "simple" A-B-C one can be learning all one's life.

And so with the Gospel, simple in its teaching of the cross of Christ, and the forgiveness of sins on confession and faith, and all the blessings our Heavenly Father is willing to give us in Christ Jesus. Yet to learn all the blessings and the whys and wherefores of God's great Plan is a life-study, well worthy the devoted attention of those who receive His grace with grateful hearts.

Seed as a Figure of Speech

We all know what the seeds of flowers and plants are like. We know that the grain of wheat is, when planted, the seed from which will be produced one or more stalks of wheat, and the larger and fuller the heads of wheat the better.

Now, the Lord took the wheat seed as an illustration. That is to say, He used it to represent something in gospel truth. In fact, He used the wheat seed to represent two distinct and separate things. This may be seen in Matthew 13, which contains the Parable of the Sower (verses 3-9) and the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (verses 24-30); to each of which the Lord gave the interpretation.—Verses 18-23; 37-43.

By giving the explanations the Lord gave us not only inspired interpretations which should be accepted without any attempt at alteration; He gave us also a model of the correct method of interpreting all parables.

Each story or parable is complete in itself, and teaches a definite lesson. No parables should be mixed together or tacked on to another parable. All the lessons of all the parables are harmonious and gems of truth; but, in seeking to understand them, each should be studied by itself, as we see Jesus indicated when He gave the distinct parables and then the separate explanation of each with its individual lesson on the Kingdom.

The special point to be observed just now is that in the parable of the Sower the seed represents "the *word* of the kingdom" which the Lord was preaching (vs. 19); whereas in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares the good seed represents "the *children* of the kingdom," while the tare seed sown by an enemy represents "the children of the wicked one." The Lord explained further: "He that soweth the good seed [i.e. "the children of the kingdom"] is the Son of man" (vs. 38), whereas the enemy that sowed the wicked ones among God's children is the devil. Each of those two parables is complete in itself, and each teaches its own lesson. And it is well to remember that in these two parables the Lord used "seed" to represent two different things. Further on these and other parables, please see the book "The Parables of our Lord"—particulars in Book List.

Except a Corn of Wheat Die

On another occasion the Lord used the grain or seed or corn of wheat as a figure or illustration to teach a third lesson. John 12: 24 reads—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Our Lord said this as the hour of His death drew near: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." Like the corn of wheat, the Lord's death would bear fruit. As He was, He would abide alone. Offered up and slain as the perfect sin-offering and as the "ransom for all," His death would bring forth much fruit.

The "much fruit" would result, not from His remaining dead, but from His new life which the Father subsequently gave Him on the third day, when He raised His Son from the dead. Some say that Christ's death was that of a social reformer, whose death awakened men's minds to new resolutions of self-sacrifice, and that thus He bore fruit. But those who express this idea fail to see the point of the comparison or figure of speech. The corn of wheat that dies has not a scrap of influence—neither on the earth in which it is lodged nor on any vegetation around it. The point the Lord made by His remark was that out of the death of the corn of wheat as such, there springs forth a new plant, and it is this new plant that bears the fruit—the new heads of corn.

By this the Lord showed that He would not remain in death. The Heavenly Father had arranged to raise His beloved Son out of death, and it is in our Lord's resurrection life that the fruitage is brought forth. This the apostle Paul indicated. (1 Corinthians 15: 16-23.) Christ himself is the "first fruits of them that slept," and all others who will live again are fruits of His resurrection power—"afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" [literally, "presence"].

Further along in the same chapter (15: 35-44) we find the apostle's answer to the question—"How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" And he goes on to illustrate the death of the members of the church and their resurrection in the glory of the spiritual (or spirit) body by referring to the sowing of "bare grain, it may chance of

wheat, or of some other grain." In this connection the figure of a seed of grain is used to illustrate another point entirely from our Lord's use of it concerning His own death and resurrection. Now the apostle emphasizes that the result of a sowing depends on the nature of the seed sown. If a farmer sows wheat, he expects to receive a crop of wheat; if he sows barley, a crop of barley, and so on. No one but an ignoramus would expect to grow a stalk and grains of barley from sowing a seed of wheat.

So also in the resurrection, says Paul. The man who dies is represented as having sown something at his death. "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." (Verse 38.) "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial." (Verse 40.) And which sort of body God will give in the resurrection depends upon what was "sown." Jointheirship with Christ in His glory is offered during the present Gospel age to those who become His true disciples and "if so be that we suffer with him." (Romans 8: 17; 2 Timothy 2: 12.) "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Revelation 2: 10.

Thus if we are sincere believers and are faithful unto death we have developed a character and disposition like Christ's, and in accordance with the Holy Spirit given to us. In that case we will "sow" a character which God has promised to raise in the likeness of His dear Son, and we may confidently expect to receive that glorious inheritance.

On the other hand, those who have lived selfish lives, and have not followed in Christ's footsteps and who have not suffered with Him, cannot reasonably expect the glorious reward. Those who live according to the flesh "sow" the flesh. Verse 50 reads—

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Verses 45-49 show that the first man Adam was made a living soul: he was a flesh being. The Lord Jesus at His resurrection was made "a quickening [or, life-giving] spirit." The first was of the earth, the second is the Lord from heaven. The human race is flesh. Only those who receive the call in the present age following our Lord's resurrection to glory are the "heavenly" mentioned in verses 48, 49, having been born of the Spirit, "transformed" by the renewing of our mind. In none before our Lord's time was this "change" effected, with a hope and promise of a spirit body in the resurrection. As our Lord also said to Nicodemus—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."—John 3: 6; Romans 12: 2; 2 Timothy 4: 6-8.

From all Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren on the resurrection, we see that he included himself among those who in the resurrection should bear the Lord's own image, consequently Paul was one of those who in his life on earth had proved faithful—not only in service, but in the development of that Christ-like character of love and self-sacrifice which the Lord had set as prerequisite to the obtaining of the heavenly inheritance.

In this connection the apostle Peter's words are noteworthy. (Chapter 1, first Epistle.) He mentions *himself as "an apostle of Jesus Christ," and he* addresses the brethren as—

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

He then speaks of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead as having given the disciples a lively, or living, hope; that Jesus was resurrected from the dead—

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you [or, as in margin, "for us"],
5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

That this salvation (like the Lord's, and reserved in heaven) differs from any previously offered Peter proceeds to show by referring to the holy prophets—

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:
11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.
12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but *unto us they did minister the things, which* are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Thus the prophets, though honoured as instruments through which the Spirit communicated the prophecies concerning our Lord Jesus, had no part in *those promises which relate to the call and sanctification* and glorification of the church. They were used to record messages of a salvation which was not for them but for the elect church of the Gospel age. The Spirit of Christ mentioned in verse 11 by which they prophesied is the same Spirit mentioned in 2 Peter 1: 21—"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

But the Holy Spirit given to the church of the Gospel age is the spirit of sonship, which is given to every believer of this age upon his or her acceptance of Christ Jesus. This spirit of sonship it was impossible for the prophets to have received, else they would have had precedence to our Lord Jesus Christ who was the first of the sons of God, and the One to whom, after His resurrection, the Father gave the Holy Spirit to pour out upon the waiting disciples at Jerusalem and to be a power within all the true *followers of Jesus throughout the age. In Old Testa*ment times promises were given, but nothing was given equivalent to the Holy Spirit which God gave to Jesus at His baptism and which, following His resurrection, has been His gift to the Gospel age believers. —Romans 8: 11, 14-17; John 2: 30-34; 16: 7; Acts 2: 4, 32, 33, 38, 39; 5: 32; Ephesians 1: 13, 14.

We repeat here, what has been often said in these columns, that the high calling of the Gospel age is by God's appointment and of His grace or favour, and is not due to any natural superiority of Gospel age believers over God's people of previous times. God chose to send His Son, and also to select or elect a few to be His joint-heirs in the heavenly glory; and those who are so fortunate as to be living while the call is open may enter in; for ye are all called in one hope of your calling.

And let us receive the thought conveyed in Paul's words concerning the seed—"thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of

wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." The wheat-seed receives the wheat body; the oat-seed receives the oat body. It is not theirs to choose, but to accept what God gives. And so it is with us. It is not ours to choose either for ourselves or for the ancient worthies, or for the nations to be enlightened in the Kingdom age. But we have this much that we can do so far as ourselves is concerned. We can each by our faith, by the depth and sincerity of our consecration, and by our fidelity to God's will assist to prepare ourselves to sow that seed which God is pleased to clothe with the likeness of His dear Son and receive into the glories of heaven.

Clothed Upon with Our House from Heaven

This thought the apostle extends in his second letter to the Corinthian brethren (chapter 5, verses 1-9), where he speaks of the new spirit body as "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Our flesh is like a tent to dwell in, unsatisfactory and burdensome. To be unclothed, that is, to have neither the flesh body nor the spirit body, did not appeal to Paul. (However, Paul when about to finish his course realized that he must sleep in death until the Lord's time to call him forth. —2 Timothy 4: 6-8.) Rather he desired the Lord's return, that he might leave the tent of flesh and be present with the Lord. (Philippians 1: 21-24.) Thus Paul shows again the importance of Christians' developing now in the likeness of Christ, so that in the resurrection they may appropriately possess a spirit body, and occupy a position with Christ in the glory which no man can approach unto.—John 14: 1-3; 17: 24; 1 Timothy 6: 14-16.

Figures of Human Relationship

Let us now consider another set of illustrations by which great spiritual truths are made clear to our minds—figures drawn from human relations. God's care is likened to that of a father; His comforting solicitude to that of a mother. (Psalm 103: 13; Isaiah 66: 13.) That we might better know God as our Father, the Lord came to reveal Him. This He did both by description of God's character and purposes and by living the godly life before men. This example set before us by our Lord and Master while on earth means that each and every one of us must come out from other associations; "and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." To be accepted by the great God of Heaven as His sons and daughters is a high honour indeed; and to be to Him the sons and daughters He can approve is something we need to attend to.—2 Corinthians 6: 14-18; 7: 1.

Another human relationship that provides helpful figures of speech to make clear spiritual truths is that of husband and wife; also an "engaged couple" (as we would express it today), as well as the marriage ceremony and the subsequent feasting.

God was a husband to Israel when He took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt and provided for them in the wilderness and in the promised land. (Jeremiah 31: 32.) Israel, on the contrary, was unfaithful, and often preferred the company of the gods of the nations.—Ezekiel 16.

John the Baptist made clear his position, as compared with that of Jesus, by an illustration drawn from a custom then in vogue—calling himself "the friend of the bridegroom." He said to the Jews, "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him." (John 3: 28.) He might have said, I am His herald, which was true. In the narrow streets of Jerusalem often a herald went before a great man to clear a passage through the crowds, and announce the name and title of the dignitary who followed. John was the angel or messenger the prophet had foretold, who would "prepare the way," and the Lord Jesus Himself referred to John's fulfilment of this prophecy.—Malachi 3: 1; Matthew 11: 7-10.

But John sought to show that he was more than a mere herald or formal introducer. His work corresponded with that performed by the friend of a young man of those days who desired to be betrothed (or become engaged) to a certain young lady. Custom required that he make no personal application; hence "the friend" looked after the formalities, the parents of the young lady having been satisfied with his recommendation of the suitor and the description of the position which their daughter would occupy. Having performed this office, "the friend of the bridegroom" could retire into the background. The period of betrothal or engagement was usually a year, and must not be confused with the marriage, which took place with great ceremony at the end of the betrothal period. The Lord based one of His parables of the kingdom on the custom of celebrating the marriage with a great feast—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son," and how, when some of the previously invited guests refused to come, the king sent his servants into the highways and byways, to constrain any they met to come. And so the wedding was furnished with guests.—Matthew 22: 1-10.

There has been much discussion among Christians as to who was the "bride," but if John 3: 25-36 be read it will be seen that John was answering a very definite question put to him by his own (John's) disciples and some other Jews, who reported that Jesus was baptizing, "and all men come to him." (Verses 25, 26.) This would revive the question as to whether John or Jesus was to be followed; in other words, which was the "bridegroom"—the important man—and which "the friend"; the identity of the "bride" not being touched on in John's reply.

Unbelieving and perverse Jews had made all the trouble they could for John when he was baptizing and calling the Jews to repentance; telling them also of the One to come after him. The priests and scribes and Pharisees who held the people in bondage by their traditions John specially rebuked, calling them (what they were) a "generation of vipers," and comparing them to "chaff" which, after the threshing, is burned up. (Matthew 3: 1-12.) It is not strange then that Jews influenced by their leaders would seek to make trouble amongst John's disciples—those who had repented and had been baptized by him.

After Jesus had been baptized, and had begun His

ministry, also (like John) preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand, these Jews saw their opportunity (as they thought) to cause more trouble—by raising antagonisms between John's disciples and Jesus' disciples. But if they could get John himself disgruntled they might count on more easily winning over all of John's disciples into opposition to Jesus. Let us make John jealous of Jesus, they said to themselves.

But John saw through their little scheme, and he well answered them by the illustration of "the friend of the bridegroom." To amplify his answer John might truthfully have said, For six months I laboured diligenfly to bring the people and those who controlled them (such as the priests, scribes and Pharisees, the rulers of the synagogues, and other leaders) to an understanding that God was sending the Messiah—His Anointed—to be your King and Deliverer. And now do you think I am jealous, or can be made jealous, of this great Leader and Teacher? Can you not realize that I am now most glad and happy to see Jesus accepting them and they accepting Him, as God designed when He sent me in advance to recommend Him to you and tell you the many advantages that would accrue to you on receiving and following Him?

Jesus did not take this Kingship upon Himself; I myself heard the Voice from heaven saying, This is He. Is the bridegroom's "friend" jealous of the "bridegroom" after working for weeks or perhaps months to bring about the betrothal? Why, no; it is understood all along that he is serving the "bridegroom" and not himself, and he is pleased to see the "bridegroom's" happiness; he rejoices when he hears the "bridegroom's" voice with the thrill of joy in it. And this pleasure is mine today. My part brought to a successful finish, I shall decrease, while He must increase, and carry on the work God has given Him to do.

Now read again verses 31-36: John declares that Jesus was from above, sent by God to speak a special message, while John himself, sent by God in advance, had been confined to earthly things; that is, to bring the Jews to a state of repentance under the law and to a state of mind and heart in which they would be ready to receive God's Son. All things the Father has given into the Son's hands, and what you and all Jews should do is to believe in Him. It is a matter of life and death to you, and not a matter of trying to make one man jealous or envious of another. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John's position was this, that he was neither the bridegroom nor the bride.

The Least in the Kingdom of Heaven Greater than He

Our Lord gave a clear explanation concerning John the Baptist and his work. (Matthew 11: 7-15.) No prophet greater than John had arisen. John was the greatest because to him had been given the honour of going before the Lord and announcing the nearness of the kingdom of heaven. Yet John himself was not invited to enter the kingdom of heaven when Jesus came as Messiah and King. The Lord said—

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS GREATER THAN HE.

John belonged among the prophets of the Lord in the period before Christ. He was faithful in the task that was laid upon him, and he will receive his reward with other faithful ones in the resurrection; that reward having been designated in the promises to the Old Testament worthies, that they should inherit the land for an everlasting possession, Abraham having been shown all the land north, east, south, and west. No promise of an inheritance in heaven was made to Abraham, honoured though he was as a man of remarkable faith. That a line of demarcation must be observed between the faithful before Christ and those after Christ had made his great Offering on the cross, the Lord emphasized again, when He said (verses 12, 13)—

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.
13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

John was in prison at the time these words were spoken, and he was beheaded shortly afterward.—Matthew 11: 2; 14: 1-12.

The Bride

The "bride" is the prospective "wife;" and the word is used as a rule principally at the time the marriage service is about to be performed and for a short while after, corresponding to the term "bridegroom" applied to the other party to the marriage. Later after the marriage the terms "husband" and "wife" come into the picture.

In those statements already quoted from Jeremiah and Ezekial Israel was the "wife," and this term expressed more forcibly than any other could have done the deliberate and unwarranted unfaithfulness of the children of Israel toward God who had been as a husband to the nation.

Equally clear are the terms "bride" and "wife" used by the Lord and the apostles to illustrate spiritual truths pertaining to "the kingdom of heaven."

Like some other symbols "bride" is used with more than one significance. In the parable of the feast for the King's Son, a bride is implied, though not mentioned because the point of the parable is the furnishing of the feast with guests. (Matthew 22: 3-10.) And its lesson is that, of those first invited to receive God's favour in Christ, all would not come; representing the fact that only a "remnant" from the Jews appreciated God's mercy and favour. The parable represents also the zeal of God to have a certain number in the "high calling" and the supplying from among the Gentiles (Acts 15: 14-18) of sufficient consecrated believers to make up the full number, as shown by the apostle Paul in a combined symbolical and historical account. (Romans 11.) That "remnant" from the Jews did not consist of Israelites selected all the way down the Jewish age nor of the faithful servants of God who lived in previous ages; the "remnant" was drawn from those Jews living from the Lord's day onward, as may be seen by

Romans 11: 5-7, 15-19; shown also by the activities of the apostles and early disciples in going first to the Jews to preach the glad tidings of a Saviour. To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. (Romans 1: 16.) Both Jew and Gentile believers were received on the same terms of faith and obedience, and formed one body of believers in Christ.—Acts 13: 45-48; 17: 1-4; Romans 1: 16; 1 Corinthians 1: 21-31; Ephesians 2: 13-18; 4: 1-6, 11, 12.

This body of believers is elsewhere called the church. Jesus said that upon Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," He would build His church. (Matthew 16: 13-19.) That is to say, That same confession must be made by each one who desires to become a member of the church. "I will build," future from the day on which the confession was made. This is shown also by the fact that to Peter the Lord said He would give the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Again showing that the "kingdom of heaven" to which the keys would give entrance was future from that day. Consequently no member of the church was chosen in times previous to our Lord's ministry when He gave Peter this promise. When therefore we read Stephen's reference to Israel as "the church in the wilderness," we must take it in the general significance of the Greek *ekklesia*, meaning "a calling out," and applicable to the Israelites as a people called out of Egypt to serve God in the wilderness and in Canaan. The church which Jesus is building is separate and distinct, and receives a higher calling than that promised to the Hebrews whose objective was the land of Canaan for an everlasting inheritance.

In Ephesians 2: 20-22, the church, the "building," is called "an holy temple in the Lord."

Each of these illustrations helps us to understand some particular aspect of the church and of our Lord's work for it and in it.

It is not surprising then to find the church also symbolically represented as a "bride." The apostle Paul no doubt had the Jewish custom in mind when he wrote to the church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 11: 2)—

2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Here the apostle speaks as though he were the father performing his part of an espousal; namely, consenting to the contract and doing his part to encourage his daughter to remain faithful to the one—Christ—to whom he had espoused her. "But I fear," he says (vs. 3), "lest by any means, . . . your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ." Hence they should not listen to anyone preaching "another Jesus" or "another gospel." (Verse 4.) Virgin simplicity means faithfulness to the One to whom the church is pledged. Taking the members of the church or bride individually, he preached and warned, "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."—Colossians 1: 28.

Under the Jewish custom the parents of the betrothed maiden retained her in their own home pending the day when the bridegroom would come and the marriage service and feast take place. In Ephesians 5: 25-27 the apostle expresses the truth in another manner. Christ Jesus "loved the church, and gave himself for it;" omitting from this picture the fact, elsewhere stated, that our Lord's sacrifice was the purchase price for the whole world. (Hebrews 2: 9; 1 Timothy 2: 5; 1 John 2: 2.) Here it is shown that the Lord Jesus, instead of leaving the betrothed church to the exclusive care of the parents—a course which would not tend to the well-being of the Church, since she is called out from the world—is actively engaged, though absent, in preparing the church for Himself—

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

For the purpose of this cleansing, means are used—the Word of Truth, and not without the co-operation of the members of the church, who are elsewhere told to cleanse themselves. (2 Corinthians 7: 1.) The Lord uses human agencies also in the preparation of His church—those who preach the word, as in Ephesians 4: 11-15. The Holy Spirit was given to assist the church, and angels minister to their needs. But, whatever the agencies, the preparation of the church is under the care of the Lord Jesus himself. This is indicated in another symbolic representation, Revelation 1: 12-20, where a different set of symbols is employed in picturing the Lord's present position of power and glory and authority and His care over the church.

Hath Made Herself Ready

The part the believers themselves take in preparation for the Lord's coming to take the church to Himself is shown in many exhortations, commands, and warnings throughout the New Testament, with lessons also to be drawn from the Old Testament. From that aspect—of making herself ready—the members of the church are called upon to be "overcomers." (Revelation 2: 7, 11, 17, 26; 3: 5, 12, 21.) Yet not in their own strength. We are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation . . . That the trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: . . . Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, . . . be ye holy."—1 Peter 1: 5-17.

In harmony with this duty and necessity of the "bride" taking an active interest in the preparation of herself for the marriage is the vision recorded in Revelation 19: 6-8. In the vision John heard "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, . . ." And what did this tremendous voice proclaim? It proclaimed the setting up of the long promised Kingdom as an accomplished fact, "saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth"

—literally, "reigned." The victory over the great "whore" mentioned in verses 1-3 was a demonstration that He already reigned, over which fact "a great voice of much people" gave praise.—Verses 1-3.

But the rejoicing was not alone for the victory over the great "whore," and in honour of the King, but also in honour of the "bride" who had become the "wife," and who had been promised a part in the breaking to shivers of the nations dominated by the great whore (Revelation 2: 26, 27)—

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.
28 And I will give him the morning star.

Also the promise in the last of the seven messages to the churches (Revelation 3: 21)—

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

The use of the title "wife" (Revelation 19: 7) by the exultant throng is not therefore to be taken as a reference to the "bride" before the marriage, but as congratulatory that she whom they honoured as the wife had made herself ready beforehand, and therefore there had been no delay in celebrating the marriage. As the "bride" in preparation, the Gospel age church was privileged to enjoy reckoned righteousness—righteousness imputed on account of their faith. Resurrected in the Lord's likeness, perfect spirit beings, imputed righteousness is no longer needed. Hence the vision portrays the wife of the Lamb as arrayed in actual righteousness (Verse 8)—

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed [Some commentators and the Revised Version have "array herself"] in fine linen, clean and white [margin, "bright"]: for the fine linen is the righteousness [literally, and see Revised Version, "the righteous acts"] of saints.

Fine linen and purple were the clothing of the rich and influential, and purple has long been a synonym for luxury. Great Babylon before her fall (Revelation 18: 16) is represented as having been clothed in "fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls"—*by all of which the merchants of the earth are enriched.* The position of the true Church, as joint heir with Christ in His glory and kingdom, requires no such finery. Spoken of her, the royal robes mentioned in 19: 8 are merely emblematic of the established position and of the righteous acts which will characterize all her dealings with mankind. Of the Lord it was written, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." The same is true so far as possible of the true believers during the Gospel age. But, resurrected in the image and likeness of Christ, they will be actually righteous, and will co-operate wholeheartedly with the Lord in the great work symbolized in the vision by the marriage feast (verse 9)—

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

The marriage supper represents the perpetual feast of good things which Christ the King and His joint heirs will place before mankind generally, including those called forth from death who are not among the overcomers who sit in the throne. For more on this subject the reader may consult the book, "The New Era."

Symbols of Covenants

Having seen that the symbols "bride" and "wife" are used in certain New Testament passages to represent the Church of the Gospel age, which as a chaste virgin waits through the centuries till the glad day when she is united to the Lord and becomes His wife and colabourer in the great work of the Kingdom age, it may at first seem strange that the symbols "bride" and "wife" should be used to represent *something totally different. But, as some who at* first had not noticed that a grain or seed of wheat is used to illustrate different things in the affairs of the "kingdom of heaven" during the gospel age afterwards saw the simplicity and beauty of the different significances, so, we believe, any who question whether "bride" and "wife" are used to represent also something else than the Church will on studying the subject readily see that there is no inconsistency or contradiction in such use of the symbols.

In Galatians 4: 22-31 we find how the apostle Paul used Sarah, Abraham's wife, and Hagar, her slave, to emphasize distinctions between the law covenant and the new covenant, showing the superiority of the new covenant. Some Jews were making the mistake of wanting to remain under the law though professing to have accepted Christ. The two women with their different status were easily understood, their history being well known to all Jews. The question was, Do you want to be free like Isaac? or a slave and outcast like Ishmael? If the latter, remain under the law *covenant at your own risk. If the former—like* Isaac, a son of promise—then you will be an heir of God, you will be free, you will receive the blessings Christ came to give. For it is under the new covenant, which Christ inaugurated, that forgiveness of sins is obtainable on the basis of faith in the sacrifice of Christ: and on that basis God agrees to remember the sins no more against you.

The advantages of the new covenant over the old are also referred to in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7; Matthew 26: 27, 28; Mark 14: 24; Luke 22: 20. The disciples were familiar with God's promise of a New Covenant (Jeremiah 31: 31-34), and though they did not at the institution of the Memorial Supper fully understand our Lord's meaning, the Holy Spirit afterward enabled them to understand it, and to preach it as an integral part of the Gospel.

The New Jerusalem as a Bride

In Galatians 4: 25 we see the law covenant likened to the city of Jerusalem, for that was the visible representative of the law covenant and of God's sovereignty over Israel. Verse 26 reads—

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

This is a New Jerusalem, and stands for the new covenant. Those who come under the New Covenant are called the children of the new Jerusalem, just as the Jews under the law covenant were the children of old Jerusalem. All this of course is figurative language, to show that we cannot be under both cove-

nants. Nor is it strange to speak of the new covenant or the New Jerusalem as a mother. In our modern everyday language many things are spoken of under the symbol "mother." Thus "Necessity is the mother of invention." By this we mean that invention is the product of some necessity. Some one under necessity of travelling by boat over water invented oars, another invented sails, and so on. So when we speak of the New Covenant as a mother, the idea is that it will produce, it will bring forth results. In Galatians we, the Church, are the results, the children, of the new covenant with its merciful arrangements.

During the Gospel age, that new Jerusalem is above, and the children it bears are blessed with a heavenly calling. Our citizenship is in heaven, the apostle says.—Philippians 3: 20.

The New Jerusalem Coming Down

But after the Church is all chosen and glorified with the Lord, the New Jerusalem is to come down. Will she then have more children? Or are we of the Gospel age to be the only children of the New Covenant? The vision of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21) shows that the purpose in coming down at the beginning of the Kingdom age is to bear more children; for all the saved in the Kingdom age will be the product of that arrangement which God will set up in authority in the earth, whereby tears, sorrow, and sin shall be forever washed away.

It will be observed that in Revelation 21 no mention is made of the Church as the bride of Christ. But that is entirely consistent with the lesson taught by the vision. A city is a symbol of a government. The New Jerusalem, the holy city, is "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Verse 2.) In what respect is shown in verses 11 to 21, where jewels are the decoration, gold paves the streets, the glory of God surrounds it. The angel said, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." And then John saw the beautiful city coming down to earth: where it is accessible to men, and all nations, if they will, can walk in the light of it.

It is a reasonable question to ask why the New Jerusalem, the new covenant, is here called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." The answer is consistent with Paul's use of city and wife in Galatians 4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the King in the new government of the Thousand Years. To carry out that work, the new covenant comes down as a "bride" and remains as a "wife" to co-operate in the great work of bringing life and salvation to mankind. Only on the new covenant terms will life be granted. Every one who desires salvation must then, as now, acknowledge and confess his sins and apply for forgiveness in the name of Jesus who died to redeem men and whose blood is the atonement for their sins.

In this vision, which is continued in chapter 22, the church of the present age is included under the symbol of servants who shall see His face, and they shall reign for ever and ever. Thus the church as the bride and joint heir with Christ of eternal glory is not confused with the bride the new covenant which brings forth children for the earthly inheritance.

And some one may now ask, Is *this—all this—*"as simple as A B C?" And we reply, Yes, it is. With care not to mix the symbolic illustrations as used in one parable, similitude, allegory, or vision with the same natural objects or conditions used to teach another lesson in some other parable, similitude, allegory, or vision, there is no more need for confusion than there is for the child to mix x y z with a b c, or r s t with h i j. Therefore—

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

For the Children

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER

Sometimes I have thought that my young friends must often have wondered how all the different languages came into the world. The first two people on the earth talked to each other and to God, and we may understand that God gave them a language when He created them. We know that the one language continued for many hundreds of years afterwards amongst the people. How then are there so many different languages now?

We are able to say in answer that they did not come by accident or by the cleverness of men themselves in the first place. But, as God gave the first language, He also caused the many different ones, of which we now know something, to come later. The account of how they came and God's reasons for sending them we shall ask you to read about at the end of this story. But just now we wish to enquire which one of all the many did He choose when the time came for the words of the Gospel to be written down, and why that one?

A good while ago we told you how God used the strong Roman government to clear out the pirates from the Mediterranean Sea, and make great roads all over the world, in sufficient time for the messengers of the Gospel to travel about with no fear at all of pirates and with a good deal of protection from robbers on the land. And now we shall see that God arranged for a clever nation to have a sufficiently perfect and exact language all ready for conveying the glorious gospel story. For it was God's will that the words of the Gospel should not be spoken only, as by the first messengers, but also written down for the benefit of all generations after.

Hundreds of years before the Gospel came and before the great Roman nation was known, the Greeks were the ruling power in all the world. So they had trade and commerce with peoples in all directions far

and near; and travellers of all kinds from Greece took the language of Greece with them. Thus the merchants and traders of other lands came to read, write, and speak the Greek language, and so it spread abroad in the world.

But the Greeks were not only the great rulers and traders of that time; they were also a clever and learned people. And perhaps that is the reason why God made them the keepers of their particular language which was the best one—the most perfect and exact—known to men. The very clever ones amongst the Greeks wrote many books, consisting of poetry, philosophy, and stories about their gods, and men of other nations who wished to gain a knowledge of their learning and wisdom were first obliged to learn the Greek language. In time they became teachers of others in such schools as they had, and thus again the language spread, and in the end became "universal."

All this may seem very natural; and, in a way, it was. But when we ask why were the Greeks with their wonderful language the ruling power *then*, and why should their language become universal *when it did*, we can only say that God was doing all that, just as at the right time He cleared the seas of the pirates and restricted the robbers. God wanted the language to give His glorious Gospel to the world, and so it was all ready and widely known when the Gospel came to be written.

What to Say, and How to Say It

During his lifetime Paul wrote important and wonderful letters to Christians of different nations, and many if not all of them now form a part of the Bible. It was while he was at Athens, we understand, that he wrote his first letter that we know of. It was written in the Greek language and was for the Thessalonian church. That church consisted of many Greeks and a few Jews. Hebrew was the Jewish language; but while the Greek Christians could not read Hebrew, the Jewish Christians could read Greek; so the one writing did for both.

Paul also wrote a letter in Greek to the Christians in Rome, where the people spoke Latin or Italian. Some of the church members were Italians, others were Jews, but both could read Greek; so again the one writing did for both. To the unlearned amongst them the letter would be explained. But what labour it would have been had Paul to write the same letter in two, three, or even more languages for Christians of many different nations! All this was avoided, as we now can see, by the wisdom of God in providing an excellent language and causing it, by seemingly natural means, to spread everywhere. So, as with the pirates, the robbers, and the road making, men thought they were doing something for themselves only when they were getting the Greek language around: but really they were working out the will of God.

Why Paul Wrote

But are my young friends now asking why Paul wrote that letter to the Thessalonians? Before we answer let us think a while and ask, Why do we write letters; and to whom do we write them? Apart from business letters and such like, we write letters to those we love or to those with whom we are in sympathy who may be undergoing some sorrows that we ourselves have suffered. But, when writing, the question with us always is, What shall we say? and how shall we say it? And that is where Paul was so excellent: he knew both what he wanted to say and how to say it.

Paul loved the Thessalonians; he knew they were undergoing afflictions, persecutions, from the Jews, from the Gentiles, and some of them even from members of their own families, and his sympathy with them was very deep. So all the love and sympathy were present in Paul to prompt a letter, and he wrote one—he wrote two to them, just as you or I would to our beloved friends or relatives if they were in distress.

Before Paul left the Thessalonians and escaped to Berea he knew they would suffer persecution and told them so. He was anxious about them while at Berea, but that anxiety increased greatly at Athens. As time went on it became unbearable. The beloved Thessalonians were often in his mind. He feared they might have lost their faith, succumbed to temptation, and gone back, so that all his labour amongst them would thus have been in vain or for nothing.

At that time he thought that somehow he must see them: he must go to Thessalonica himself. He tried, and tried again, but Satan hindered. Very well; he knew a way of getting round Satan's hindrances. If he could not go himself, he could send someone else. The faithful and beloved Timothy was with him. It needed but the word from Paul, and Timothy was on his way to see how the Thessalonians were and to set Paul's heart at rest.

He Sends Timothy to Report

How we would love to know by words from Paul of the joy there must have been amongst that great number of believers at Thessalonica on having Timothy with them. It might have been the first time they had seen him, for we do not know whether he was with Paul during Paul's visit there. And coming amongst them unawares Timothy, of whom doubtless Paul had told them much, would be to them like an angel suddenly appearing. Indeed he was an angel—a "messenger," for that is what "angel" means—and as such the Thessalonian brethren would receive him.

But all the pleasure was not on their side. We think Timothy well knew what we can now see and shall refer to again presently; viz., that his visit was entirely the Lord's will. And although he had had some hardships which he faced in a soldier-like manner, he knew no greater joy and delight than in doing that will of God. Besides, he was meeting, perhaps for the first time, a group of new and enthusiastic believers; and those are always times of joy.

But Paul at the other end was greatly longing for his return, and Timothy must not delay. He soon learned "how they were," and he had a great report to take back of their "faith and love." When Paul heard these glad tidings he knew it was all right with them in Thessalonica. The good news gave him the greatest joy. They had not been overcome by their

adversities, but were proving themselves overcomers. He was greatly relieved by this report, and said: "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." Just as we often say when tense moments are over, "now we breathe again."

But Timothy learned that they had a few wrong ideas about some things. They had misunderstood some things Paul had told them about, and had forgotten others. And some had done a bit of private thinking as well—which by the uninstructed was very likely to be wrong, and in this case was wrong—not the thinking of itself, but thinking differently from Paul's instruction.

It was so important that they should be put right in the several ways they had gone wrong, that Paul could not let this report pass without writing them a letter, and so there came his first letter to the Thessalonians.

It is a beautiful letter. It tells them of his love for them and praises them for their own love and zeal. It corrects their wrong ideas and reminds them of the things they had forgotten. And as it is a letter inspired by the Holy Spirit, it gives us an idea of the kind of language that even we in our humble way should use in writing to each other. So, to learn how to do that, we must read his letters often and study them closely; for who amongst us would not love to be at least something like Paul!

It was God's will that Timothy should go and not Paul. But Paul did no wrong in wishing to see the Thessalonians again; and although he was not permitted at the time to do so, the Lord graciously arranged for a visit later. Thus Timothy was enabled to see the Thessalonians, and they saw him and would be encouraged by his presence. And the Thessalonians got two wonderful letters which they could have always with them for their instruction. Paul did himself ultimately see them again. And so we can see the truth of what Paul himself has written, "If God be for us [or on our side], who can [successfully] be against us?"

Please read the first epistle to the Thessalonians for this Story.

For the origin of many languages, Genesis 11: 1-9.

Of God's provision of "all things" necessary, which would include language in which to express and spread the truth, Romans 8: 31, 32.

How Paul sent Timothy, 1 Thessalonians 3: 1-8.

Of Timothy the Christian soldier, 2 Timothy 2: 3.

Of why we should study the Scriptures, 2 Timothy 2: 15: 3: 16, 17.

—UNCLE FRANK.



When was the Revelation Written?

(Reprinted from the N.C.A., August, 1912)

MARGINAL notes in reference Bibles state that the book of Revelation was written about A.D. 96, and we accept this as correct. But those who profess to see in this marvellous writing a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in A.D. 70, must needs contend that the Revelation was written before that date, or about thirty years earlier than A.D. 96, the generally accepted time indicated in the margins of the Bibles.

This point has been contended for a long time. The evidence is not voluminous, but it is sufficient, and nothing new on the subject has come to light for many years. What is known about it to-day was equally well known fifty years ago, and what was known fifty years ago was current two hundred and fifty years ago. It gives us all the more pleasure therefore to utilize the argument as presented by Pastor Robert Fleming, V.D.M., who preached on this subject in London in A.D. 1701, and in so doing to preserve as far as possible the quaintness of his language, while using the modern "s" throughout to facilitate the reading of it by twentieth century folk unaccustomed to the long letter in use up to the beginning of the nineteenth century in our English printing and to more recent times in English handwriting.

If Pastor Fleming's argument is sound—and we do not see how the evidence can be impugned or the deductions therefrom disputed—the theory that the book of Revelation was mostly a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem is effectually disposed of, for the Revelation could not have been written expressly to *predict* what had occurred a quarter of a century before the visions were given to John in Patmos.

We do not say that Revelation is absolutely silent concerning the fall of Jerusalem; we consider it likely that in one place at least this great tragedy is alluded to, and that there are a few other references to events that occurred before A.D. 96. But the general character of Revelation is prophetic, and the bulk of it must therefore refer, as itself states (Revelation 1: 1), to events that were to come to pass after the book was written; that is to say, after A.D. 96. Pastor Fleming's argument follows.

Authorship and Inspiration of Revelation

The Revelation was written by the apostle John, and is a sacred and canonical book of the New Testament.

I hope there is no Christian that will dispute the truth of this proposition with me. For, besides that the stile of John may be easily traced in this book, notwithstanding the difference of the subject from that which he wrote of in his gospel and epistles: he does frequently make mention of himself, and that with such peculiar circumstances. As agree with none but the apostle; as we see chapter 1, verses 1, 2, 4, 9; also 21: 2; 22: 8.

I know indeed that some of the ancients doubted of this, as Caius a Latin father, mentioned by Eusebius, Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 28, and Dionysius of Alexan-

dria, who made a great noise against it for a while, as we see in Eusebius also, Hist. Lib. 7, cap. 4. But yet even this man declares that he owns it to be a sacred book, though not written by the apostle John. Wherein he speaks, what we must look upon to be altogether absurd. For if St. John be not the author, it must be an imposture, seeing his name is inserted in it, as being the penman. So that if it be not St. John's, it is no sacred book. Or if it be a sacred book, the author is none but the beloved apostle. But the weakness and inconsistency of this, denies his reasons against this book, are sufficiently though briefly exposed by Monsieur du Pin, both in his preliminary dissertation to his "Bibliotheque des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques" and in his history of the canon of the books of Scripture.

And if this were any argument against the divinity of this book, that some persons have doubted of it, or denied it to be canonical, there is hardly one book in the New Testament that would stand the test: Seeing we find in ancient Church-history that there have been not only particular men, but even sects of them, that have excepted, some against one book, and some against others. And we know, that the epistles of James, and Jude, and the second and third epistles of John, and that admirable epistle to the Hebrews, have been controverted, as well as the Apocalypse: of the authority of which neither Papist nor Protestant, Grecian nor Armenian Christian doubts at this day.

And as all Christians do now acquiesce in the Revelation, as a canonical book: so excepting those I mentioned, and the heretics called Alogians, all the eminent fathers of the Church received it of old. So did Justin Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryph. Irenæus lib. 4. cap. 37. and 50. and lib. 5. cap. 30. and apud Euseb. lib. 5. cap. 8. Tertullian, adv. Marc. lib. 3. cap. 5. Clemens Alexandrinus, apud Euseb. lib. 3. cap. 23. Origen in Mat. and Joh. and apud Euseb. lib. 6. cap. 25, and Eusebius himself, hist. lib. 4. cap. 28. Nay all the other fathers agree in this also, viz. Epiphanius, Victorinus, Theophilus, Cyprian, Methodius, Jerom; and others quoted by Eusebius, Epiphanius and Jerom, viz. Melito, Hippolitus, Victorinus, etc.

But for my own part, were all these authorities wanting, there is that in this book itself, that would inforce me to own it as divine. For besides the augustness of its stile, the wisdom of its contexture, and the purity of its design and counsels, there is something that I want a name for, that commands my belief and veneration, and insinuates itself into my affection and conscience, as if Christ himself breathed something divine in every line. But the clear view of the fulfilling of the several parts of its prophecy, is an argument that even several other books of the New Testament want.

Time of Writing

The book of the Revelation of John was written after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The notion of Grotius, upon which his interpretation of the Apocalypse is founded, is this; that the seven kings or heads of the beast, mentioned in Revelation 17: 10, are not to be understood of seven several forms of government, but of seven particular emperors, viz. Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian and Titus, and that Domitian is the eighth, who was of the seventh, because as he pretends, he governed during his father's absence.

The foundation which he lays, for the probation of this, is that John was banished into Patmos, in the reign of Claudius [B.C. 10—A.D. 54]: But that though he saw his visions then, he did not write them till Vespasian's [A.D. 9—79] time. For he must make this last supposition, as well as the first, else his notion would be condemned immediately, seeing it is said, that five of these kings were fallen Revelation 17: 10, that is, says he and Hammond, when he wrote, not when he saw these visions. But how false this is, any body may see with half an eye; seeing these words are not John's but the angel's to him. And therefore the defenders of this opinion must find out five emperors that were fallen before Claudius, if they will restrict these heads of the beast to particular men:. For if the angel spake these words to John in the days of Claudius, they must relate to them that went before or to none.

This is enough to destroy this notion of their's, and I know not how it is possible for any of their admirers to salve their credit this way. But seeing the principal thing they found upon, is this, that John saw the apocalyptical visions in the days of Claudius, and that so all, or at least most of the Revelation relates to things that fell out before the destruction of Jerusalem; I shall say something further to disprove this assertion, and to confirm the verity of our proposition.

Now there are only two things adduced by Grotius and Hammond to prove, that John was in Patmos in Claudius his reign: the 1st is that Claudius raised a persecution against both Jews and Christians, and that being the first persecutor, it is probable, that John was banished at that time. The second is, that Epiphanius does expressly assert that it was by Claudius that John was banished to Patmos.

As to the 1st of these, it is nothing but a supposition, without any proof; for we have no account, either in the Acts of the Apostles, or in any other Writer, that Claudius did ever persecute either Jews or Christians. And Lactantius de Mort. Per. does expressly assert, that no Emperor did persecute the Christians before Nero. It is true, Suetonius says, *Claudius Judæos impulsore Chresto tumultuantes Roma expulit.* And Luke tells us, that Claudius banished the Jews from Rome, which occasioned Aquila and Priscilla, and other Christian Jews, to retire from Rome: but neither of them say, that he persecuted the Christians, or even the Jews. Now, as for the expression of Suetonius, *impulsore Chresto*, or *Christo*, the meaning must be this, that the Jews that did not believe, going about to stir up the government at Rome, as they did everywhere else (as is plain from the book of the acts) against

the Christians, and appearing against them in a tumultuous manner, upon the occasion of Christ; complaints might probably be brought to the Emperor, who no doubt, upon this account, banished all of that nation from Rome: so that Suetonius having a confused notion of Christ, might easily be induced to express himself this way. And now that this was all that Claudius did against the Christians, is plain to me from one argument that has escap'd Dr. More, but is to me unanswerable, taken from 18th chapter of the acts; where, after the sacred historian had taken notice of Claudius his banishing the Jews out of Rome, and of Aquila and Priscilla's being lately come upon that account from Italy to Corinth; he tells us of Paul's lodging with them, because he was of the same occupation. But being pressed in spirit, to preach Christ, upon the coming of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia, he goes into their synagogue, and reasons with the Jews and proselytes there, upon this head: and having converted some, particularly Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and Justus, in whose house he afterwards disputed; Crispus, no doubt being thrown out of his office, and Sosthenes put in his stead, and Paul continuing to preach in Justus his house, which joined to the synagogue; the Jews are incensed to such a degree, as to rise tumultuously against Paul. Sosthenes, therefore, the new chief ruler of the synagogue, and the rest of the unebelieving Jews make an insurrection, and seize upon Paul, and carry him to the judgment-seat, before the Proconsul Gallio, that excellent Roman, the elder brother of Seneca. He tells the Jews, that if Paul, or any other man, were guilty of what was lewd, wicked, or unjust, that in that case, he was obliged to punish such persons according as the Roman law and justice did require. But seeing they accused Paul of nothing of that kind, but only of doctrinal matters, relating to their own law and religion, he had nothing to do with them; and therefore he drove them all away, and set Paul at liberty, *which made the Gentiles fall upon Sosthenes the* chief author of this tumult, and beat him before the judgment-seat, which Gallio permitted to be done, and connived at, either as judging that he did deserve to be so treated, or as supposing it might prevent the Jews from acting so factiously and tumultuously again. Now, after this short, but exact account of this history, it will be easy to see how precarious and groundless, nay false, Grotius's opinion is, of a persecution being raised against Jews and Christians in the days of Claudius. For if there had been any such thing, or any edict for it, how came Gallio to tolerate a public synagogue of the Jews, and suffer Paul to preach openly? or if the christians were only ordered to be persecuted, why did not the Jews use this, as the reason of their accusing Paul, who to be sure wanted not a good-will to have done so, and were not ignorant that this would have been the main argument to prevail with the Proconsul? and had there been any such edict, can we imagine that Gallio was ignorant of it? for so he must have been, seeing he tells the Jews, that he had no orders to punish any man for his religion or sentiments that way, but only those that were guilty of wickedness or lewdness in life. If any say, that his temper was to care for none of these things? I answer, this expression may indeed denote his temper; but I suppose it speaks forth not only that, but his principle and sentiment, as judging it unrighteous to persecute, or punish any man for mere opinion. But, whatever this had been, had there been an edict for persecuting the christians or Jews, he durst not have neglected his orders, especially when the edict must have been so recent, and when he had what might have past for a just reason of his punishing both the party accusing, and the party accused, *viz.* their disturbing (as he might have represented it) of the public peace. But, indeed, it is too plain to need any further proof, that Claudius his banishing the Jews out of Rome, was accompanied by no persecution, either against them or against the christians. And this, Dr. Hammond confirms, by what he says in his annotations on the 31st verse of the 26th chapter of the acts, forgetting, that this way he destroys his own foundation of interpreting the Revelation: where, upon these words of Luke, that Agrippa, Festus, and Berenice, and the rest of the company, after they had heard Paul's defence, did conclude, that he had done nothing that deserved either death or imprisonment; the Doctor observes, that the reason why they did conclude so was, because there had been as yet no edict emitted against the christians, by any of the emperors: and this was the reason also, says he, why Gallio, the Proconsul of Achaia, said publicly, that it was not for him to judge of things that the Roman laws had determined nothing about: For, continues the Doctor, though Claudius had commanded the Jews to leave Italy, by which the christian Jews were forced to go away also, not as they were christians, but because they were Jews; yet, there was no law made against christians, as such, at this time. It is true, he says, that John was not only banished, as Aquila and Priscilla were, but confin'd in the isle of Patmos. But he should have given the reason, why John was the only person persecuted: however I shall examine this assertion, and the reason that the Doctor gives for it in other places of his annotations.

We come therefore now, in the 2nd place, to consider the testimony of Epiphanius, upon whose credit alone Grotius and Hammond believe that John was in Patmos in Claudius's time. And here by the way, I cannot forbear to observe the strange mistake of Dr. Lightfoot, who agrees in the main with these learned men, in interpreting the Revelation, in relation to the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore makes John to see these visions long before that; but has this peculiar to himself, that he imagines John was not banished there, but went thither voluntarily to preach the gospel to the inhabitants; whereas John himself doth expressly tell us, that he was there as a sufferer and witness for Christ: chap. 1, verse 9. "I John, who also am your brother and companion in

tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ;" so that, as this refutes Dr. Lightfoot, and confirms what Grotius and Hammond agree in, that John was not in Patmos as a traveller, but as a prisoner and sufferer; so it is enough to refute even *them also: for the words do plainly insinuate,* that John was not the only persecuted man at this time, but that there was then a persecution raised against all Christians in general; and therefore we may be assured that he was not in that Island in the days of Claudius, in whose time we have proved there was no persecution.

But to return, Epiphanius says indeed, That John saw his visions in Patmos, in the reign of Claudius. Heres. 51 Sect. 12. and 33. But can his single authority weigh down all antiquity, that says the contrary? *shall we believe him rather than Ireneus, who* liv'd two hundred years before him, and was the *scholar of Polycarp, the scholar of John himself?* Now what can be plainer than the words of Ireneus, lib. 5. cap. 30. "if his name (*viz.* that of Antichrist, or the beast), had been openly to be divulged at this time, it would no doubt have been told by him that saw the apocalyptic visions: for it is not a long time since he saw these, but even in some sense, in our own time, *viz.* towards the end of the reign of Domitian." And that Ireneus had just reason to say, that John's seeing the revelation was almost in his own time, or within the memory of the men *of that generation, if not his own also, is plain from* chronology: for he being the scholar of Polycarp, who was martyr'd in the year of Christ 167, and being himself put to death in the year 202, if we suppose that he wrote this but ten or twelve years before his death, yet he might justly say, that there was but about an age's difference from his time, and that wherein John saw the revelation: for if John was in Patmos, towards the end of Domitian's reign, it could not be sooner in any propriety of speech, than the year 90, seeing he began his government Anno 81, and *died* 96. *And who can* doubt but Ireneus does deliver here, what his master *Polycarp had told him? for as none knew* the history of John, better than that worthy person, so none had better opportunity to know what related to this matter than Ireneus, by reason of his long and intimate acquaintance with him. This seem'd a foundation sure enough of old to Eusebius: and if some men had not some private ends to promote, by opposing it, might be a sufficient foundation to all men still. Let us, therefore, hear what this learned historian says on this head: "In those days," says Eusebius, Euseb. Eccl. hist. 1. 3. c. 23. (*viz.* in the days of Cerdo, Ignatius, and Simeon, of whom he had been speaking) "the Apostle John, the beloved disciple was yet alive, inspecting the churches of Asia, having returned after Domitian's death from the Island, whither he had been banished. Now that John was then alive, it is enough to adduce the testimony of two persons of great authority, who are worthy of all belief, and were ever eminent for defending the truth, I mean, Ireneus, and Clemens Alexandrinus; the first of whom, in his second book against Heresies speaks thus: All the presbyters, says Ireneus, who lived familiarly with the Apostle John in Asia, do assure us, that *they had this related to them from John himself*; for he lived with them even unto the times of *Trajan [A.D. 56—117]. In this third book also,* Irenæus gives us the same account in these words; the Church of Ephesus also, which was founded by the Apostle Paul, and was afterwards under the care of the Apostle John, until Trajan's time, is an eminent witness of what was delivered to us by the Apostles. And besides him, Clemens likewise, says Eusebius, does not only take notice of the same time, but gives a particular story relating to him, in that book of his, which bears this title; what rich man can be saved? and then Eusebius recites the story *at length, which were too long to insert here.*

Now if John lived to the days of Trajan, he must have been a prodigiously old man, according to Epiphanius, who says he was 90 years of age, in Claudius his time. For giving him all the allowance that can be desired, *viz.* that John was so old in the last year of Claudius, and that he died in the first year of Trajan, he must have been 134 years old at least, when he died; seeing Claudius died, A.C. 54, and Trajan did not begin to reign until the year 98, though others say, with more probability, not until A.C. 100. Now, besides that it is not easy to believe, that so thoughtful and laborious *a man should live so long, the improbability of what* Epiphanius says, appears further from this; that if in the year 54, from Christ's birth, John was 90 years of age, he must have been 36 elder than Christ. And if so, it seems very odd, that Christ should say to him, from the cross, man, behold thy mother, and to Mary, woman behold thy son. For as this seems to say, that he was at least as young as Christ, this account makes him an old man of near 70 years of age at that time. Which, as it must suppose, Mary to be a very aged person of between 80 and 90 at least: *so it contradicts the constant and unanimous* tradition of the church, which supposes him to be very young at that time. Whence Baronius says, that he was but 25 years old. And Nicephorus relates, out of an epistle of Evodius Bishop of Antioch, that the virgin herself was not then 50; seeing Christ as he asserts, was born when she was but 15 years old.

Whence it appears, how little we ought to trust Epiphanius, in opposition to all antiquity besides. Which made Drusus say, *scimus omnes Epiphanium in multis graviter hallucinatum.* And upon the same account, Petavius scruples not to correct him: for where he has it *imperante Claudio,* he writes this short note in the margin, *mendose pro Domitiano.*

But the truth is, though I am not willing to detract from this author's credit, yet I suspect it was not so much an error of judgment as of will, or that which some call a *pia Fraus,* that made him desert the tradition of the church in this matter. For his telling us this story is upon the occasion of an

objection of the Montanists against the Apocalypse, taken from this supposition, that there was no church in Thyatira, when John writ the Revelation: which it seems, he thought would serve another turn, if he inverted it, by telling them that John said so only by way of prophecy. Whence he proceeds to prove the verity and divinity of the book: and therefore thought his argument would be the more cogent, the further he run up the date of the revelation, and John's being in Patmos. But as this was a poor as well as unlawful shift: so I shall leave him and his authority both, to those that have more time and leisure to consider them further.

From Far and Near

God Moves in a Mysterious Way

Sir: I have received your Books and Tracts being sent me from such a far distant land, and would be glad if the N.C.A. could be continued, as I am in earnest to know more about the valuable truths hidden in that great and valuable Book of all books. There are many here in this country who would be glad to get such great encouragement in the faith, but on account of poverty are dependent upon others to supply our need. Our Lord has promised that His Gospel must be preached to all nations; and through sending out tracts and magazines freely to anyone who is interested the good tidings of great joy are spread to one and all. I do not know how it is that my name reached you; hence I have now come to the conclusion that "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

This is a great experience I have gained since I became a Christian, that God loves His children, and would save them to the uttermost who are willing to save themselves by faith and obedience to Him. May He shower His blessings upon all until we reach the great end which our Lord has promised to the faithful. Your brother in the Lord, ——, *South America.*

Dear Brethren: I do heartily thank our heavenly Father for His loving providence in using you to minister to His children and assist us to keep in the old paths and provoking us to good works.

I also thank you for your favours of the past year, and humbly ask you to continue to send me the N.C.A. on the same terms as the Lord's poor. It grieves me when I read of the deficit for the year, not being able to help. I pray our Father will continue to guide and bless you. Yours by His grace, ——, *British West Indies.*

[We are glad to be able by the Lord's grace to send the true Gospel of His dear Son to South America and the West Indies, as well as to other parts of the vast field, and trust to His unerring providence to direct the message into the hands of those who will appreciate it; also to supply the means with which to carry on the work in these the closing years of the Gospel age. It is the privilege of each one who receives the truth to spread it still further, and we are supplying tracts free for the purpose to any friends of the truth anywhere who have opportunity to use them. Send for a dozen, a hundred, or a thousand tracts—as many as you can place, in homes, through the post, or in the ships of the sea that call from time to time.]

Dear Brother and Sister: Love and greetings to you both from all here. We observed the Memorial Supper on the 17th April. Brother M. was not able to be up. But we moved a table, so that he was close up with us. And though he could not speak, he realized all we were doing, and partook, and bent his head in prayer at the breaking of the bread and at the serving of the wine.

How I wish I could have been with you all at the Conference. I feel so unworthy of all God's goodness, and realize it is only through His grace that we can attain to that High Calling. We know that God can overrule all things for us, and can give us the needed strength in every trial. Yours in that One Hope, ——, *New South Wales.*

[The age draws nearer its close, and our lives also. The last days with our loved ones are sad ones, for the weakness which precedes the last closing of the eyes is painful to see. Yet such is God's will, that even His saints should go into death, fulfilling their consecration to be faithful unto death that they may receive the crown of life. Our sympathy and prayers are with dear Brother and Sister Montgomery, formerly our representatives at Edinburgh, and with all passing through similar experiences. The Lord's promise is not to save His saints from dying, but to raise them out of death into the joys of the Divine Presence and to the privilege of eternal life. Thank God, the time is coming when pain and sorrow and death shall be no more.—Matthew 25: 19-23; Romans 8: 18.]

Effectual Preaching of the Gospel

Dear Sir: Please find enclosed my annual subscription for the N.C.A. I feel the paper is very helpful to me, and should be to any one who loves to feed on the Word, for it is made very plain and simple; therefore should be readily assimilated by other than the well educated; and when one reads it, it seems to be an answer to the long ago statement, that to the poor the Gospel shall be (or is) preached, which is often effectually done through the medium of ink and paper as well as by word of mouth. I remain, Yours faithfully, ——, *Victoria.*

Dear Brother Henninges: Enclosed 10/- postal note for N.C.A. fund. I am glad the debt is decreasing, and that you get so many encouraging letters to cheer you all. They must cheer all who read them. The addresses too from the Sermon on the Mount are most helpful and building up in the truth. Oh, that we may apply them to ourselves, and prove and test ourselves by the good things in the Word of which we are reminded in the N.C.A. I am feeling advancing years, and realize how I need patience and all the other graces of the Spirit, that I may learn of Him who is meek and lowly of heart. Continue in prayer for me, as I do for you both and for the good work you are engaged in. With love and best wishes, Yours in looking for the Blessed Hope, ——, *Tasmania.*

Enclosed please find postal note for five shillings. I did not send my two shillings last month, so I am sending you four this month. The extra shilling is for two books advertised in last month's N.C.A.—"The Dead—Where are They?" and "Everlasting Punishment." I am sorry to hear that the Advocate Sustaining Fund is so far in arrears. I intend sending two shillings along every month, and more when I can afford it. I am delighted with the instruction I receive from reading the N.C.A. God bless you in your endeavour to make plain the truth concerning God's Kingdom and the blessings that are to come to all mankind. I remain, Your brother in Christ, ——, *New South Wales.*

[No doubt the regular laying aside of a set amount for the upkeep of the Funds is a good practice for us all. It is good discipline for ourselves; for we know how easily every penny may slip through the fingers, especially when the total income is limited, or when it is large with many calls upon it. With united regular giving the feeling of oneness among us is increased, and the work is steadied. We do not want to cease sending out the good things all over the world, and it is wonderful to think how the Lord is using the oldest and the newest settled countries in giving the same glad message. For Melbourne has just been celebrating its Centenary, while the United States and Canada have been celebrating their Four Hundredth year of settlement, and the British Isles and the Continental countries can go back to early Roman times. As we experience a sense of gratitude to those who in the past have given their lives for the Gospel's sake, especially in the great Reform movements which from time to time have revived the testimony seemingly likely to perish, so may we in our time lift up the standard of truth everywhere, to which those longing for a higher spiritual life and a better knowledge of the Word of God may look and take up afresh the evangel.]

Greetings in our Redeemer's name!

Please find enclosed payment for books on hand, and please forward 12 May 1st (Conference) Advocates.

The Triumph of the Cross is indeed wonderful. Our thoughts have been taken onward to the end of the Kingdom age, where we see all enemies destroyed, reconciliation complete, communion and harmony with God restored, and God all in all. All the bitter experiences through which the sons of men have passed as the result of sin seem to be a great preparation for the final Triumph, the ushering in of the ages of Glory.

And so, dear Brother, we rejoice in the one hope of our calling: our glorious inheritance. How we shall rejoice when presented to our Father in heaven as the "First Fruits" of the Triumph of the Cross.—James 1: 18. Your brother by His Grace, ——, *Queensland.*

SOME BETTER THING FOR US

Question.—*I notice that the Revised Version gives a slightly different rendering of Hebrews 11: 40 from that contained in the Authorized Version, and should like to be informed which is more in accord with the sense of the original. The passage reads—*

Authorized Version: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.
Revised Version: God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Answer.—The first thing to be observed in this text is that both translations agree in the statement, "God having provided some better thing." If God has "foreseen" (marginal reading) or "provided" something better as the inheritance of the Gospel age church, than for the men and women of faith named in verses 4-39, who "obtained a good report through faith," having won the approval of God, there can be no essential difference between the phrases "without us" and "apart from us;" because the latter part of verse 40 cannot be taken to contradict the first statement. By no proper method of interpretation can that which is "better" be regarded as the same.

God's plan is that the faithful who preceded the announcement of the "high calling" should not receive their reward at the first advent, even though no more would be added to their number to receive the earthly inheritance promised them. His plan is that those invited to joint-heirship with Christ should be called and chosen, and should make their calling and election sure, before any rewards are given. Paul said a crown was laid up for him which the Lord would give to him in the day of His appearing. It is in the resurrection time that the gospel age saints receive that divine form of life and that position of authority with Christ in glory that God promised them. It is also in the resurrection time that the ancient worthies will be called forth and given their official places in the earthly administration of the kingdom. Both positions are honourable and free gifts from God to be prized by those who receive them. The heavenly control and the earthly administration will work harmoniously together, each satisfied with the position and the work which God has allotted, and each active and diligent in the great work of the Thousand Years.

Received at Bristol Branch

Dear Sir: Have just received your February copy of New Covenant Advocate. Have been much impressed by previous two, especially in regard to the Sermon on the Mount. They have been a real blessing. I propose handing them round all the family. This is a hasty note to catch the post. Enclosed find P.O. for 5/-, which is my first yearly subscription. Hope you will send on this delightful paper each month. Other books are very interesting too, especially the one about our Lord's Parables. I am deeply indebted to you and cannot express my gratitude. Must close. God bless you. Yours in debt, ——, *Scotland.*

Subscriptions Now Due

ANOTHER year of the N.C.A. is now completed. As most subscriptions end with the close of the volume, this notice is given to all Readers so that they may promptly send us their orders and payments for the renewal for another year. The subscription price is 4/- per year including postage in Australia and New Zealand; 5/- ($1.25) elsewhere. Readers are requested to accept this general notice as though it had been privately addressed to each one personally. Promptness in responding will be greatly appreciated, and will be a great help to the work. Therefore, please let us hear from all at earliest opportunity. Those who have been receiving the N.C.A. free on special terms because of inability to pay are cordially welcome, as ever, to the paper on the same terms. But we must hear from such yearly, so we may know they still live and desire to continue reading.

The "Advocate" Sustaining Fund

52, 12/6; 53, 2/-; 54, £1; 55 (*Anon*), £1; 56, 4/-; 57, 10/-; 58, 2/; 59, £1; 60, £10; 61, 2/-; 62 (Odd coins in little box), 4/-; 63, £2; 64, 2/-; 65, £2: 10: 0; 66, £2; Received at Bristol, 113, £1; 116, £1; 118, 5/-; 123, £2; 125, 7/6; 126, 15/-; 127, £1; 128, 10/-; 129, 10/-; 130, 10/-; 131, 10/-; Received at Brooklyn, 468, $4.75; 469, $1; 470, $8.75; 471, $24; total at Brooklyn, $38.50 (£7: 18: 5); total for month, £37: 14: 0 ($183.32); previously reported, £80: 4: 7 ($389.79); total for 5 months, £117: 19 ($573.11). With grateful thanks to our heavenly Father, and deep appreciation of the co-operation of brethren and sisters everywhere, it is a pleasure and an encouragement now to be able to say that the amount of the Deficit and unpaid printer's bills on N.C.A. account mentioned in the Annual Report has been overcome, and there is the sum of £31 available for this year's work. The expenses of the Advocate Sustaining Fund for the whole of this year to December 15, 1935, are estimated at £400 ($2000); thus leaving £369 to be accomplished between June 1 and December 15—or an average of about £60 ($300) per month for the 6 months.

The Cheerful Givers

26, £4; 27, £10; 28, 16/-; 29, £10; 30, 8/-; 31, 4/4; Received at Brooklyn, 337, $4; 338, 75 cents; 339, $23.97; total at Brooklyn, $28.72 (£5: 18: 2); total for month, £31: 6: 6 ($152.24); previously reported, £36: 3: 5 ($175.78); total for 5 months, £67: 9: 11 ($328.02). The estimated expenses of the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1935 amount to £200 ($1000); though more than this sum can be beneficially utilized should it be available.

The New Covenant Advocate and . . . . Kingdom Herald

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ONE GOD, ONE LORD, ONE SPIRIT

The articles in this issue, except the last, were first published in these columns serially in 1912. Subsequently they were published in book form under the title, "The Christian's Comforter." This book is now out of print The subject being one of the most majestic—not to say vital—of all that can engage the attention of the people of God, and enquiries for the book being frequent, it has seemed desirable to republish the series. The final article in this issue, which gives the title to the whole, was first published in the N.C.A. for May, 1933. May Divine Grace attend and Divine Power speed the spreading abroad of these sacred truths!

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY for the very existence of God's people as such, both individually and in congregations, the Holy Spirit is one of the least well known of all the gifts which God has graciously given His people through Jesus Christ, our blessed Redeemer and Mediator. And whereas in the Word of God we are told the most wonderful and beautiful facts about the Holy Spirit, many fantastic impossibilities are ascribed to the Holy Spirit by such as are not careful to compare their imaginings with the sober realities of the Word of Truth.

That the Holy Spirit should be sent to God's people, to abide with them, had been foretold by prophets of old and promised by our Saviour. Joel had said, indicating a time future from his day*—

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.—Joel 2: 28, 29.

Only a short while before His crucifixion the Saviour said to the disciples (John 14: 16, 17, 26)—

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth: . . .

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, . . .

15: 26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

*Joel prophesied about 800 B.C.

The fulfilment of Joel's prophecy and of our Lord's promise began on the Day of Pentecost following our Lord's ascension, and the great event that there took place was so alluded to by the Apostle Peter, who was himself one of the recipients of the heavenly blessing. He said—

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; —Acts 2: 16.

Then he quoted the prophecy above referred to, following it with a discourse on the death and resurrection of Jesus, announcing that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Near the end of this discourse, Peter, referring evidently to the precious promise of the Master given but a few weeks before, said—

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.—Acts 2: 33.

We have therefore to distinguish between the Holy Spirit of God and the manifestations or operations of His Spirit. That which descended upon all the waiting disciples was the power of God through Christ, and its operations were various, as described in the book of the Acts and in the apostolic Epistles. Since Pentecost the Spirit has been given to every one who becomes a sincere believer in Jesus, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians (1: 13)—". . . . in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise;" though not all received the same "gifts."—1 Corinthians 12: 4-14; Romans 12: 3-8.

The Holy Spirit's presence with the Church being evidently of such vast importance, it is most certain that it behooves us to acquire all the information available concerning the Spirit and the Spirit's work. And while these studies are not undertaken with the expectation that in them all will be presented that would be profitable to consider, it is hoped that the way to acquisition of additional knowledge may at least be so opened up and pointed out that the further pursuit of the study will have been somewhat facilitated for all searchers

of the Scriptures. The examination will begin by an inquiry into the various operations of God's Holy Spirit as described in the Old Testament.

The Holy Spirit as Divine Creative Power

In the very first pages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is mentioned (Genesis 1: 1, 2)—

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved [*literally*, was brooding] upon the face of the waters.

Here the Spirit of God was manifested in His creative power or energy, directed by Him to the bringing of order out of the chaos which prevailed while the earth was without form, and void. Light was brought in; an expanse, to separate the waters above from the waters beneath, was formed; the dry land was caused to appear when the waters beneath the expanse or firmament were gathered into seas; vegetation was brought forth from the earth; the heavenly bodies began their rule over the day and the night; the waters brought forth fish and fowl, each with power to reproduce its kind; the earth brought forth creeping things and four-footed beasts and cattle, also with reproductive powers. And, last of all, the human pair was created in the divine likeness and of substances furnished by the earth, to rule over all these wonderful creatures, and also to fill the earth with their own progeny. All this was done by the power of the Divine Spirit as the creative energy of the Almighty, this statement being made without prejudice to the fact that the Son of God was intimately associated with the work (John 1: 1-3); and there were present heavenly angels who rejoiced in His work. (Job 38: 4-7.) The Holy Spirit is thus seen to have been associated with the very beginning of this earth and its affairs.

The Holy Spirit as Contending Power

And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.—Genesis 6: 3.

When God by the Holy Spirit, manifest as creative energy or power, created man, He created him in His own likeness. (Genesis 1: 26.) It is evident that the likeness spoken of was not that of bodily substance, because God is a Spirit, whereas man is flesh, and these two are separate and distinct from each other. There are natural, or fleshly, bodies, and there are spiritual bodies, but the two are not the same. (John 4: 24; 3: 6; 1 Corinthians 15: 40, 44.) The point in which man—though a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8: 4-8)—was made in the likeness of God was, we apprehend, that his mental and moral faculties resembled those of his Creator. He had a mind similar to God's mind, able to appreciate the things which God approved, and to abhor the things which God condemned. This being so, it is not difficult to understand that the perfect obedience required by God from the man in the garden of Eden was a condition in which the man was able to acquiesce as just and reasonable, and against which he would feel no resentment.

But the test came, the man fell from his estate of obedience into a condition of disobedience, and immediately the likeness to his Creator was less distinct than it had been. It was as though the keen edge of a blade had become dulled, and a small nick made in it by striking it against a substance it was not intended to cut. Man being dismissed the Garden, the effect of disobedience became more noticeable in succeeding generations; the edge quite lost its keenness, while the nicks multiplied and became larger, and many of them had ragged edges, so that the general state of the blade was altogether disgraceful.

About one hundred and twenty years before the flood was brought upon the earth, God looked down and saw how far astray man had gone by that time, and He said, "My spirit shall not always strive [or contend] with man, for that he also is flesh."

God's attitude toward men in respect of sin is indicated by the fact that when sin entered God did not give men over to unrestrained evil doing. Having made man in His own image, God's desire was, notwithstanding the fall, to see that image retained in the mind and conduct of men; and to that end God ruled over men and punished them for *their sins, as demonstrated in His dealings with* Cain and Lamech. (Genesis 4: 9-16, 23, 24.) Some few walked with God, Enoch and Noah being named, and possibly the second Lamech (Genesis 5: 21-24, 29), but the vast majority became so sunk in iniquity that God would no longer contend for His rightful position as Ruler, yet gave them another 120 years before He destroyed that evil world or order of things in the flood. Meantime Noah and his people who had found favour in His sight had built the ark by divine direction. These were favourable to the Divine rule, so with them God started the new dispensation after the flood. God's Holy Spirit was a Spirit of Righteousness, and He was grieved to see the earth corrupted and filled with violence. (Genesis 6: 6, 7, 13.) Noah was preserved because he was righteous, and would, after the flood, be the beginning of a righteous order of things in which the true God would be worshipped. Noah was not sinless, but God counted his faith for righteousness. (Genesis 7: 1, 5; 8: 18-22; 9: 11; 2 Peter 2: 5; Hebrews 11: 6, 7.) God's punishment of sin, by the destruction of the "world that then was," has served since as a warning to all who know the history of those times. (2 Peter 3: 5-12.) And God's Holy Spirit through the apostle Peter tells of a new heavens and a new earth* (a new order of things yet to come), in which will dwell righteousness (verse 13); a Kingdom in which God will instruct

*For further references to the three "heavens" and three "earths" mentioned in 2 Peter 3, and explanation as to what they stand for, please see "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," chapter 2; also "The New Era."

and extend mercy to many who in the present life have followed their own evil ways.

The Holy Spirit Conferring Wisdom in Arts and Crafts

(1) And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, (2) See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: (3) And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, (4) To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, (5) And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.—Exodus 31: 1-5; also vss. 6-11; 35: 30-35; 28: 3.

When the Israelites left Egypt, they had among them no skilled artists or craftsmen. Having been the slaves of Pharaoh, they had no opportunity to learn anything better than rough labour. Therefore, when the tabernacle had to be erected and its furnishings prepared, the children of Israel had among them none who had been trained for such work. But God, the great Artist and Craftsman of the Universe, the Designer and Creator of all things, including man with his wonderful body, and his mind in the likeness of that of his Creator, had the necessary wisdom and skill, and He had also the ability to transfer some of it to Bezaleel without requiring him to serve a long apprenticeship at the trades. The need being present, God met it by filling Bezaleel with His Holy Spirit—a Spirit of power, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge, to devise and execute all manner of cunning works. This manifestation of the Holy Spirit was very similar to the divine creative power manifested at the beginning.—Genesis 1: 2.

The Holy Spirit Giving Power to Prophesy and Wisdom for Judgment

And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; . . . and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone. . . . And the Lord . . . took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. . . . would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them.—Numbers 11: 16, 17, 25-29.

Moses was perhaps the one exception to the generally degraded condition of the children of Israel, for he had been educated as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and we are told that he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." (Acts 7: 22.) Yet it was not by this wisdom that he was enabled to lead the Israelites and judge them, but by the Holy Spirit which God put upon him. According to the account in Numbers 11, it was the Spirit of God, granted to Moses to empower him for his great task, which was given also to the seventy elders that Moses presented before the Lord. The seventy were not learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians as Moses had been; but that fact was no obstacle to God when the time came for them to be used as assistants to Moses in the work of bearing the burden of the people. The Spirit was placed upon them, and forthwith they were able to prophesy, and were given wisdom to act as judges over the people, to relieve Moses of much of that labour. Not by worldly education, nor by ignorance, but notwithstanding worldly wisdom and in spite of ignorance, were Moses and the seventy elders enabled by the Holy Spirit put upon them to bear the great burden of the murmuring multitude.

The Holy Spirit Imparting Muscular Strength

13: 24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.

25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorak and Eshtaol. . . .

14: 5 Then went Samson . . . and came to . . . Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

6 And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: . . . .—Judges 13: 24, 25; 14: 5, 6. See also vs. 19; 15: 14.

It is not stated that Moses and the seventy were made more muscular than they had been before the Holy Spirit was put upon them to give them wisdom; and it is readily seen that Samson, although the Holy Spirit moved him to feats of immense strength, was not by that Spirit made very wise.

This indicates that the Lord has bestowed His Spirit at times for specific and definitely limited purposes. The Spirit put upon Moses and his seventy assistants could have made them strong as well as wise; but it was not so done because the intention at the time was to bestow only wisdom. The same Holy Spirit could have made Samson wise as well as strong; but the Lord did not interfere with the manifestations of Samson's folly, nor deliver him from the evil consequences of it.

The fact that the Spirit of the Lord moved and strengthened Samson at times to kill men—as when he slew thirty men of Ashkelon in order to get their apparel, when he slew a thousand with the jawbone of an ass, and, finally, when he slew several thousands of the nobility of the Philistines by pulling down the pillars (Judges 16: 23-30)—has been a difficulty to many minds, and the question has been asked, Why did not the Holy Spirit move Samson to work for the conversion and salvation of the Philistines, instead of strengthening him to kill them? The answer to this reasonable query is in the fact that God has not forgotten these heathen, but has appointed another time in which He will deal with them to enlighten them and give them the opportunity for salvation which they did not have in the past. God's then dealings with the "evil neighbours" of His people were on different lines and for other purposes; not prejudicial, however, to His purpose to make the way of salvation known to them in due course. What He proposes to do for those "evil neighbours" when He raises them from death is foretold in Jeremiah 12: 14-17, which all should read carefully.

The Holy Spirit Moving Saul and His Messengers to Prophesy

20 And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. . . .

23 . . . and the Spirit of God was upon him [Saul] also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. . . . Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?—1 Samuel 19: 20-24.

If the biceps of Samson could be controlled by the Holy Spirit and their strength magnified; if extraordinary wisdom could by the same Spirit be conferred upon Moses and his seventy assistants, we now see that the vocal organs of Saul and his three bands of messengers could be used, even against their wills, by the Holy Spirit; so that those who set out to capture David were made to prophesy, and were thus prevented from fulfilling their and Saul's evil desire.

This need not seem surprising. Do not the Scriptures say that the Spirit of God was exercised in creative energy to make the first man? If so, it might only be expected that the Spirit could—and would on occasion—still exert a power over men's bodily organs, as in the case of Saul.

The prophetic utterances of Saul and his messengers are not recorded, hence we may gather that they did not specially concern us. Excepting the prophecy of Caiaphas, the wicked high priest (John 11: 47-53), the prophecies for the instruction of God's people were not (as far as we can recall) given through evil and unwilling prophets, but by means of men who were devoted to God, and were seeking faithfully to do His will. The New Testament will tell us more about these.

A Lying Spirit from the Lord

Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.—1 Kings 22: 23; 2 Chronicles 18: 1-22; see also Ezekiel 14: 6-11.

In the Jewish age, if a sincere Jew made inquiry of the Lord in the appointed way about any matter concerning his welfare, he was given a true answer covering every thing he needed to know for his own benefit. (Exodus 18: 15, 16; Leviticus 24: 12, 13; Numbers 27: 1-5; Psalm 27: 4.) But if any one had become idolatrous and worshipped other so-called gods besides Jehovah, the only true God, and then came through his false priests or prophets to inquire of Jehovah, God would not answer them. If the false prophets claimed to be prophets of the Lord, the Lord would not guide their thoughts or words by His Holy Spirit. On the contrary, He would allow them to prophesy according to the spirit of their vain imaginations and desires, and so both prophet and enquirer would be entangled in the net of their own self-deception; and evil would befall them in accordance with the prophesyings of His own inspired prophets, because He would desire the downfall of the idolater or wicked person.

The general principle governing such cases in Old Testament times is stated in Ezekiel 14: 6-11, and a case in point is that of Ahab, like whom there was none that sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of God (1 Kings 21: 25, 26), whose experience in being deceived by false prophets is described in 1 Kings 22.

Micaiah, God's prophet, was given a symbolic dream in which the lying spirit was shown, and this lying spirit must not be misunderstood as an agent of the holy God, but as representative of the false prophets—such as the 400 mentioned in 1 Kings 22: 6—ever ready to lead Israel astray, with whose wrong determination God did not always interfere, but often led them to disaster.

Nevertheless, even if a prophet in Old Testament times gave a sign or wonder, and it came to pass as he had predicted, the people were to have sufficient knowledge and stability of character to refrain from following that prophet if he incited them to go after other gods. They should *know* that there is no other god than the One Who led them out of Egypt, and should take the experience as a test permitted by the Lord their God to try and prove them. As for the wicked prophet who thus incited them, he was to be put to death.—Deuteronomy 13: 1-8.

The Holy Spirit Moving Holy Men of God to Prophesy

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—2 Peter 1: 21.

It is not claimed that the holy men who were moved by the Holy Spirit were perfect men. In fact, the Scripture frankly points to some of the manifestations of their imperfections, and thus assists us to see what we should avoid. But these sometime exhibited wrongdoings were not the rule and practice of the lives of the prophets. Their rule of conduct was to do God's will, their sincerity therein being demonstrated by their faithful endurance of much persecution and tribulation for righteousness' sake.

The authority of Scripture therefore rests not upon these imperfect men, nor even upon their evident sincerity of heart, but upon the fact that the Holy Spirit "moved" them to speak or write, so that the Bible is not the word of man but the Word of God, and therefore "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Holy Scriptures are "able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—2 Timothy 3: 15-17; 1 Timothy 4: 16.

As a test of its divinity, Scripture itself proposes something that is bound to be accepted as conclusive; namely, the ability to predict or foretell events (Isaiah 41: 21-26)—

Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods. . . . Verse 23.

The Saviour proposed the same test of His claim to acceptance as the Messiah—

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.—John 13: 19.

It is extremely difficult among imperfect men to secure from eye witnesses of an event two versions that will exactly agree. If, then, it be so difficult for men to agree as to matters of fact in the past, it is certain that the ability to predict future events is quite out of their range. Any one who can foretell events hundreds and thousands of years before the time, and can also indicate when these events are to occur, is manifestly in the enjoyment of superhuman power. The gods of the heathen could not give this power to their priests and devotees; certainly not, since the gods themselves were created by the devotees, and it was a toss-up as to which end of the log should warm the man and roast his meat, and which—if there happened to be any residue—should become the idol for him to worship. (Isaiah 44: 14-20.) Neither were the evil spirits reliable who were behind all false worship.—1 Corinthians 10: 19-21.

But the God of heaven, Who by His Holy Spirit created man, could also by the same Holy Spirit move the prophets to say and to write things that were beyond their natural ability to know and understand, and He has done this from time to time as His purposes required, this inspiration of the Holy Spirit applying not only to the Old Testament human agencies, but also to those of the New Testament.—1 Corinthians 7: 40.

If it be inquired, How did the Holy Spirit move the prophets of God? the answer is found by noting the various ways in which the will of God has been communicated through the holy men—(1) By direct word, as from God to Moses in the giving of the Law; (2) by dreams which they would relate to the people; (3) by granting visions of extraordinary and unnatural creatures, such as *Daniel, Ezekiel,* Zechariah, and John on Patmos described; (4) by direct action upon the mental and vocal organs of the one who was for the time being used as the agent of communication, causing him to say things that he did not understand, and perhaps (as in the case of *wicked Caiaphas already mentioned*) did not sympathize with.—Exodus 19: 24; 20: 22; 21: 1; Isaiah 7: 3, 4; 6: 1-13; Genesis 37: 5; 2 Corinthians 12: 1-4; Acts 2: 14-36.

The Holy Spirit Anointing our Lord Jesus Christ

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. —Acts 10: 38.

The time was come when the Law of Moses must be superseded by the grace and truth of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (John 1: 17.) Moses by *inspiration of the Holy Spirit had foretold the* raising up of the Great Prophet, who was to be obeyed in all things by the people. (Deuteronomy 18: 15-19.) But the Law Covenant had endured for so long, and the New Covenant was to be so different from it in such a number of particulars, and, moreover, the Jews had so hardened their hearts, that the acceptance of Messiah, and His better sacrifice and better covenant based upon better promises, must be a matter of no little difficulty to that people. And the same difficulty would be more or less a hindrance when Christ would be preached by the apostles and earliest believers (who were Jews) among the Gentiles, who were somewhat acquainted with Jewish history and with the Old Testament writings.

It was obligatory under the law to anoint the High Priest, and later on the Kings also, with a specially prepared oil used for no other purpose; its first use having been to anoint the tabernacle and its furnishings, as well as Aaron the high priest and his sons. (Exodus 30: 22-33.) At God's command Samuel anointed Saul to be king over Israel. (1 Samuel 9: 16; 10: 1.) The coming of Jesus Christ as God's Anointed to be King over Israel was foretold by the prophets, also His anointing as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. It was necessary, therefore, that Jesus should be anointed in fulfilment of the prophecies and as a credential in the eyes of the people who were looking for Him. This anointing was done, not with the oil kept at the temple, but with that which the oil typified. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven at the time of His baptism by John.

By the Holy Spirit made visible to John in the form of a dove, John was enabled to recognize Jesus as the Son of God and the promised Messiah. Messiah means Anointed, also the Greek-derived word Christ. Jesus the Christ means Jesus the Anointed. Following this manifestation of the Spirit, a Voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Matthew 3: 13-17; John 1: 29-34.

Therefore, beginning with the earthly ministry of the Saviour, we find the operations of the Holy Spirit *extraordinary both as to number and variety.* The miraculous works which the Father thus did through the Son were offered by the Lord to the people as His credentials to support His claim that He had come from God: "believe me for the very works' sake," was His pathetic appeal. (John 14: 11.) *And their rejection of Him notwithstanding* the mighty works was one of the sins He denounced against them—"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (John 15: 24.) Yet some understood, and believed, and confessed—"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 2.) The Holy Spirit in miracle-working power was conferred by our Lord during His ministry upon the apostles (Matthew 10: 1-20), and upon seventy other believers. (Luke 10: 1-16.) But after His ascension, when He had obtained the promise from the Father, the Holy Spirit in miracle-working power was poured out on the day of Pentecost upon all the waiting believers,

and from that time it was the privilege of every believer to receive such a testimonial from heaven.

The Holy Spirit Moving the Members of the Early Church

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . .

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.—1 Corinthians 12: 4-11.

As the power to work miracles was one of our Lord's heavenly credentials, so was the same power a heavenly testimony on behalf of the early Church, that they were right in accepting Jesus as their Mediator instead of Moses, and the New Covenant instead of the Law Covenant, and that their preaching of His resurrection and exaltation was the Truth —"God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will" (Hebrews 2: 4). It is to be noted, however, that aside from the general out-pouring on the day of Pentecost upon the Jewish believers (Acts 2) and a similar demonstration on the occasion of the Gospel being first preached to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10), the Holy Spirit as a miracle-working power was not conferred upon believers except by the laying on of the hands of an Apostle of the Lamb. (Acts 8: 14-17; 19: 1-7.) This served to distinguish the apostles in their high position, and also to show that the presence of these gifts in the Church was to be only temporary, the power to bestow them passing away with the last of the apostles, and the gifts themselves "failing," "vanishing," and "ceasing" from the Church at the decease of the last believer who had had apostolic hands laid upon him.—1 Corinthians 13: 8.

"A More Excellent Way"

Of our Lord it is written that "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3: 34.) Of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit so far mentioned in others, most were mechanical. Excellent and desirable as these manifestations of divine power were, the human agents through which the power operated were not necessarily better or worse in character for the experience. Aside from these, there are other manifestations of the Spirit in the character and lives of His disciples. After enumerating various gifts, the Apostle said—

But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.—1 Corinthians 12: 31 to 13: 2.

Love is the "more excellent way" of manifesting the possession of the power of the Holy Spirit operating in us. And this is not something aside from the Holy Spirit, but another manifestation of it, a manifestation of the same disposition as is possessed by and manifested in God and His dear Son. The "more excellent way," then, is that God's people should have the Holy Spirit in them developing a character and disposition of love, and producing the blessed fruit of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance [self-control]," against which there is no law. (Galatians 5: 22, 23.) "A good moral character," says some one. No: this is far above a good moral character, which does no more than pay its debts and abstain from injuring any one. A good moral character may be demonstrated by a heathen unbeliever, but he will not gain everlasting life for that. Moreover, the Christian virtues have to be *added to faith* (2 Peter 1: 5-15), so the unbeliever is quite on the outside, however good his morality may be.

The Holy Spirit as Comforter and Guide

BEING intimately associated with our subject, the teaching of Scripture concerning the exceedingly important part that the Holy Spirit bears in the operations of God's providential overrulings on behalf of His people requires consideration. In this capacity, the Spirit is symbolized by "seven eyes." The "Lamb as it had been slain" has "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth;" the Lamb has also "seven horns," symbolizing probably the fact that the risen Lord has all power in heaven and in earth, and that He is therefore authorized to send the "eyes" into all the earth to behold the state of God's people and to watch over their welfare.—Revelation 5: 6; Zechariah 4: 10; Matthew 28: 18.

The Holy Spirit as the "Eyes" of Divine Providence

In the midst of the throne which John saw in his vision, and round about the throne, were four "beasts" (literally, "living creatures"). These were full of "eyes" before and behind, illustrating the fact that nothing escapes the observation of the providential oversight of God's Spirit. The "living creatures" represent the providence of God in action —mighty as a "lion," patient as an "ox," intelli-

gent as a "man," and with the swiftness and certainty of direction of a "flying eagle." (Revelation 4: 6-8.) It is not only the province of God's providence to glorify Him, but also to observe with the "eyes" (the Holy Spirit) the condition of His people and, when necessary, to act on their behalf. Such action took place when to the "woman" (church) were given "two wings of the* great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time [fulfilled as 1260 calendar years], from the face of the serpent."—Revelation 12: 14.

But the "eyes" see more than the needs of God's people collectively. They also observe His people individually, and every item of their welfare is looked after by God's providence, so that the Saviour could say—"the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matthew 10: 30.) How delightful it is to be assured that the risen Lord sends the "eyes" to watch over us and the "living creatures" to do for us, so that all things must "work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8: 28.) How conducive to repose to realize that we may cast all our anxiety upon God, for He careth for us. (1 Peter 5: 7.) And how glad we should be to realize the part taken by the Holy Spirit in all these operations of divine providence.

> The eyes of the Lord are in every place,
> Beholding the evil and the good.—Proverbs 15: 3.

Nevertheless, this is not all of the Holy Spirit's work in ministering to God's people.

The Holy Spirit as Comforter

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost [or, Spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.—John 14: 16, 17, 26.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:—John 15: 26.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.—John 16: 7.

These are all the places in which the Holy Spirit is entitled the "Comforter." The Greek word *parakletos*, translated "Comforter" in the above passages, occurs only one other time in the New Testament. The best rendering for *parakletos* has been a good deal of a question among the translators, and the word has been variously rendered: "Comforter," "Advocate," "Helper," "Teacher," the greatest number favouring "Advocate" as the best expression of the original thought. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines *parakletos* as "an intercessor, consoler."

The Comforter was to be sent by the Father in answer to the petition of the Son; which is the same as saying the Son would send the Holy Spirit from the Father. (John 14: 16; 15: 26.) The Comforter could not come unless the Lord departed; therefore it was expedient that He go away; but, having come, the Comforter would abide with God's people for ever. (John 16: 7; 14: 16.) One naturally wonders why the Holy Spirit could not be sent unless Jesus went away. The answer to this question is that, in God's order, redemption must first be accomplished by Christ's death on Calvary, the Redeemer must be raised from death, and must ascend to the Father's throne, before the Spirit could be sent upon the believers.

Two Advocates for the Saints

If the definitions of *parakletos* as given in Strong's Concordance be adopted, it is not difficult to realize how the Spirit acts as both "intercessor" for, and "consoler" of, God's people in this age. We read (Romans 8: 26, 27)—

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because [margin, that] he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The very fact that God's Spirit is in the believer, who has come to Him through Jesus Christ, the only Mediator (John 14: 6; 1 Timothy 2: 5; Hebrews 8: 6), constitutes an intercession or a plea with God on behalf of the believer when overtaken in a fault. This was an unfortunate slip of the tongue or manifestation of fleshly weakness and sinfulness; it was not what he would have done had he had a new body as well as the new, indwelling Spirit. Therefore let the Lord be gracious, and let Him not hold this against the erring one, who regrets his error, and will endeavour to avoid doing so again. Being rightly exercised by this experience, he will be more watchful and prayerful, and will be stronger to resist the next time he is tempted. Let not the "new creature" be destroyed on account of the fault of the "old man." The Lord heeds this unspoken groan of the Holy Spirit in the believer, and gives it His favourable consideration, for this intercession is "according to the will of God." And the fact that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the child of God is an unspoken intercession on his behalf gives him great consolation, and so the Holy Spirit, the *parakletos*, is both Intercessor for, and Comforter of, the saint.

But if any saint sin—as all do—and will confess the sin, as John instructs us to do (1 John 1: 6-10), "we have an Advocate [*parakletos*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2: 1, 2.) His advocacy of our cause is effectual because

*The Greek has the definite article here, so that the correct reading is, as given, "THE great eagle," referring, we believe, to the "living creature" so described in Revelation 4: 7.

He has shed His blood for us as the sufficient offering for our sins. He is "the propitiation for our sins," but this gives no licence to continue sinning. His blood, accepted by us as the true atonement for sin, is able to cleanse us from all sin. (1 John 1: 7.) And so, "If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John 1: 9.

Thus we have two Advocates, Jesus with the Father, and the Holy Spirit within us; one Advocate in heaven, the other on earth. We need both. Each works into the hands of the other, so to speak. Of what avail would the intercession of Christ's blood be if God saw no prospect of ultimate reform in the transgressor by the "new creature" overcoming the "old man?" None whatever. Or how could we benefit by the intercession of the Holy Spirit, had there been no sacrifice of Christ on Calvary to make propitiation for our sins? Obviously we could not benefit at all in that case. It is very clear that the two Advocates who intercede for the saints, who have in the first place been reconciled to God by the one Mediator, Jesus Christ, are not too many, but are both required according to the will of God. Would it be with this thought of two Advocates for God's people that the Saviour said to the disciples (John 14: 15, 16)—

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you ANOTHER Comforter [*paraklctos*—"Advocate"], that he may abide with you forever.

What a consolation to realize how thoroughly God has provided for our every necessity in order that we might be acceptable with Him!

The Holy Spirit as Guide

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.—John 16: 13-15.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.—John 14: 26.

It may come as a surprise to readers who have not previously observed it, to learn that in the above passages the words "Spirit" and "Ghost" are from the same Greek word, *pneuma*. When the Authorized Version was published (in the year 1611), the office of a minister of religion was described as "ghostly," in the sense of "spiritual." Among the superstitions of the time fostered particularly by the Church of Rome was the belief in "ghosts" as "disembodied spirits" of deceased human beings, and the fear of "ghosts" was inculcated, the better to hold the people in subjection. Just why in John 14: 17 the Translators rendered *pneuma* by "Spirit" and a few verses further on (vs. 26) by the word "Ghost' can only be surmised. Scrutinizing these scriptures carefully, no reason for the distinction can be seen. The word "Spirit" should always be used, and "Ghost" never. This can be clearly seen by comparing John 14: 26 with John 16: 7, 13; the former describes the Comforter as sent to "teach you all things," while the latter says the Comforter "will guide you into all truth." In both texts the Revised Version has "Holy Spirit." To be consistent the Revisers should have followed the same practise of rendering *pneuma* by "Spirit" wherever it refers to the Holy Spirit, but they have not done so. In Acts 2: 33 and 38 they revert to "Ghost," as also in Acts 10: 45 and other passages. It is to be regretted that the Revisers missed so fine an opportunity to make clear to the reader that "Ghost" is misleading and "Spirit" is correct.

Misleading "Guidance"

Crude ideas as to the guidance of the Holy Spirit have gained acceptance in the minds of some Christians. It has been claimed, for instance, that the Holy Spirit's presence in the believer may be realized as it were a burning flame (fortunately not painful to or destructive of the person); or as a moving power causing the body to shake and tremble and thrill; or as a speaking voice; or as an inner illuminant. And it is further claimed that these demonstrations—alleged to be done by the indwelling Holy Spirit—are particularly appropriate and peculiar to these last days of the Gospel age.

That the persons making these claims are mistaken is evident. The Holy Spirit is described in 2 Timothy 1: 7 as "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Anything out of harmony with this is not the Holy Spirit, whatever else it may be. Spiritualism claims to be an instrument of good, whereby unseen powers take possession of a medium and deliver messages claiming to emanate from dead persons. But this is only a modern form of the ancient spirit-possession which the Old Testament denounced and which our Lord condemned by casting out the evil spirits responsible for the condition.

Another body of people claiming to be moved by the Holy Spirit in a mechanical manner has existed from the days of George Fox (1624-1691), a religious reformer in England, who founded the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers. Their idea carried out in their assemblies is that the Holy Spirit is an "inner light," and that no one shall speak until a power "moves" him or her to speak; and what is said is taken as inspired. This method, however, finds no sanction in the Word of God. Later still, in America, Ann Lee founded the sect known as the "Shakers." As the name indicates, shaking and trembling are taken as evidence of the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Joan of Arc, canonized as a "saint" by the Papacy in 1894, was burned at the stake as a witch at the age of 19, in the year 1431, by the same "never changing" Papacy, because she heard "voices" within her under the inspiration of which she acted. At all times Satan and the fallen angels have been on the watch

to lay hold of high-strung, nervous persons, misleading them into supposing that they were being honoured by having the Holy Spirit thus acting in and through them. Such phenomena, though they occur now-a-days, are not peculiar to these times, inasmuch as they have been more or less frequent throughout the entire age.

Neither are the phenomena of these days to be regarded as of the same order as the "gifts" of prophecy, tongues, etc., that were granted to the church in apostolic days. There is at least one striking difference (really there are more) between the "gifts of the Spirit" and the phenomena of to-day which demonstrates the vast difference between the two, and shows that they cannot be identical. The difference is this: In apostolic days the spirit of the prophet was subject to the prophet, the miraculous "gift" was under the control of the one who had it (1 Corinthians 14: 32); whereas in these days the recipient is under control of the so-called "gift," which he imagines is a "gift of the Spirit" such as those that were given only in apostolic days by the laying on of apostolic hands. In apostolic times, the believer "stirred up" and used *the gift that he had* (1 Timothy 4: 14; 2 Timothy 1: 6); in these days, the supposed "gift" stirs up and uses at all hours of day and night the person that *it* has.

The Holy Spirit Guides into Truth

According to John 14: 26; 16: 13, above cited, the Holy Spirit would—

1. Bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;
2. Guide you into all truth;
3. Shew you things to come.

It is also stated in John 14: 26 that the Spirit would "teach you all things," and in John 15: 26 that the Spirit would "testify of me;" these are regarded as being included in the guidance into all truth mentioned in No. 2, and therefore have not been particularized.

1. *Bringing to Remembrance.* This precious promise evidently belonged to the immediate disciples only, as no one else heard the Master, and therefore none else could have His words brought to remembrance. This operation of the Holy Spirit would be mechanical, assisting their memories to recall things already heard and known. John 2: 22 would appear to record a fulfilment of this promise. (See also Luke 24: 5-8.) But while the words quoted in No. 1 must be limited to the disciples, a blessing of similar nature is granted to other believers. Probably there are few Christians that cannot recall times when their memories were marvellously assisted—how they could not tell—so that they were able to speak of the truth to others and readily refer to passages in the Bible. But it should be noticed that these occasions were not bringing forth things hitherto unknown; they were helps to *memory* only. Something of this sort seems to be implied in the promises of Matthew 10: 19, 20; Mark 13: 11; Luke 12: 11, 12. Since the Holy Spirit aids to the remembering of things already learned, how industriously we should store our minds with the good things of the Word, for ready use when required.

2. *Guiding into all Truth.* Since the Holy Spirit is not an "inner light," as the Quakers suppose, but has moved holy men of old to put down *in writing* all that is necessary for God's people to know in order that they may be wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3: 14-17), and similarly moved the apostles and evangelists in the writing of the books of the New Testament; and has in this manner revealed "the deep things of God" concerning the favours "which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2: 9, 10), it follows that the Holy Spirit's guidance of God's people into all truth would be accomplished by *assisting them to an understanding of the things written* for our learning that we might be thoroughly furnished. This aid might be vouchsafed to any of God's people in their solitary study of the Scriptures, diligently comparing them together, or it might be sent through another brother or sister by word of mouth or by written or printed page. The Lord has expressly given such human instruments for the assistance of His people into the "*unity of the faith.*"—Ephesians 4: 11-13.

"Ye Need Not that Any Man Teach You"

If Paul tells us that the risen Lord has expressly ordained that some of His people shall assist others, as pastors, teachers, etc., why does another apostle say (1 John 2: 20, 21, 24, 26, 27)—

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.

26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him [margin, in it].

The answer is that the Holy Spirit was not inspiring the apostle John to write something contradictory of what had been written by the apostle Paul under inspiration of the same Spirit. Consideration of the context shows that John was writing of some seceders from the truth and from the company of God's people. These seceders were denying that Jesus is the Christ, and they were therefore antichrists, denying the Son, and at the same time also denying the Father Who sent the Son, and has made Him to be both Lord and Christ. (1 John 2: 18-26.) It is of these and such persons that the Apostle writes when he says, "ye need not that any man teach you:" Having been already taught the truth by the Apostles and their helpers, there was no need for them to listen to or seek instruction from the teachers of error. The anointing of the Holy Spirit, which you have received from God through Christ, was not to be a transitory, but

a permanent experience; "the anointing which ye have received abideth in you," and teaches you to abide in Christ, and to beware of leaders astray and keep away from them. So John and Paul do not contradict each other, and the Holy Spirit is not self-contradictory.

3. *Showing Things to Come.* In visions and revelations the apostles were shown things to come, as the many with which Paul was favoured, and those shown to John on Patmos. Some of these they may have understood at the time of receiving the visions; but it is likely that many of them remained not understood, because the time of fulfilment was too remote to make the complete knowledge profitable to the saints. It is likely, though, that Paul knew more than he was allowed to tell, for he writes of having heard things not lawful for him to utter. (2 Corinthians 12: 4.) As a rule, the understanding of a prophecy is withheld from God's people until about the time of fulfilment; and sometimes prophecies are understood only by the Holy Spirit pointing out the fulfilment as having occurred. This latter was the case on the day of Pentecost, when Peter was enabled by the Holy Spirit to understand and explain a portion of the prophecy of Psalm 16, as then recently fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Says the Apostle, "*no prophecy of the scripture* is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man:" and in these times it is not to be interpreted or understood by the will of man. (2 Peter 1: 20, 21.) The prophecy came anciently by the Holy Spirit, and the same Spirit in due course enables the children of God to understand the several prophecies as from time to time they become due to be understood. "Interpretations" devised without the aid of the Holy Spirit are "private," and therefore vain.

The Holy Spirit does not show us "things to come" by showing us visions and revelations as to the apostles, but shows us the future things by enabling us to understand the Spirit-inspired, written prophecies concerning future events. The Holy Spirit does not assist us to the understanding of these things a long time before their fulfilment, but, as a rule, helps us to the knowledge about the time the prophecies should be fulfilled; sometimes while the prophecies are being fulfilled; occasionally just after fulfilment. Many and important as were the prophecies concerning Christ's death and resurrection, the disciples understood not one of them until after their fulfilment.

It is obvious that the wonderful promises of guidance into all truth and instruction concerning things to come, and of aiding the memory by the Holy Spirit, and the intercession for and consolation of God's people by the Spirit, *cannot be fulfilled to those who are only partly His.* There must be a complete giving up of oneself to the will of God before these extraordinary blessings can become ours, and can work through us to the blessing of others. Let us, then, not be half-hearted and therefore unstable; for such a man shall receive nothing from the Lord. (James 1: 7.) Let us have a complete change of tenancy as far as our hearts are concerned, casting out the old taskmasters Sin and Self, and acknowledging fully, and in every detail of life, the New Master, Christ Jesus, who bought us with His precious blood, and to whom therefore we by right belong.

The Holy Spirit as Convincer, or Convicter

—John 16: 7-11—

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove [margin, *convince*; R.V. *has convict in respect of sin, etc.*] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

CONVICTION of the world in the matters of sin, righteousness, and judgment is the work of the Holy Spirit, as well as are the comforting and guiding of God's people. Therefore a right understanding of this feature of the Spirit's activity is of the greatest importance, particularly since the Lord has taken pains, in the above statement quoted from John's Gospel, to set out the three counts on which the world is convinced or convicted, along with the evidence in support of each count. Such right understanding, it is hoped, may be demonstrated in the explanations of these "convictions" that shall presently be given.

The "World"

The word "world," used in John 16: 8, 11, is translated from the Greek word *kosmos*, which means "orderly arrangement," or "order of things." According to Strong's Concordance, this word is used "in a wide or narrow sense, including the inhabitants of the world, literally or figuratively [morally]." The word *kosmos* is found many times in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel and First Epistle of John.

Regarded in its narrow or restricted sense, the word "world" (*kosmos*) signifies the Jewish arrangement, or sometimes the inhabitants of Palestine. In its wider sense, the word "world" signifies the general arrangement, the order of things, or the people, of the whole of mankind. Our Saviour lived His earthly life in Palestine. He spoke to the

people of that country, was persecuted by them, and finally was crucified at their demand. But the disciples of Jesus were not to be restricted to Palestine. They were commanded to go into every nation for the purpose of preaching the Gospel and of making other disciples. They have spoken in the Master's Name and as His representatives to the "world" in the larger as well as in the smaller sense in which that word is used. And as the smaller "world" of Palestine persecuted the Master, so both larger and smaller "worlds" have persecuted the Master's servants. As the smaller "world" called for the death of the Master, so both "worlds" have caused many of His disciples to be killed.—John 15: 18-22; 16: 33; 2 Timothy 3: 12.

The "World" in its Smaller Sense

In the following instances the word "world" (*kosmos*) is used in the restricted or limited sense, referring either to the arrangement or order of things existing in Palestine at the time of our Lord's ministry or to the people of that country at that time.

John 7: 1-9—. . . If thou do these things, shew thyself to the *world*. . . . The *world* cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

John 12: 12-19—. . . The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the *world* is gone after him.

John 15: 19—If ye were of the *world*, the *world* would love his own: but because ye are not of the *world*, but I have chosen you out of the *world*, therefore the *world* hateth you.

John 16: 19, 20—Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of what I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the *world* shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

John 18: 20—Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the *world*; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

Galatians 4: 3—Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the *world*: "Elements of the *world*" here means the Law given to the Jews, and probably the same in Colossians 2: 8, 20.

The "World" in its Larger Sense

Following are some instances in which the word "world" (*kosmos*) is used in the larger sense, meaning the arrangement "or order of things" comprised in the institutions and peoples of the Roman Empire, or of the whole earth, ancient or modern.

Luke 11: 50, 51—That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the *world*, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, . . .

Luke 12: 30—For all these things do the nations of the *world* seek after: . . .

John 1: 9—That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the *world*.

John 1: 29—The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh [or beareth] away the sin of the *world*.

John 3: 16—For God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him . . .

Romans 1: 8—. . . your faith is spoken of throughout the whole *world*.

Romans 5: 12—. . . by one man sin entered into the *world*.

1 John 2: 15—Love not the *world*, neither the things that are in the *world*. Also vss. 16, 17.

1 John 4: 4—. . . greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the *world*.

Romans 5: 13—(For until the law sin was in the *world*: . . .

Romans 11: 12—Now if the fall of them be the riches of the *world*, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

1 John 2: 2—And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole *world*.

The "world" which was to be convicted by the Holy Spirit would include the people in the larger definition of that word as well as the Jews who were the "world" in the smaller sense of the word. Wherever the Lord Jesus spoke the Word of truth given Him by the Father—and He spoke only to the Jews, being sent to no others (Matthew 15: 24); wherever the Apostles and other believers during the age have carried the message—and they were commanded to go into all nations (Matthew 28: 19); there have been the inevitable conflicts resulting in the conviction of the "world" of Judaism and heathendom.

Concerning His own mission to the Jews, the Lord said—"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (John 15: 22-24.) Thus were the Jews already convicted of sin against the Light that the Father had sent to illumine their darkness. But this was not all. Favour would still be extended to the Jews for a while through the preaching that would be done by the apostles and believers after the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, at Pentecost. Through this ministry of the Spirit, supplementing that of our Lord by the same Spirit, the Jews would demonstrate their hardness of heart still more, and the end would be the destruction of their city and the complete dispersion of the people constituting their little "world." It is of the convicting ministry of the Spirit against Jews and Gentiles *after* Pentecost, rather than of that before, that John 16: 7-11 speaks, and toward this must our inquiry now be directed.

The Holy Spirit Convicting of Sin

"Of sin, because they believe not on me," was the word of the Saviour. It is a favourite saying in "revival" meetings that the Spirit is "working," "striving," and "wrestling" with unconverted persons in the audience with a view to bringing them into a state of "conviction," in which they will acknowledge that they are sinners. But this is rather beside the mark as far as the statement of our Lord is concerned. Doubtless all men are sinners, and undoubtedly they must all be brought to the acknowledgment of their need of a Mediator between God and themselves—each one in due time,

whether in this life or after the resurrection (1 Timothy 2: 4-7); but the fact still remains that this is not what our Saviour was speaking of when He said that the Holy Spirit should convict the world of sin. The particular sin He mentioned was the sin of unbelief—"because they believe not on me." Now unbelief could not be brought as an accusation against an ignorant person. One who has never heard cannot be charged with unbelief as a sin. Only he who has heard the truth can be convicted of sin, if and because he believes not on Jesus.

Besides this, the Holy Spirit is not given to unbelievers, but only to believers—"after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." (Ephesians 1: 13.) It remains then that it is not the Holy Spirit in unbelievers that convicts them, because the Holy Spirit is not in the unbelievers; it is the Holy Spirit *in believers* that convicts the unbelievers—the conviction being sometimes acknowledged by the unbelievers and sometimes not.

How is the convicting done? The Holy Spirit in God's people guides them into truth and energizes them to speak forth the truths which they have learned from the Word. The unbeliever hearing the truth thus proclaimed is convinced or not, as the case may be, this depending considerably on the state of mind he is in at the time of hearing. If convinced and he acknowledges it, well; if convinced and he hardens his heart against it, the Holy Spirit of God using the preaching believer has thus proved the unbeliever to be guiltily so. His unbelief is no longer a misfortune due to natural darkness; it is now a sin against light; as we read in John 3: 18, 19—

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

No one who has heard the truth with any measure of appreciation of it as truth can continue to occupy the position that he was in before he so heard. It is simply impossible in such circumstances to maintain the *status quo ante*. The hearer may be glad that this is so, and may greatly rejoice in the light; or, he may rage and storm against it; or, he may with specious thoughts lull himself into a state of indifference and fancied security. But whether he like it or dislike it, whether he follow the light or fall into the stupor of indifference to it, the fact remains that one who has seen the true Light and has recognized it as Light has been by that circumstance profoundly affected in his whole life. The entry of the Light into his mind has removed him from his former position; but it has been for him to say in which direction he should be shifted. These facts are stated in a few words by the Apostle, when he speaks thus about the "savour" of the knowledge of Christ and its effect wherever he preached (2 Corinthians 2: 15, 16)—

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

The knowledge of Christ, realized and obeyed, helps the obedient one by so much on the way to *life;* the same knowledge realized and disobeyed helps the disobedient one by that much on the way to *death;* i.e. the Second Death. The principle is unfailing, and its operation cannot possibly be evaded by any one who comes into realizing contact with the knowledge of Christ. It is therefore the part of wisdom to be "willing and obedient" when the knowledge of Christ is placed before us.

Examples of Conviction

On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, placed the knowledge of Christ before an immense audience of Jewish hearers, the very persons who, only a few weeks earlier, had joined in the cry, "Crucify him." (Mark 15: 6-14.) Many of them were now greatly exercised by what they heard and the miracles they had seen; they were convinced, and they inquired what they must do. (Acts 2: 37.) Three thousand believed on this occasion. (Acts 2: 41.) Soon after, as a result of Peter and John's miracles and preaching at the temple, the number had increased to five thousand believers. (Acts 3: 1 to 4: 4.) But others—by far the majority—remained hard of heart, unwilling and disobedient, notwithstanding the knowledge of Jesus which they realized. (Acts 4: 13-22.) These, and others like them in the small "world" of Judaism, were convicted—by the Holy Spirit working through the Apostles and brethren—of unbelief *as a sin.* Light had shined upon them, and they loved the darkness rather than the Light. They were convicted of sin because they believed not on Jesus. This went on in Palestine, and also among the Jews in other parts, the climax coming when their city was destroyed as a demonstration of the divine wrath against their hardness of heart.—1 Thessalonians 2: 14-16.

Among the Gentiles to whom the truth has been preached during the Gospel age the experience has been similar. Some coming in contact with the truth have been "convinced" (*elegcho*) or "convicted" (the two English words are often interchangeable), and have been obedient to it. (1 Corinthians 14: 23-25.) Others, though convinced and trembling, have been disobedient, and so the Holy Spirit has convinced these disobedient ones of the sin of unbelief. They remain professedly ignorant, but the Apostle declares their ignorance to be wilful because they prefer to walk after their own desires. (2 Peter 3: 3-5.) But as the small "world" of Judaism was convinced and destroyed, so the larger "world" of the Roman Empire was also convinced and destroyed; and the nations its successors will be similarly dealt with. Scoffing concerning the pro-

mise of Christ's presence* will not postpone, much less prevent, the evil day when God's judgment against the unrighteousness of the present order of things shall be manifest in swift destruction. But, thanks be to God, "we, according to his promise, look for" a new order of things, which will be righteous.—2 Peter 3: 13.

The Holy Spirit Convicting of Righteousness

"Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more," was the next item of which the world was to be convicted. Of Righteousness? How could the world be convicted of both sin and righteousness? Here it will be well to call attention to the word translated in the Authorized Version "reprove" (margin, "convince"), but in the Revised Version rendered "convict." The word is *elegcho,* which, according to Strong's Concordance, means "to confute, admonish." It is not, therefore, as though the world were spoken of as a prisoner before the court, convicted, but rather as though a demonstration were being made, and the world confuted and admonished on the subjects of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Nor is it the world's righteousness that confutes or admonishes the world. It was the world's sin that was demonstrated—"of sin, because they believe not on me;" but it was Christ's righteousness that came next in question—"of righteousness, because *I* go to my Father."

Christ's righteousness was demonstrated by His ascension to the Father, because the ascension showed that He had been raised from death, which fact in its turn proved that He had not died for sins of His own, but for the sins of the whole world. Had He died for sins of His own, death would have been to Him a penalty under which He must needs have remained unless He had been redeemed. The fact that He was raised from death by the power of the Father showed that His death had not been as a penalty, but as a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of others; hence in himself He was righteous.

But while all this is well understood by Believers, and was thoroughly believed by the apostles and brethren at the time, this in itself would be no conviction, confutation, or admonition to the world, because the world did not see Christ after His resurrection; neither was His ascension to the Father advertised as a public spectacle which the world was invited to attend. Besides, this was not the way in which the world was to be convicted, or convinced. The world's conviction on the subject of Christ's righteousness was to be accomplished by the Holy Spirit; it could not therefore have occurred at the time of Christ's ascension, but must wait until the descent of the Holy Spirit, which took place on the day of Pentecost.

On and after Pentecost the apostles and brethren gave eloquent and powerful testimony that Christ had been raised from death, and that He had ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high. For uncultured persons, such as the most of them were, to give such testimony with however much of native eloquence would have accomplished only to bring upon themselves the derision of the scoffers. But the power of their preaching concerning Christ's resurrection, ascension, and righteousness lay not in themselves; the power came from above by the demonstration of the Holy Spirit in the miracles and wonders which the apostles and the believers were able to perform. These miracles backed up the preaching; they were a witness or testimony from heaven as to the authenticity of the message which the apostles and believers were declaring, having received the same from the Lord (Hebrews 2: 1-4); they mightily testified in their incontestable manner that the preaching was true and faithful, and that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power, *according to the spirit of holiness,* by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1: 4); and thus the Holy Spirit, working through the Church, furnished, *by means of the miracles and signs,* an irrefutable confutation or admonition to the world, Jewish and Gentile, concerning the personal righteousness of Christ, and the substantiation of His claim to be the Son of God.

The "world" of Judaism by its most notable men—"rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest" (Acts 4: 5, 6)—acknowledged the irrefutable nature of the testimony, saying, "What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it." (Acts 4: 15, 16.) But instead of submitting themselves to the Truth, which they admitted they could not deny, they hardened their hearts still more, and took what steps they could to hinder its further spread among the people.—Acts 4: 17.

The larger "world" is equally heedless of the testimony. They generally profess to believe that Jesus Christ was a "good man," but they at once belie their profession and besmirch His goodness by making Him out a falsifier, inasmuch as they deny that He died as the propitiation for our sins, which was the very thing He claimed He had come into the world to do. (Matthew 20: 28; 26: 28.) What miserable inconsistency! What unspeakable folly! are exhibited by the "world" when they reject the claims of the Son of God.

"Ye See Me No More"

This expression in John 16: 10 is not to be taken as meaning that after His ascension to the Father the disciples would never see Jesus. The expression evidently applies only to the Gospel age; for the Lord said that if He went away He would come again and receive His people to Himself, that where He is they may also be, and that they may behold His

*For further explanations on this subject, please see the book, "Christ's Prophecy on Olivet." Paper covers, price 1/- (25 cents); in cloth binding, 1/6 (35 cents), post free.

glory, being themselves changed into His likeness so that they might "see him as he is." (John 14: 3; 17: 24; 1 John 3: 2.) The saying, "the world seeth me no more," is evidently intended to have a permanent application beginning at the time of our Lord's death, inasmuch as He was not shown to the world after His resurrection, nor at His ascension, and now He dwells in light unapproachable—"whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (1 Timothy 6: 16.) The Lord added, "but ye see me" (John 14: 19); yes, because "ye" are to be made like Him, so that "ye" may be able to see Him.—1 Corinthians 15: 49, 50.

The Holy Spirit Convicting of Judgment

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." How would the Holy Spirit convict, confute, or admonish the world "of judgment" by means of a judgment on "the prince of this world?"

The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost proved Christ's resurrection from death and His ascension to the Father, hence His personal righteousness and the righteousness of His claims, as above shown. The work of the Holy Spirit, of writing the law of God on the mind and heart of the believers (2 Corinthians 3: 3; Hebrews 8: 10), also convinces the world in respect of righteousness, leading them to contrast the holiness and purity of the believers with their own unrighteousness. Our Lord said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matthew 5: 16.

But more than this was proved by the descent of the Spirit; viz., that Jesus was exalted to the position of "a Prince and a Saviour." The Holy Spirit is particularly mentioned as a witness to this. (Acts 5: 31, 32.) If Jesus has thus been exalted to be the Prince, that fact is in itself a judgment against the "prince of this world;" and so the very presence of the Holy Spirit, granted to them that obey Him, was and is an admonition that Jesus has indeed been exalted to the Father's throne. (Revelation 3: 21.) It is only necessary for us now to inquire how this judgment affects the "world" and its "prince."

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12: 31.) So our Lord prophesied shortly before His crucifixion. The effect upon the Jewish high priest, the "prince" of the "world" of Judaism, is already a matter of history. Jesus was exalted not only a Prince, but also a High Priest—"a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec," and Mediator of the New Covenant, better than that of the Law. The Jewish high priest, the "prince" of the "world" of Judaism, was therefore cast out of office, and he will never again occupy it. The judgment has already been summarily executed against him; the temple was left without one stone upon another, and the Law itself, under which the Jewish High Priest held office, was done away in Christ.—Hebrews 7: 11-13, 21-26; 8: 1-6; Colossians 2: 14, 15; 2 Corinthians 3: 7, 14; Matthew 24: 2.

The effect upon the secular princes and kings of the larger "world" is not yet as marked as in the case of the Jewish high priest. But it will come. The kings have not been wise; the judges of the earth have not suffered themselves to be instructed; they have not "kissed" the exalted Son of God set upon His holy hill of Zion; they have not bowed down and submitted themselves. Therefore they also must be cast out; their institutions must be broken with a rod of iron, and must be dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel, by Him Who is King of kings and Lord of lords, when He comes forth to make war against those who have the impudence, which would be sublime were it not so foolish, to resist Him. During the Gospel age He has not shown Himself very much in His capacity of King of kings and Lord of lords, because He has had in hand the work of calling out a special people to become His joint heirs. But the time is now very near for Him to show Himself as the mighty Potentate in the affairs of earth, and He will do this in a manner that will leave no room for doubt; for He must reign until all enemies are put under His feet.—1 Corinthians 15: 25.

Still Another Prince to be Deposed

There is another "prince" of this "world." He has been "the god of this world," blinding the minds of them which believe not (2 Corinthians 4: 4), and the whole world has been under his wicked influence for thousands of years. (1 John 5: 18, 19). He made to the Lord the spurious offer of all the kingdoms of the world, if our Saviour would but bow down and worship him. (Matthew 4: 8, 9.) He is called by our Lord "the strong man." (Matthew 12: 29.) This great one must also be cast out, and very soon the Lord will bruise him under the feet of His saints (Romans 16: 20), and will relieve the world of his rulership over them and the deceptions with which he has deceived them. All the evil arrangements and systems which he has invented shall be destroyed when Satan, "the strong man," is bound, and then will be established the new arrangements, the new "world" or order of things—under our Lord Jesus Christ. The present "prince of the power of the air" is a wicked spirit, working in the minds of the children of disobedience; the Lord shall depose him from his empire of the "air" (dominion over the minds of men), and shall Himself rule over men. (Ephesians 2: 1-6; Colossians 1: 12-14.) In the present age those who believe are liberated from his tyranny; these are by the grace of God delivered from the power of darkness, and translated, or set over, into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

Thanks be unto God for all His precious promises; thanks be unto Him for the Prince and Saviour Whom He has provided; thanks be unto Him for the sending of the promised Holy Spirit the Comforter, to guide His people into Truth, and to convict, confute, and admonish the "world" of *Sin*, because they believe not on Jesus; of *Righteousness*, because the Son of God has ascended to the Father; of *Judgment*,

because—thank God!—the prince of this world is judged and must shortly be cast out. Hail to the exalted Prince and Saviour, God's King upon His holy hill, Zion!

The Holy Spirit as Demonstrator of Sonship

—Romans 8: 9, 14, 16—

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

DEMONSTRATION is rightly required for every proposition which is not self-evident. It is therefore a very good thing that nearly all propositions are demonstrably true or false. For instance, if it be agreed that 9 and 1 make 10, and the proposition be advanced that 6 and 4 make 10 just as 9 and 1 do, it is quite easy to demonstrate the correctness of this by starting with the 6 and counting four more to it—7, 8, 9, 10. If another proposition be advanced, that 5 and 3 make 10, it is equally easy to demonstrate the incorrectness of this by starting with the 5, and counting three more to it—6, 7, 8; by which we are convinced that 5 and 3 make 8; but not 10.

Not every proposition is as readily subject to demonstration as are these elementary ones; some requre long and intricate calculations; others may require careful watchfulness for prolonged periods—a year, or many years. But if one be truly interested in a statement or proposition, he will not balk at intricacies of calculation or protractedness of waiting for the demonstration. If anything, the satisfactoriness of the demonstration will be rather enhanced by the difficulties in the way of reaching it.

If all this be true concerning propositions that affect only the temporal things which perish with the using, how much more satisfactory must it be to have a demonstration of that statement, the greatest that can be made of any one in the present life, and which affects not only the present life, but also that which is to come—that statement of the Apostle John in 1 John 3: 2—

"Beloved, Now are We the Sons of God"

It seems clear, from the use of the words "now" and "we," that the Apostle does not speak of all men in his own day nor yet of any or all persons of other times, but only of some in a certain time. Is there, then, anything that sets out the conditions of sonship, and so furnishes a demonstration as to who are the "we" that the Apostle mentions? There is such a demonstration provided: it is one of the grand offices of the Holy Spirit to show who are the children of God, and to comfort those children by adequate testimony as to their relationship to the divine Father.

Our Father in Heaven

An idea that has found much acceptance, even among those who ought to know better, is that God is to be regarded as the Father of all men, and so the phrase "The Fatherhood of God" has become very popular. In a creative sense we are His offspring, for He made man in the first place; it is also true that God sustains the lives of men, and that all would soon perish did He withhold the sunshine and the rain. (Acts 17: 25-29; 13: 15-17.) But, apart from this, God does not acknowledge all men as His children or members of His family; He proclaims them as enemies to Himself, and recommends His love in that, "while we were yet sinners," and enemies, Christ died for us. (Romans 5: 8-10.) Certain steps need to be taken before men can reach the position in which they may say of themselves—"Now are we the sons of God." They need to realize their position as sinners and enemies of God, unreconciled, and contrary to God in both flesh and mind. (Ephesians 2: 1-3; Colossians 1: 21.) They need to recognize Jesus as the only One who, on account of His death as the satisfactory offering for sin, is entitled to mediate between God and men, and is able to accomplish the needed reconciliation. (Colossians 1: 20; 1 Timothy 2: 4-7.) They need also to come unto God through Jesus Christ the only Way (John 14: 6), confessing that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God, the One also named Jesus, because He was sent to save His people from their sins. (1 John 5: 1; Matthew 16: 16; 1: 21.) Then God is prepared to recognize them as His people, and to adopt them as His children; but not before. The theory that God is the Father of all men is most misleading, which demonstrates nothing more than the willingness of its adherents to presume on the divine goodness.

Servants or Sons?

Not even all those who in times past showed a sincere desire to do God's will were permitted to regard themselves as sons of God. Moses was a man of God, enjoying many favours from the Almighty. God spoke with Moses face to face, and all but revealed His face to this favoured man, after communing with him forty days. Yet we do not read of Moses as a son of God, but as a servant. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant."—Hebrews 3: 5.

Abraham was a marvellous man, whose faith in God and willing obedience to the divine commands are held up in the Scriptures as patterns worthy of imitation by all the ages. Abraham's faith was more

than a profession; it was evidently the genuine article, because God was pleased to count it to him for righteousness, and by it he "obtained a good report." (Romans 4: 3, 20-22; Hebrews 11: 2, 8-19, 39.) But we are not told that Abraham was regarded as a son of God. The highest description of Abraham's relation, granted after Abraham's faith had reached its climax of works, was expressed in the word "friend of God"—a goodly word, indeed, and doubtless one of the most treasured of Abraham's possessions. (2 Chronicles 20: 7; Isaiah 41: 8; James 2: 21-23.) Yet a friend—even a dear friend—is not in quite as good a position as the Son of the Father, nor as the Son's bride.—Matthew 3: 17; John 1: 33, 34; 3: 29.

The servant is not much in the confidence of his lord; but the son is enlightened concerning his father's plans. The servant is ordered to do this or that without being given to understand the whys and wherefores; but a father reveals many things to his son. In short, "the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." (John 15: 15.) Being members of the house of servants over which Moses was faithful, the disciples of our Saviour during His earthly ministry were in the position of servants. Near the close of His ministry, the Master said they should no longer be called servants but His friends, because He had made known to them all He had heard from the Father. (John 15: 15.) But a little later they were given another promotion, and, even in anticipation of the heavenly demonstration, the Lord Jesus, their Master and Friend, was pleased to acknowledge them as "my brethren." (Matthew 28: 10; John 20: 17; Hebrews 2: 11-13.) How wonderful to be acknowledged by the risen, glorified Saviour as His brethren; as children with Himself of one Father—"my Father, and your Father;" as worshippers with Himself of the one and only true God—"my God, and your God."

In a short space of time the disciples advanced from their birth position as servants to the position of friends of Jesus, and soon after that again to the position of brethren of Jesus. But, according to Hebrews 2: 12, not the apostles only, but all the Church are honoured by being called the brethren of Jesus and sons of God. (Galatians 4: 5-7.) The apostles were not thus distinguished as "brethren" of Jesus, according to John 15: 15; 20: 17, until after the death and resurrection of the Saviour. And this fact helps us to understand why "some better thing" is provided for us than was provided for Abraham, the friend of God who obtained a good report (Hebrews 11: 39, 40), and why the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, who was the special friend of the Bridegroom, and most honoured of the prophets.—Matthew 11: 11; John 3: 27-31.

Having lived and died before the death and resurrection of Jesus, Abraham and John were not living in the time when they could be called brethren of Jesus and sons of God. Confession that Jesus is the Christ, and a heart-belief that God hath raised Him from the dead, are necessary before one can be recognized as a son of God. (1 John 5: 1; Romans 10: 9.) Abraham manifestly lived too soon for these conditions to be fulfilled by him, and even John the Baptist did not live long enough to know that God had raised Jesus from the dead; therefore they could not enter into the privileged position of sons of God. But to others, since their time, this great privilege is granted of becoming brethren of Jesus, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ to the glorious heavenly inheritance to which God raised Him from the dead. (1 Peter 1: 3-5, 10-12.) "For ye are all the children of God *by faith in Christ Jesus*," says the Apostle, thus confirming what has already been seen to be the testimony of the Scriptures before cited.—Galatians 3: 26.

The Holy Spirit Given to Sons

"And because [or, according to Dr. Ellicott's translation, "as a proof that"] ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."—Galatians 4: 6.

It is to be carefully noted that the Holy Spirit is not sent into the hearts of believers in order that by this means they might become sons of God. They become sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3: 26; 1 John 5: 1), they are recognized by the Father as such, and *because* He so recognizes them He sends His Spirit to them. It is not, therefore, that God may be enabled to recognize believers as His sons, but rather that believers may recognize God as their Father, and themselves as His adopted sons, that the Spirit is given them, crying, "Abba, Father."

Thus is granted to the believer a view of the Holy Spirit in one of the most comforting relations possible to exist between the Spirit and the believer—the Demonstrator of his sonship and of God's Fatherhood. The very presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart demonstrates that he is an adopted son of God. Conversely, the absence of God's Spirit from any heart demonstrates that that person is not an adopted son of God; and so the Apostle says—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—Romans 8: 9.

The Holy Spirit is received as a gift from God in the first instance "by the hearing of faith," and as the token of sins forgiven. (Galatians 3: 2; Acts 2: 38; Ephesians 1: 13.) The Holy Spirit thus given is called in Ephesians 1: 13, 14 a seal or pledge—"in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The continuance of the Holy Spirit's presence in the believer's heart will be manifest by means of certain works, called "the fruit of the Spirit." (Galatians 5: 22-25.) If this "fruit" does not exhibit itself as an addition to the believer's faith (2 Peter 1: 5-7), this lack proves his blindness to spiritual things and his forgetfulness of the mercy of God in forgiving his past sins (v. 9); hence also it proves that he is no longer recognized as a son of

God, but is regarded as having turned back again to the pollutions of the world, from which he had been delivered through Christ.—2 Peter 2: 20-22.

Demonstration to Others

The Holy Spirit in the believer's heart is not only a comforting demonstration to himself of his sonship, but also a demonstration to others of that relationship between God and himself. If one have the Spirit in his heart, he will manifest the "fruit" in his daily life. Others must inevitably see this and take note of it; and so, by the Holy Spirit, the believer's sonship will be demonstrated to those who observe his walk and conversation. This "fruit" will not manifest itself as it were by compulsion, for the Holy Spirit is not a spirit of bondage and fear (Romans 8: 15), but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. It is a Spirit of liberty to love and serve God through Christ, and to bear an abundance of "good fruit." The sons of God are free to exercise this "sound mind," for against this "fruit" there is and can be no law.—2 Timothy 1: 7; John 8: 31-36; Galatians 5: 23.

"Led by the Spirit"

Many foolish and hurtful notions have been associated with this simple phrase found in Romans 8: 14. Some have professed to all but hear a voice directing them to do this or that, to go here or there. Others have felt themselves impelled—almost forced—to take a certain course, as though one pushed or pulled them. And these things they have claimed were "leadings" of the Holy Spirit!

Holy men of old were mechanically inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the Scriptures (2 Peter 1: 21), the writers of the Gospels, the Acts and Epistles, and the Revelation were also supernaturally guided by the Holy Spirit. But now the Scriptures are counted sufficient for all the needs of the man of God, and such inspiration by the Holy Spirit is no more known among the Lord's people. (2 Timothy 3: 15-17; 2 Peter 3: 15, 16.) Therefore, the "voices" and "impulses" which some profess to "hear" and "feel" are not "leadings" of the Holy Spirit, but of another spirit, or even the natural activity of their own brains.

But when Romans 8: 14 is considered in connection with its context (v. 13), with which it is connected by the word "For," signifying "Because," the Apostle's meaning in using the words, "led by the Spirit," is at once discerned. In verse 13, he has shown that the work of the indwelling Spirit is to "mortify [kill] the deeds of the body." These deeds and desires of the flesh are all unholy and contrary to the will of God, as may readily be seen by perusing the list of them given in Galatians 5: 19-21. By "the flesh" is not meant the physical body as such, but the sinful mind which uses the body in a selfish and unholy manner. This carnal or fleshly mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, and cannot be. (Romans 8: 7.) The only thing to do with it is to kill it. The Holy Spirit in the believer has to do this, and also to bring forth, instead of the vices, the "fruit" mentioned in Galatians 5: 22, 23. If the Spirit be successful in doing this, "ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8: 13, 14.) To be "led by the Spirit" means just what the Apostle describes in v. 13; viz., to have one's mind informed on the will of God by whose Spirit the life pleasing to Him has been set forth for our learning. This requires that we put to death the desires and deeds of the fallen flesh, and that we bring forth instead the virtues of the divine character. May God help us to follow this leading, and to avoid the snares and pitfalls into which our natural imaginations, aided and abetted by an unholy spirit, are too ready to lead us. So shall our following of the Holy Spirit's leading be a demonstration to ourselves and to others that we are indeed the sons of God.

The Spirit Bearing Witness

Many well-meaning Christians have been led into great difficulties in their Christian experience by the supposition that the Holy Spirit dwelling within them means that they must have a constantly happy feeling. Perhaps they have heard some say how "happy" they were, and have thought, without inquiring into the Scriptures, that they must have this happy feeling all the time. Such a Christian will sometimes express his conception of the witnessing of the Holy Spirit in the words, "I *feel* that I am a child of God." But if the person be asked on what foundation does this feeling rest, it comes out eventually that the *feeling* is both foundation and superstructure. As long as the *feeling* is present, the person is ecstatic and emphatic in his realization and insistence that he is a child of God. But let the *feeling* diminish or disappear, and the poor unfortunate is as woe-begone as he was formerly ecstatic; now he is as certain as can be that the Almighty has cast him off, and perhaps he insists that he has committed the sin unto death, although he has probably no idea whatever as to what that sin might be. All this stress laid upon *feeling* is a tremendous error, and one of the most successful of the delusions engineered by the Adversary. The Scripture never tells us that we are children of God because we *feel* we are; or that we are not children of God because we do not *feel* something. The scriptural teaching concerning the witness or testimony of God's Spirit as to the sonship of believers is based on solid truth, not on emotional excitement.

The manner of the Holy Spirit's witness or testimony is twofold. In the first place, the very presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart is a testimony that he is a son of God. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father." (Galatians 4: 6.) If it be asked, How may we be assured that the Spirit of God is in our hearts, the answer is—"By their fruits," added to the initial faith. The fruit of the Spirit is the group of Christian virtues. The love of God can be shed abroad in our hearts only by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5: 5.) If the love of

God is in our hearts, it proves that the Holy Spirit is there, and the presence of the Spirit is a proof that God regards us as His children by faith in Christ Jesus.—2 Peter 1: 5-15.

The other method of the Spirit's witness or testimony to our spirit concerning our sonship is by means of the inspired Word. The conditions on which we may become sons of God are clearly stated in the Word. (John 1: 11-13; 1 John 5: 1; Galatians 3: 26.) If we have complied with those conditions, we are to *believe* that we are sons of God. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." (1 John 3: 1, 2.) This is a glorious fact, testified to in black and white by the Holy Spirit, and we have to believe this testimony just as implicitly as we should believe the testimony of any other credible witness.

Having received this twofold testimony of the Holy Spirit as to our sonship, we are entitled to feel, and should feel, happy, joyful, and spiritually uplifted. These feelings will not be based on an ignorant frenzy, but upon a solid and proved fact, and will therefore not be fanciful but reasonable feelings. But if seasons of trial and weariness of mind come, as come they must (Hebrews 12: 5-11), the *fact* of our sonship still remains, and helps us much in the bearing of trials, knowing that God has promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love Him, "who are the called according to His purpose" —sons of God, "conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8: 28, 29.) Insane persons sometimes imagine themselves to be royal princes, but it is only a *feeling*, and they have have nothing to show for it; the *feeling* is all they have. If we think of ourselves as sons of God, let us do so on the basis of *facts*, convincingly set before us in the Scriptures, and, so far as they relate to what is required of us, demonstrated by the Holy Spirit in us. And finally, by loving our brethren (1 John 3: 14; 5: 1, 2), let us, by the Holy Spirit's aid, demonstrate to others the fact that we are indeed the children of God.

The Sin Against The Holy Spirit

—Matthew 12: 31, 32—

31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world [literally, "age"], neither in the world ["age"] to come.

EVERYTHING thus far considered about the Holy Spirit has shown forth God's love in providing and sending such a wonderful Comforter and Guide for His people. The Spirit has helped God's people to understand the Word; has guided them into all truth; has brought to their remembrance items of truth formerly learned; has interceded for them with unuttered groanings; has witnessed to them that their sins are forgiven; has been a demonstrator that sincere-hearted believers in Jesus are regarded as God's children, members of His family by adoption. All these gracious offices have been fulfilled by the Holy Spirit to the people of God severally and collectively since the great day of Pentecost, the same Spirit is still showing divine grace to the obedient believers, and they are exhorted to "be filled with the Spirit."—Ephesians 5: 18.

It has been well for us to realize, in our experience as well as from the teaching of Scripture, the Holy Spirit as the promised Comforter, because such realization must appreciably assist us to understand another phase of the Spirit's relation to God's people.

The Spirit of God occupies a position of the greatest dignity, which must needs be minutely observed by us, for offence against the Holy Spirit is fatal. If one were to speak blasphemously against the Son of man, the Saviour said, forgiveness of the offence is possible; but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not forgivable, neither in this age, nor in the age to come. All manner of sin and blasphemy is forgivable, except that against the Holy Spirit. It becomes us then to consider well this matter, that we may realize the circumspectness which must govern our daily walk, and the carefulness which must watch over our words, so that we may avoid the wrong course.

Origin and Effect of Sin

The original sinner, who "abode not in the truth" (and from this statement we must acknowledge that he was once in the truth), was the devil. (John 8: 44.) But, as far as the human race is concerned, sin entered by means of its very first members. Sin is transgression against law, and our first parents took upon themselves the responsibility of disobedience to the command which God had given them concerning a certain tree. (Romans 5: 12; 1 John 3: 4; Genesis 2: 17; 3: 2, 3, 6.) In itself, and as far as the value of the property taken was concerned, this offence might appear to be no greater than that of irresponsible boys in an orchard. But man is ever prone to judge by the outward appearance, and such judgment is seldom just. In Eden, the value of the fruit taken did not enter into consideration; God was no poorer because of it, nor would He have been wealthier had the fruit not been taken. The question was not of material, but of moral values. Would Adam and Eve obey God, or not? They disobeyed.

The first effect of this disobedience was to bring upon themselves the penalty of death which had been associated with the command. (Genesis 2: 17.) The

inquiry was held, and the guilty pair acknowledged their sin, aggravating the offence by seeking to shift the responsibility for it onto others, Adam not fearing even to try to involve God Himself when he said —"The woman whom THOU gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Genesis 3: 12.) The sentence of death was duly pronounced, and it was explained that its fulfilment would be in Adam's return "unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Genesis 3: 19.) This would mean nothing short of the complete destruction of the sinful ones. Before Adam was formed of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2: 7), he was nothing; returning to the ground he would become nothing, as he had been before creation. Adam was not told that he should live forever in a state of anguish, mental or physical; he was told that he must die, and special measures were taken to insure that he should die, and not live forever.*—Genesis 3: 22-24.

The effect of the sin in Eden was not restricted to the sinners; it was passed on to their posterity, and all the race is involved therein, as the Scriptures assure us. (Romans 5: 12, 15-19; 1 Corinthians 15: 21, 22.) This is the reason why all die, whether the infant which could not have sinned, or the aged person that has sinned repeatedly during a long life. The infant does not die on account of its own sin, for it has not sinned; but neither does the aged person die on account of his own sins† though they be many; all die on account of the original sin, having been constituted sinners by that one disobedience of their ancestors.

For that Edenic sin and for all of our individual sins that arise out of it Christ has died, giving a ransom for all men, and dying for *our* sins, according to the testimony of many Scriptures. (1 Timothy 2: 4-7; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-3.) By this it is seen that God has not dealt hardly with us in decreeing that we should have the penalty of our first parents passed on to us. It is a foregone conclusion that we would have done as they did, and so would have brought the penalty directly upon ourselves in which event each separate sinner would have required a separate redeemer if he were to be rescued from the consequences of his sin. By causing all to be constituted sinners on account of one transgression, God has been able to arrange justly and equitably that all should be redeemed by the one sacrifice—that of His Son, and freely justified through faith in His blood; "that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—Galatians 3: 22; Romans 3: 23-26.

All this teaching of Scripture is considered old-fashioned and out of date by the "wise" men of to-day, at whose feet sit those who are to stand as professedly Christian ministers in the pulpits of Christendom; and so it has come to pass that the Genesis account of the Creation of man and his Fall into sin is said to be "legendary" and "unhistorical." By the "wise" the Cross of Christ and the Sacrifice on Calvary have been "interpreted" out of all the meaning attached to them in the divine purpose, which was and is that Christ's blood was shed as a *propitiation*, or propitiatory sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2: 2.) This foolishness of the "wise" need attract no more than passing notice by way of pointing out how foolish they are thus to oppose the central truth, which stands as the foundation of man's relation to God and of his prospect for eternal life. Nevertheless, we are bound to feel sorry that men will so deceive themselves and others in regard to these fundamentals. But we also feel glad and thankful for the promise of a time near at hand, when deceptions will not be allowed for a thousand years, and when men shall be brought to that accurate knowledge of fundamental truths which is part of the divine will for them.—Revelation 20: 3; 21: 3-7; 1 Timothy 2: 4-7; John 1: 9.

Forgiveness of Sins and How Obtained

The death of Christ as the sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world does not in itself procure the forgiveness of sins for even one member of our race. It provides, however, a *basis* on which the forgiveness of sins is possible for those who *believe in Jesus*, so that when one becomes a believer in Jesus, God is righteously and justly able to forgive such an one's sins that are past. All this, including the necessity for faith, is clearly set forth by the Apostle—

". . . Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ **unto all and upon all them that believe**: . . . that he might be just, and the justifier of **him which believeth** in Jesus."—Romans 3: 21-26.

But the believer in Jesus, beginning his Christian life with a clean sheet, is not able to keep the pages of his life's record perfectly clear. He sins at times. However unwitting or unwilling, his wrong action in thought, word, or deed is nevertheless a sin, and something must be done to make things right again. As a "new creature," the believer is not God's workmanship for sin, but for good works. (Ephesians 2: 10.) Every sin committed by a believer in Jesus is therefore a departure from the program divinely marked out for him as a "new creature" in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5: 17.) But if the believer confesses his sin, God can justly and will faithfully forgive, and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse the confessing one from all sin. The Son of God in the Father's presence will intercede, the Holy Spirit in the believer will also intercede, and thus the relationship interfered with by the believer's sin will be re-

*Considerations of space forbid more than a mere mention here of the subject of the penalty for sin. It is certain that the Christians in apostolic times, when the teaching was pure, did not believe that unbelievers were on the way to everlasting torment. Had they thought such a thing, they would not have gone about preaching to Jews only. They could not thus have limited their efforts, but must have tried to save others from the awful fate. (Acts 11: 19.) The interested reader is invited to consult the book, "Everlasting Punishment," 112 pages, in which the subject *is quite fully discussed*. Cloth bound, 1/1 (29 cents); in paper covers, 6d. (10 cents), post paid.

†Some possible exceptions of mature persons will be noted in due course.

established.—1 John 1: 7 to 2: 2; Hebrews 7: 25; Romans 8: 26, 27, 34.

God is exceedingly gracious, longsuffering, and willing to forgive, and none need fear to approach Him in prayer through His dear Son to ask forgiveness. Under the New Covenant in Christ's blood, shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26: 28), God can be merciful to our unrighteousness, and can forget our sins and our iniquities. (Hebrews 8: 12.) But before He can forgive us on account of His Son's shed blood, He requires to see in us a willingness to forgive any who may have trespassed against us, and He also requires confession on our part. (Matthew 6: 12, 14, 15; 1 John 1: 9.) If God's forgiveness means that He is merciful to our unrighteousness and that He remembers our sins and our iniquities no more, then He expects us to be similarly merciful toward those who have injured us and not to remember their sins and iniquities once they are regretted and acknowledged by the transgressor.

But confession to God is more than the parliamentary form of words—"I withdraw." Confession implies the recognition of the wrong thought, word, or deed as a sin, the abhorrence of it as such, and the endeavour to avoid the repetition thereof, this last being proof of the sincerity of the confession. If the wrong thought, word, or deed has been the means of injury to some other person, that person should also be approached and confession made, together with every effort to repair the damage done. (Matthew 5: 23, 24; James 5: 16.) It is nowhere commanded in God's Word that confession of sin should be made to a priest or other person not concerned, but confession to God is required, also to the injured person (if any); and before the New Covenant blessing of *mercy to his unrighteousness can be realized and his* sins and iniquities can be consigned to the land of forgetfulness, there must be (as already mentioned) in the confessing penitent the willingness to forgive any who may require it of him.—Matthew 18: 21-35.

Possibility of Death

Notwithstanding the willingness of God to forgive, and the fact that He has made every provision for, and offers every inducement to, the erring one, there are limits, and it is possible for the Christian—the "new creature"—so to live as to bring upon himself the utmost condemnation, even death. Says the Apostle to the saints (observe he does not address the "world" of unbelievers, but saints, "brethren"), "For if *ye* live after the flesh, *ye* shall die:"—Romans 8: 13.

That this statement does not refer to decease in the ordinary sense of that word is clear from the fact that both saints and sinners die—the most saintly as well as the vilest. It is also evident that the Apostle is not here referring to the state of deadness in trespasses and sins sometimes mentioned in the Scriptures, as in Ephesians 2: 1-5. Had he wished, in Romans 8: 13, to refer to this, he would doubtless have written, If ye live after the flesh, ye *are dead.* The Apostle in Romans 8: 13 speaks of death as a punishment; and as he is certainly not referring to the decease of the fleshly body of the Christian, it is evident that he is teaching that under certain circumstances, possible to occur in the present life, the "new creature" will die; and the circumstances are—"if ye live after the flesh."

What does it mean to "live after the flesh?" It means to live *according to* the fleshly mind and desires, which are at enmity with God; which are not and can not be subject to the law of God. (Romans 8: 5-8.) For the "new creature" to conduct himself in this manner is simply to invite destruction; because nothing that is contrary to God—willingly and wilfully so—can be allowed to remain alive forever—"all the wicked will he destroy." (Psalm 145: 20.) To adopt and persist in the course of living "after the flesh," i.e. according to the will and desires of the old life from which one has been delivered through faith, is manifestly to sin against the Holy Spirit which God has given to His people; it is a "grieving" or "quenching" (Ephesians 4: 30; 1 Thessalonians 5: 19) of the Holy Spirit in the Christian so acting, and in such circumstances nothing can be expected but the extinction of the "new creature."

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

In Romans 8: 13 the Apostle has given a general definition of the course which, if persisted in, must result in death to the "new creature." In Matthew 12: 31, 32, the Master himself has shown one of the ways in which such evil conduct may manifest itself. The Greek word *blasphemia,* in Matthew 12: 31, 32, means, according to Strong's Concordance, "vilification." Vilification of the Son of man is forgivable under certain circumstances; but the vilification of the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven, neither in this age, nor in the age to come. According to this statement by the Lord, the age to come will be a time of forgiving some sins; of all sins, indeed, except that of vilification of the Holy Spirit. Those who believe that the future age contains no possibilities of mercy and forgiveness should consider well these gracious words of the Saviour, to see whether their thoughts on this matter have been taken captive to Christ.—2 Corinthians 10: 5.

Vilification of Jesus might be done in more or less ignorance, or by reason of weakness of the flesh; and these would be mitigating circumstances if the sin were afterwards confessed and forgiveness sought. We feel satisfied in our own minds that ignorance is what has caused and still causes many to vilify the Father and the Son by promulgating the awful teaching that some human beings will be tortured for ever and ever. But the Holy Spirit cannot be vilified except after consideration and reasoning somewhat more extensive than that usually displayed by the advocates of the doctrine of everlasting torment.

What was either an illustration of such vilification of the Holy Spirit or something dangerously near it is recorded in Matthew 12: 24, and it was this incident that led to the Saviour giving out the teaching of vss.

31 and 32. Jesus had just wrought a remarkable miracle in healing a man possessed with a devil, blind and dumb. The cure was immediate and perfect, so that the afflicted person was able to speak and to see. When the news reached the Pharisees, they said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." In this they spoke not only against Jesus, but also against the Holy Spirit which worked through Him to perform the miracles. (Matthew 12: 28.) Instead of acknowledging that the power of God was doing these things, they attributed the works to the power of Beelzebub.* In effect, therefore, they blasphemously said that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, was the spirit of Beelzebub, the god of the dunghill, and idol of Gentiles who continually led Israel astray, and hence an enemy of God—the holy Jesus in league with the prince of the demons! (Matthew 12: 24.) "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils," they said.—Luke 11: 15. See also Matthew 9: 34.

Is it surprising, in view of this, that our Saviour said concerning the hypocritical Pharisees—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the condemnation of Gehenna?"—Gehenna being a symbol of the second death. (Matthew 23: 33.) The Pharisees had had extraordinary opportunities to hear Jesus, to see His miracles, and to consider them. Yet they were so wicked as to say that the miracles were done by the power of Satan. It was a terrible and perilous position that their awful hardness of heart led them to adopt, a position from which they would find it most difficult to remove. Whether the Pharisees actually perpetrated the unforgivable vilification of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Matthew 12: 31, 32, the Lord, the Judge of all hearts, knows. For us it must suffice at present to know that the attitude and words of the Pharisees on this occasion drew from the Master's lips those wonderful words which at once proclaim the liberality and define the limits of divine forgiveness of sins.

Falling Away After Enlightenment

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world [literally, "age"] to come,

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.—Hebrews 6: 4-6.

Here the statement is made that those who fall away, after enlightenment and participation in certain New Covenant blessings, cannot be renewed again to repentance. Their consciences have become so seared that they have lost the sense of right and wrong, and instead of being sorry and seeking forgiveness, they glory in their evil ways. (1 Timothy 4: 1, 2.) This is an intimation that such persons have sinned so seriously as to bring upon themselves the extreme condemnation. Such a falling away would be equivalent to a Christian crucifying his acknowledged Lord and Master and publicly putting Him to shame. A more horrible crime than such ungrateful mutiny could not be imagined, and the one who would do this would not be fit to live. But evidently it is to be understood that those who fall away after having been enlightened and blessed in the manner described are of the disposition that would traitorously rise up in rebellion against their acknowledged Lord, and would seek to accomplish His death. How careful we should be, lest our hearts become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!—Hebrews 3: 12, 13.

Wilful Sin after Knowledge of the Truth

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.—Hebrews 10: 26.

The Apostle does not specify any particular sin of thought, word, or deed; so every kind of sin might be included, because every sin after enlightenment may be done wilfully. Done wilfully, the offence which in itself may be apparently of little consequence becomes very serious indeed. The sacrifice of Jesus was not offered for such a sin, and no sacrifice will be offered in the future on behalf of it. The Christian who sins in this manner has thus fastened upon himself a sin the consequence of which he must meet alone. Being a wilful sin, the transgressor cannot count on the intercession of the Holy Spirit, nor on that of our Lord in heaven, and so he is left not only without a sacrifice past or prospective, as before mentioned, but also without any Comforter or Advocate (*parakletos*). Without a shield, without an intercessor of any sort, he must face the Divine Judgment, and the Apostle says that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." He also says that the Christian who thus violates the New Covenant provisions, and does despite to the Spirit of grace, is more culpable and shall be punished more sorely, i.e. severely, than those who despised Moses' law. By taking this course against the New Covenant, by the blood of which he was sanctified, such transgressor demonstrates himself to be an *adversary of God*, and therefore he must be devoured by the fiery indignation of the Divine Judgment.—Hebrews 10: 27-31.

(Just here it is necessary to observe that some exhibitions of wilfulness in wrong doing are attributable to the transgressors' inherited imperfection and weakness. To the extent that this is so, the Lord can be merciful to our unrighteousness, as stated in the New Covenant provisions (Hebrews 8: 12), and can forgive if the sin be confessed. These partially wilful sins against a measure of light seem to be spoken of in Luke 12: 47, 48. Partially wilful sins are punished with few or many "stripes," according to the

*Baal-zebub was the god at Ekron of the Philistines, to which Ahaziah, of the Ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel (which had revolted against Jerusalem in the days of Jeroboam), sent messengers concerning his disease. The name means "Lord of the fly," and to consult this pagan god implied that they still regarded Jehovah, from whom they had turned away, as inferior to the heathen god, thus adding fresh insult to their former apostacy. Upon which Elijah the prophet was sent to demonstrate the superior power of Israel's God. (2 Kings 1: 2-17.) The Greeks by parody on the Chaldean name called this idol "Beelzeboul," meaning "dung-god."

circumstances of which the Lord alone is competent to judge righteously.)

If we have rightly apprehended the teaching of God's Word, it is that wilfulness is the very essence of an unforgivable sin, and that the wilfulness is the reason why the sin is unforgivable. This seems to be the meaning of "if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth." The sin may be of any sort; it is in this case only the means for the expression of the wilfulness; and any sin in thought, word, or deed will serve the purpose. It should also be noted that a sin committed wholly through weakness can afterward become the means of wilful sin; for if there be an unwillingness to confess the wrong, and be converted from his error against truth and righteousness, the transgressor thereby associates his will with the unconfessed sin, so making it a wilful one and an instrument of death. (James 5: 19, 20.) If a Christian's will be associated with a sin, either in the first instance to do it, or secondarily to avoid confession of it, that is a wilful sin. It is a sin against the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as the carnal or fleshly mind has to some extent obtained the ascendancy over the Holy Spirit and the power of discernment between right and wrong which the Gospel gives to the believer. If the sin be fully wilful, the old mind has completely gained the victory over the new mind, which means that the new mind or "new creature" is *dead* ("quenched") in that person. As the old or fleshly mind is not subject to the law of God, neither can be (Romans 8: 7), and the new mind in the transgressor is dead, it is easy to understand why the Apostle said that such a person cannot be renewed to repentance. It is also easy to understand why death is the only suitable punishment for a fully wilful sin, or deliberate sin of the will, committed by a Christian after enlightenment. Such a sin is not to be prayed for.—1 John 5: 16.

The position then is this: Sin against the Holy Spirit is most serious. It is not forgivable—neither in this age, nor in the age to come; whether that sin take the form of vilification of the divine Spirit in miracle-working power, or the other form of wilfulness in sin after enlightenment. In view of these things let us walk circumspectly; let us show ourselves children of the light; children of the day and not of the night, beseeching the Lord that He would grant us wisdom to avoid the snares, and strength to overcome the besetments of the adversary of souls, and as well the sinful tendencies of our own fallen nature.

One God, One Lord, One Spirit

TO SAY, "I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit," seems a very easy thing to do. The words fall quite naturally and readily from all Christian lips of every persuasion, and we too can say them as heartily and sincerely as any. Then why not leave it at that? has been asked. All Christendom with one voice can utter the short formula, and therein all Christendom can be united.

But there is something more to this great matter than the declamation of a few words. The utterance of this brief formula indicates merely that one believes in the existence of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and there it stops. Why one of the Three should be called the Father and another the Son, and what these designations should teach regarding the relations between these two; and why the other should be called the Holy Spirit, and what that designation signifies, is not at all explained in the mere statement of belief in their existence. And this is precisely the information desired, if it be obtainable.

"Canst thou by searching find out God?" was asked by one of Job's false comforters in regard to the reason why Job was afflicted. (Job 11: 7.) Yet subsequently God explained, and then Job understood.—Job 42: 1-6.

The apostle Paul exclaimed—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11: 33.) And this is so. But Paul said this just after he had by the Spirit explained God's dealings with the Jews. They could not of themselves have searched it out, but they could comprehend the answer when given.

And so it is with regard to other features of Divine Truth, some of which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world; "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;" we read in Ephesians 3: 5. If God wishes to reserve to himself the meaning of any item of information, no amount of searching will find it out. In such event the information has not been understood even by the prophet inspired to speak it, nor by any of God's people subsequently until the time for revealing arrived.—Mark 13: 32; Daniel 12: 8-10; 1 Peter 1: 10-12.

It is quite certain, also, that searching the writings of heathen philosophers and idolaters will not bring the searcher the true knowledge of God, or of His Son, or of the Holy Spirit. We are exhorted in Scripture to search for truth as men dig for hid treasures. What is necessary is first to locate the mine of wealth; and so we read: "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11: 6.) Believing that there is a God, we may ask Him for enlightenment, not only in regard to Himself, but in regard to His dear Son, and also

the Holy Spirit; but, even so, this request will bring to light no truth not intended to be known and understood by God's people.

On the other hand, if there is recorded in the Scriptures any information about the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, more than the mere fact of their existence, such information is doubtless there for the enlightenment and edification of God's people. For such information we may reverently seek in the Divine Word, and we may feel assured that such seeking will not be rebuked; it will be rewarded. (Hebrews 11: 6.) Not only so; but we are expected to search the Scriptures for whatever may be there for our learning.—Romans 15: 4.

The "god of this world" has been very busy blinding the minds of people about the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and he has had immense success in his efforts. Many misbeliefs have been accepted in Christendom as sacred truths, and those who could not, on scriptural grounds, adopt these misbeliefs have suffered, sometimes even to martyrdom.

The doctrine that at present has nearly universal acceptance in Christendom, and has had for nearly sixteen centuries, is that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit constitute a trinity, each member of which is coeternal with the others, and exactly equal with them in power, majesty, and glory. Notwithstanding the reverence accorded this teaching in Christendom, we are satisfied that it is unscriptural, and that it is not a faithful saying worthy of acceptation.

The doctrine of the "Holy Trinity" is an endeavour to say something about the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit additional to the mere statement of belief in their existence. But the "god of this world" succeeded in misdirecting the searchers for information on this most sacred subject, and led them astray to a point reached in the fourth century. There he was content to leave the most of them as far as this subject is concerned, and there the greater part of their successors seem content to remain.

Development of Trinitarian Teaching

The word "trinity" is not found in Scripture, nor any such teaching as that which affirms the coeternity and equality of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each with the others. This being so, it will be interesting to trace in the early church the development of this teaching now almost universally in Christendom regarded as absolutely fundamental. Therefore, before undertaking to show what the Scripture teaching is, let us read some selections from "A History of Creeds" (1911), by William A. Curtis, B.D., D.Litt. Professor Curtis writes—

"The true Creed of Israel in the Old Testament, and ever since, is the 'Shema'—'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.' (Deuteronomy 6: 4.) By our Lord Jesus the 'Shema' is joined (Mark 12: 29-31) with and made part of the first and greatest of the commandments.

"Our survey of the New Testament references to confession of faith has made it evident that at the close of the Apostolic age no particular creed or confession could claim to have been exclusively or even expressly ordained for use by Jesus or by His apostles. The explicit sanction of both Master and Apostles could be claimed only for the simple confession, 'I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,' or its equivalents.

"Four main forms or types of Creed emerged from the fluid tradition and usage of the Ancient Church, and established themselves as normative and peculiarly sacred in Christendom." (1) The so-called "Apostles' Creed, completed by the middle of the eighth century; (2) the Nicene Creed of the fourth century; (3) the Te Deum (a hymn); (4) the Athanasian Creed."

At the beginning of the second century, "IGNATIUS of Antioch appears to quote or echo a current summary of faith and doctrine. 'Be ye deaf, therefore, when any man speaketh to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David, who was the son of Mary, who was truly born, and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven and on earth and below the earth; who also was truly raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him, who will raise us also in like manner who believe on Him—His Father, I mean, will raise us—in Christ Jesus apart from whom we have not true life.'

"By the end of the second century, in spite of the reserve which deterred the early Church from committing to written form its symbol of faith and communion, we find it paraphrased and embedded in the writings of Irenæus and Tertullian. IRENÆUS (A.D. 180) writes—'The Church, though scattered through the whole world to the ends of the earth, has received from the Apostles and their disciples the faith in one God, the Father Almighty, who hath made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all that in them is; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who through the Prophets preached,' etc.

"TERTULLIAN (A.D. 200) quotes or paraphrases the 'Rule of Faith.' 'But we believe always, and now more, being better instructed by the Paraclete, the Leader into all truth, in one God, but under this dispensation, which we call economy, that there is also a Son of the one God, his Word who hath proceeded from himself, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made: in him sent by the Father into the Virgin, and born of her, man and God,* son of man and son of God, and called Jesus Christ.'

ORIGEN (A.D. 230) writes: "The form of those things which are manifestly delivered by the preaching of the Apostles is this: 'First, that there is one

*This is the earliest occurrence noted in Prof. Curtis's History of the description of our Lord Jesus as "man and God." From then onward progress was rapid to the end.

God, who created and framed every thing, and who when nothing was, brought all things into being. . . . Then, second, that Jesus Christ himself, who came, was born of the Father before all creation. And when, in the formation of all things, He had served the Father (for through Him all things were made), in these latest times, emptying himself, He became man and was incarnate while He was God, and though He became man remained the God He was. . . . Then, third, they also delivered that the Holy Spirit was associated in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son.'

"GREGORY THAUMATURGUS (A.D. 270), pupil of Origen, and bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus, gives in a more rhetorical fashion a creed whose language points forward to, and anticipates, the so-called Athanasian Creed of the later Church.

"LUCIAN (A.D. 300), the martyr, left behind him a still more elaborate creed, with scriptural and theological expansions. It terminates with an anathema of all heretical false doctrine. It was submitted to the Synod of Antioch (A.D. 341), thirty years after his death, as a rival to the Nicene. 'We believe, in accordance with the Evangelic and Apostolic tradition, in one God the Father Almighty, the Maker and Provider of all things: And in one Lord Jesus Christ His Son, the only-begotten God, through whom all things were made, who was begotten of the Father before all ages, God of God, Whole of Whole, One of One, Perfect of Perfect, King of King, Lord of Lord, the living Word, Wisdom, Life, True Light, Way, Truth, Resurrection, Shepherd, Door, unchangeable and unalterable, the immutable likeness of the Godhead, both of the substance and will and power and glory of the Father; the firstborn of all creation, who was in the beginning with God, the Divine Logos, . . . And in the Holy Spirit . . . clearly of a Father who is really a father, and of a Son who is really a son, and of the Holy Spirit who is really a holy spirit, these names being assigned, not vaguely or idly, but indicating accurately the special personality (hypostasy), order, and glory of those named, so that in personality they are three, but in harmony one.' "

Professor Curtis then describes the conditions leading up to the calling of the Council of Nicæa, as follows—

"So soon as CONSTANTINE embraced the Christian religion, and the restraints of persecution were withdrawn, the growing differences of Christian opinion issued swiftly in a conflict of sects so fierce and deadly as to demand the intervention of the Emperor himself. If Constantine had any theological preferences of his own, they were not unfavourable to Arius. But his great aim was the peace and unity of his empire, and the good name of the new faith which he had espoused; and in his eyes the doctrine which commended itself to the mass of Christians was the only true faith, whether in the event it proved to be Arian or Athanasian.

"Unanimity there was to be, if not in the Council, certainly after it: nonconforming bishops would be deposed: the majority of opinion would thenceforward constitute orthodoxy: at a Council solemnly convened by imperial authority, and still more solemnly constituted by invocation of the Holy Spirit, Truth would surely be found on the side of the many, the voice of the majority would be the voice of God.

"In these ideas, Constantine, himself incapable of pronouncing judgment upon the points at issue, was simply with a statesman's instinct adopting the convenient but perilous principle that faith and doctrine are fit matters for legislation, that religious truth not only may be discovered after debate by counting and comparing the votes of a duly representative body of churchmen met in council, but may be thrust by authority upon the human intellect. Under his auspices, well-intentioned but essentially pagan, coercion entered the Christian Church, and invaded in the name of Christ the very shrine of Christian liberty of conscience. Under his auspices an exaggerated awe and authority attached themselves to the findings of so-called Œcumenical Assemblies, the occasions not seldom of disgraceful tumult and faction, of arrogant presumption, of gross uncharitableness. It was after the second Œcumenical Council* that Bishop Gregory of Nazianzus declared: 'I flee from every assembly of bishops, for I have never seen that a Synod has come to a good end, or that the evils of the Church have been removed instead of being increased; for indescribable quarrelling and rivalry reign there.' We do well to pause ere we commit ourselves to an unqualified surrender to the dogmatic and controversial utterances of the Councils of the fourth century, remembering the words of Bishop Westcott, no rash or narrow partizan: 'I should think there was no corruption in either doctrine or practice,—or I may add in text,—of which the roots cannot be found somewhere in the fourth century. Yet people talk with unction about the Saints of the fourth century! I am afraid that if they read their history, they would find that they were very ordinary men.' (Contemporary Review, December, 1903.) We may rightly honour the churchmen who carried on their bodies the scars and mutilations left by pagan persecution when they obeyed the summons of the Roman Emperor and assembled at Nicæa, but we need not forget that it takes more than mutilation-scars and Christian courage and constancy to make a theologian and a master in the letter and spirit of Holy Writ. There was too often spiritual defeat and humiliation under the outward victory of a party in the Church. An ostentatious unanimity gained by threats of deposition or dishonour might impress the masses whose faith was wholly dependent on authority, and who could not find their way into the fold save in the middle of the jostling flock; but thoughtful men remembered the differences of opinion and the doubtful Scriptures which lay behind the decrees, and many Christian leaders who had little sympathy with Arius deprecated with

*Constantinople, A.D. 381.

good reason the thrusting of unscriptural phraseology into the sacred clauses of the Apostolic Faith, which were to be binding upon the universal Christian conscience. . . .

"The Nicene Creed was the first symbol of faith framed by a Council, enforced by the secular power, purely controversial in origin, theological as distinct from Scriptural in its peculiar terms, and furnished with a concluding anathema, a lash on the whip of discipline. It was the work of the Council of three hundred and eighteen bishops convened by Constantine at Nicæa, A.D. 325. The Emperor presided in person. The delegates, who travelled by the imperial command at public expense, were all from Eastern Churches except Hosius of Cordova, who had been sent by the Emperor to Alexandria on a preliminary mission to investigate into the disturbance which had arisen in connection with the Synodal deposition of Arius and his associates. After the rejection of a creed submitted by the Arian party, which set forth their Christology in terms which fell short of eternally-begotten divine Sonship and oneness in essence with the Father, the venerable EUSEBIUS of Cæsarea who led the mediating party in the Council brought forward the Creed of his Church as he had learned and taught it. The Creed of Cæsarea was accepted as the basis of the new formula, and with the distinctive additions of the Council regarding the person and dignity of Christ and the concluding anathema it passed out into the world as the Nicene Creed. . . .

"In the subsequent revisions of the Nicene Creed, both for theological and liturgical use, the anathema was omitted, either because it was felt to be an incongruous element in the symbol of catholic faith, or because it was implicit in the body of the symbol, or because it had done its work, and Arianism had received its death blow. . . .

"In the series of Catholic Creeds the Quicunque Vult occupies a place of its own and exhibits a character of its own. It is by far the longest. Its reception into general use came latest, and its retention has been most precarious, a fact which throws doubt upon its fitness to serve as a universal symbol. The Roman Church, in whose office of Prime it found a place, uses it on Sundays only, and these mainly in Lent and Advent. The Greek Church gives it no place in its service, and is content to place it, of course with the obnoxious words 'and *from the Son' omitted, in an appendix to the Horologion*, as orthodox in teaching and helpful for private use. The Anglican Church, outside Ireland and America, where it has been set aside, has maintained it, with some difficulty and not without misgiving and controversy, in use at Morning Prayer on the great festivals. The Lutheran Church gave it a place in the Book of Concord beside the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, in harmony with Luther's opinion, who doubted whether since New Testament times anything more 'weighty and glorious' had ever been written."

Creed of Nicæa
(A.D. 325)

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, both those in heaven and those on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, entered humanity [enanthropesanta] and suffered, and rose the third day, ascended into heaven, is coming to judge the living and the dead:

And in the Holy Spirit.

But as for those who say that there was a time when He was not, and that before He was begotten He was not, and that He came into being from things that were not, or who affirm that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or created, subject to change or alteration, them the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.

Quicunque Vult, or Athanasian Creed
(About A.D. 450)

Whosoever would be saved [literally, "safe," "in a saved condition"] must above all hold the Catholic faith, which except a man have kept whole and inviolate, he shall without doubt perish eternally.

Now the Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in a Trinity and a Trinity in a Unity, neither confusing the persons nor separating the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit, but of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit the divinity is one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

As the Father is, such is the Son, and such the Holy Spirit. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated. The Father is infinite, the Son is infinite, and the Holy Spirit is infinite. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal, and yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal, just as there are not three uncreated nor three infinites, but one uncreated and one infinite. Likewise the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, and the Holy Spirit is omnipotent, and there are not three omnipotents, but one omnipotent.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord, and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord. For just as we are compelled by Christian truth to confess each person singly both God and Lord, so by the catholic religion we are forbidden to speak of three Gods or Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. There is therefore one Father, not three Fathers, one Son, not three Sons, one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity there is no earlier or later, no greater or less, but the whole three persons are coeternal and coequal with each other; so that in all things, as is aforesaid, both a Trinity in a Unity and a Unity in a Trinity is to be worshipped. Let him, therefore, who would be saved think thus of the Trinity.

But it is necessary to eternal salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the right faith, therefore, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man.

He is God, of the substance of the Father begotten before the worlds, and He is man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world; perfect God, perfect man, of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father ac-

cording to His divinity, less than the Father according to His humanity.

Who, though He be God and man, is yet not two, but one Christ; one, however, not by conversion of the divinity in the flesh, but by assumption of the humanity in God: one, altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as a rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead, at whose advent all men are to rise again with their bodies, and render an account of their own deeds; and they who have done good shall go into life eternal, but they who have done evil into eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith, which except a man have faithfully and firmly believed, he shall not be able to be saved.

The foregoing quotations, including the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, are selections from Curtis's History of Creeds, pp. 30-89.

Confusion in Christendom

It would be impossible to imagine anything more directly contrary to numerous Scripture statements (some of which will be referred to) than the assertions of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, the main ideas of which came from Egypt. The trinitarian teaching (not expressed in the Nicene creed as it is in the Athanasian) was not immediately acceptable to all Christendom such as it was in the fourth century; but after something like a see-saw experience it eventually secured general recognition. After this it remained unquestioned, unless by obscure individuals here and there, including Michael Servetus (1511-1553), who for his antitrinitarianism was burned at the stake under the auspices of John Calvin, until the rise, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, of Socinianism, based on the teachings of the Italian theologian, Fausto Socinus (1539-1604), and embodied in the Racovian Catechism, published at Rakau, a small town in Poland, which was the centre of the movement.

The "god of this world" was busy in this movement too, and succeeded in blinding the minds of those who confessed that the Trinitarian teaching was unscriptural, in that the Socinian doctrine denies the atoning value of the death of Jesus. Later development of the movement into modern Unitarianism involved it in yet more errors.

As far as concerns belief in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it has to be said that, apart from the Socinians, the Protestant Reformers made no protest against the Nicene and Athanasian creeds. In every instance they (except the Socinians) emphasized, in their Creeds, Confessions, Articles of Faith, Catechisms, and other official documents, their firm belief in those creeds.

In every case of revolt from established authority or from an authorized establishment, the seceders are prone to fly off at tangents, each in his own way and for his own reasons. The Protestant Reformation was no exception to this.

The "Evangelicals" denounced the Roman doctrine of the Mass, and preached the sufficiency and efficacy of our Lord's sacrifice on Calvary as the atonement for the sins of all mankind and for the unwilful sins of believers committed after they had begun the Christian life. But they continued to believe in the trinitarian teaching, and, because they also held the doctrine that the human soul is indestructible, they continued to believe in endless misery as the punishment for wilful sin.

The Socinians also denounced the Mass, and they saw that trinitarianism was wrong, also that the teaching of endless misery was an error. But they denied that our Lord's death was the atonement for sin, viewing His life and death as only examples; and because they continued to hold the error of the indestructibility of the human soul, and refused to believe in endless misery as the punishment for sin, they went to the other extreme of error, and said that no one would be for ever lost, but that eventually all would be saved.

And so we realize that, as the Prophet Daniel had foretold (Daniel 11: 34), the Protestant Reformation was but a "little help" to God's people. The time for the consumption of the Papal "little horn" had not then arrived, and would not until 1799, when the divinely foretold consumption did begin, is now proceeding, and will continue until completed. (Daniel 7: 25, 26.) For some centuries following the Protestant Reformation God's saints were still to struggle against the blinding influences of the god of this world, who skilfully utilized, and still utilizes with "great swelling words," Protestant as well as Papal systems in his machinations.

Was Jesus Christ God and Man?

In the foregoing quotation from Tertullian (A.D. 200) occurs what is perhaps the earliest known description of our Lord Jesus as having two natures ("man and God") at the same time, beginning with His miraculous Virgin birth.

Here is a great misbelief. It is easy to see, by applying the touchstone of the Ransom to this misbelief, that it was impossible for Jesus to have had two natures while on earth. Had He had two natures He would not have corresponded to Adam and his race, who have only one (the human) nature, and so would not have been a ransom, or corresponding price. Agreeable to the requirement of the touchstone, that the Ransomer must correspond with the beings to be ransomed, is the direct statement of Scripture (Hebrews 2: 9)—

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

The first man was made "a little lower than the angels" (Psalm 8: 4-8; Hebrews 2: 6, 7), and was crowned with the glory and honour of perfection of his being and rulership of earth. When he sinned, and lost his glory, his honour, and his very life, redemption could be accomplished only by the payment of a perfect Ransom corresponding to the man who had sinned. Therefore Jesus was made "a

little lower than the angels," was invested with glory and honour as the first man had been, in order that He might suffer death; "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Thus the direct statement of Scripture corroborates the requirement of the Ransom touchstone. It is shown that our Lord Jesus while on earth was a perfect man, as indeed He must have been in order to fulfil the purpose of His coming to earth.

The "Rule of Faith" quoted or paraphrased by Tertullian is thus proved to be in this particular not of Faith but of misbelief. So also the statement of Origen (A.D. 230), who said of Jesus, "He became man and was incarnate while He was God, and though He became man remained the God He was." Every statement that Jesus Christ was of dual nature is in irreconcilable conflict with the Ransom and with the plain statements of Scripture.

But it is quite right and scriptural to say that Jesus was God, if this be said in the manner of John 1: 1-3, which, read in English according to the presence or absence of the article in the text, says—

> In a beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was a God. The same was in a beginning with the God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Here we are told about "the God" and "a God," the latter being with the former "in a beginning." What does this mean? The answer is that the Hebrew and Greek words translated "God" in the Scriptures mean "mighty one." These words are not exclusive but extensive in application, referring sometimes (1) to Jehovah, sometimes (2) to Jesus, sometimes (3) to angels, and sometimes (4) even to imperfect human beings. Instances of (1) and (2) occur in John 1: 1-3 above cited; of (3) in Psalm 8: 5, where the word meaning gods is translated "angels;" of (4) in Exodus 7: 1 and John 10: 34, 35. The word "god" is not the proper name of Jehovah, nor of Jesus, nor of angels, nor of men; but is a descriptive word applicable to any being describable as "a mighty one." This fact being understood, it is not difficult to realize that in John 1: 1-3 Jehovah is "the God," and Jesus in His prehuman estate is "a God."

Beginning of the Creation

The "beginning" mentioned in John 1: 1-3 refers to a time before the creation of the material universe, when only two Beings existed. Which of these Beings was before the other? may be asked in all reverence. The Saviour himself answers by His self-description in Revelation 3: 14—

> These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD.

Similarly the Apostle Paul in Colossians 1: 15 (Revised Version)—

> Who is the image of the invisible God, THE FIRSTBORN OF ALL CREATION.

According to these two statements our Lord Jesus was the very beginning of God's creation. Subsequently, as has already been seen in John 1: 1-3, He was the Instrumentality for the bringing into existence of all other created things; so that "without him was not any thing made that was made." Truly He was "a God"—a mighty one.

Some there are who try to nullify the word "beginning" in Revelation 3: 14 by intimating that it should be understood as though it said "beginner;" their idea being that if our Lord was the "beginner" of the creation of God, he would not be part of that creation as the word "beginning" would declare Him to be. This suggestion is not allowable. The word translated "beginning" in Revelation 3: 14 means precisely that; it refers to place or position, and not at all to activity; as if one should say, "A" is the beginning of the alphabet, but not the beginner.

Then there is the inspired declaration in Colossians 1: 15, that Jesus is "the firstborn of all creation," showing that He is part of the creation of which He is the firstborn.

Without doubt we are obliged by Scripture to understand that our Lord Jesus was brought into existence by the direct creative act of Jehovah. At that time the Son was not a fleshly being, but was on a higher plane than that occupied by the heavenly angels, inasmuch as He subsequently created the angels as well as every other created being and thing.

Since we understand this we must say it, giving the Scriptural reasons to every one asking us (1 Peter 3: 15), fearing neither the anathemas of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds nor the present displeasure of those who speak against the divine Truth, and who denounce what they call our "blasphemy."

"He Emptied Himself"

Is it given to us to know what took place when our Lord, "the beginning of the creation of God," was made "a little lower than the angels" in order that He might taste death for every man?

The Athanasian creed says—

> Who, though He be God and man, is yet not two, but one Christ: one, however, not by conversion of the divinity in the flesh, but BY ASSUMPTION OF THE HUMANITY IN GOD: one, altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

Probably it would be impossible to find a statement more directly contradictory of what Scripture says on this subject than are the capitalized words in this citation from the Athanasian creed.

The Apostle Paul (Philippians 2: 5-7, Revised Version) says—

> Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the [literally, "a"] form of God, counted it not a prize [margin, "a thing to be grasped"; or even more literally, according to another version, "did not meditate a Usurpation"] to be on an equality with God, but EMPTIED HIMSELF, taking the form of a servant, being made in [margin, "becoming in"] the likeness of men.

We can not know every thing that took place in connection with our blessed Lord's miraculous Virgin Birth; but we can, at least, see how the Creed contradicts the inspired Word. The Apostle says that our Lord "emptied himself." The Creed says —"not by conversion of the divinity in the flesh, but by assumption of the humanity in God." Denying

that our Lord "emptied himself," or parted with anything, the Creed asserts that God ASSUMED something, viz., humanity, adding it to the divinity; and thus they say that our Lord was both divine and human, both God and man, while on earth.

Trinitarian theologians have always been in difficulties over the "kenosis" or "emptying" in Philippians 2: 7. Their creed requires them to say that something was added, not something emptied out, when our Lord came from heaven to be a perfect man on earth.

The fact, however, is that a real change took place in our Lord's physique when He was "made flesh." (John 1: 14.) He did not take on flesh as it were a garment or cloak covering some other nature; as the Revised Version correctly translates it, He "BECAME flesh." This change of physique did not in any way affect His identity; and He remembered and could speak of that which in His prehuman existence He had seen with the Father in heaven.—John 3: 11-13, 31, 32; 17: 5. It should be noted that the last four words in John 3: 13 are not found in the most ancient manuscripts.

The change from heavenly to earthly, from spiritual to human, estate was not permanent. We have already seen that our Lord "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," that He might be, and so might give Himself, "a ransom for all." At His miraculous Virgin Birth "the days of his flesh" began; and at His atoning death "the days of his flesh" ended; and Jesus having obeyed the Father's will even unto death, God, in raising His Son from death, did not return Him to the plane of existence a little lower than the angels, but set Him in a heavenly, unfading, and incorruptible inheritance, very much higher than that of the angels.—Hebrews 1: 3, 4; 2: 9; 5: 7-9; 1 Timothy 2: 4-6; Philippians 2: 8-11; Ephesians 2: 20, 21; 1 Peter 3: 22.

The Beginning, the Firstborn from the Dead

In thus raising the Son from death the Father gave Him preeminence in all things. The Son was not only the beginning of the original creation of God. He is also the beginning of the new creation —"the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."—Colossians 1: 18.

Now we see that Scripture requires us to understand that our blessed Lord has experienced two changes of estate; one when He came from heaven to earth, the other when the Father raised Him from death, and made Him the exact image of His own (the Father's) person, or, as the Revised Version marginal reading has it, "the impress of his substance."—Hebrews 1: 3.

In saying these things about our Lord Jesus, as Scripture requires, we incur the great displeasure of all trinitarian believers. This we regret on their account, wishing only that they might see the wonderful truth, and with us rejoice in it. But the Nicene creed says—

> But as for those who say that there was a time when He was not, and that before He was begotten He was not, and that He came into being from things that were not, or who affirm that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or created, subject to change or alteration, them the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.

How potent must have been the influence of the "god of this world," to bring about the astounding misbeliefs stated in the Nicene and Athanasian creeds! Let us be thankful that by divine grace we are not entangled therein.

The Son still Subject to the Father

Our Saviour who, in Gethsemane, prayed to His Father—"not my will, but thine, be done"—is still subject to the Father, and always will be. This is plainly shown in 1 Corinthians 15: 28—

> And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Note that the above words "subdued" and "subject" are translations of the same Greek word.

Thus is shown the supremacy of the Father. The Son is at the Father's right hand; and, at the very peak of His glory, all enemies under His feet, He is, and to all eternity will be, subject to the Father, who placed all things under the Son, and who is glorified by the subjection of all, acclaiming the Son as Lord.

What we have now seen in the Scriptures banishes for ever the credal teachings of coeternity and coequality as between the Father and the Son, which the Athanasian creed presumptuously proclaims must be believed in order to salvation. And we marvel that Christendom has been so firmly bound in these errors for sixteen hundred years. But while thankful on our own behalf for the truth that has freed us from the error, we are thankful also to realize that the time is not distant that shall witness the liberation of all who are held by this teaching, most dishonouring to God in denying His supremacy, and dishonouring to the Son in shockingly misrepresenting Him as willing to claim equality with His Father, His God.—John 20: 17.

The Holy Spirit

It will have been noticed that the Nicene creed merely mentions the Holy Spirit, defining nothing. In this the Nicene creed is much less elaborate than some of its predecessors, and than the Athanasian creed, which affirms the coeternity and coequality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. At the time the Nicene creed was formulated (A.D. 325) the burning question was as to the relationship between the Father and the Son; the teaching concerning the Holy Spirit was in the background.

In view of what has been seen in the Scriptures concerning the relationship between the Father and the Son, we are bound to say at once that the Athanasian creed is in error also in what it says concerning the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture teaching is that the Holy Spirit is the influence or power proceeding from (or, Revised Version margin, "goeth forth from") God. God, a Personality, is the Source of the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit itself is not a person, but a power, just as the spirit of a man is not a separate person, but is the influence or power of which the man is the source or origin; and just as the spirit of the world is not a person, but is the influence or power of which the world is the source or origin.—John 15: 26; 1 Corinthians 2: 11-16.

On the day of Pentecost the Lord Jesus, "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost [Spirit], he hath shed forth [or poured out] this, which ye now see and hear." Shedding forth and pouring out can be understood of a power or influence, but not of a person.—Acts 2: 16-18, 33; 10: 45.

In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit acted for the most part in a mechanical manner, inspiring the prophets to speak and write, giving Samson physical strength, or enabling untrained men to make the finest jewellery for the tabernacle. Since our Lord's resurrection, the Holy Spirit has been, in the lives of believers, a guide to the understanding of Scripture truth, and a fruit-producing power to build them up in the likeness of character of God and of Christ. In addition to this latter have been the miraculous "gifts" conferred upon the early church, as already described on page 90.

The Argument from Pronouns

Trinitarian believers think the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit is a Person, one of three coeternals and coequals. They find apparent support for their belief when they read such passages as John 16: 7-15, a portion of which we now quote—

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: . . .

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. . . .

The constant use of the pronoun "he" in the above passage and some others is taken by the trinitarian believers as teaching that the Holy Spirit is a Person. When met in this way we first cite another well known passage, Romans 8: 16, and ask the trinitarian for his explanation of it—

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

We say to the trinitarian believer, You wish us to explain the passages in which the pronoun "he" is used, and we shall do so. But first we would like your explanation why the Holy Spirit is called "itself" in Romans 8: 16. The translation is quite correct in both places. We have never been favoured with the explanation we have asked for; though we fully believe that the explanation is quite well known to many trinitarians, particularly to such as have studied languages.

We are not meaning to set Romans up in opposition to John as though there were a contradiction and each believer must choose which he prefers. THAT WAY IS NEVER RIGHT, but is greatly dishonouring to God, whose Holy Spirit inspired the writers of both Romans and John.

The explanation is that in the passage in John the pronoun "he" has for its antecedent the noun *parakletos* (Comforter), which in the Greek is masculine, and requires a masculine pronoun. In Romans the pronoun "itself" has for its antecedent the noun *pneuma* (Spirit), which in the Greek is neuter, and requires a neuter pronoun. Therefore the use of the pronouns proves nothing at all in regard to the sex or personality of the Holy Spirit, and the passages in John are not proof texts in favour of the trinitarians, nor is the passage in Romans a proof text in favour of those opposed to the Athanasian creed.

If the use of the pronoun "he" in these passages is to be received as *evidence* or proof that the Holy Spirit is a male person, then a principle is established, and every use of that pronoun in the Bible must needs be regarded as referring to some male person. Hence an iron gate is a male person, because when Peter was being delivered from prison by the angel, the iron gate "opened to them of *his* own accord." (Acts 12: 10.) On the same principle, the altar in the court of the tabernacle in the wilderness was also a male person, for we read of "*his* horns," "*his* pans," "*his* ashes," "*his* shovels," "*his* basons," "*his* fleshhooks," "*his* firepans." (Exodus 27: 1-3.) If the use of the pronoun "he" is to be received as *proof* in the one case it is equally good proof in the other two. But if the use of that pronoun does not prove the altar and the iron gate to have been male persons, neither can it prove the Comforter to be a male person. So this alleged "evidence" is no evidence at all.

In the languages, ancient and modern, of continental Europe, sex had and has but little to do with determining the grammatical genders of nouns, these being arranged (the English think disarranged) in manners which the most of us would consider exceedingly peculiar. In Germany, the sun is feminine, the moon is masculine, and the ship always neuter.

The English language is not now burdened (as it was in Chaucer's time) with the grammatical gender which is still such a trial to English students of continental languages; although there are a few idiomatic and colloquial instances remaining in English, such as "she" for ship. We now are accustomed to apply gender to nouns according to the sex of the things named. In the Greek they had the grammatical gender, which arbitrarily applied masculine, feminine, and neuter regardless of physical facts. It is very convenient for English-speaking people to be free of the burden of grammatical gender; but it is necessary for us to realize that it was used in the Greek language, and that its use forbids the citation of texts containing the pronoun "he" or "itself" as indications of the personality or lack of personality of that which is thus referred to.

Grieve Not the Holy Spirit

We have shown from the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit is the power, or influence, of the Father. The Holy Spirit therefore is not a personality. But as long as the Father has existed (that is always) so long has the Holy Spirit proceeded from Him to accomplish His purposes. Therefore the Holy Spirit is called "the eternal Spirit." The objection is sometimes raised—If the Holy Spirit is not a person, how can it be said to experience love or grief, as in Ephesians 4: 30—"grieve not the holy Spirit," and Romans 15: 30—"for the love of the Spirit"? To this we answer that, by a well known usage of language, impersonal things are sometimes spoken of, or even spoken to, as though they were persons. Young children learn this in the well known nursery rhyme addressed to the star—"How I wonder what you are." This usage is frequent in the Scriptures. In the two passages cited the Holy Spirit, though not a person, is spoken of as though it were a person. Keeping in memory the fact that the Holy Spirit is the power or influence of God, who is a Person, it is not difficult to understand why the qualities of Jehovah, of which love is one, and the ability to suffer grief another, should be ascribed to the Power or Influence which proceeds from Him. Moreover, Ephesians 4: 30, which exhorts to "grieve not the holy Spirit," adds an explanation, "whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption," in which the Spirit is spoken of as a *seal*—an inanimate thing; while in 1 Thessalonians 5: 19 it is spoken of as a flame—"Quench not the Spirit." To get the right understanding, all these descriptions must be considered in harmony; and the only consistent conclusion is that the Holy Spirit is not a person but a Power or Influence from God "shed forth" upon His people through Jesus Christ.

When the Saviour began His earthly ministry, the Spirit was given Him without measure, and the inspired words of prophecy show exactly what that Spirit was —"And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord"—in short, the power of God. When our Saviour offered up Himself, the same Spirit gave Him the power to do so "without spot." And when the risen Christ ascended to the Father, He obtained the power before promised in the prophecy of Joel, and on the day of Pentecost "shed forth" that wonderful Gift, "which proceeded from the Father," upon His waiting people, to be with them and their successors in the faith until He should receive them to Himself.—Hebrews 9: 14; Matthew 3: 16; John 3: 34; Isaiah 11: 2, 3; Acts 2: 14-21, 33; John 15: 26.

"Jehovah our Gods is One"

When Moses was inspired to write Deuteronomy 6: 4, in the Hebrew text of which the word "Gods" is in the plural, was he writing something in favour of the Three-in-One teaching? No, he was not! though this passage is now much misused by those who seek to convert the Jews to trinitarianism.

The Bible has many instances of similar use of plural forms. In the introduction to Young's Analytical Concordance there are two pages of "Illustrations of Bible Idioms." Paragraph 50 says—"Plural nouns, pronouns, and verbs are frequently used for the singular." Numerous references to both Old and New Testaments are cited. In modern English this usage is very infrequent; but the Royal "We" is well within living memory; also the editorial "we." In modern German the practice is still followed of using the plural pronoun when addressing a stranger or a distinguished person, also by children when addressing their parents; and, in writing, such plural pronouns begin with capital letters. Let us refer to two Bible illustrations of the plural-for-singular idiom. The two to be cited are chosen because the facts are noted in the marginal readings in reference Bibles, and can easily be seen by every reader.

In Genesis 4: 10 it is written—

> And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood [margin, bloods] crieth unto me from the ground.

This referred to the blood of murdered Abel, the first martyr to the faith. There is no possibility of supposing that the plural form "bloods" refers to plurality of number. The plural form of the word is used for impressiveness, to indicate importance.

In Isaiah 53: 9 it is written—

> And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death [margin, deaths]; . . .

Our Lord died but once, as we all know. By the Hebrew prophet His one death is referred to in the plural. Why? To indicate, by the usual grammatical form, its immense importance, value, and dignity, as the one offering sufficient for the sins of the whole world.

Similarly the plural word "Gods" is used in Deuteronomy 6: 4 to indicate the majesty of Jehovah.

> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God [Hebrew, Gods] is one Lord.

Any thought of plurality of number is ruled out by the word "one" in the text. So the trinitarians are seriously misusing the majestic and inspired Hebrew "Shema" in their endeavour to influence Jewish proselytes to become trinitarian believers.

While on this subject it is very interesting to note —and it well illustrates that the people in general were accustomed to this idiom—that when the children of Israel in the wilderness worshipped the golden calf they said (Exodus 32: 4)—

> These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Yet there was but one calf!

In the Name

Trinitarian believers refer to our Lord's words (Matthew 28: 19)—"baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" —as though they would support their idea.

But the text says nothing about coeternity or coequality. The rendering "in the name of" signifies by the authority of, or with the assent or approval of.

If trinitarians urge, as sometimes they do, that the association of the Holy Spirit with the Father

and the Son in the baptism formula should be taken to prove that the Spirit is a person because the Father and the Son are persons (in this connection see also the benediction in 2 Corinthians 13: 14), reference must be made to 1 John 5: 8, where this so-called "principle" of interpretation that satisfies the trinitarians that the Spirit is a person should equally prove to them that the water and the blood also are persons because associated with the Spirit in an agreement.

But the trinitarians would not allow this association to prove that the water and the blood are persons (as of course they should not); so we say that they are debarred from insisting that the Spirit is a person on account of being associated with the Father and with the Son in the baptism formula.

The One Text

In all the Bible there has never been more than the one text that could be thought to be definitely trinitarian in its declaration; viz., 1 John 5: 7, 8—

> For there are three that bear record [[in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth,]] the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

The peculiarly trinitarian portion of this passage is enclosed in double brackets. At the time of making the Authorized Version (A.D. 1611) the authenticity of the bracketed words was somewhat in question. The finding since of manuscripts more ancient than those then available shows beyond all doubt that the bracketed words are not authentic; they are uninspired, and should have no place in our Bible. According to the Variorum Bible footnote, these words are found in "two very late MSS.; omitted by the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine, and all Greek MSS. written before the fifteenth century; omitted by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort in their compilations of the Greek text; omitted by the Revised Version; the passage is first found in writings of the African Fathers of the fifth century (but is possibly also quoted by Cyprian) and in later copies of the Vulgate."

From this it appears that there was no trinitarian text in any Greek manuscript of the New Testament for more than a thousand years after the Nicene and Athanasian creeds were formulated!

In this connection it is necessary to make a serious complaint against the Revised Version. It is customary to see in the marginal notes in relevant places in the Revised Version, "some ancient authorities read;" or, "Many ancient authorities read;" or, as in a note on the last chapter of Mark, "The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from ver. 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." By such marginal notations the attention of the reader is directed to special items of information, always interesting, and sometimes very important. Against the words omitted from 1 John 5: 7, 8, there is no such marginal notation; this most important alteration has been made in complete silence. Moreover, the numbering of the verses in this chapter has been altered, also without notation, so that in this passage the verse numbers in the Revised Version do not agree with those in the Authorized Version (although the verse numbers agree elsewhere).

The right of the Revised Version translators to alter the verse numbers is not questioned, since these numbers are not inspired, but are inserted only to facilitate reference to the Scriptures.

But here is an alteration made in the text, as well as in the verse numbers, at a passage affecting the very doctrine which the Athanasian creed says is necessary to be believed in order to salvation; and the Revisers have done all this without following their usual custom of directing attention to ancient authority on special items. WHY? ? ?

Perhaps the reason may be in the fact that nearly all the translators of the Revised Version were trinitarians.

Christendom's Idolatry

Eastern Christendom bows down before "holy" pictures (ikons), but will have nothing to do with images. Papists bow down before images and venerate "holy" pictures as well. Both sections venerate alleged "relics" of saints. Papists bow down before the "strange god," the wafer which the all-powerful word of the least of its priests is supposed to be able to transform into the veritable flesh of our blessed Lord, so that the creature creates the Creator. Protestants have rightly cast out all these forms of idolatry.

But there is another idolatry in which nearly all Protestants are involved with the Papists and Eastern Christendom. They all worship the "Holy Trinity" which, as we have seen, is violently contrary to Scripture; is most dishonouring to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; and, having been fashioned by men, being the work of men's minds if not of their hands, is wholly imaginary, and therefore NON-EXISTENT.

In worshipping the non-existent "Holy Trinity," Christendom is guilty of IDOLATRY, and we have no hesitation in making this accusation. Individual Christians to whom these words may come are lovingly exhorted and urged to flee from this and all other idolatry if they are involved. And may we all have grace and strength to keep clear of it and of every semblance thereto.

Those of us who, by the grace of God, are already clear should give thanks for what we can understand about the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and should endeavour to follow the course that will glorify God in all things.

One God, and One Lord

Although we are fully aware that the "Holy Trinity" worshipped by nearly all Christendom is in fact non-existent, we are also aware that as a form of misbelief the trinitarian doctrine is very potent in many hearts, and is a conspicuous illustration of

the activity and the influence of the "god of this world" in blinding many minds. It behooves us therefore more than ever to rely on that Word inspired by the Holy Spirit—that Word which is able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3: 14-17); that inspired Word which contains neither the Nicene nor the Anathasian creed, but which, contrary to these creeds and imaginings of uninspired men, says to us (1 Corinthians 8: 4-6)—

. . . we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)

But to us there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in him; and ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom are all things, and we by him.

May this blessed knowledge ever abide in our hearts, sanctifying us according to the blessed, and holy, and perfect will of God! Amen.

For the Children

PAUL REACHES CORINTH

When so many preparations were made by the Lord for the introduction of the Gospel, and so long before it was to be preached, we begin to think it must be something very, very important. And indeed the Gospel *is* important. It is the most important thing in the world, because it tells us of things of more value than anything we have ever yet known or heard of. The Gospel is really "news from heaven," first brought to men on the earth by the greatest of all God's messengers—our Lord Jesus. That we should hear anything from heaven at all is wonderful enough; but when God's own Son is chosen to bring it we may marvel at the way this earth has been favoured.

When Paul heard of it he immediately devoted his whole life to telling the "news from heaven" to others; he became one of its honoured messengers. Silas did the same, as also did Timothy; and, as we have seen, they both became Paul's trusted helpers on his great journeys from city to city.

Paul had been alone in Athens; Timothy had gone to Thessalonica, and Silas seems to have been on another mission somewhere in Macedonia. Paul left Athens, after his preaching to the philosophers on Mars' Hill, and went to Corinth, and there he seems to have been not long in finding two people—a man and his wife—who, like himself, were tent makers. Paul would have but little difficulty in finding someone of this trade, for a good many people were engaged in it. No doubt he would also know just where to look for such traders, and when he found these people he arranged to make his home with them, and every day they worked together at the tents. It was in this way that Paul provided himself with the simple necessities of his life while in Corinth, earning enough for all his needs, so that he had no occasion to receive anything from the natives of that city.

As we shall several times again hear of the two people whom Paul met and with whom he abode, we must tell you that their names were Aquila and Priscilla. Both belonged to the Jewish nation, but we are not sure whether they were Christians when Paul first met them. We know, however, that they were soon after, and it may all have come to them through Paul their partner in labour. Although Aquila, and probably his wife also, was a native of Pontus in Asia Minor, he seems to have made his home in Rome—many miles from Corinth. But, sometime before Paul met them, one of the Roman Emperors had commanded all the Jews to leave that city, and that is how these two came to be in Corinth.

Among the many seaports along the Mediterranean coast Corinth was one of the most important. It was a great commercial centre, and the Jewish population was large. This means that there was at least one synagogue in the city, where the Jews gathered every Sabbath day—there to pray, read and search their Scriptures; looking for and waiting for their Messiah, not knowing that He had already come to their nation, had finished His work on the earth, and had gone back into the heavens!

In a city like Corinth, where travellers by sea were arriving nearly every day, the Jews would certainly have heard of Jesus of Nazareth, for the news would be brought to them. But the Jews themselves also frequently visited Jerusalem. From the different reports they would receive—some saying "He is a good man," others that "He deceiveth the people," they might be left in an uncertain state of mind as to whether He really was their Messiah.

And that is how Paul would find them when he entered the synagogue in Corinth on the Sabbath days. And we can well imagine how thoughts of sympathy and even pity would fly through his mind as he sat there and heard his brethren, the Jews, praying to God and trying to worship Him through Moses. His concern would be even greater for them if, after he had declared the truth to them about Jesus, they stubbornly rejected the divine message and preferred the hopeless course of looking for another Messiah. Well might Paul think of the burdens that would be lifted and the blessings that were awaiting them if they would but believe the truth he had to preach.

And the opportunity was given him each sabbath; and he reasoned with all present, using the Scriptures and persuading them that Jesus was the Christ. And the Jews early opposed themselves to the apostle's message. That opposition would be shown by their manner towards him as well as by words. But what particularly showed their determination and unreasonableness was that they did much more

than merely oppose Paul: they "blasphemed;" that is, they said things against Jesus as Messiah that were quite wicked. By blaspheming they proved themselves wholly unworthy of having any more of the Gospel made known to them; so Paul withdrew, and did not enter their synagogue again. He had fulfilled the Lord's command always to preach to the Jews first, and as they refused him he could tell them they must themselves take the consequences of that refusal. And that was no small matter, for in refusing Paul they had also refused God!

The very words he used you will read presently in the Acts, but they were accompanied by an action which was common in those days, and was indeed commanded by the Lord whenever the Jews refused their testimony. He "shook his raiment," which meant that he had done his duty toward them and was now free.

The Jews in Corinth were thus left to continue in their synagogue alone, and to go on looking for their Messiah in their own way. For Paul walked out and went to the Gentiles, declaring the Good News to them. And that was only a matter of passing out of one door and entering another. For a Greek believer named Justus had a house next to the synagogue, and this man, seeing and knowing all that had been done, invited Paul to hold his meetings there. So now what do we see?

We see the old form of worship and the new being carried on side by side in a Gentile city, in both of which places the Corinthians were at liberty to enter during a service, for the invitation was always open. And if it so happened that the two congregations were meeting on the same day, say on a sabbath morning, we would see them passing each other in the street and afterwards entering the different doors.

Amongst those going to the house of Justus would be some Jews who formerly went to the synagogue: and now what looks they would get from their Jewish friends as they passed the synagogue by! At the close of each service there would be further awkward meetings and passings in the street; and all of this would prove a test for both parties. The synagogue Jews would certainly frown on and condemn the Christian Jews, harbouring more or less bitterness against them. But the Christians, if true to their teaching, would be patient and intreat: "Come and see" would be their appeal.

This odd situation of a Jew starting a rival meeting next door to the synagogue would become known through the city, arousing some curiosity, The people might say, We know fairly well what the Jews believe and teach—looking for their Messiah, and so on; but what do these new ones say? And many of them went to see, and so heard for the first time how the God of the Jews was then calling the Gentiles, the Corinthians amongst them, to receive the blessings that were first offered to the Jews, but which they rejected. And Paul put the matter so plainly and scripturally before them that many believed, and later on still many more, and were baptized in token of their faith.

Thus the church in Corinth was started, and the numbers grew and increased. All of the members were enriched in the knowledge of God and given mighty powers by the laying on of Paul's hands; so that they must have created quite a stir in that great city and the country round about.

We have many times had to tell you of the envy and bitterness of the Jews against the Christians in other cities, and already those evil things were showing themselves amongst the Jews of the synagogue against Paul. Some Jews having left them, and many Gentiles crowding in as followers of Paul—and next door too—acted like a sting. It gave them pain instead of pleasure which it should have done. But when the chief ruler of the synagogue—Crispus by name—and his whole family walked out and entered the house of Justus, also as followers of Paul, there was most probably a real storm of indignation against Paul. For it was like taking a stone out of the foundations of the synagogue when they went; for the chief ruler was the most influential and prominent man in it.

Those Jews who separated themselves from the synagogue to follow Jesus faithfully, and those Gentiles who left their idols and became firm believers in the Lord, certainly did the right thing. They recognized Paul and his companions as true messengers from God, and therefore as having the word of the Truth to speak. In that case the truth could not be heard in the synagogue again, nor was it then or ever in the idol temples. Their calling, then, was to keep themselves separate, to keep together and close to Paul and to the Lord who was the great Leader of them all, and to pay attention to no other teachers.

But let us suppose that some of the Jews after a while should say, Well, after all there are some things in the Law of Moses that are good; and the Gentiles should say, Not every thing in the gods is bad; and, you know, some of the people still attending both places are very nice. Let us pay them a visit in their services, and get friendly with them, then perhaps we can talk with them of the good things we know, and it may be they will see the Truth and will come over to us, forsaking the wrong ways as we did. Is not that just what is wanted?

We might answer this and say, Yes: it is what is wanted. But whether it would be right to adopt that plan is another matter. So we ask, Would the Jews of the synagogue who had already refused Paul's message be persuaded by that plan to change their minds and join the Christians next door? I suppose we may say, Not one of them. Would the Gentiles do any better? We are sure they would not.

So if friendship and companionship with these are desired, it is the Christians who would have to sacrifice their faith. And that would mean that in time they would lose it all: the Jewish believers would be back in the synagogue altogether, and the Gentile believers in their idolatry again!

It is always the same at all times with all of us. Satan is interested in breaking down the separate-

ness of those who believe, and is so strong at present that the wrong will always win as soon as we forsake the apostle's instructions. If we have learned to know the Lord and to love Him and His people, it is for us to keep with them or we shall soon find ourselves falling away, falling back to the old things we once left.

How careful must we be of our companions!

Be Not Afraid; I am With Thee

Paul had been so accustomed to the Jews seeking to take his life or to do him bodily injury, in nearly all the cities he visited, that he again seems to have feared that probability in Corinth. For when he wrote to the Corinthian church a good while after he said, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." And as it seems he was in Corinth when he wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians, we may learn from that letter that there was considerable opposition to the Gospel in Corinth, and probably from the Gentiles as well as the Jews. For the apostle besought the Thessalonians to pray for them, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and that they may be delivered from "unreasonable and wicked men." It was his great desire to go on with his work of evangelising that great city, but there were very many hindrances and, as we think, positive dangers to his own person. And had he been injured by violence or threatened with death as had so often happened before, the free course of the Gospel would have suffered, or Paul would have had to fly out of the city.

But the Lord knew about all that was going on, and of Paul's weakness and fear and trembling. And the Lord was kind to Paul in his distress, and for the third time spoke to him. On this occasion it was in the night He spoke, and in a vision. They were words of cheer, promise, and encouragement—just such words as he seems to have needed—

"Be not afraid," Paul: stop fearing and trembling.

"And hold not thy peace;" "but speak"—as you have been.

Do not think I have forsaken or forgotten you: "For I am with thee."

And now I promise that "no man shall set on thee to hurt thee."

And know this, that your work here is far from finished: "for I have much people in this city."

This visit of the Lord in a vision must have lifted Paul right up; and whatever depressed feelings he might have had must have flown away. He could more than ever trust in the Lord and resume his calm and serenity, walking about that city before the face of all his foes, "teaching the word of God among them." And knowing that not one person or any number of them could raise a hand to do him injury! That was now impossible since the Lord Himself was controlling all of them. And his work was going to be a great success, for "much people," many people, would become believers through his ministry.

For one year and six months Paul continued in Corinth, and knew that he was being preserved from the violence of wicked men. The Gospel spread throughout the city and in many smaller places around, and to the great joy of the apostle many believed on the Lord, and were added to the church. So if he had a short season of "fear and . . . trembling," it was more than balanced by a long period of security, peace, and success under the mighty hand of the Lord.

Please read Acts 18: 1-11 for this Story.
What the Jews said of Jesus, John 7: 11, 12.
Instruction in conduct, 1 Corinthians 4: 12, 13.
The Corinthians made rich, 1 Corinthians 1: 5; 2 Corinthians 9: 11.
The Gifts, 1 Corinthians 12: 28.
The need for keeping separate, 2 Corinthians 6: 14-18.
And together, Hebrews 10: 25.
To follow Paul, 1 Corinthians 11: 1.
To reject false teachers, Galatians 1: 8, 9.

—UNCLE FRANK.

Subscriptions Now Due

ANOTHER year of the N.C.A. is now completed. As most subscriptions end with the close of the volume, this notice is given to all Readers so that they may promptly send us their orders and payments for the renewal for another year. The subscription price is 4/- per year including postage in Australia and New Zealand; 5/- ($1.25) elsewhere. Readers are requested to accept this general notice as though it had been privately addressed to each one personally. Promptness in responding will be greatly appreciated, and will be a great help to the work. Therefore, please let us hear from all at earliest opportunity. Those who have been receiving the N.C.A. free on special terms because of inability to pay are cordially welcome, as ever, to the paper on the same terms. But we must hear from such yearly, so we may know they still live and desire to continue reading.

TRIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS will be received as a co-operation in the work. Send us the price of a year's subscription with the names of four friends you desire to interest in the Good Tidings; the N.C.A. will be sent for three months to each address in the hope that they will wish to continue as readers. Trial Subscriptions sent now or very soon will include this issue.

The "Advocate" Sustaining Fund

Voluntary donations to this fund have been received as under, since our last report. As the "Advocate" is regularly published at a financial loss, it is obliged to depend upon the loving co-operation of its friends until it shall become self-sustaining. Let the good work continue!

67, 2/-; 68, £1; 69, 2/-; 70, 4/-; 71, £1:10:0; 72, £10:10:0; 73, 4/-; 74, £1; 75, 4/-; 76, £2:2:0; 77, 2/-; 78, £1; 79, £3:2:6; 80, £2:11:3; total for month, £23:13:9 ($115.11); previously reported, £117:19:0 ($573.11); total for 6 months, £141:12:9 ($688.22). Of this total, a portion was required to clear off the Deficit from 1934, the amount remaining for use in the work for this year being £55. The expenses of the Advocate Sustaining Fund for the whole of this year to December 15, 1935, are estimated at £400 ($2000); thus leaving £345 to be accomplished between July 1 and December 15—or an average of about £69 ($345) per month for the 5 months.

The Cheerful Givers

Voluntary Donations, as under, have been received since our last report for the spread of the Good Tidings concerning the Grace of God in Jesus, our Mediator and Intercessor under the terms of the New Covenant.

32, 5/-; 33, 2/-; 34, £15; 35, £20; 36, 5/-; 37, 6/2; total for month, £35:18:2 ($174.52); previously reported, £67:9:11 ($328.02); total for 6 months, £103:8:1 ($502.54). **The estimated expenses of the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1935 amount to £200 ($1000); though more than this sum can be beneficially utilized should it be available.**

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The Blessing for All the Families of the Earth

A RELIABLE PROMISE of something good for all the families of earth is worthy the attention of *all families collectively, and of every* member of every family individually. The fact remains, however, that many families of many nations have never heard of a blessing to be expected, and many individuals of many nations who have heard of it have not taken it seriously enough.

Some have heard that the Gospel is "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," but have fallen into the misapprehension that somehow the "good" tidings include eternal misery—agony never ending—for the vast majority of the families of the earth. A sense of justice prevents some from investigating the manner by which God can and will bless all the families of the earth, because they think that to bless the wicked as well as the good would do wrong to those who have struggled to overcome temptation and maintain a high standard of honour and goodness. Without looking into the subject—without so much as inquiring if God has devised some method of blessing which can be and is fair and equitable to all—they turn away from it. They see sin and suffering and death all over the world for thousands of years, and hopelessly conclude that it can never be otherwise. They devote less attention to this subject of universal importance than they would to watching a man—let down in a quarry or mine—pick up (and so bless) an injured workmate, or to neighbouring municipalities arguing for months as to how a bridge destroyed by a flood shall be replaced and who shall pay for it, that thus a few thousand persons may be "blessed" by the use of it. Sympathy goes out to sufferers from fire and flood, storm and famine, and relief measures are hurriedly organized to rescue and feed (and thus bless) as many as possible. But try to tell these kindhearted ones that the great God of heaven has already under way a plan of wonderful foresight and competent grasp of all the difficulties men labour under, in which plan a blessing is arranged for all the families of the earth—including every individual of every family—and it is surprising how few will stop long enough to listen even to a brief outline of the blessing and how it operates. And, if philanthropists are too absorbed in their own inadequate schemes for world betterment to listen to God's arrangements for all-sufficient and successful betterment of all the families of the earth, how can we expect selfish schemers for their own profit to care what God considers an appropriate blessing for them and for all?

General and Exclusive Blessings

But even selfish schemers can be and have been turned from their schemes to consider the successful operation of some plan of a less selfish character. All possessed of human nature have more or less selfishness in them; indeed, a certain amount of interest in self is necessary to provide for our own physical well being—health, food, clothing, etc. Self interest of a reasonable sort exhibits itself in care for one's family and possessions. We are encouraged in Scripture to have also a desire to possess for ourselves the blessings God offers and is prepared to give; in some instances has already given, having provided rains and fruitful seasons for the benefit and sustenance of all mankind in the present life. But we can see, can we not, that provision of temporal necessities fails to supply all our needs. We need a knowledge of the great Provider, as the apostle Paul told the Athenians and others. (Acts 14: 14-17; 17: 22-31.) And, further, we need to know how sin, disease, and death got such a hold on our race, and what the great Provider of temporal benefits proposes to do, if anything, to rid mankind of these implacable enemies. When therefore we read the apostle Peter's words to the Jews, we find that God has blessings to give of a more special and exclusive sort. After quoting the promise to Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the kindreds [or "families"] of the earth be blessed," Peter adds—

Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities. —Acts 3: 26.

A queer sort of "blessing," some may say, when the practice of sin is so pleasurable that to be de-

prived of it is painful and involves self denial. But this gives us the idea that God's conception of a blessing it not to clap us on the shoulder and say *well done when we do wrong. God's conception* of a blessing was to send His Son Jesus to do certain things with a view (for one thing) of turning men away from sin. And, a few years afterwards, Paul said *the same thing to the Grecians, in but slightly* different language; that God "now commandeth all men every where to repent."—Acts 17: 30.

Rather late in the day, was it not, some one may *say, to call on all men everywhere to repent, after* millions of "families" had died without so much as hearing of the Saviour, or of the existence of the true God, or of His purpose to "bless" them? What *sort of blessing did they get—sunk in heathen idol*atry, witchcraft, intertribal hatreds, etc.?

Just how God purposes to deal with these will be considered presently.

God's Conception of Blessing

We wish now to inquire a little further into God's conception of Blessing. We know that He had the children of Israel for His chosen people under a special covenant for over sixteen centuries—from the time Moses led them out of Egypt to Sinai, where they received the law, and with one voice declared, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Exodus 19: 1-8.) A significant feature of the law was its numerous promises of blessings, with threats also of curses. By this method the Israelites were given an incentive to do the things required and a good reason for refraining from the things prohibited. We see also in this arrangement how God included many temporal benefits in His blessing when they kept His law, and withheld those temporal benefits when they were persistently disobedient. To make the distinction more dramatic, and consequently the more impressed upon their memories, Moses was directed to arrange a public ceremony at the entrance to the land of Canaan. Certain heads of tribes were to stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless, and certain other heads of tribes were to stand upon Mount Ebal to curse. And the Levites loudly pronounced the respective blessings and curses.—Deuteronomy, chapters 27, 28.

As the years went by, if any who had done evil had been cursed on account of it, the way was left open for them to turn from their evil and from the curses and to receive restoration to God's favour, together with the blessing promised the obedient.—Deuteronomy, chapters 29, 30.

Lack of space prevents our going into details concerning the blessings and curses, but the object is evident—to give Israel a higher standard of morals than prevailed at the time among the Egyptians and other idolatrous peoples. That the Jews failed to enjoy as much of the blessing as they might have done, their history shows. And we must notice that all those blessings and curses were in connection with the law given to Israel, and did not pertain to tribes and peoples outside Israel. This must be borne in mind when we read in the New Testament that the whole Jewish people was under the curse of the law and therefore condemned to death as violators of it. For it is written, "Cursed is every *one that continueth not in all things written in the* book of the law to do them."—Galatians 3: 10.

Besides the temporal blessings the children of Israel were granted blessings of a higher kind—com*munion with God, forgiveness of sins repented of* (if the prescribed sacrifices were offered); the privileges of worship at tabernacle and temple, the privilege of having the testimony of the prophets, the *promise of a new Mediator and a new High Priest,* and the promise of a covenant under which sins could be forgiven and remembered no more. And when the Lord Jesus did come to be their King, *High Priest, and Deliverer, they found that the* new blessings were to be had apart from the law, and were built upon the sacrifice of Christ as the propitiation not only for their sins but for the sins *of the whole world. And with this new covenant* and forgiveness in the name of Jesus came a new set of promises, a new set of blessings, which deserve our careful attention.

Abraham and His Inheritance in the Land

But first let us notice that before the law was given at Sinai God's people from Adam to Moses were accepted on account of their faith in the promises and their fidelity to God, without the numerous details contained in the law. Similarly those who believed the promise given in Eden that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head were privileged to draw near to God in worship. Some of those persons of faith are named in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews as well as in the Old Testament records; likewise Jews living under the law who were accepted on account of their faith.

Abraham showed his faith in God's promise and demonstrated his obedience by leaving Ur of the Chaldees, and going into the land of Canaan. Whereupon God called him to an eminence and promised him all the land that he saw for an everlasting possession. This was a very material blessing, but we should not overlook the fact that, while Abraham wandered up and down the land, he never actually owned a footbreadth of it. (Acts 7: 2-5.) What then becomes of the promise? First Isaac, then Jacob inherited the promise, though neither received the land as a personal possession.

But those promises will not go unfulfilled, for Scripture assures us that in the resurrection Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall receive their inheritance in the land. It is theirs by divine decree, but they will not want to be alone in it. They will share their inheritance with other overcomers of olden time. Abraham was blessed in being the head of the line through which the Lord Jesus the Son of God came according to the flesh. He and others of ancient time will be blessed still further in the resurrection life by being made "princes in all the earth." He looked for a city, i.e. a government, whose builder and maker is God.—Luke 3: 34; Romans 9: 4, 5; Psalm 45: 16; Hebrews 11: 8-10.

Even so, the majority of men before the flood pursued wickedness, and God destroyed that order of things in the great Flood, saving in the ark only Noah and his family, afterward to plant a new family of godly persons in the earth. But from this standard of righteousness the majority of their descendants departed, as described in the Old Testament, and referred to in the epistle to the Romans, chapter 1, and other New Testament passages.

The True Light to Lighten Every Man

In our brief looking backward from the time of Christ, we have seen that God gave promises of blessing, but most of them were contingent upon the recipient or recipients of the promise fulfilling certain conditions, such as Noah building and entering the ark, Abraham entering Canaan and maintaining faith in the promise even to offering up his only son Isaac. Isaac and Jacob also had faith. But while Abraham was designated the giver of blessings, he had little opportunity for bestowing blessings during his lifetime. With the exception of those for whom Melchizedek ministered, few knew of the true God, much less did they worship Him and for that reason inherit a promise of blessing. And so it was through succeeding generations to the time of Christ —the majority of the peoples of the earth were idolaters and pursued all manner of wickedness; consequently could not be eligible to the promises given to the faithful and obedient.

From these facts many have concluded that God never intended to enlighten or otherwise bless those ignorant and sinful peoples and nations. But in the teachings of our Lord and the apostles we do find confirmation that God has neither abandoned nor forgotten those peoples. They are included in the "all the families of the earth" of whom the Lord spoke to Abraham.

Many millions of the inhabitants of the earth died without light during the long period of the Jewish age; many were dying while our blessed Lord walked the earth. Millions and millions have died since our Lord's day in absolute ignorance of God and of His gracious purposes in Christ. And the words of the apostle come very appropriately to mind (Romans 10: 12-14)—

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.
13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

The preaching of the gospel that men may know the great blessings God is willing to give through Christ is necessary, therefore, before those blessings can be apprehended and the necessary steps taken to bring oneself into line to inherit them. And God has made ample arrangements to give that enlightenment to all the families of the earth. Many in the present age—i.e., since the Lord offered on Calvary the perfect sacrifice for sin—have heard more or less of the gospel, and a few of these have accepted the call to follow in the Master's footsteps and to become joint heirs in His kingdom.

Salvation a Blessing

Verses 12, 13 show that Salvation is the very rich blessing offered in the gospel, and that it is open in the present age to all who call upon the name of the Lord. The preaching has gone into practically all nations, but by no means have all people heard it. Consequently we must conclude that up to the present the gospel has not been preached with a view to enlightening all, or that would have been done, seeing that God is all powerful. The apostles' explanations show that in the present age the gospel is sent to make a selection: God visits the Gentiles to "take out of them" a people for His name. This selection is to a high calling, to be joint heirs with Christ in His kingdom. (Acts 15: 14; Philippians 3: 10-15; Romans 8: 14-18; Revelation 20: 6.) Manifestly, then, while this special call is operating for this specific purpose, many millions of the families of the earth remain unchosen, unselected, unsaved—of whom the majority have died in ignorance of the Only Name "given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved."—Acts 4: 10-12.

And since salvation means deliverance from the power of sin and death and the grave, with the granting of eternal life by the Lord Jesus Christ, we again find ourselves under necessity to seek an explanation of why, if this is the case, so few of the thousands of millions of mankind have even heard of that Only Name.

Various attempts at explanation have been made by different bodies of Christians, but most fail to consider all the Scripture statements involved. Some assert that God will save the ignorant dead on the ground that they were not responsible. Others say God did not want them to be saved or He would have sent the light to them. Others again try to excuse God, and say He accepts the worship offered to heathen idols as given to Him, on the ground that those idolaters want to worship something they know not what. How foolish would be this attitude on God's part, how inconsistent with His character of truth and righteousness, and also how undignified a position for the Supreme Being, the Creator of all things! No, Paul tells us the worship the nations give to idols is offered to demons, and God refuses to accept such worship. They who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, and must come in the name of His dear Son, whom He sent to be our Saviour through faith in His blood.—1 Corinthians 10: 20; John 4: 24; 14: 6; 16: 23, 24; Romans 3: 25; Hebrews 13: 15.

And it is for this reason, that faith may be on the right basis, and the believer be enabled to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10: 22), that God has arranged that blessing mentioned in John's gospel (1: 9)—

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

In other words, God, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3: 16), has arranged that "all the families of the earth" shall be blessed by the shining upon them of the Son in His glorious office of True Light.

There is only one True Light. John the Baptist was not that Light, but had come to bear witness of the Light. And so he did. He pointed out Jesus as the One for whom he had been told to look, upon whom the Holy Spirit would be poured out as a testimony to John that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed of God.—John 1: 6-8, 29-34.

Not Philosophical or National Lights

This statement that Jesus Christ is the true Light casts out the claims of all other persons and institutions to be the true Light. Philosophies and theories of all sorts have been developed claiming to explain Nature and Man, and why Evil is in the World, but, not being the Light from Jesus Christ, these ideas and theories are empty and void. One nation may be more "civilized" than another, and by conquest or political influence may impose a more or less better form of government and higher standard of living. And the nation benefited may admit that it has to that extent been "blessed." But is there one system of philosophy or one political power on earth to-day that can truthfully claim to have blessed or to be at the present time in the process of blessing even one nation—not to say ALL the nations—of the earth in respect of securing their salvation from sin, their deliverance from death, or their resurrection from the dead?

Or, not to go quite so far as that, is there in the world to-day any philosophy or religion, or any political power, that is at present lighting all, or any, of the families of the earth with anything comparable to the true Light? No, there is not. There is only one Source of the true Light:

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST."—2 Corinthians 4: 6.

Jesus Christ the Seed of Promise

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8: 12.) And He told His disciples that they, having been, as candles or lamps, lit by Him, should let their light shine. The Jews had been God's nation; and by the temple worship and the good lives of the obedient they had to some extent been a light in the world. But when Christ came that nation was deposed on account of their resistance to the true Light.

The Jews were the "seed" of Abraham by natural descent; the Bible term denoting progeny or descendants. And some of the scribes, Pharisees, priests, and other influential Jews seem to have taken themselves as chosen blessers, and were making terms upon which the common people might have their blessing, even going to the extent of making many additions of their own to the law of God. When Jesus came, He exposed their wrong state of mind and their unfitness to be blessers even of their own countrymen. Did He then choose some other nation of earth—Grecians, Romans, Chinese, or other such peoples to be the blessers of all other nations, and so of all the families of the earth?

The apostle Paul answers this question in the negative, first of all showing that the "seed" of the promise to Abraham is not a nation, but an Individual (Galatians 3: 16)—

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Jesus Christ is the One pointed forward to by the promise to Abraham, as He is also the One foretold in the promise made in Eden (Genesis 3: 15)—of One to come who should bruise the serpent's head. Jesus Christ the Son of God is the One appointed by God to bless all the families of the earth; and in the same chapter (Galatians 3) the apostle shows that the Jews who desired to have part in the promise of a blessing must come to Jesus for it.

A Holy Nation

But does not Scripture speak also of a holy "nation," it may be asked, and can it be said that this "holy nation" is blessing all the families of the earth? The apostle Peter says of it (1 Peter 2: 9)—

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises [or, virtues] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

In verse 2 the individual believers in Jesus are spoken of as "newborn babes" requiring the milk of the Word for nourishment. In verse 5 they are "lively," or living, "stones" built up a spiritual house. They acknowledge Jesus as the Stone which the Jews rejected, but which is now the headstone of the corner in this new temple. Hence the words of verse 9, "ye are an holy nation," refer to these same believers in Jesus who acknowledge and serve Him by consistent living, showing in their own conduct the character and virtues of God.

But this "holy nation" does not and can not "bless all the families of the earth." As individual believers they are scattered among the nations, and Peter proceeds to show, in harmony with many other scriptures, that, far from exercising great influence they are "strangers and pilgrims," spoken against as evildoers, suffering grief for conscience' sake, called upon to suffer unjustly, even as their Master had been.

The "holy nation" in the present age is in process of selection, and the entire age is appointed to gather the required number of members to constitute this "holy nation." Each member in his day and generation shows forth God's praises, but the time of reigning comes with the return of the Lord to take them to Himself; and they shall live with Him, and reign with Him, as kings and priests, over the whole groaning creation, which awaits their manifestation soon, we trust, to take place, that the next phase of the blessing of all the families of the earth may take its place in due order and time.—2 Thessalonians 2: 14; 1 Peter 5: 10;

John 14: 2, 3; Revelation 20: 6; 1 John 3: 1, 2; Romans 8: 18, 19, 21.

Thy Kingdom Come

Doubtless readers who have followed this outline of Scripture teaching now see to what it leads. Since the Cross, when Jesus offered himself as the true sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, the true Light has shone, and it has here and there found receptive hearts and minds, and His followers have become lights; but it has been as lights in darkness. No political power in the present life was promised to the church, nor could they influence more than a few to become, like themselves, footstep followers of Christ. But what has been done has been to **prepare them** for **the work of the future.**

Here fails most of the theology of the various bodies of Christians. They teach for the most part that in the present life choice must be made between heaven in the future if good and an eternity of torment if not good. In the case of the good, they say (the soul's destiny being fixed at death or before), the soul enters heaven at death to enjoy everlasting felicity, no more concerned with the salvation of men—unless it be some friendly interest in relations left behind, whom they desire also to go to heaven when they die. As to the vast majority of mankind, they say their fate also is fixed at death, and that fate is that they shall go to a place of everlasting torment without relief or mitigation. Some Christians look upon physical torment as being too crude, and say the torment will be mental, such as remorse, while others say the torture is both mental and physical; first their souls only, and later on their souls joined by their resurrected bodies.

It is popular now to say, "Oh, nobody believes that teaching any more." Those who say this cannot have investigated the subject very far. If they will make inquiries they will find that millions of professing Christians still believe that the unsaved go to a place of eternal unrelieved suffering from which there is no possibility of escape.

What then becomes of the promise that in Jesus Christ, who is the Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3: 16), all the families of the earth shall be blessed? What then becomes of the pronouncement by God Himself that His Son Jesus is the True Light that lightens every man that cometh into the world?

Manifestly every seeker after truth must choose between what God says and what man-made creeds assert in opposition.

Those Christians who say that persons who have died unsaved and unenlightened remain forever dead, without hope or prospect of resurrection, allow that the unsaved will not suffer torment of any kind. But, even so, what becomes of the promise which includes them as part of "all the families of the earth"? Why exclude them from the benefits of the True Light?

For, again we repeat, such comprehensive promises as a blessing of all the families of the earth and to lighten every man that cometh into the world MEAN SOMETHING. And Paul's words on another subject are applicable in this matter also—"yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." Certainly God's Word is true, and if we want our words to be true our words must agree with His.

The Lord's Prayer should give every inquirer a thought on this subject (Matthew 6: 9, 10)—

> Our Father which art in heaven,
> Hallowed be thy name.
> Thy kingdom come,
> Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Think what this means—"Thy kingdom come." When the Lord gave the prayer God's kingdom had not come. For nineteen centuries the petition has been repeated by those who have addressed the Father and desired His name to be hallowed, and yet that kingdom has not arrived to accomplish what is prayed for in the next petition, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." And we ask, Shall that prayer never have its fulfilment? Will the time never come when God's will is done on earth as in heaven?

Believers now are said to be in the kingdom of God's dear Son because they have been transferred from the power of darkness by reason of their faith in the Lord Jesus. (Colossians 1: 12-14.) But the kingdom the Lord taught us to pray for is the one which will accomplish in the earth a great work never before seen—the triumphant conclusion of which shall be that God's will will be done by every human being the world over, even as it is done in heaven by the good and faithful angels. And that is perfectly—with no necessity to ask forgiveness, for in the everlasting ages to follow no sins will be committed to require forgiveness.

A Wonderful Kingdom Age

A wonderful Kingdom Age, you say?

Yes, indeed, we reply; and what a pity more thought is not given to it. If men—in their perplexity to know what to think and what to do—would only ask, What is God doing?

Surely He knows all that is going on in the earth, and can rectify wrongs?

Certainly, nothing is hid from His sight, and very soon now the time will have come to set up that kingdom. God's kingdom is not an empty name. It comprises—

(1) The King or Ruler, with trained assistants.

(2) A territory over which He rules.

(3) People who occupy the territory and are the subjects of the Ruler.

(4) Laws for the proper order and conduct of the kingdom, promoting the welfare and happiness of its subjects.

(5) A period of time: a king rules so many days, months, or years; some empires and kingdoms have endured for hundreds of years.

The King of Kings

First, then, the King—the Lord Jesus Christ, called "the King of kings, and Lord of lords." (1 Timothy 6: 15; Revelation 19: 16.) He is a King with kings under Him; designated also "the prince of the kings of the earth." (Revelation 1: 5.) He

is also High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. (Hebrews 5: 5-10.) Since His resurrection, the Lord Jesus has been both King and High Priest, but, as already shown, engaged in work preliminary to the setting up of the kingdom in power on earth.

Under the Lord Jesus will be the Under Kings and Under Priests, the Overcomers, His Joint Heirs, selected during the Gospel age, who shall sit with Him in His throne, even as He overcame, and is set down with the Father in His throne. (Romans 8: 16, 17; Luke 22: 28-30; 2 Timothy 2: 11, 12; Revelation 3: 21; 20: 6.) Their inheritance is in heaven; they shall be with and like Him.—1 Peter 1: 4, 5; 1 John 3: 2.

Under Christ and the Church, but with an inheritance on the earth as promised to Abraham, will be *overseers and directors, called in Psalm 45: 16* "princes in all the earth." These offices will be filled by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the holy Prophets, and others who demonstrated faith, from Abel down to the last of their line, John the Baptist. As princes in all the earth, these persons of faith and integrity will have great authority, and will control *the general conduct of affairs over the whole earth.* —Matthew 8: 11; Luke 13: 28, 29; John 8: 56; Hebrews 11: 4-10, 39, 40; Matthew 11: 7-13.

The Kingdom Territory

Second, the territory over which the Lord now rules is the Universe, for the Father so appointed Him. (Ephesians 1: 21.) During the present age believers have acknowledged His rulership. They have constituted the true church, and have devoted themselves to His service. They were told, "Occupy till I come," while as stewards they awaited the Lord's return (Luke 19: 12-27), and they are to reign with Him in the kingdom to be established in *the earth. The "territory" as it relates to that* kingdom is the entire earth, the abode originally given to mankind.

To Daniel it was revealed that "the stone that smote the image [of world-power] became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (Daniel 2: 35.) Interpreted in verse 44—"And in the days of *these kings shall the God of heaven set up a king*dom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Thus it is clear that none of the kingdoms at present existing in the world can be the stone kingdom which God will set up. No present-day kingdom will ever fill the whole earth, though several have ambitions that way, and will yet strive to attain universal dominion by means of alliances. The League of Nations would like to rule the world; so would the Pope of Rome. Revelation 16: 13-21 tells how any such alliance or understanding among the *nations will come to nought.* It is GOD'S WILL—not the will of some league or politico-religious system of man's device that shall be done in earth, as it is in heaven, where man's will counts not at all.

What Population will the Earth Sustain?

Third, People are necessary; a Kingdom without subjects would be no kingdom at all. When God created man to be lord of the earth He gave him subjects—the animal creation—as well as a dominion. *Men were to multiply, and fill the earth,* and subdue it. We see all around us how men have exerted control over their fellowmen, and with what result, while the earth itself is far from being subdued.

It is easily seen that the people living on the earth when the image of world power is overthrown would automatically come under the control of the Kingdom of God, which the Lord Jesus as God's Anointed will establish. But are they to be the only subjects of the Kingdom?

Among Christians who look for the Lord's Second Coming to set up His Kingdom are some who believe that all the "saved" will live again on the earth, that none will go to heaven; and that only a few of earth's myriad dead will be raised to everlasting life, the vast majority being condemned as unworthy of a resurrection.

Were this theory correct, the earth would be very sparsely populated, and the kingdom of God would be a comparatively small affair, instead of the wonderful triumph the Scriptures declare it will be, consummating the foretold blessing of all the families of the earth. There are to-day vast tracts of the earth uninhabited, which will provide ample room for *all* the dead when the Lord calls them forth. Let us remember that He bought them all with His precious blood, and they belong to Him. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Romans 14: 9.) Not one will be forgotten or overlooked!

The Resurrection of Judgment

Besides which, the Lord's own statement contradicts this theory of a very limited resurrection. After saying that the Father had given Him "authority to execute judgment," Jesus said (John 5: 28, 29)—

> 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,
> 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [more exactly, the resurrection of judgment].

Part of the beauty and truth of this passage is spoiled by the word "damnation" in the Authorized Version—apparently due to failure to associate the word "judgment" at the end of verse 29 with the word "judgment" in verse 27, and in verse 30—"as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just." During His ministry the Lord judged the Jews by the word He spoke to them and according to their response. But the Lord's judgment was not limited to issuing the words which tested the Jews' faith and their willingness to repent. The time was coming when a like judgment would sit in regard to all men, and for this purpose those who had died in ignorance of the "true Light" would be called

forth from the graves to appear before Him. This judgment will be part of the work undertaken in the Kingdom age. Then the true Light will enlighten them and otherwise richly bless them. Judge in Scripture was one of the titles of a Ruler, and his functions included instructing the people in the way of righteousness.—Judges 2: 16-18; 1 Samuel 7: 15-17.

God's Will is Law

Fourth. At all times God's will should be the recognised law for the instruction and control of the subjects of His kingdom. God's will should govern all our actions now, even in such a case as James mentions. (4: 13-17.) We are to be sanctified by the truth, and God's Word is truth. We are exhorted to be His *obedient* children. Whatever He commands or prohibits must be law to us.—John 17: 17; 1 Peter 1: 14-16.

Similarly in the Kingdom over which Christ and the Church are to reign. There will be a well-defined Code, and in simple terms that Code will be God's will, with a view to His will being perfectly done by all when the Kingdom is delivered up to God, as described in 1 Corinthians 15: 24-28.

But Jesus the King will be the Lawgiver. To us His disciples now He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "*If a man love me, he will keep* my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14: 15, 23.) Similarly, when the Kingdom of God is set up in the earth as the sole Government over mankind, God's commandments, whatever they may then be in detail, will require everyone to acknowledge His beloved Son as Lord and King and fall in line with His administration.

But that will not be all.

Repentance and confession of sins will be in order, and acknowledgment of the atoning work accomplished by our Lord Jesus on the cross. Now, each of us who believes is grateful at being able to say, He died for my sins, and we give Him our love and our devotion in return. So in the Kingdom age: the rightminded will not haggle over any laws, precepts, admonitions, warnings, which the Lord chooses to impose. Then, as now, those who appreciate the absolute perfection of His requirements will come into harmony with them, and say, I delight to do thy will; thy law is within my heart.

A Thousand Years of Blessing

Fifth.—But think of a King and His trained assistants reigning for a Thousand Years! We read concerning the Church, the overcomers of the Gospel age (Revelation 20: 4, 6)—

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The resurrection of the Church is the first and chief resurrection, for they reign with Christ as His joint heirs. And the thousand years set apart by God for the work of dealing with the millions of the dead to be called forth were no doubt fixed as sufficient time in which to accomplish the enlightenment of all by the great Judge and His assistants.

As we look back we see that many kings in various countries have sought the welfare of their subjects. But always there were obstacles to be overcome, vested interests hard to shift, and general discontent at being deprived of accustomed evils. A reign of fifty or sixty years could accomplish much with the co-operation of all, but even so a good reign was often succeeded by an evil one, as occurred frequently in Israel, and all the evils would be back again in full force. What must it mean then of joy and hope when we learn that God's Kingdom on earth, for which so many have prayed, will not be upset by an opposition reign to follow and bring back again all the evils from which mankind have suffered in the past. And this not in one country or one section or one continent of the world, but, as Daniel foresaw, a kingdom that "filled the whole earth," a kingdom "which shall never be destroyed," "the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens."

In 2 Peter 3: 13 this kingdom of a thousand years is called "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." That is, new ruling powers and a new social order among men, different *from any in the past because therein will dwell* righteousness.

Righteousness dwelling there means that the dead whom the Lord Jesus will call forth from the graves will not come back to the evil conditions prevailing when they died. All will learn that a reign of blessing may be at the same time a reign of discipline and well defined restraints; indeed must be, for right and wrong cannot flourish together. The true Light will show them that the Lord has not set up His Kingdom and brought them back so they may again live selfish lives injurious to others.

The true Light will show them that they must face the fact of sin in the old order and in their old lives, and seek forgiveness for the numerous transgressions in their old lives. That is the import of the Scripture teaching that the New Covenant will be in operation, the Lord Jesus being the Mediator of that Covenant, through whom alone they may draw nigh to God and receive the divine forgiveness. And, in addition, the Holy Spirit will enable them to grasp the fact that holiness, truth, goodness bring more real joy than sin, error, and selfishness ever could do.

No one need miss any of the blessings offered. Satan will be bound that he may deceive the nations no more till the thousand years are finished. (Revelation 20.) The New Covenant Government is pictured (Revelation 21) as a glorious city of light sent down by God to be established in the earth. The holy city is symbolic of the Government of the Lord Jesus Christ, city being often used in Scripture as a symbol or figure of a government. Both the Church—the overcomers of the Gospel age—and the "ancient worthies"—the overcomers of previous

ages—will be busy throughout the thousand years overseeing and instructing the people. Having themselves lived on the earth during the period of sin, they will be able to enter into the difficulties of these now being brought face to face with the righteous Government and requiring to adjust themselves to it.

At the same time every individual will be left free to believe and serve God or to persist in perversity. For while there will necessarily be restraints on conduct, the evilly minded will still be free to indulge their own thoughts. And at the close of the Kingdom age, when Satan is loosed for a little season, any such evilly disposed ones, who despise the goodness of God and the blessings He offers, will be shown up in their true colours and will be removed from the scene. Then the Son will deliver up the perfect Kingdom to the Father; and an earth full of righteous, loyal and loving people will praise Him forever more.



For the Children

A PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE

When the Lord told Paul that no one would be allowed to set upon him to hurt him, it meant that they would not be permitted to do him bodily harm. But the Lord said nothing about restraining their tongues. They could talk against him or make complaints to the magistrates or other authorities without hindrance, if they wished.

We remember that in Paul's day the great rulers of the world lived in Rome and were known as the Cæsars. But the Cæsars, although having very great power and authority—for they were the head of the empire—were only men and could be in only one place at a time.

In governing the great Roman empire, therefore, they had to appoint other men to act for them in all the cities beyond Rome. These men thus represented the Cæsars, and were expected to act justly according to the laws of the empire. Some of them had greater authority than others, and accordingly had different titles. Some were kings, others proconsuls, governors, tetrarchs, captains, etc. The English word "deputy" in Acts 13: 7, 8, 12 stands for proconsul; and in Acts 19: 38 deputies for proconsuls.

Until now we have not told you that Athens and Corinth were cities in a part of the country of Greece known as Achaia. But that is so, just as Melbourne and Ballarat are cities in the State of Victoria as a part of Australia. It was necessary for the emperor of Rome to have someone represent him in Achaia, much the same as the governor in Victoria represents the King of England. Cæsar's representative in Achaia was called a proconsul, and his name was Gallio.

Gallio was amongst the best of the Romans of his day, and a very suitable man to be made an administrator of the law. Many of the governors, kings, etc., were unnecessarily stern, and often cruel and unjust. But Gallio was known to be of a more gentle disposition, with a strong sense of justice, fairness, and right dealing.

Gallio then, unlike most of those in authority, was one that all could come to, knowing that they would be properly received and their complaints listened to, providing they were proper complaints. This the Jews knew well, and they looked upon the arrival of such a man as Gallio as a grand opportunity to make complaints against Paul. They rightly reasoned that he would want to have the city and country free from causes of trouble and disturbances, and would desire peace and prosperity to flourish under his rule.

But they made a great mistake if they supposed that the proconsul would take sides in any dispute they might have with others in the city who also were entitled to justice as much as they, for there was no favouritism with Gallio: each would get from him what he deserved. Still they proposed to try to win his sympathy, hoping he would consider their cause just, and would order Paul to be imprisoned, expelled from the city, or perhaps even worse treated. Therefore the Jews "made insurrection" against Paul.

But "insurrection" is too strong an English word to use here. An insurrection is "an organized resistance to an established government," and these Jews were far from acting in that manner. The Revised Version reads, more exactly—"the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgment seat." All the Jews wanted was action by the government against one of their own race. Nothing is said about Greeks taking part in this.

The Jews could say that the peace and order of their synagogue had been upset by Paul when Crispus and others left, and that he was persuading men to worship God in a manner different from the law, but beyond this they could say nothing against him, for he had done nothing wicked in the city. If the great Cæsar himself had come and examined him he would have found no reason for condemning him. Paul was a preacher of the Gospel, and in this age the Gospel has no control over the laws of a country nor over their administration.

And the Jews were wrong in thinking that he said anything "contrary to the law." Paul said nothing against it. The Law had always told the Jews to look for the very things Paul was preaching, and because they refused to hear him, and denied the truth of what he said, they themselves were guilty of going contrary to the law—and the will of God. But the Jews did not believe themselves guilty of any-

thing, and they did not therefore see what convincing answers Paul would have for Gallio if they should charge him with doing things "contrary to the law."

There was also another thing they seem to have forgotten—the liberal disposition of the Greeks as a nation. We have seen how God's providence preserved the Greek language, so that, when the Gospel came to be preached, Paul and others found a ready and competent language in which to write their epistles to the Greeks. In the Greeks themselves God preserved a people who had been as a rule generous in their treatment of the Jews—from the conquest of the Persians by Alexander in 334 B.C., when Greece became the third of the universal empires of which Daniel had prophesied. Boys and girls do well to read the history of these universal empires, and see the remarkable fulfilments of Daniel's predictions.

Many Jews lived in Alexandria, and for their benefit and use the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek B.C. 283, and circulated all over the Empire, wherever Jews were found. Synagogues were built in many cities, and some Greeks, as well as Jews, attended to hear the Scriptures read and explained. The Greeks in general retained their idol worship, but were tolerant of all gods, including the God of the Hebrews, whom they ignorantly regarded as being much like their own gods. The many gods in the Court on Mars' Hill, and the willingness of the philosophers at Athens to hear Paul, illustrate this attitude.

The Jews must also have overlooked the great disadvantage they would be under in appearing before Gallio with their charge, for Gallio was a Roman of the aristocracy and a man of ability, and he knew that the Romans pursued the liberal policy previously followed by the Greeks, and let the people believe what they pleased, whether Jews or idolaters.

With so many things against them, there was but little hope of the Jews getting their way about Paul. But they were determined to try. No doubt Silas and Timothy and others of the Christians accompanied Paul. Jews in good numbers would be present, and some one amongst them would have been chosen to lay the charge before Gallio. Possibly some Greeks also would be there, watching the proceedings, and keenly interested in what Gallio would say.

If Gallio should say that Paul must be punished there would be great jubilation amongst the Jews, and any Greek onlookers would be satisfied with such a verdict. When the court was open, and Gallio was seated in judgment, the speaker for the Jews laid the charge against Paul. He said that "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law" (and probably more words than these).

We are not told who it was who spoke, but we think it may have been Sosthenes. For, when Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue and his family left it all to follow Paul, need arose for a successor, and Sosthenes seems to have been chosen. If Sosthenes was the chief ruler, then we may well think that he was the leader of the drive against Paul, and the responsibility for all of it was with him.

After the charge was made, Paul wanted to give his answer, but Gallio, by immediately addressing the Jews himself, showed that he considered it unnecessary to call upon Paul to make his defence. He said that if they could not tell him of some wickedness Paul had done in breaking the laws of Rome, he would not listen to any dispute about their religious beliefs; those were matters he would have nothing to do with; and he drove them away from the judgment seat.

So the case suddenly ended: it was over probably in a few minutes. Paul was free, and the anger of the conspiring Jews turned against the leader who had so bungled the business and drawn them on and made them look foolish before Gallio and the court. They realised that they had been "had" by being drawn into a matter so contemptuously regarded by the proconsul, and their anger broke out into violence.

Some misunderstanding of these incidents has arisen from two words in verse 17 that should not be there, for they are not contained in any of the oldest three Greek manuscripts, the Sinaitic, the Vatican 1209, and the Alexandrine. These two words are "the Greeks." Some copyist seems to have inserted them in a later manuscript, thus making the account read as though it were Greeks who attacked Sosthenes. It should read, "Then they all [referring to the Jews who had gathered under Sosthenes' leadership before the judgment seat] took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat." They all rushed at Sosthenes, and seizing him beat him before the judgment seat—not to death, exactly, but severely.

The action of the irate Jews was very quick against Sosthenes: it was sudden: they had not got out of the court before the punishment began. It may be that Gallio had retired, but in any case he knew what was going on, and his best wisdom at the moment was just to let the Jews fight it out among themselves. Perhaps also he thought, in true Roman fashion, that Sosthenes was getting what he deserved, and he would not call the soldiers. "Gallio cared for none of those things."

What the Jews therefore hoped to see applied to Paul (or something like it as a result of the judgment) was instead administered to their own leader. And although they were doubtless ignorant of the Lord's good promise to Paul which he heard in the vision, their action and its consequences serve to show the folly of fighting against God and of trying to injure those whom He is protecting.

Thus the enemies of the Gospel were restrained. Paul was free: was again delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; and the word of the Lord had free course "yet a good while" in Corinth. And as for Sosthenes, it would seem that he afterwards became a believer in Jesus, and a coworker with Paul.

Please read Acts 18: 12-17 for this Story.

Some officials under the Cæsars, Acts 21: 23; 25: 13; 27: 1; Luke 3: 1.

The Universal empires, Daniel 2.

Liberal treatment of the Jews, Herod rebuilt their temple, John 2: 20.

A centurion built them a synagogue, Luke 7: 2-10.

Another assisted them, Acts 10: 2, 22.

Synagogues "in every city," Acts 15: 21.

How the Law foretold Jesus
(a) As a Sacrifice, Leviticus 16.
(b) As Prophet to succeed Moses, Deuteronomy 18: 18, 19.
(c) As the new High Priest, Psalm 110: 4.

Paul's desires for deliverance and for the free course of the Gospel in Corinth, 2 Thessalonians 3: 1, 2.
Sosthenes with Paul, 1 Corinthians 1: 1.

UNCLE FRANK.

Unity of the Faith

FAITH is an exercise of the mind, and may be expressed as "belief in things unseen." We have faith in God whom we have not seen; that is, we believe there is a God. And, if we are instructed out of His Word, we believe many things about His character, His works, and His purposes. We believe He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him—not only seek Him in order to find Him, but seek Him in the sense of learning His will and bringing our lives into conformity to it. (Hebrews 11: 6.) Faith also connotes confidence. We have *faith or confidence in a friend because* we believe his character to be sound and trustworthy. We have confidence concerning things unseen because we have learned something of God's character and purposes and see in Jesus the manifestation of His love toward us.—Hebrews 11: 1; 1 John 3: 5-10.

Faith is not credulity: it is the acceptance of facts that have been made clear to our minds, and should be based on sufficient evidence. Our evidence concerning God is found in Nature—the heaven and the earth—which declares His glory and might, and in His Word, the Scriptures, which are a revelation sent through inspired prophets and apostles. The Scriptures *contain a history of the world which* we believe to be true.

Believe in Thine Heart

But faith—*in so far, at least, as it concerns spiritual things*—is not exclusively of the mind. Faith is an exercise of the heart. There may be mental assent to a proposition concerning the unseen which is coldly intellectual, with no effect upon the life. To be approved in God's sight, the things accepted by the mind as true, on account of the evidence contained in the Scriptures, must go deeper than mere intellectual acquiescence. The things believed must be grasped and acted upon by our whole being—appealing to our affections and causing a transformation in the life. Paul wrote that belief in the heart is necessary to salvation (Romans 10: 9, 10)—

> That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
>
> For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

By these statements we see that confession or public acknowledgment of what we believe in the heart is also essential. It is necessary to grasp the gospel teaching with the mind and to believe it in the heart. It is necessary also to be frank and open in acknowledging before men the goodness and love of God which have reached us and offered us salvation. When the heart is properly touched, the mouth will speak.

Faith as a System of Belief

That which God's Word tells us—*concerning Himself, His Son our Lord Jesus Christ,* His great plan of redemption, the calling out of people to believe, and the method by which salvation may be attained—is called THE FAITH. Taken as a whole it is a system of belief. God does *not* ask us what we wish to believe; He does *not* say everyone may believe what he likes or sees fit so long as he lives right. (For how can a man live right if his beliefs—his conceptions of God's will—are wrong?) The apostles, who were the Lord's inspired witnesses to the truth, were very emphatic in their exposure of error and in their advocacy of exact knowledge. Truth is one *harmonious whole, and should be believed in all its* parts.

Not only so, but the faith should be strictly adhered to and defended, as Jude said (vs. 3) ". . . it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once [literally, "once for all"] delivered unto the saints."

That faith, once delivered, has not altered, and it remains for every truth seeker to hark back to the inspired Word and learn THE FAITH there set forth. By diligence in studying the Scriptures we shall become more and more established in the faith, *although it is possible (and often happens) that,* with so many false teachings going about claiming to be true, one may for a time be misled in one direction or another, or may fail for a time to see the full import of some important passage of Scripture on a given subject.

By contending earnestly for the faith in so far as we understand it, both mind and heart are exercised—whether the discussion be with unbelievers, who attack the Christian faith in its every aspect, or with those who hold to God's Word as the authority, but sadly misconstrue its teachings on vital subjects. It is not always possible to convince those who differ, because some of those most assertive of their fidelity to God's Word are unwilling to look at and consider passages of Scripture which contradict their position. The apostle wrote to Timothy to charge the brethren *before the Lord "that they strive not about words* to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." (2 Timothy 2: 14.) Our aim should be, as Jude instructs us, to build one another up on that most holy faith which God has given us.—Verse 20.

Again, we read in Ephesians 4: 5 that there is "one faith." This of course has no reference to man-made creeds, whether of large or small denomina-

tions. Many unscriptural creeds have been formulated, consequently cannot be the "one faith."

Some even go so far as to approve a multiplicity of creeds, so that each person may choose the one best suited to his temperament or his conception of what should be. They are horrified at the thought of all thinking alike. But that is exactly what the Lord does want in His people; "if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."—Philippians 3: 15, 16.

No one suggests mental slavery because we all agree that two and two make four. That is exact knowledge that every one should want to possess. In Christ we can be equally well agreed, and at the same time free—free with the true freedom of obedience to Him and loyalty to His cause.

Oneness of Spirit

However, we sometimes hear it put this way: that Christians may differ in doctrine and yet have oneness of spirit; and perhaps after all it is not desirable to disturb a feeling of oneness in spirit by pointing out why certain views held are wrong.

On this we may say that if oneness of spirit means keeping silence when wrong doctrines are set forth, then all believers of the truth would need to be silent much of the time, because all around are the hosts of evil, and evil men and seducers professedly Christian are waxing worse and worse, by subtilty destroying the faith of many; and if unity of spirit is sought with all who profess Christ's name the result would be unity in error and the loss of union with Christ. Error is of the darkness, and we should have no fellowship with the works of darkness. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7.) And this fellowship one with another in the light automatically places us out of fellowship with the devotees of the dark.

The Holy Spirit of God is a Spirit of Light and not of darkness. And if His Holy Spirit fills our minds and hearts, there is accomplished the true unity. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and its mission is to guide the Lord's people into all truth. That it may fulfil its mission in us, we are necessarily separated from what is not truth. And if this means loss of friends and lifelong associates, let us rejoice that we are counted worthy thus to suffer on the behalf of Christ, who suffered the loss of all things for us. Let us be "strong in faith, giving glory to God." (Romans 4: 20.) Let us keep ourselves as closely as possible in line with the Apostle Paul, that we too at the end of our course may be able to say (2 Timothy 4: 7)—

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have KEPT THE FAITH.

♠ ♣ ♠

The Council of Nice and the Canon of Scripture

A PORTION of the skeptical class of the community are intelligent and somewhat candid, but unfortunately are not familiar with the subjects about which they talk, and hence are led into most egregious errors.

There is, perhaps, no statement more current among infidels at large, whether of high or low degree, than that the canon of New Testament Scripture was defined and settled by a vote of the bishops assembled at the Council of Nice, in the year A.D. 325. Over and over has this assertion been made and reiterated. And many infidels have settled it as one of the articles of their faith, and upon this basis proceed to deride Christians for their folly and superstition.

I recollect meeting this story in Marlboro', Mass., where it had been written out by a leading infidel, and printed in a newspaper. The writer declared that this account of the origin of the New Testament rested upon the authority of Papias, an early Christian bishop. I replied that there was one little difficulty about that story, namely, that Papias had been dead and buried 150 years or more before the Council of Nice was ever heard of; but suggested that, as they might have obtained their information from "the spirits," the fact of his death was no insuperable difficulty in the way of their theory. The skeptic arose to explain, and said the person alluded to was not the right Papias, but that the one he referred to was an "obscure Christian bishop of the fourth century." The writer replied that he was no doubt very "obscure," so obscure that *no one had ever heard of him before or since.*

It seemed desirable, however, that this statement about Papias should be looked up, and so, turning to a well-known infidel book written by an English author, and published at the office of what has long been the leading infidel paper of America, these words were found:

"The following fact, mentioned by Pappius in his 'Synodicum of the Council of Nice,' is, however, worth all the preceding, valuable and curious though they be. Pappius informs us of the manner in which the true Gospels were selected from the false at that memorable council: 'This was done,' says he, '*by placing all the books under a communion table*, and upon the prayers of the council, the *inspired* books jumped *upon the table!* while the false ones remained *under!*' What a test of *truth!* What a proof of inspiration! It is quite a *stirring* argument. Who, after this, will venture to doubt the authenticity of the Scriptures? . . . And if these councils are not to be depended upon, we have no means of ascertaining which of the immense numbers of Gospels,

Acts, Epistles, and Revelations, are really genuine, or if any are so. All is confusion, doubt, and uncertainty. A curious state of things when a book is said to be of *divine* origin."

Similar statements are found in numerous infidel publications, and are received with unquestioning confidence by infidels who taunt Christians with their credulity in believing the Bible. This story, as quoted above, was referred to as "an historical record translated from the Greek," in an article published in a Boston infidel paper.

Briefly stated, the Council of Nice did nothing of the kind during its sessions, as this question did not come up for consideration there. This foolish story occurs in a book entitled "Synodikon," which was printed from an old Greek manuscript, first discovered by John Pappus, a German theologian, but written no one knows when, where, or by whom; but as it refers to events which occurred in the year A.D. 869, we *know* it must have been written at least 544 years after the Council of Nice was held. Pappus probably discovered this romancing old document in some library, and printed it as a curiosity; and infidels have swallowed it whole, as if it were the authentic history of an eye-witness.

We propose now to show, briefly, the absurdity and falsity of the assertion that the New Testament was *concocted by a pack of priests, or an ecclesiastical* council.

Robert Phillip's "Life, Times, and Missionary Enterprises of John Campbell," the African Missionary traveller, contains (pp. 215-216) the following anecdote by Mr. Campbell:

I remember distinctly an interesting anecdote referring to the late Sir David Dalrymple, better known to literary men abroad by his title of Lord Hailes, a Scottish judge. I had it from the late Rev. W. Buchanan, one of the ministers of Edinburgh. I took such interest in it that, though it must be about fifty years ago since he told it, I think I can almost relate it in Mr. Buchanan's words:

"I was dining sometime ago with a literary party at old Mr. Abercrombie's, father of General Abercrombie who was slain in Egypt at the head of the British army, and spending the evening together. A gentleman present put a question which puzzled the whole company. It was this: 'Supposing all the New Testaments in the world had been destroyed at the end of the third century, could their contents have been recovered from the writings of the first three centuries?'

"The question was novel to all, and no one even hazarded a guess in answer to the inquiry. About two months after this meeting, I received a note from Lord Hailes, inviting me to breakfast with him next morning. He had been one of the party. During breakfast he asked me if I recollected the curious question about the possibility of recovering the contents of the New Testament from the writings of the first three centuries.

"'I remember it well,' said I, 'and have thought of it often, without being able to form any opinion or conjecture on the subject.'

"'Well,' said Lord Hailes, 'that question quite accorded with the turn or taste of my antiquarian mind. On returning home, as I knew I had all the writings of those centuries, I began immediately to collect them, that I might set to work on the arduous task as soon as possible.' Pointing to a table covered with papers, he said, 'There have I been busy for these two months, searching for chapters, half-chapters, and sentences of the New Testament, and have marked down what I have found, and where I found it, so that any person may examine and see for himself. I have actually discovered the whole New Testament from those writings, except seven (or eleven) verses, (I forgot which,) which satisfied me that I could discover them also. 'Now,' said he, 'here was a way in which God concealed or hid the treasure of his Word, that Julian, the apostate emperor, and other enemies of Christ who tried to extirpate the gospel from the world, never would have thought of; and though they had, they never could have effected their destruction.'

"The labor of effecting this feat must have been immense; for the gospels and epistles would not be divided into chapters and verses as they are now. Much must have been effected by help of a concordance. And having been judge for many years, a habit of minute investigation must have been formed in his mind."

The Ante-Nicene Library, published by T. & T. Clark, of Edinburgh, comprises some twenty-four octavo volumes, averaging about five hundred pages each. In these 12,000 octavo pages of printed matter, which stand on a shelf by my side as I write, are comprised nearly all the extant writings of some fifteen or twenty of the most eminent Christian authors who lived *before* the year A.D. 325, when the Council of Nice was convened. One of these volumes also contains such remains of those spurious, uncanonical and fictitious Gospels, Acts, etc., as have come down to us from early ages. In these twelve thousand pages, all of which are accessible to skeptics in the English translations, and which can be compared with the originals by those who are competent to do so, will be found an avalanche of evidence upon the question of the origin of the New Testament Scriptures.

These men, some of whom were cotemporary with the Apostles, and others who, as their immediate successors, were well acquainted with their associates and cotemporaries, give in these writings the most positive and unmistakable evidence as to the New Testament books which they received, and as to the estimation in which those books were held. They quote passage after passage and page after page of the same Scriptures that are quoted to-day and read in every Christian assembly. They quoted the books which we quote; they quoted them as we quote them; they received them as we receive them, and this, long before the Council of Nice or any other council had anything to say about the canon of the Scriptures.

Polycarp, who was martyred A.D. 155 or 156, after having served Christ eighty-six years, and who was, during some thirty years of his long Christian life,

cotemporary with the Apostle John, whose disciple he was, quotes in his epistle to the Philippians, nearly forty passages from our New Testament: Justin Martyr, who wrote about A.D. 140, or some forty years after the decease of the Apostle John, quotes again and again the very words which we now read in the New Testament; and in the writings of Irenæus, A.D. 178; Clement, A.D., 194; Tertullian, A.D. 200; and Origen, A.D. 230, are to be found 8,728 quotations from the New Testament, including *every book* which we *accept as canonical.**

Dr. Alexander Keith, in the sixth chapter of his "Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion," records the number of quotations from the New Testament which can be found in works which are still extant, by the writers whom we have named. He reports seven hundred and sixty-seven (767) passages quoted by Irenæus, from every book in the New Testament except the third epistle of John and the epistle of Jude; three hundred and eighty-nine (389) passages quoted by Clement from every book except the epistle of James and the second and third epistles of John, and the epistle of Jude; eighteen hundred and two (1802) passages, or, if repetitions are included, more than *three thousand* passages, quoted by Tertullian, from every book in the New Testament except the epistle of James, the third of John, the second of Peter, and the epistle of Jude; while the works of Origen yet extant, contain five thousand seven hundred and sixty-five (5,765) quotations from the New Testament, including every book contained therein, and *excluding all of the so-called apocryphal books, about which infidels sometimes talk so freely.* Many works of Origen and other authors of those times have perished, but it is probable that if Origen's entire writings had been preserved, if the New Testament had been lost, it could have been reconstructed from them alone.

These authors which we have named comprise but a portion of the authors who wrote *before* the Council of Nice; but these are sufficient to settle forever this question of the authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures.

The fact that councils, at a later date, published to the world lists of books which they received as of divine authority, may be important to the council, but is of no importance to the books themselves. A town meeting or a village caucus might publish to the world the volumes they receive as the statutes of the state or the general laws of the nation, but their publication of the fact has *no possible connection with the authority of those laws.* If they receive them as authoritative, well and good; if they do not receive them, other people do; and the government is abundantly able to enforce them. So this talk about councils and priests concocting the New Testament out of a jumbled-up lot of doubtful and questionable books, is an evidence of that skeptical credulity which is so abundant among infidels as a class.—*H. L. Hastings*, in *The Armory.*

*Tertullian, in the thirty-sixth chapter of his work, "Against Heretics," written about A.D. 200, when the parchment writings of the apostles, being less than one hundred and fifty years old, should, with ordinary care, have been in perfect preservation, thus speaks concerning the authentic writings of the apostles, then read in the churches: "Come, now, you who would indulge a better curiosity, if you would apply it to the business of your salvation, run over the apostolic churches, in which the very chairs of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, in which their own *authentic writings are read*, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally. Achaia is very near you, in which you find Corinth. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi, you have the Thessalonians. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get Ephesus. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have Rome, from whence comes, even into our hands, the very authority [of the apostles]."

The Field is the World

MAN'S INABILITY to predict the future was never more strikingly shown than in the last few months. The people of every nation have their eyes turned toward Abyssinia, and, particularly those who might be drawn into war, stand with fear awaiting the decision for or against armed combat. Yet not one person, however high in military or diplomatic circles, is able to say to-day what the decision will be on September 4, the date set for an important meeting of the League of Nations Council.

Always when considering the subject of war among the nations we need to give due weight to our Lord's words to the disciples. He said that "wars and rumours of wars" are NOT a sign of the end of the age. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." (Matthew 24: 6-8.) Reports of explorers in New Guinea tell of previously unknown tribes who fight one another on the slightest pretext and practice cannibalism, eating only half-cooked portions of the bodies of their enemies. The white races, who consider themselves superior to these blacks, have found it uneconomic to live as it were on fighting, and have recognized the usefulness of trade between nations at peace with one another. Yet wars have continued in one part of the world or another, with only short intervals between—permitting the horrors of war to fade somewhat from the memory, and allowing a new generation or two to rise without personal experience of these horrors.

To-day, only 21 years from the beginning of the "world war", of 1914-1918, the present generation

can look back on the Japanese conquest of Manchuria and other Chinese provinces, the Chaco war in South America, fighting in China of provincial generals and their armies among themselves and against Communism, insurrections in Mexico and Spain. Various European powers have extended their colonial possessions, peaceably if possible. But a prospect of war as near to Europe as Abyssinia reminds us again of the folly of involving the whole of Europe in unnecessary slaughter that one European power may conquer or be prevented from conquering a small and inoffensive people in North-east Africa.

The kingdom of Ethiopia dates from Bible times. It claims to have been converted to Christianity as a result of Philip's preaching to the "man of Ethiopia," as described in Acts 8: 26-39. And the claim is not unreasonable, since he was "an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure." (Verse 27.) As the eunuch had been up to Jerusalem to worship at the temple, he may have been a Jew, for Jews were high in the courts of Gentile rulers. Or, he might have been an Ethiopian proselyte.

But whether the conversion of the Ethiopians took place then or at a later time, the fact remains that the Gospel early spread into Egypt and north Africa, and Ethiopia would come under evangelization sooner or later. The form of Christianity underwent corruption, as we know, after the apostles fell asleep, acquiring different traditions in different countries. Mosheim says concerning Scripture Versions of the second century—"Among these versions, that which was distinguished by the name of the Italic obtained universally the preference, and was followed by the Syriac, Egyptian, and Æthiopic versions, whose dates it is impossible to fix with certainty."

Whether there is to be a war or not is no doubt controllable by Divine Providence. At the same time economic and other natural factors are entering in, as the effect of the climate upon the Italian soldiery, the ability to finance the purchase of artillery and equipment, etc.

Humanly speaking, one of the factors most likely to affect Italy's ambition will be the attitude of manufacturers and suppliers of war material, much of which is not produced in Italy. If these manufacturers and suppliers consider that Italy's credit is not good enough they may decline to supply raw material or finished goods which they fear may not be paid for. In that case Italy would be unable to carry on very far. The same result could be obtained by national enactments prohibiting the export of war material; but present appearances are that most nations will leave their merchants free to act at their own risk.

But, if we can not predict the future in regard to Ethiopia, we do know this, that a war in north-east Africa, or even a war on European soil, is not necessarily a sign of the end. A great war in Europe 21 years ago, which altered somewhat the map of Europe and resulted in changed forms of government in some of the nations of Europe, was thought by some to be the last war of the age, the end of civilization, the end of the world, etc., etc., but none of these expectations proved to be correct.

UNTOUCHABLES. A few persons who have been Christians, or who are of Christian descent, become ensnared in the religions of the East, and proceed to recommend them to Christians as being either "as good as" or "better than" the teaching of the Bible. The Hindoo religion is one of these, particularly on the score that it has some good "sayings."

But a few good sayings are hardly enough to prove a religion desirable. The Lord gave a good test when He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them"; fruits being actions and general principles as well as words. By this test the Hindoo religion is one to be rejected. Take, for instance, its caste system, concerning which we quote the following from the "Argus"—

India's Depressed Millions

The millions of Indians known as the "Untouchables," or depressed classes, constitute the lowest castes recognized as being within the Hindu religious and social system. They are not only the lowest in the religious and social scale, but with few exceptions they are at the bottom of the economic scale and are generally illiterate. In the villages they are segregated in a separate quarter, and eat food which would not be even touched by the other members of the community. They are required to carry bells or cry out, like the lepers of old, to indicate their presence to the caste Hindus, from whom they must keep at a distance of 64 ft. They are not allowed within the temples, and their shadows may not fall across the water in the tanks outside the temples. They may often be seen with spittoons tied to their breasts, so that they may not pollute the highway. Those of them who are not landless agricultural labourers, working for a small pittance, are engaged in the mines and the tanneries, where they perform the most unpleasant jobs. They are not allowed to draw water from the public wells in the villages, and the comparatively few of them who attend the schools are separated from the rest of the scholars. They are also denied the privilege of resort to the courts of justice.

The origin of the "untouchables" is obscure, and has given rise to considerable controversy, but the higher caste Hindus base their behaviour upon legends that have come down through the ages establishing the inferiority of this unfortunate class. In recent years a few members of the depressed classes have entered the Government services, but they are rigidly debarred from the army and the police. The number of the "untouchables" throughout India is estimated variously at from 50,000,000 to 60,000,000. In the British White Paper dealing with the constitution for India it is proposed to give the depressed classes special seats in the legislature, but Gandhi has refused to accept this proposal, believing that it would perpetuate the "bar sinister." He has been conducting a campaign with the object of bringing the "untouchables" into the Hindu fold, but has met with little success. Indeed, his life has lately been in danger in consequence of his championing of the restoration of freedom to the maligned caste. The "untouchables," failing better treatment by the higher caste Hindus, would prefer not to be transferred outside the protection of the British laws, which at least guarantee their lives.

Contrast this with the teaching of Christ concerning consideration for the poor! or even with the law given the Jews, who were compelled to treat the humblest labourer with kindness, remembering that they themselves had once been slaves in Egypt.—Deuteronomy 5: 14, 15; 24: 14-22.

Unexpected Results

We have heretofore in the N.C.A., and in the leaflet "Trial and Error," pointed out the difficulty experienced by statesmen and parliamentarians fore-

seeing how any given piece of legislation will work out in practice. Factors are often overlooked which, if considered in time, would have altered the nature of the legislation, the duties of commissions, etc.

The same is seen to have been true in regard to the Peace treaties, the constitution of the League of Nations, and sundry "pacts" entered into between nations.

There have been in the Mandates given to Japan, France, and Britain, some features not altogether satisfactory to the peoples affected by them, owing to unforeseen developments. The following from "The Palestine Weekly" gives an account of conditions in Palestine in 1929, ten years after the British Mandate was granted under the League of Nations, and 12 years after the Turkish forces in Palestine were defeated and driven out.

Catholicism in Palestine

Excitement ran high in Jerusalem several months ago when rumours arose and reports were spread that the Archbishop of Canterbury was coming to the Holy Land. He was, at the time, paying an official visit to the Greek Archbishop Chrysostom at Athens, and it was fully expected and hoped by the people of Palestine, particularly the Greek Orthodox element, that he would extend his journey to our shores also. Although he would have been heartily welcomed by all, it was the Greeks especially, who looked forward to his visit, because they hoped that he might be able to help them out of their difficulties which they had been encountering for some time.

Prior to the War the Greek Orthodox Community was, without a doubt, one of the strongest religious communities in the Holy Land, and was the envy of all other elements. It received annually, from Russia, Roumania and Greece a subsidy of some 4,000,000 gold francs—which readily accounts for the enviable position it enjoyed here. But, with the outbreak of the War, when foreign gold failed to find its way into the treasury, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate dwindled to a state of almost complete collapse, and up to the present day they have not succeeded in regaining their former glory and splendour.

Their many institutions, too, have suffered greatly. Of the 140 schools which they had maintained, and of the 83 schools whose religious education was controlled by them, not more than a score still exist. The Greek Hospital in Jerusalem, the Russian Compound, the lofty tower on the Mount of Olives—all once their property—have been practically abandoned.

An account of the struggles and misfortunes of the Orthodox Patriarchate would hardly be complete without making mention of the assistance rendered to them by the Palestine Government. It took in hand the management of the finances of the Patriarchate, and, by dint of the strictest economy, managed to succeed in paying off a large part of the debts.

But the Greeks have never risen to their former glory, and the position of supremacy amongst the religious communities of the Holy Land, which they previously enjoyed, has been usurped by the other important Christian element here, the Roman Catholics.

Ever since the arrival, some nine years ago, of Monsignor Barlassina as Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, the Roman Catholics have come to the fore in every scope of activity. Many new and fine institutions have been erected in the country. Worthy of particular mention among them is the Opera Cardinal Ferrari in Jerusalem, erected about three years ago. This building hardly requires an introduction to residents of the Holy City. Its school rooms, rest rooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums and cinemas have come to be recognized as the centre of much of the cultural and social activities of a large element of the local population—not only Roman Catholics, but other religions as well. Both the Dominicans and the Franciscans, the two leading Catholic Orders here, have carried on extensive programmes of expansion, including among other activities, the maintenance of many orphanages and parochial schools.

The most recent, and, indeed, the most essential factor in strengthening the Roman Catholic position in the Holy Land was the settlement of the long-standing Roman question by the signing of the Lateran Treaty between the Vatican and the Italian Government. The status of the Roman Catholics in Palestine assumed an entirely new aspect here. By this great political act of world significance, rightly called the "Chef D'oeuvre" of Mussolini's diplomacy, the Catholic Church in Palestine ascended to far greater power.

The effects of the Concordat are already far-reaching in their effect. France has always claimed special rights in the Catholic shrines of Palestine because of the vast number of religious orders which it maintains in the country. It was but natural to expect, therefore, that Italy's accord with the Vatican would bring forth a strong protest on the part of the French. Such was not the case, however. Not only has there been no protest, but the effect has been quite to the contrary. **It appears that the two great Catholic Powers have agreed to co-operate for the purpose of strengthening the position of their religion not only in Palestine, but throughout the Near East. Petty rivalries are to be laid aside by mutual agreement.** The main reason for the friction which had existed hitherto had been the fact that the highest positions in the Catholic church had been held almost entirely by Italians. It is understood, however, that with the new Lateran Treaty, the French will also obtain their due share of representation in church officialdom in the Holy Land.

Further evidence of the change in the status of Catholicism in Palestine is the fact that, through the efforts of the "Vatican City," the Patriarchate in Jerusalem is henceforth to be recognized by Great Britain as a kind of "legation." Hitherto, Monsignor Barlassina's position carried with it but semi-official diplomatic rights. But, beginning next September, a sort of "Nunciature" will be established here, with Monsignor Valery of Cairo as its first titular incumbent. But the latter will not spend all of his time in Jerusalem—most probably not more than the four summer months. During the remainder of the year he will be represented by a chargé d'affaires, who will maintain permanent headquarters here. Already a special palace for the Jerusalem "Nunciature" is under way, and, if present plans are carried out according to expectations, the Papal colours, yellow and white, will fly atop this palace before the coming winter.

Such startling and sudden developments in the Catholic world have naturally given rise to fantastic rumours of all sorts. Thus it is hardly surprising, that the report of a visit by the Pope to the Holy Land before the end of this year immediately found credence in local circles.

Whatever the final outcome may be, Jerusalem is again on the map, and has become a subject of paramount interest to all the world, just as it was thousands of years ago. History is being made here day by day.

An Important Consideration for God's people today, as all through the age, is the work God is doing in taking out a people for His name, and the part each of us is given in the carrying on of that great work. Having arrived at the "time of harvest," which occupies the end portion of the age, we look out and see the fields ripe to harvest. That is to say, we see many countries of the world, in which the Gospel has been preached more or less and the Word of God circulated. We see, as a result, millions and millions of professing Christians, the vast majority of whom, according to the parable (Matthew 13), are only imitation, not the real thing. They constitute the "tare" element. Many forces are at work to bind the tares into bundles. But His saints, who have and hold the truth, the Lord directs as His messengers to gather the "wheat" into His barn.

That is, He sends us who have the truth to seek out and find the truth hungry and supply them with the truth on the many doctrines which have been presented by false teachers, and thus to bring the Lord's devoted servants into oneness of fellowship, unity of knowledge and of the Spirit. That is the most important work going on in the world to-day, although the world in general is ignorant of it. As John said, "the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (1 John 3: 1.) The postal and travel facilities for circulating the truth are better than ever before. It remains for His people to take advantage of these facilities by devoting as much as they can of their time and means to the publication and circulation of the truth in printed form, by letter, and by word of mouth. Thus will the "harvest" be reaped.

Each one who receives the truth has the privilege of becoming a bearer of the truth to others, and letters received show that the privilege is appreciated.

The "Advocate" Sustaining Fund

Voluntary donations to this fund have been received as under, since our last report. As the "Advocate" is regularly published at a financial loss, it is obliged to depend upon the loving co-operation of its friends until it shall become self-sustaining. Let the good work continue!

81, £5; 82, 2/-; 83, 6/-; 84, 10/-; 85, 2/-; 86, £10; 87, 2/-; 88, 10/-; 89, £1; 90, 2/-; 91, £100; 92, 4/-; 93, £2:10:0; total for month, £120:8:0 ($585.14); previously reported, £141:12:9 ($688.22); total for 7 months, £262:0:9 ($1273.36). Of this total a portion was required to clear off the Deficit from 1934, the amount remaining for use in the work for this year being £175. The expenses of the Advocate Sustaining Fund for the whole of this year to December 15, 1935, are estimated at £400 ($2000); thus leaving £225 to be accomplished between August 1 and December 15, or an average of about £56 per month for the 4 months.

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Voluntary Donations, as under, have been received since our last report for the spread of the Good Tidings concerning the Grace of God in Jesus, our Mediator and Intercessor under the terms of the New Covenant.

38, 7/6; 39, 8/3; 40, 5/-; 41, 10/-; 42, £1; 43, £20; total for month, £22:10:9 ($109.53); previously reported, £103:8:1 ($502.54); total for 7 months, £125:18:10 ($612.07). The estimated expenses of the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1935 amount to £200 ($1000); though more than this sum can be beneficially utilized should it be available.

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The New Birth

(Editor's Sermon, Reprinted from N.C.A. March, 1920.)

THE SCRIPTURE teaching on the subject of the New Birth is rightly regarded by most believers as being among the fundamentals of the Christian faith. As the natural birth represents the beginning of our natural life, so the illustration of birth is used in the Scriptures to stand for the beginning of a new life as it pertains to the Christian. It may therefore readily be acknowledged that, as the teaching of the New Birth has to do with the very beginning of our new life, it is indeed fundamental, and that it is very important that we have a clear conception of what the Scripture teaches about it.

If we look abroad to see what others have said upon this vital subject, we find a curious divergence of view. On the one hand, some would wish us to understand that the New Birth has to do with the believer's conversion from Satan to God; on the other, we are asked to believe that the New Birth is not at all an illustration of conversion, but only of that change which will occur when those who have been faithful unto death are ushered into the heavenly conditions and made like our Lord. Each party contends for its view in opposition to the other; each holds that it alone has the correct view of the subject, alleging that the other is very incorrect and misleading, and therefore very detrimental to the progress in grace and knowledge of the believer in Jesus.

On account of this conflict of opinion we are all the more driven to an independent examination of the Scriptures, there to seek and to find (if we may do so by the aid of the divine Spirit) exactly what *they* say about the New Birth. As we do this, we find that the figure of birth is used in the Bible to illustrate facts connected with both the present and the future life of the Christian. The Scripture evidence to be presented shows that both the contestants already mentioned are partly correct, but that both unfortunately vitiate so much of the truth as they have on this subject by their failure to recognize that in the Scripture the New Birth is applied more widely than to the point that particularly appeals to them. Moreover, this vitiation of their partially correct position is not lessened by the special pleading that each of the parties has to do in order to try to make the Scripture agree with its own theory.

Newborn Babes

The first evidence to be considered is in the words of the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 1: 22, 23)—

> Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:
> Being BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

In this passage the phrase "born again" is a translation of *anagennao, ana* signifying repetition ("again"), and *gennao* signifying either begettal or birth, and being translatable in the one sense or the other according to the sex of the parent mentioned in any given connection. The Authorized Version does not always recognize and follow this usage; but in the present passage, because God (with whom the thought of masculinity and fatherhood are invariably associated) is mentioned as the parent, the Revised Version translates in verse 23, "having been *begotten again.*"

Although the Revised Version translation of this passage is obviously an appropriate one, it must be equally obvious that the present condition of the believers spoken of as "having been begotten again" is not illustrated by the antenatal period which in the natural order intervenes between begettal and birth, because the child begotten but not yet born cannot purify its soul by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, nor can begotten but as yet unborn children "love one another with a pure heart fervently." It is quite evident, therefore, that it is right to speak of these children of God as having been born again as well as begotten again. And so the Apostle addresses them—

As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.—1 Peter 2: 2, 3.

Here the intention of the Apostle to indicate that the New Birth is an illustration of the present experience of believers is so plain as to be unquestionable. In the natural order a babe must be born before it can desire the milk which is to nourish it; similarly, the Christian must be born again before he can desire the sincere milk of the Word which is to sustain his newly-begun life as a child of God.

How is this new life begun? may well be asked. It is begun by the implantation into the mind of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, "the word which by the gospel is preached unto you," says one Apostle (1 Peter 1: 23, 25); and another informs us, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth."—James 1: 18.

This would seem somewhat arbitrary, as though the whole matter depended solely on the will of God, and none other was concerned in it. Yet Peter says the word "was preached," thus indicating the use of at least one human instrumentality, and Paul explains that "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3: 26), showing that in some manner the faith of him who hears the preaching of the divine Word is instrumental in the starting of his life as a newborn babe, a child of God.

Considering the statements of Peter, James, and Paul, together, as must be done since they all relate to the same thing, the explanation seems to be this—The gospel is preached, perhaps in a formal sermon to a congregation, perhaps informally to a few or only to one listener, perhaps by means of a letter to a friend, or by the printed page of the Scripture itself, or of some helpful book, paper, or tract explaining the Scripture. One "hears" with the ear of his mind that which enters through the fleshly ear or eye, as the case may be. The gospel truth thus heard is received as a message from God, is believed, and is acted upon. The hearer who thus receives the word of the incorruptible seed into his heart and mind realizes that he is travelling in the wrong direction, that he is going away from God instead of toward Him, so he repents, turns about (is converted), and sets his face to travel toward God instead of away from Him, rejoicing in faith in the blood shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of his sins and to make him acceptable to God. From the moment of that repentance, turning about, and exercise of faith, the new life is begun, the believer has become one of the "newborn babes" described by Peter, the New Birth has taken place, he has been born again.

That the faith of the individual is necessary in order to his becoming a child of God is further shown by the following (John 1: 12, 13)—

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Apostle Paul, without using the term New Birth, intimates that it has occurred on the entry of the believer into Christ by faith, when he says—

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—2 Corinthians 5: 17.

That one becomes a "new creature" or "newborn babe" in Christ does not mean that the substance of his fleshly body had been in any way altered. The believer is in that respect not different from what he was the moment before he became a believer. Yet there is something "new" about him; in some respect he is not the same as he was before he became a believer. He has been *renewed in the spirit of his mind by the operation of the begetting seed*, the Word of truth which he has heard, and in which he has exercised faith. This *new mind* is the start of the *new life* in the believer, and if it be not quenched it will profoundly affect his entire manner of conduct from the moment he becomes the newborn babe until he finishes his course. So the Apostle says—

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.—Ephesians 4: 23, 24.

. . . but ye be transformed by the renewing of your mind.—Romans 12: 2.

Growth of the Newborn

The newborn babe in Christ is not always to remain in the infantile condition; he is to "grow," as the Apostle expresses it, "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3: 18.) This growth will of course be a growth of the new mind, which for the present is the "new creature." As the natural babe requires food so that it may grow, so does the babe in Christ. Of what sort is the spiritual food, which will nourish the new mind, and where shall it be obtained? The nourishment for the "new creature" is found in the storehouse of the Scriptures.

The first nourishment that the babe is able to take is milk; and so the Apostle says the newborn babes in Christ should "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." By the "milk of the word" may be understood the less profound, the elementary teachings, such as those of repentance, faith, baptisms, etc., called in Hebrews 6 the foundation principles. These will serve for a while to nourish the young Christian, and to establish in him the necessary elements that will make for further growth. But, as the babe in the flesh progresses to solid food, so must the babe in Christ progress, "leaving the principles," as he becomes able to eat and digest the "strong meat," which also is to be found in the Word, and nowhere else. By this he did not mean leaving the first principles in the sense of forsaking or abandoning them, but leaving them in the sense that one has learned and digested them, and is ready for other food; or, as a student leaves the multiplication table to take fractions, algebra, etc., always making use in his later studies of the things learned in his primary studies; or, as a builder leaves the foundation to proceed with the erection of the super-

structure which in its turn is based on the foundation, or it would be unstable. The Apostle was very emphatic about this, and deemed it necessary to rebuke some who had not made the growth he had a right to expect of them as Christians. It is worth while to read his words in full, and to take to heart any lesson they may contain for ourselves to-day. He said (Hebrews 5: 12-14)—

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Exercise Assists Growth

It is impossible to mistake the Apostle's meaning in the foregoing words. Every one who has been begotten by the incorruptible seed of the divine Word, and has become a newborn babe in Christ, MUST GROW, or he will fall into a decline of spiritual health from which it will be difficult, and may even be impossible, to recover. The two essentials to physical growth are food and exercise. Similarly, the two essentials to spiritual growth are stated by the Apostle to be food and exercise. As the babe in Christ progresses from soft to hard food and strong meat of the Word, so must he exercise his senses (or, rather, "faculties"), in order to get the full benefit of the hearty food he has eaten, and in order to be able to continue in that spiritual state which is capable of digesting the strong meat. Otherwise he will soon have to go back to the infantile diet. When a person of some years has to take to milk diet, he is considered an invalid. When the Christian who has been some time in the way has to go back to spiritual milk food, he is a helpless babe, whereas he ought to be a teacher.

The exercise to be taken by the Christian is of two sorts. He must preach the Word of truth to others, acting as God's ambassador, and he must practise the Word constantly in his own daily life. Both these exercises he must take continually, or he will fall short of making acceptable growth. Regarding the first sort of exercise the Apostle says to the new creatures (2 Corinthians 5: 17-20)—

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things [i.e., all these "new things"] are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Having been reconciled to God through the mediatorship of His Son, unto us God has committed the word of reconciliation. He has put it upon all the reconciled ones as a duty and responsibility to act as His ambassadors to beseech others to become reconciled as we have been, and this is one form of the exercise our senses must have by reason of use if we are to grow.

Concerning the other form of spiritual exercise we read (1 John 5: 4)—

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

To overcome the world means to overcome its attractions and its spirit or disposition which naturally is in every one of us. To overcome the world means to gain the victory over "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." These are "*not of the Father*," but are "*of the world*." (1 John 2: 16.) This form of spiritual exercise must also be assiduously practised by the one born of God, so that he may grow.

Proper attention to suitable spiritual food and exercise of the spiritual faculties will assure the growth of the newborn babe from infancy to maturity. In view of this the aged Apostle John said (1 John 2: 12-14)—

12 I write unto you, LITTLE CHILDREN, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. [Forgiveness of sins is the beginning of Christian experience.]

13 I write unto you, FATHERS [Christians long in the way], because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, YOUNG MEN [Christians who have made progress from the infantile stage], because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, LITTLE CHILDREN, because ye have known the Father.

14 I have written unto you, FATHERS, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, YOUNG MEN, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

From the scriptures already cited it is clear that the new birth is the new life begun when one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, and that the growth of the newborn babe by means of food and exercise to maturity is an illustration of growth of the Christian in grace, knowledge, and love in the present life.

But this is not the sole scriptural use of the illustration of birth. It has another application, which must by no means be overlooked.

Born of the Spirit

Early in our Lord's ministry there came to Him by night an eminent man, Nicodemus—a Pharisee and a *ruler of the Jews*. (John 3: 1, 2.) The Pharisees were the most numerous and influential of the several sects at that time in existence among the Jews. They believed in the Kingdom, they looked for the Messiah, and some of them were very self-righteous—so much so that both John the Baptist and our Lord freely denounced them as hypocrites. The general character of the Pharisees has become so well known, through the descriptions of them in the New Testament, that their name is now used to describe any person of similar traits, including Gentiles who have not the remotest association with the Pharisees as a religious sect. However, not all the Pharisees were knaves; some of them were sincere, and Nicodemus appears to have been one such.—John 7: 46-52; 19: 38-40.

What may have been in Nicodemus' mind as a subject for inquiry does not appear. He had got only

so far as to utter his polite and complimentary preamble, which was an acknowledgment of the divinity of our Lord's mission, when the Master took the initiative, saying (verse 3)—

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—John 3: 3.

Nicodemus, greatly astonished, thought our Lord referred to a repetition of the natural, fleshly birth, and asked how could this be done when one was old. (Vs. 4.) In reply, our Lord showed that He was referring to birth of quite another sort (vss. 5-7)—

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of [literally, "out of"] water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of [literally, "out of"] the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of [literally, "out of"] the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew [literally, "from above"].—John 3: 5-7, R.V.

Here our Lord spoke of the beginning of a new life; and He did it in such a way as to show that, in part at least, He referred to something very different from the present-life experience referred to by the Apostles Peter and Paul when they wrote of "newborn babes" and "new creatures."

Born of Water

In saying to Nicodemus that one who wished to enter the kingdom of God must (for one thing) be born of (literally "out of") water, our Lord was evidently referring to the mission of John the Baptist, whereof water baptism by immersion, in which the candidate was quite literally born "out of water," was a very prominent feature.

John the Baptist came with a special message to the Jews, to prepare them to receive the teaching which Jesus would give concerning the spiritual part of the Kingdom and entry into it. Our Lord must therefore have meant Nicodemus to think of the reality symbolized by John's ceremony of immersion. The reality was repentance and remission of sins; and, since John's mission was not at all to Gentiles, but only to Jews, the sins to be remitted would be particularly the transgressions of the children of Israel against the Law Covenant. (Matthew 3: 1-11; Acts 19: 4.) That repentance and remission of sins were necessary preliminaries to entrance into the kingdom of God would doubtless be readily understood by Nicodemus, who would also quickly apprehend our Lord's reference to these under the figurative expression, "born out of water."

The conversation proceeds as though this were the case, for we read nothing more about "born out of water" than the one unelucidated use of the phrase in verse 5. The remainder of our Lord's discourse is devoted to the explanation of "born of the Spirit." "Born of water," as applicable to the Jews of that time and up to the close of their period of special favour about 3½ years after our Lord's crucifixion, refers to present life experiences. In this the figure of birth is similar to the "newborn babe" and "new creature" experience of all believers (Jewish and Gentile) since the Gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles.

What We Shall Be

The present experience of new birth, infancy, growth, and maturity in the Christian life is by no means all that is in store for those who make sure their calling and election to joint heirship with Christ in the glorious Kingdom. We are even now children of God, says the Apostle (1 John 3: 2)—

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

A new life is to begin for the joint heirs when they are raised from death, changed into Christ's likeness. The details of this are not yet made known to us, but the main fact is that we are to be "like him," who was put to death flesh, but raised again spirit; and of whom on His resurrection day it was said—"Thou art my Son; THIS DAY have I begotten thee."—Psalm 2: 7; Acts 13: 33; Romans 1: 4.

Concerning this promised new life the Apostle Paul explains that, whereas we are now flesh beings, we are to become spirit beings, because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Of the resurrection of the overcomer, he says—"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."—1 Corinthians 15: 44-50.

The new life to be begun in the joint heirs with Christ when at their resurrection they are made spirit beings like their Lord is what our Lord referred to when He said to Nicodemus—"Except a man be born of . . . the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." To show that He was not in this case speaking of a change of mind or disposition, but of bodily substance, He said—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The two substances are quite separate and distinct each from the other; there is no mixture or amalgamation possible. That which is born of the flesh is not spirit; and that which is born of the Spirit is not flesh; each remains by itself apart from the other.

Further to show something of what it means to be born of the Spirit and become a spirit being, our Lord said (John 3: 8)—

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

So was our Lord after He had been born of the Spirit (made alive as a Spirit Being in His resurrection). He appeared suddenly to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and after breaking bread and blessing it and giving to them, their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; then He "vanished out of their sight." (Luke 24: 13-31.) He came and went like the wind, manifesting Himself in various ways after His resurrection; but the disciples were quite ignorant as to whence He came and whither He went. He had been with them as a flesh being among flesh beings, "in the days of his flesh." (Hebrews 5: 7.) After His resurrection He took steps to make them

understand that the "days of his flesh" were ended, and that He had become a Spirit Being, very different in substance from what He had been before, just as He had said to Nicodemus—"That which is born of the flesh IS flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit IS spirit."

Nicodemus was still much puzzled after all these explanations, and said—"How can these things be?"

Replying first with another question, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" the Lord showed Nicodemus that, learned though he was, there was still truth to be revealed, and He (Jesus) had come to declare it, for He had been sent by the Father for that purpose (John 3: 11, 13)—

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man.

The words "which is in heaven" are not found in the most ancient Greek MSS.

Whether or not Nicodemus was convinced by our Lord's subsequent statements on this occasion, as recorded in John 3: 14-21, is not stated, but that he did become a disciple of Jesus sooner or later is indicated by John 7: 50-52; 19: 39-42.

Having now examined the figurative use of birth, and having seen that birth is used in Scripture to illustrate not only the experience of becoming a Christian, but also that great change promised Christ's joint heirs in their resurrection, when they shall begin their new life as spirit beings, let us be glad and give thanks to God for the helpful lessons to be learned from attentive contemplation, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, of this most felicitous illustration. In particular, let our minds be directed in the way proper for the renewed mind. Let us desire not only the "sincere milk," but also the "strong meat" of the Word, so that we may grow thereby in grace, knowledge, and love, in the likeness of God our Father and of Jesus Christ our Elder Brother. Let the Christian virtues be exhibited by us in the beauty of true holiness. So shall we by God's grace progress toward the time when divine power shall bring to pass that other New Birth for which we look, when we shall be like Him, and shall see Him as He is.

Questions and Answers

Mediator and Advocate

Question.—It is claimed by some that God dealt with Abraham without the intervention of a mediator, and that the Church of the Gospel age, prospective heirs of the Abrahamic promise, therefore require no mediator, though it is said "we do need an advocate." Is this Scriptural?

Answer.—In "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," chapter "Salvation and the Covenants," reasons are given for believing that God dealt with the patriarchs on New Covenant terms *in anticipation* of the ratification and inauguration of the New Covenant. That this is so is evidenced by our Lord's words (John 8: 56)—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." The ratification of the New Covenant was accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus on the cross of Calvary, His blood being, as He said, the blood of the covenant; and its inauguration by the Holy Spirit's ministration began at Pentecost. Every reader is requested therefore to read that chapter of "Bible Talks," and compare its conclusions with the Scriptures, to see whether the teachings there advanced are so. Abraham and all of us of every age and clime, being descendants of Adam born subject to his condemnation and estrangement from God, require the services of Jesus Christ to act as Mediator, to reconcile us to God. So far from the Gospel age church being exempt from this requirement, the Apostle lays special emphasis upon our need of reconciliation and upon the mediatorship of Jesus Christ to accomplish it for us; he also shows that Jesus Christ as Mediator of the New Covenant is the *prime necessity* to insure that the Gospel age church shall receive the eternal inheritance of the High Calling. Here are his inspired words, addressed to the Gospel age church—

And YOU, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he RECONCILED

In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight.—Colossians 1: 21, 22.

And FOR THIS CAUSE he is the Mediator of the new testament [covenant], that . . . they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.—Hebrews 9: 15.

The defect in the reasoning used by the questioner is not at all hard to see. Thus:

If it be assumed that there was no mediator between God and Abraham, and that God entirely ignored in his dealings with Abraham the position to which His Son was in due time to be exalted as Mediator between God and men; and if it be further assumed that the members of the Gospel age church, which in Galatians 3: 29 is called "Abraham's seed," do not need a mediator because it is supposed that there was no mediator between God and Abraham, all this being assumed because there is no allusion in so many words to a mediator between God and Abraham, then the same reasoning would apply to the Advocate, and the fact that there is no allusion in so many words to an "advocate" for Abraham would be bound to prove that the members of the Gospel age church need no advocate any more than they need a mediator. Then where would the questioner be? His style of reasoning proves too much—more than he himself would wish it to prove.

The people who build upon such reasonings do so only in order to support their theory that somehow or other they were in such a condition of mind that they did not need to be reconciled to God. How the power of Satan blinds men to the realization of their own natural state and causes them to ignore the plainest possible words of the Apostle, such as

those cited above and many more of like tenor! Like Israel of old, they, going about to establish their own righteousness, ignore the righteousness which is of God, and the necessary reconciliation with Him through Jesus Christ the Mediator, which is the only way of obtaining that righteousness. Will it be counted presumptuous if we adopt the Apostle's language and say that our heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they might be saved? This *is* our sincere desire, so we feel that we may express it.

Thanks be to God, we have over us the one Mediator, appointed to act between God and all men who would come unto Him, and, having entered into the New Covenant with God by acceptance of the Mediator's sacrifice, we have also the benefit of Him as our Advocate or Intercessor.—1 Timothy 2: 4-7; John 14: 6; Hebrews 9: 15; 1 John 2: 2.

Priests Upon Thrones

Question.—In Hebrews 7: 12 we read that the priesthood was "changed," and in Hebrews 5: 10 that Christ is "an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." From this should we not take it that Christ is the only One who has a right to be called a Priest, and that Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy have no right to the title? The Law Covenant had many priests, but the New Covenant has One—Christ our Mediator.

Answer.—The "order of Melchisedec" is applied to Christ's position, because Melchisedec was a king as well as a priest, while the Levitical priests were priests only, and not kings. Our Lord Jesus is the only High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, but there are also under priests, as indicated in 1 Peter 2: 9—"*ye are a royal priesthood,*" and Revelation 20: 6. ". . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." The statement of Hebrews 7: 23, 24, that the Law had many priests, but Christ continues ever, refers to high priests, since the high priests died and had successors, and does not exclude Christian believers from the position of priests under Christ the only High Priest of our profession.—Hebrews 3: 1.

The mistake of Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and others on the subject of the Christian priesthood is that they make the priesthood a clerical *class,* whereas the Lord's arrangement is that every believer is a priest. When the saints receive their reward in the kingdom, they will then be priests upon thrones, and therefore priests "after the order of Melchisedec," but not High Priests.

Keturah

Question.—Abraham had a wife named Keturah. Do the Scriptures authorize us to consider her, in connection with the allegory in Galatians 4: 22-31?

Answer.—The Scriptures nowhere authorize the consideration of Keturah as a figure of a covenant. So far as Keturah herself is concerned, she was never a wife, as Sarah was; she was not even a servant of a wife, as Hagar was the maid of Sarah, and as the Law Covenant has been in some sense a servant of the New Covenant. (Genesis 16: 1-3; Hebrews 8: 4, 5; 10: 1; 1 Corinthians 10: 1-11; Galatians 3: 24.) The word translated "wife" in Genesis 25: 1 is *ishshah,* and it has a very wide range of application, both good and evil, and is so used in the Scriptures. In Genesis 16: 3 is found an illustration of the range of this word, in that both Sarah and Hagar are described as "wife," though it is most obvious that the best sense of the word could not have applied in Hagar's case. In 1 Chronicles 1: 32 Keturah is called Abraham's concubine. The word translated "concubine" in this place is *pilegesh,* and is so rendered in its more than 30 occurrences. It has no other meaning than that given in the text. These two passages (Genesis 25 and 1 Chronicles 1) are the only places where Keturah's name is mentioned, and they undoubtedly indicate that her position in Abraham's household was not that of an honoured wife; on the contrary, she was one of several concubines.

The Apostle in Galatians 4 instructs us that Hagar was a representation of Jerusalem in Palestine, which stood for the Law Covenant, whose children were in bondage. He also instructs us that Sarah was a representation of the "*Jerusalem which is above,*" the new Jerusalem being called, figuratively, the "mother of us all," referring to God's people during the Gospel and Kingdom ages. This Jerusalem, now "above," is to "come down" to earth and reign over men during the Thousand Years. As other Scriptures show that the affairs of men are to be governed by the New Covenant arrangements during the Thousand Years, it is quite simple to see that the heavenly Jerusalem, our "mother," which is to "come down" (Revelation 21: 2), is the New Covenant. Although the Apostle instructs us to regard Hagar and Sarah as illustrations respectively of the Law and New Covenants, he says nothing as to Keturah being the representation of any covenant whatsoever, neither does any other inspired writer.

Since the New Testament does not teach us to regard Keturah as a type of a covenant, it is best for us *not* to take it upon ourselves to do so. For, if Keturah, why not Abraham's other concubines, of whom he had several? (Genesis 25: 6.) It is best to take the Apostle's beautiful allegory in Galatians 4: 22-31 as he gave it.

Desolate Without a Husband

Question.—If Jerusalem "above" (Galatians 4: 26) is the New Covenant, which I believe it is, in what sense was she desolate and without a husband (vs. 27)? See also Isaiah 54: 1.

Answer.—The New Covenant ministration of life was intended from the beginning (from the foundation of the world—Revelation 13: 8; 17: 8) to be the means by which the children of God should be produced. But for a long time, like Sarah, she was desolate in the sense of being childless. (Genesis 17: 17.) Meanwhile the Hagar or Law Covenant produced some children, but they were not such as could be recognized as heirs of God. From Pentecost onward the Sarah or New Covenant began to produce children, and then the Law Covenant and its progeny were definitely disowned, and were cast out of the divine household, for they cannot be heirs with the children of the freewoman, or New Covenant. When

the work of the Gospel and Kingdom ages is completed, the children of the New Covenant will be seen to be more, many more, than the children of the Law Covenant were.

That the New Covenant is meant in Isaiah 54: 1-8, is indicated by verse 13 of the same chapter, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." Our Lord refers to this very prophecy, and applies it to those who heard His teaching—"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man [i.e., every Jew] therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6: 45.) Jesus was the Teacher whom God sent under the New Covenant to teach the deeper truths set forth in the Gospel, and thus give them the "great peace" referred to by the prophet. Under the New Covenant a peace is given which the Law could not give—"peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Romans 5: 1.

For the Children

PAUL, APOLLOS, AND THE TENT MAKERS

After about eighteen months of teaching in Corinth, Paul said farewell to the brethren and sailed toward Syria. Priscilla and Aquila went in the same ship. Syria, as you know, was a country north of Palestine, and about seven hundred miles from Corinth.

On the way the ship called at Ephesus, a large and important city on the west coast of Asia Minor, and noted for the great temple erected in honour of the goddess Diana. As Paul seems to have had at least one Sabbath day there, he went into the Synagogue, according to his custom, and "reasoned with the Jews." But as Luke, who has written the whole story of the Acts, does not record any of his words for us, we think he must have said much the same things as he had said to others, proving by their Scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth whom their nation crucified was the Son of God and their Messiah.

The impression he created at the time seems to have been favourable, for the Jews asked Paul to stay longer with them, that they might hear more of his teaching. But "he consented not." He therefore took his farewell of them also, and promised that if God were willing he would "return again" unto them. And we shall see that he was indeed led of God to visit Ephesus many months later.

When farewelling the Jews he also farewelled Aquila and Priscilla, for their going on the way with Paul does not seem to have been a part of his missionary arrangements. More likely they went to Ephesus in pursuit of their ordinary labours of tent making; but all the while and everywhere speaking out the great message of the Gospel as much as they were able.

We may well believe these two Christians were earnest listeners to all the teaching the great apostle would give them in those happy months they had of his company while in Corinth, and later on we shall see how serviceable that knowledge was in helping a great and eloquent Jew who came to Ephesus after Paul had gone.

There, then, at Ephesus the little company which sailed together from Corinth separated; for Paul and his helpers took ship and after a long run reached Cæsarea on the coast of Palestine. His next move was to visit Jerusalem, where he would meet with whatever Apostles were in the city, as well as other Jewish believers.

What words Paul said to them we do not know. We are only told that "when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up [i.e., from Cæsarea to Jerusalem], and saluted the church," he then went on to Antioch in Syria, three hundred miles north of Jerusalem. It was from Antioch that he had begun the long journey years before, and it was natural that he should come back to the headquarters to report, for all the Christians there were sympathetic and deeply interested in his work.

But now, again, we are told nothing of what happened when he arrived; but we can pretty well guess what did. It would be just the same as happened when he returned there after his first journey had ended. Then Paul told them of "all that God had done with them," and especially that He had received the Gentiles into the church as well as the Jews. So we may ask, Why not tell them of all that God had done with them on the second great journey? Would not they be just as anxious and interested to hear all this after the second journey as after the first? It will be interesting and helpful then if, for a while, we see in our minds all those Christians gathered together in Antioch, and Paul in the midst rehearsing to them all the story of their travels just ended.

All eyes would be fixed on Paul, and all ears attentive to his words. And how glad he would be to tell them of all the ways by which God had saved them from their enemies and spared their lives and even directed them in all their goings. What pleasure he would have in telling them that when they were at Troas, and had come to what seemed a "dead end," not knowing where next to go, God sent him the vision of a man from Macedonia calling out, "Come over into Macedonia, and help *us*." So they were relieved, and thus carried the Gospel into Europe for the first time.

And that story of their being gaoled in Philippi, down in a dungeon with feet in stocks, and how wonderfully the Lord delivered them at midnight! And again how he (Paul) was saved from bodily injury or even death at the hands of the angry Jews of Thessalonica when by a simple slip in the arrangements for his escape he might have fallen into their hands:

but there was no slip! And how these same Thessalonian Jews, wild with rage that he had escaped them there, came down to Berea after his life or freedom and—missed him again! And when to these were added the stories of his time at Athens and Corinth, the whole narrative would be beaming with interest and clearly showing how the Providence of God was guiding and preserving them all the way.

But perhaps the best part of the whole story would be when Paul told them of the many from amongst the Gentiles (the heathen) who became believers, and turned from their idols to serve the living and true God. And those Christians in Antioch knew well what that meant for the Gentiles. For many of them in Antioch were Gentiles themselves and had been idolaters, and knew by experience what a wonderful change is made in a person's life when he believes the Gospel. When they were idolaters, their lives were full of sin and wretchedness, superstition, fear, and more or less squalor. But belief of the gospel delivered them from all that, and brought to them the heavenly blessings of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

And now they were hearing from Paul of many Gentiles far away who had received the same blessing of deliverance, and had been made rich in the knowledge and love of God, as they themselves had been by the same Gospel. And so we may believe there was great joy and gladness amongst the Christians in Antioch on hearing such news.

Paul remained in the city for a good while; but, having another journey in his mind, he again moved out and, passing into Asia Minor, travelled over Galatia and Phrygia, visiting the same towns he had been in before, and everywhere "strengthening all the disciples."

On this journey Paul must often have thought of that promise he made the Ephesians, "I will return again unto you, if God will," and he directed his steps in that direction.

In those days the disciples had many hard things to put up with, just as many true disciples have now, and Paul himself had more than any of them. Apart then from what he might say to them of encouraging words, they had only to look at him bearing his own burdens joyfully, going fearlessly on, and travelling all those weary miles out of love for them and to do them service, to be strengthened and encouraged themselves. And we would not be surprised, would we, if they should reason from this and say, "Paul has been such a blessing and help to us, that we will try to be a similar blessing to others who have never heard the Gospel."

But now we must leave Paul travelling while we look in at Ephesus again. And there we find that although the Ephesians had already had one happy experience when Paul visited them another one came to them after he had gone. For there came to the city one day a great and eloquent preacher—a Jew—and one who understood the Scriptures well. His name was Apollos. He was not in the full sense a Christian, "knowing only the baptism of John." But what he did know he spoke and taught diligently and boldly in the synagogue.

Already we know of two people, at least, in Ephesus who would certainly be amongst the first to make themselves known to Apollos if they should see and hear him. They were Aquila and Priscilla.

No doubt these two had been upholding the Christian faith before the Jews and Gentiles, in their own humble way, and perhaps finding it hard to get them interested. But to have the mighty Apollos, of whom they had probably never even heard, come amongst them all of a sudden, and speak with such great earnestness and power to the Jews, would be not only a most joyful experience, but would lead them to think that now something would be done. For they both loved the Gospel, and had found that it exceeds all other things in loveliness; and perhaps Apollos would be the means of bringing many others to love it too.

A Special Blessing for Apollos

But Apollos himself came in for a special blessing, as we shall now see.

Strange as it may seem to us, when he came to Ephesus there was one important thing in Christian teaching about which Apollos did not know anything. But the very thing he did not know was well known to Aquila and Priscilla, and we may have no doubt but that Paul had taught them of it when they were together tent making in Corinth. What a providential thing, then, that these humble Christians should be in Ephesus when Apollos came, and so could be used by the Lord to instruct one ever so much greater than themselves as a preacher! And what a good thing they had been so diligent in learning the truth!

Let us see then, first of all, what we are told Apollos did know, and then we shall understand better what he did not know.

When John the Baptist came to the Jordan river telling the Jews that very soon the great Messiah so long promised was coming, he called upon them to repent of their sins. Then, if they did repent, the next thing was they must be baptized in water and thus confess publicly that they had repented. It was at that time only the Jews who were called upon to repent and be baptized, because it was to the Jews only that Jesus the Messiah was sent; it was only they who could thus "prepare" themselves by repentance and baptism to receive Him. That is what Apollos knew; and that is called "the Baptism of John."

But when Jesus the Christ came, He also preached baptism, but with a different meaning, and began to baptize disciples before John had finished his mission. In the next story the meaning of Christ's baptism will appear.

If we wonder why Apollos did not know about Christ's Baptism, the reason may be that he had so far only learned what John the Baptist taught. He had probably never been in Palestine, for he was born in Alexandria many miles away, and had never met any of the Apostles. But now through the help given by Aquila and Priscilla he knew "the way of God more perfectly," and the good promise that to those who have much (zeal and earnestness) shall more (knowledge or truth) be given, was fulfilled toward Apollos.

When therefore he left Ephesus for Corinth soon after, he was mightier than ever in the Scriptures, and greatly helped those at Corinth who had already believed under Paul's preaching in that city; and he mightily convinced the Jews who were as yet unbelievers that Jesus was Christ.

Please read Acts 18: 18-28 for this Story.
Of what Paul had before said to the Jews, Acts 13: 16-42.
Of what Paul did after his first journey, Acts 14: 25-28.
Of the vision of the man calling them, Acts 16: 8-10.
Of what happened in the prison at Philippi, Acts 16: 22-26, and at Thessalonica and Berea, Acts 17: 5-14.
Of God's kindness in appearing to Paul at Corinth, Acts 18: 9-11.
Of what the kingdom of heaven is not, and is, Romans 14: 17.
Of John's Baptism, Mark 1: 4; Matthew 3: 1-12.
Of Jesus baptizing disciples, while John continued his work, John 3: 23, 26, 28-30.
Much given to them who have much, Matthew 25: 29.

—UNCLE FRANK.

The Field is the World

MANY people to-day are thinking that Solomon was not so wise after all: he said "there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us." (Ecclesiastes 1: 9, 10.) And they say, Look at the machinery, look at the astronomical and other instruments of science, the great ocean steamships, the railway trains, the 30 and 50 or more story buildings, the airships and aeroplanes!

Well, perhaps Solomon was not thinking of things of that sort, for as King of Israel he had a vast dominion, great wealth and splendor, vast commerce, not possessed by his predecessors. He had only sailing ships, not ocean palaces; camel and horse or donkey transit, not railway trains and electric trams; the music of string and wind instruments, not phonographs with "canned music," nor yet the wonderful "wireless." And surely these are "new"! some one may say.

Well, perhaps Solomon would adhere to his remarks were he alive to-day. The sun still rises and sets every day, the rivers still run to the sea, and evaporation precedes rain which fills the rivers again. One generation goes and another comes, yet it is the same old earth, and it will abide forever. People are born, they live their little span, engage in various activities to earn their bread, they pile up wealth, and whether they live in palace or cottage it must be left behind, and no one knows whether the one who inherits his property will be a good manager or a waster. Solomon's position brought him many responsibilities, and every additional asset brought more care. So the man who worked at labor all day and could enjoy his meals without worry was as well off as any.

For his office Solomon received special wisdom from God, and he dispensed justice in a manner that gained the respect and admiration of all fair minded people. He would see the sin and selfishness, which also were not new under the sun.

And another thing not new—the prevalence of death—made all else vanity or emptiness, for nothing could be kept forever. And death meant: neither knowledge, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest. The only thing of substantial worth was to serve God and hope in the future which God had promised.

These observations are as true to-day as when written. The aeroplane is only another method of getting from one place to another (the horse and the camel being not yet dispensed with), the ocean liner only a glorified sailing ship, and so on; and human nature is much the same now as then. What matters is to make good use of the life we have, and to trust God for resurrection and a life of permanency in a world of perfection, peace, and kindness.

And in another respect Solomon was right. There is no new thing under the sun, since the whole of our planetary system was complete before man was placed upon the earth. What men are finding out to-day and priding themselves upon has been there all the time. The sun had a "spectrum," shown in the rainbow, long before the spectroscope was invented for separating the different light rays. Violet, ultra-violet, Roentgen (X) rays were all there; and so was the earth, the home of pitchblende from which largely "radium" is obtained.

The research scientists are all looking for things already there, analyzing the earth, the waters, the air, contriving "new" chemical combinations—but always from what God made ages ago.

Wonder what makes "wireless"? No man made it: man only uses forces already to his hand. Wonder what makes it go round the earth? Recent examinations of the "stratosphere" lead to the conclusion that the atmosphere which sustains life on the earth, and is solid enough to support heavy airships, is completely surrounded by a condition of some other sort that acts as a reflector—there all the time, only they did not know it! Under the sun! and not new!

Do All Things Continue as They Were?

What then of Peter's reproof of those who say that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Do Peter's words contradict Solomon's statement that there is no new thing under the sun?

Answer: No, Peter does not contradict the Wise Preacher. Peter is referring to **forces originating outside our solar system** (2 Peter 3: 3, 4)—

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts [or desires],
4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

In so far as they have in mind the things referred to by Solomon—the material earth, air, and sky, the regular succession of day and night, of seasonable rains, crops and fruit for man's sustenance, the curse and the labour, the sin, the disappointments and the death, the scoffer is historically correct if he allows for the Flood and other acts of God in dealing with men. But this the scoffer does not do—the one who says "Where is the promise of his coming?" That is (he means) Where is the fulfilment of the promise? If we go way back to Eden, there was a promise of One coming who should bruise the serpent's head. The patriarchs had the promise of a Blesser; the Jews of a Messiah, the Anointed of God. The Christians have the promise that the Lord Jesus, who has gone to the Father's right hand, will come again, and receive us to Himself.

Peter says the scoffers referred to are willingly ignorant. They are like people of any time who do not wish to be convinced: they ignore any facts or arguments that do not suit them. The people to whom Noah preached did not want to hear anything that would intimate the termination of the evil conditions they enjoyed. And after the Flood did come and destroy that order of things, scoffers have chosen to ignore it, as they do not wish to admit that God interposed then. And, if not then, they feel safe in their own delusions for the present, and feel that they can despise and reject all warnings of retribution in the future.

Another point discernible in Peter's reference to the Flood (vss. 5, 6) is that God had made the earth and had full control over it. He did not ask permission to send the Flood. He purposed to send the Flood, and He chose His own time for doing so. The giving of 120 years' warning, and having Noah build the ark in full view of all concerned, were acts of consideration to assist the transgressors to repent and take refuge in the ark.

So too, says Peter (vs. 7), God has full control since the Flood, and His promise not to send another such Flood (Genesis 8: 22) in no wise inhibits His sending some other form of punishment or bringing in some other form of world-order. And, with the ability to decide the future of the earth, comes also the ability to retain the present order until He is ready to dispose of it. Hence the scoffer who sees the same order of things in existence to-day as was established after the Flood may think it a very long time, but if still amenable to reason the scoffer must admit that the God great and powerful enough to create the earth and sustain the world order figuratively spoken of as "the heavens [political and ecclesiastical ruling powers] and the earth [social arrangements among men], WHICH ARE NOW," is great and powerful enough to reserve it until the time in which He plans to substitute for it another world order; namely, the new world order which will be His Kingdom.—2 Peter 3: 8-13.

Neither the scoffer nor the believer, neither the great rulers and warriors and ecclesiastics nor the socialists and communists can prolong this present evil world a moment nor shorten it a fraction of a second.

Signs of the End

These thoughts on Peter's words in answer to the scoffer are suggested by the present uncertainty in men's minds concerning the near future. Everyone is asking, or at least questioning in his or her own mind—Will there be another war, and who will be involved in it? Will it (if it comes) be limited to Italy and Abyssinia, or will it develop into another "world war"? As we have often remarked when calling attention to our Lord's words to the disciples (Matthew 24), "wars and rumours of wars" are NOT a sign of the end. The disciples had asked, "what shall be the sign of thy coming [literally, "presence"], and of the end of the world" [literally, "age"]? And the Lord told them what would not be "signs," as well as what would be signs of His presence and of the end of the age.

Thus we are definitely shown that things which have been characteristic of the whole age cannot properly be cited as signs of the end of the age. Marrying and giving in marriage, for example, is not a sign of the end of the Gospel age, because that has been going on all over the world from the beginning. And the Lord illustrates the general ignorance on the subject of His presence and the nearness of the end by saying that right up to the last people will be marrying and giving in marriage and KNOW NOT.—Matthew 24: 37-39.

Neither marrying nor abstaining from marriage is a "sign." But the Lord prophesied of several unmistakeable signs which His people should look for and expect to see. Rulers and other persons in positions of responsibility have always had their perplexities. Nations—the people themselves—have always experienced "distress" of various kinds. But a clearcut SIGN for the end-part of the Gospel age is that "the powers of the heavens [ruling powers and persons] shall be shaken," and that among the peoples there shall be "perplexity." (Matthew 24: 29; Luke 21: 25-28.) For ages the peasantry have been mute, dullwitted sufferers, and there are still many such.

The Peasantry Astir

But a sign now of increasing prominence is that the people themselves—the peasantry and the artisan and the large "middle class"—are perplexed as never before, thinking thoughts of "rights" and finance and social reforms; planning new forms of government, new marketing schemes, new trade treaties, etc. Not waiting for the rulers to act at their own pleasure, but themselves thinking out schemes and imposing them upon their political overlords. As an illustration that this change is noted even by observers who take no notice of pro-

phecy is the following newspaper advertisement in a Melbourne daily newspaper, July 27, '34—

THE PEASANT WAKES UP—in Europe—and strange political consequences may well follow his awakening. Few realize the great extent of the peasant population of the world, or the influence which it could exert upon economic and political affairs.

According to a despatch from Paris this month, the peasants of France are being organized for revolt. It reads—

PEASANTS' REVOLT. French peasants, complaining that the prices received for cattle, pigs, and cereals are lower than the cost of production, are refusing to pay taxes, and it is believed in some quarters that the country is on the eve of a peasants' revolt, similar to one in 1358, which ended in terrible bloodshed. Peasants throughout the country are forcibly resisting attempts to seize their goods for arrears of taxes, and they insist that the Government shall temporarily prohibit the importation of maize and wheat, reduce the import quotas for dairy produce and poultry, and ban the importation of second grade foreign cereals, meats and vegetables.

An organisation calling itself the Peasants' Front announces that it is issuing new and more drastic orders to its members next month. In the meantime the members must *return all demands for taxes* "*until something is done to* make it possible to live."

Plymouth Brethren and Italy

Received at our British Branch, and transmitted thence to Melbourne, the following from the "Daily Herald" (London) will interest our readers—

Strange Alliance

The projected Italian conquest of Abyssinia and the threat of a new Imperialism in Africa find support, in England, in strange quarters.

For instance, the Plymouth Brethren, of all the people in the world, seem for once to agree with Lord Rothermere, whose newspapers have said, "Good luck, Italy!"

Two readers send me a copy of the August number of "The Witness," which is described as "A monthly journal of Biblical literature," whose motto is "All the Word of God for all the people of God," and which is edited by Henry Pickering in the interests of the Plymouth Brethren.

"Texts" Excuse War

In the "Watchtower," a feature which deals with current news, Pickering, after explaining in a paragraph the Italo-Abyssinian situation, says, "Apart altogether from Governments and politics (which are outside our province) taking the long view, may there not be a way whereby the RULER OF THE UNIVERSE (for there is yet a Ruler, Psa. 59, 13; Dan. 4, 7; Prov. 8, 16; Psa. 22, 28), is allowing Ethiopia to be taken from her stagnation into renewed life?

"A nation since the 1st Century, she is still semi-barbarian, *has only one small railway, few roads, little commerce*, few schools, a bastard Christianity as its religion, a medieval form of government, and anything but progress *as her motto.*

"If Italy takes charge, roads will soon appear, railways will penetrate the country, order and control will be established, areas will be cultivated, the country developed, and a new Abyssinia appear, to the surprise of the natives."

The "Allowed Principle"

Then, after stating how, through the ages, the control of the weak by the strong and the barbarian by the civilised *seems to be the "allowed principle" of development, this* Plymouth Brother asks:—

"Would the Gospel have been preached as it has been, *especially in the past, liberty and freedom on every hand* as now known, and such like but for the progressive people turning chaos into order, waste into fertility, barbarism into civilisation, and progress everywhere? We hold that Christian principles, Christian teaching, and Christian people, nay, Christ's Influence in all its ramifications, has been the main factor in the metamorphosis of these lands and peoples.

"*Whatever may be the outcome of this present dispute in North Africa, we trust it will make for the increase of missionaries, the circulation of the Scriptures, the preaching of the Gospel,* the enlightenment of the backward peoples, *the real 'good of all,' and*—THE GLORY OF OUR GOD. So may Christians pray *to-day.*"

Wanted—A New Mission

It seems strange that there are people still alive who seem satisfied that, if the number of missionaries is *increased, all is well with the world.* If Imperialism is the "allowed principle," so is gangsterdom.

It seems to me that we want to start a mission to *missionaries, at least to those who agree with Henry Pickering.* These missionaries should be taught that war is wrong, that the acquiring by a strong nation of a country owned by a weak one is *nothing but common theft, that Imperialism is* contrary to the teaching of Jesus, whatever Christians may think of it.

According to Pickering, the Gospel has been preached by progressive people who have turned barbarism into civilisation.

"Civilisation by bombs, gas and tanks," comments one of the readers who sends me "The Witness," "is a doubtful benefit, even if it does blaze the trail for Plymouth Brethren."

Bombs and Bibles

All over the front page of Pickering's journal, Bibles are advertised, one with a "carrier handle" for women, another, a "text Bible" that will go in a "Gent's vest pocket."

I suggest that copies of these might be dropped by the Christian Italians with the bombs, when they wipe out the *Abyssinian villages.*

Then, any stray survivor who has escaped the "civilising forces" of the explosive which has killed his family, may *search the Scriptures.*

It may console him to know that the wholesale murder was prophesied by some Israelite who, were he alive to-day, would be ignored by the prophecy-experts who now exult every time that, reading some outburst of poetic ecstasy, they turn a poet into a tipster.

They used to say, "The trader follows the missionary." Now, the phrase should be, "The missionary follows poison gas."

Distinguish Things that Differ

Whatever others may think and plan in regard to the political, ecclesiastical, and social order of our time, we who love the Lord and are looking for His Kingdom are often placed where we must exercise our judgment as to the right course for us as His children. And well may we pray for one another, as the Apostle prayed for the Philippian brethren (1: 9-11)—

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment [margin, "sense"];

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent [margin, "try" things that "differ"]; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Sound judgment and "sense" are *needed to distinguish* between right and wrong, between that which is God's will and that which is not God's will, and we may be sure that He approves "the fruits of righteousness."

Good "sense" also is in order, that we may distinguish things that differ when studying the prophecies —*distinguish the events themselves in respect of differences* of causation and of fact, and in regard to

time of fulfilment. Thus we shall be the better prepared to read correctly the signs that pertain specially to our time as distinct from the things which always have been. And we may profitably bear in mind that other condition foretold—"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." (1 Thessalonians 5: 3.) And our position: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."—Hebrews 12: 18-29.

The Peoples of all Nations being Tested

There is an advantage in knowing what to look for. The Lord has given His people that advantage through His Word. The message to Philadelphia told of an hour to come AFTER its time—"the hour of temptation [or, trial, testing], which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Revelation 3: 10.) That time is now, in the Laodicean period. Not only is the professing Church of God being tried, as described in verses 15-21, but the world itself as a whole is being tested—its separate nations and all its inhabitants. And not only the nations with their peoples, but also their gods are being tested.

Their Gods being Tested

As a man is known by the company he keeps, so nations are known by the gods they worship. Japan, for example. For more than a hundred years missionary enterprise has carried the gospel to Japan—mixed with serious errors, it is true; but still the Bible has been translated into their language and the leaders at least have been able to contrast the beautiful teachings of Jesus with the ideals represented in their own gods and the traditions by which their national life has been moulded. In a previous issue we called attention to the definite choice of the rulers: they have buttressed the Shinto worship as the religion of the land, making its observance compulsory. The special representative of the Melbourne "Herald" which last year accompanied the Australian Goodwill Mission to the East writes concerning the antiquity of the religion and the reasons for its new prominence to-day, as follows—

National Spirit in Japan

As Japan grows in national importance, there is an increasing world interest in the Japanese national spirit, which has contributed so much to the Island Empire's attainment of the front rank in the march of nations.

To what extent the Japanese revere this national spirit was impressed on members of the Mission by the importance attached officially to the visit paid by Mr. Latham's deputy, Mr. Lonfield Lloyd, to the national sacred shrines at Ise.

Sacred Deer

After inspecting the Imperial Palace, where by tradition all coronations are held dating back a thousand years to when Kyoto was the capital of Japan, and then a brief visit to a lacquer factory—if such it can be called—members of the Mission left in the late afternoon for Nara, famous for its sacred deer park.

Nara, with its ancient Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, contains tens of thousands of rare objects of art, and it is said that the origin and growth of the Japanese Empire took place in the vicinity of the present town, which 1200 years ago was the capital.

In the Nara Park we visited the giant statue of Buddha, claimed now as the largest in the world, and later went on to see the deer. The people of Nara, and even the official deerkeeper, say that the exact number of deer is not ascertainable, but they are content with an estimate of 700, just as they estimate roughly that there are some 2000 stone lanterns and 1000 hanging metal lanterns in the shrine.

Seat of "Spirit"

Mr. Maki, a Foreign Office official, accompanied the party on the whole tour.

Because the Japanese had previously arranged Mr. Latham's itinerary, he was unable to pay a visit to the Sacred Shrines at Ise, but he deputed Mr. Lonfield Lloyd, who, as a student of the Japanese language and history, was a particularly happy choice for such an important mission.

Ise, as Mr. Maki explained, is the "Seat of the Japanese national spirit," and these shrines are held in the utmost reverence by the Japanese.

Sacred Treasures

The importance of Ise lies in the fact that these shrines house the "Three Sacred Treasures of the Throne." These treasures, according to the Japanese, are the original symbols of the Dynasty, which, basing itself upon them, founded the Japanese Empire more than 3000 years ago.

In Japanese belief there is a divine prophecy which promises eternal duration for the Dynasty which is the guardian of these treasures, a prophecy, which, in their estimation, has found complete confirmation in the unbroken line of Japanese Emperors.

These three sacred treasures are the Mirror, which is the symbol of enlightened justice, the Necklace, which is the symbol of divine bounty, and the Sword, which, as the symbol of inviolable dignity, is the guardian of these principles.

The putting into practice of these three principles by the Dynasty is what is called in Japan something equivalent to "Imperial ethics," and from them the Japanese derive the conviction that they are, as a nation, one family group around the throne.

This spirit is infused into the whole nation, and is perhaps best exemplified in the army which lives under a Japanese military moral code, each item in it being a sacred Imperial edict.

In this connection, by the way, I was given an interesting account of the old Samurai method of suicide by "harakiri."

Mere flight from the world's hardships by plain suicide of any other type is considered cowardice by the Japanese, but "harakiri" is a method by which the victim shows that he can bear agonising pain—amounting perhaps to more than he would suffer in life—before death. "Hara" is Japanese for abdomen and "kiri" is from the verb "kiru," meaning "to cut."

I was told it was not practised much now, but for the soldier or anyone held in high esteem it is still the accepted method.

Much the same thing has happened in China, where missionary activity has been carried on for many years. Chinese and Japanese of the upper classes have been educated in Christian colleges and some have finished in the Universities of England, America, and Germany, principally. Men thus trained conceived the Chinese Republic with Western civilisation and the Christian religion as the standard of ethics. To-day other-minded leaders predominate, and the old religions—principally Confucianism and Buddhism—are being fostered as the best means of controlling the masses.

As foretold these two great nations are being tried, and they point to the nominal Christian nations as justifying their continued exercise of the national and military spirit. And the same is true of other

nations, as may be seen in Europe to-day. For while there is a League of Nations and a World Court to settle disputes, and some use has been made of the facilities thus afforded, yet the spirit of conquest is so great that each nation of Europe feels itself obligated to fortify its frontiers and to enter into pacts and alliances to safeguard the future.

This trial or testing that has come "to try them that dwell upon the earth" includes tests of ordinary individuals as to honesty, truthfulness, fair dealing, fidelity to pledges, etc., as well as governments and their official representatives. There have always been those who would put decayed and inferior apples at the bottom of the case and sell the lot for prime fruit. Religion was a deterrent with many. But now associations of producers and government inspection endeavour to demonstrate that straight dealing is the best: that honesty is still the best policy. And still many prefer the old methods. So with trade descriptions of manufactured goods. Government inspectors are kept busy, and still misrepresentation is rife.

The Fear of God

The root of the trouble goes deeper than mere human weakness and proneness to sin. It is that, as the Psalmist says of the wicked, "there is no fear of God before his eyes." (Psalm 36: 1.) The heathen temples have their hordes of priests who manipulate the people to their own ends, feeding them on the silliest superstitions and fears of vengeance if they go contrary to the priests, who are often the tools of the rulers or make the rulers their tools. The fear of the Christian's God of righteousness and love means fear to go contrary to His righteous commands; also a realization that the true God can read the thoughts, and cannot be deceived; and that wrong actions will be punished. The fear of the true God also leads (or should lead) to the study of His Word to learn what righteousness is, and also that the present evil world is being reserved for destruction, and that not far in the future. Those who seek the heavenly inheritance, to be with and like the Lord and reign with Him the Thousand Years, have a great incentive to right thinking and loving actions and for being separate from the "world." And in view of the fact that God's Kingdom will soon be set up in the earth, it behooves all men everywhere to repent and to come into line with the will of God. But the majority remain still the blinded dupes of heathen, or of false Christian superstition. Nothing but Almighty Power can set things right.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool not long since displayed his ignorance of divine prophecy by saying: "It took centuries of education to abolish slavery, and it may take an equal number of years from now onward to abolish war. In my opinion it is all a matter of education. . . . Any real peace movement must begin with the individual and spread to the family, and thence extend to larger groups until it embraces the entire nation, and ultimately the whole world."

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the Jesuits and many other secret orders and organizations of the Roman church are extending themselves all over the earth and gaining control of as many already existing organizations—religious, educational, and political—as possible in the endeavour to control the destinies of the nations. It says in effect—"Where is the promise of his [the Lord's] coming?" And not only so, it says in effect that there shall be no coming at all, inasmuch as it considers it the business of the Papacy to rule the world. It has linked itself with those who know not, and its counsels are darkness and not light.

The Archbishop tells what he would do in the way of educating the world for peace and prosperity were he world dictator, but excludes all reference to the ignorance and squalor prevailing in countries which have been for centuries under Roman Catholic control, such as the so-called Republics of South America. Some of these Indian territories were conquered by Spanish and some by Portuguese explorers who received the patronage of that church, and the superstition, ignorance and squalor prevailing after centuries of the church's rule tells its own story of what Roman Catholicism really is. "By their fruits ye shall know them!"

Protestantism in the meantime still works for Church Union, or, if not that, for a Federation of Protestant denominations for mutual protection and social work; while some think union under one head is necessary to be effective.

Others again seek the preservation and wellbeing of the present social order by the adoption of new economic ideas which they hope and believe will bring greater security and general wellbeing, with no unemployment except perhaps the unemployables. The latter they think should be placed on co-operative or municipal farms and so become self-supporting.

The Experiment in Alberta

Tariffs, multiple taxes, single tax, quotas, limitation of crops, have been employed to restore prosperity (such as it was). Then came the New Deal in the U.S.A. and Government Financing in Britain. Economic and Trade Experts have suggested ways and means. Now comes the first application of the Douglas Credit system, which the propounders claim would make a new world if all the world would adopt it.

At the elections in the Province of Alberta, Canada, it was asserted that the adoption of "Douglas Credit" would enable the Government to give to each person in the community a certain sum of "credit" annually. In the expectation of receiving, the electors voted the System in, by electing those candidates who were pledged to apply it.

But it is not so easy to produce "credit," now that the responsibilities of office are upon them. And the method of changing over from the old system can be decided upon only after consultation, it is announced. So the public must wait and see. And all the world will watch the experiment with interest and fresh "perplexity."

The Lord has allowed men to try many devices for making the world a better place to live in. Doubtless it is well for men to exercise their judgment and improve conditions where possible. And all sincere wellwishers of mankind will rejoice when the Lord himself takes over their bungling and sets up His own Expert Government, which will accomplish all the good that men tried unsuccessfully to do.

From Far and Near

ENCOURAGING letters have been reaching us from different parts of the world, showing that the Lord has His children scattered widely over the earth. It is in this way that a worldwide witness for the truth can be given, and we are glad to see those who have been blessed with the truth sharing the good things. By personal conversation one can reach a few, but the brethren are realizing that by taking advantage of postal facilities they can reach a far larger audience. The following interesting letter gives the experience of one who is using that method of service.

Dear Brother Henninges: I am enclosing cheque to be used as you may deem best. [Placed with thanks to Advocate Sustaining Fund. Ed.] I have all the last lot of tracts sent out, but so far have not heard from any of the recipients. There seem to be very few who are looking for anything in the way of light. Those who have written in response to previous sendings are apparently just interested in some thing—either to back up views they have or else as an argument against some other sect. They have not really set to their seal that God is true.

However, there seems nothing else to do but to keep right on sending out the literature, so I am awaiting the coming of the next lot of tracts, especially the "Letters to John." I have a package of the last tract, "Trial and Error," which is a good one, in that it gives the receiver a choice of 12 pamphlets any of which may bring results. I like to send out "Letters to John" with the "Trial and Error" leaflet.

Our climate seems to have changed. We usually had about six weeks of hot dry weather during July and August, with perhaps a thunderstorm in the midst of it. It was trying, because everything got so dry and the roads became so dusty. So far this year we have escaped, and at the same time we have not had any forest fires. The lightning usually lights a lot of fires which cause a great loss of timber. Although I mention these things, they are not of chief interest to me as they do not concern the Kingdom which is to come in its due time. At the same time there is a purpose in them, although we—at least I am not able to trace it. The different pests in the way of insects destructive to fruit and to grain and to other things are very numerous, and the weeds and grass with awns on it which make it necessary to keep strictly on the paths or roads or else to have high boots, or go without socks, seems to point out that the curse of the ground is getting at about its worst.

At the same time we have an abundance of both fruit and everything else, and we have to dump a lot of fruit so as not to glut any market. These things I know are patent to you, for the papers are full of them. Social Credit and such like topics are all the talk now. There are different kinds of it. Major Douglas is the author of one of them. [Since the foregoing was written the Alberta elections have been held, and "Social Credit" is to be tried, as reported in another column.—Ed.] We also have the C.C.F. who have joined up with the Socialists, and want the Government to take hold of all the leading industries, and do away with selling for profit instead of for consumption. The talk on these subjects is incessant. But you know all about it, for you have just the same things going on in Australia. Love to all the brethren and to yourself and Mrs. Henninges. Sincerely yours, ——, *Canada.*

Though the Brother says he cannot trace God's purpose in the vagaries of weather and storm, yet he suggests the purpose when referring to the increase of insect and other pests; namely, the curse which was pronounced at the beginning when man sinned and so failed to show proper appreciation of the perfect estate in which they found themselves in the Garden. No doubt something of the sort was necessary in order to demonstrate God's attitude toward sin, and that only persons obedient to God may expect a continuance of His favours. And no doubt it is well that even those who have become His children by faith should experience some if not all of the discomforts of the curse—for their own instruction, as witnesses that God keeps His word, and to acquire sympathy for fellow sufferers under the curse.

At the same time, as the Brother says, notwithstanding the apparent disorders of climate and the destructiveness of pests (and, we may add, calamities in general), God still provides bountifully for men's needs. For Canadian apples are among the finest in the world, and among the most healthgiving of Nature's gifts to men.

Yes, the same questions are being discussed in Australia by an ever increasing proportion of the population as in Canada, and we may say increasingly in every country of the world—questions that before the French Revolution the average person did not trouble his head about. Most were content to live and die on the estate of the lord or squire, with only here and there one on his own little patch of land. But "the time of the end" marked a change, an increase of knowledge, many running to and fro, as Daniel predicted. And so fast are some men now that they pick

up theories on the run without properly analyzing them. Russia of late has found that it is all very well to denounce "profit," but nothing can be accomplished in manufacture or any other branch of work without "profit," for the Soviet government itself seeks to make profits on its transactions. Profit is often only a few extra pounds or dollars that the owner can reinvest to repair and improve his plant, which means spending for materials and labour. And it is not in schemes contrived by fallen human nature, communist or other, to let advantages slip through the fingers without trying to "grab" some of them.

Only the perfect kingdom of God will be righteous in every respect, and some who look forward to that kingdom essay to suggest how the farming, trading, distributing, and general economic management will be conducted, basing their thoughts on what is or has been the practice or the theory.

It is well therefore to remember that the Scriptures speak concerning the Kingdom only in general terms of the blessings of peace and favour from God, the *removal of the curse, and the freedom of individuals* to enjoy the fruits of their own labour. The first essentials of the Kingdom under the all-controlling rule will be the preaching of repentance from sin, the compulsory imposition of the will of God as our Lord Jesus exemplified it, and as taught in the glad tidings of the gospel. Confessing and forsaking sin, and accepting the terms of the New Covenant, the people will, we believe, be comparatively indifferent to the political, social, and economical questions so disturbing now under the reign of sin.

So the prophet tells of the knowledge of God covering the earth as the waters cover the sea; and of a feast of fat things satisfactory to everybody of a reasonable mind and a grateful heart. Many then will see reason who never saw it before, and will be thankful who were never contented before. In other words, every one who is willing will receive a new heart and will have the will of God written upon it. And that is the secret of true happiness.

The Precious Eye Ointment

Dear Brother: Your very kind letter and parcel of literature to hand, for which accept our heartiest thanks; my wife and I have been very busy since, reading. We are much pleased with the teachings, as far as we have progressed, and with the gentle meek manner in which the Truth is offered. My wife was particularly uplifted by reading the article "The Little Flock and the Great Multitude," which she declares is most satisfying. I have not read it yet, but intend to do so.

It is all so clear to us who use the precious "eye ointment" that our Lord is present [in the manner the Scriptures set forth], and that we are living in the last days of this age. And it certainly makes one feel very grieved and sorrowful to see so many people keeping blindly on their course and turning a deaf ear to the Word of Truth. We feel we must do all we can to help them, so have decided we will put a few hours in next time we go to town, and also we will give out that splendid little book "Christ's Promised Return." It might please God to bring forth the increase. We will leave the choice of tracts to you. Send us the most suitable ones for beginners. I am enclosing the sum of ten shillings; after deducting for exchange, send as many above mentioned booklets as will cover this amount. We were greatly interested in your account of the work, which must be productive of much blessing to you. We also liked the letters of readers in the Advocate. It is really very marvellous to think we are living in these wonderful times and able to help the Great Reaper.

With many good wishes and praying God's blessing on you both, ——, *N.S.W.*

The "eyesalve" for anointing the eyes of our understanding renders it a very necessary remedy to have on hand in this Laodicean stage of the Church's history, and the Lord offers it freely. Let us accept and use it, and recommend it to others, and we are glad to see our brother and sister joining the ranks of the active workers. Truly nothing else in this world gives a fraction of the joy derived from helping the blind to see.

Dear Brother: It is a long time since I wrote you directly, and now—if I do it—it is in compliance with the request in the N.C.A.—that I am still among the living and desirous of receiving it.

In the past—until last year—I managed to send something towards the Funds for the publications, but of late all avenues have been closed, except one—that of the state bank, and this is very strictly sifted, and accorded only for commercial purposes.

There is nothing specially interesting that I have to tell you, save that I am trying to let the light shine to some that seem to be after it; whether they will see it or not, the Lord knows. I still believe that the Lord is at the helm of His work, and that He will provide ways and means for its continuance on a scale sufficient to bear the witnessing until the end of this age, whenever it comes. May He help and strengthen your hands and minds; and not only you, but all that are trying to do His will during this age, is the prayer of Your brother in the Hope,

——, *Bulgaria.*

To the Editor. Dear Bro. Henninges: I am writing to you as I would like you to know what a comfort and blessing your books have been to me. At first I was just afraid to read them, as the teaching was altogether new to me; and as I had been a member of the Apostolic Church for three years, and had just come out of it because I could not honestly before my God accept many of its practices, I just felt I must go carefully. But after much prayer for guidance I felt able to study your books.

By the time I had read the 1928, 1934, and 1935 Conference numbers of the N.C.A. the sweetness of the messages and the wonderful light of God's Word took all my fear away. And I can only thank Him for His wonderful love in letting me know the plan and purpose for mankind, for what our dear Saviour has done up to the present, and what will be accomplished in the Kingdom age.

I have got in touch with Brother and Sister Catford, and go to the Bible Study Sunday afternoons which I find very helpful indeed. I have found "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind" everything that could be desired.

I have had to unlearn most of my beliefs. I had rejoiced in my own salvation, but I was often very heavy hearted about the many who were so careless and indifferent to those things. Will you please accept my heartfelt thanks in Jesus' precious name, for the teaching your books have brought to me. And I pray that God will make them a blessing to many more who are seeking to know the truth. Yours sincerely, ——, *South Australia.*

The "Advocate" Sustaining Fund

Voluntary donations to this fund have been received as under, since our last report. As the "Advocate" is regularly published at a financial loss, it is obliged to depend upon the loving co-operation of its friends until it shall become self-sustaining. Let the good work continue!

94, 10/-; 95, 2/-; 96, £1: 6: 0; 97, 13/2; 98, £1: 4: 0; 99, 2/-; 100, 2/-; 101 (Odd coins in Little Box), 4/-; 102, 18/8; 103, 2/-; 104, £2: 10: 0; 105, 10/-; 106, £25; received at Bristol, 133, 10/-; 137, £1; 138, 5/-; 140, £1: 7: 9; 143, 10/-; 145, £1; received at Brooklyn, 472, $5; 473, 25 cents; 474, $5; 475, 75 cents; 476, $3.33; 477, $8.75; 478, $3.75, total at Brooklyn, $26.83 (£5: 10: 5); total for month, £43: 7: 0; ($210.68); previously reported, £262: 0: 9 ($1273.36); total for 8 months, £305: 7: 9 ($1484.04). Of this total a portion was required to clear off the Deficit from 1934, the amount remaining for use in the work for this year being £218. The expenses of the Advocate Sustaining Fund for the whole of this year to December 15, 1935, are estimated at £400 ($2000); thus leaving £182 to be accomplished between September 1 and December 15, or an average of about £61 per month for the 3 months.

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44, 4/6; 45, £20: 46, £1: 47, 3/6; total for month, £21: 8: 0 ($103); previously reported, £125: 18: 10 ($612.07); total for 8 months, £147: 6: 10 ($715.07). The estimated expenses of the Cheerful Givers Fund for 1935 amount to £200 ($1000); though more than this sum can be beneficially utilized should it be available.

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The Reconstitution of All Things

"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution* of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all *his holy prophets since the world began.*"—*Acts 3: 21.*

(Reprinted from N.C.A., October, 1922)

WHEN the Almighty thinks so much of a subject as to cause all His holy prophets since the world began to speak of it, that subject must be very important indeed. Such is God's estimation of the "reconstitution of all things." If this be the divine estimate, all who seek to be governed by the Holy Spirit of God must hold the promised "reconstitution" at the same valuation, and must show their sense of the importance of this topic in their words and deeds. If they think much of it, they will often speak of it; if they really and truly believe what they think and say about the supreme importance of the "reconstitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," the conduct of their lives will demonstrate the sincerity of their belief, for they will, if sincere, act with *this "reconstitution"* always in view as a reality that must be reckoned with.

Ordinary prudence would counsel the man of faith to learn all he can about the foretold reconstitution, so that he might order his life accordingly. The child at school is told, and believes, that an examination is to take place at a certain time; if he has a proper realization of the importance of the event, he lives with that prospect always before him. A man knows that at a certain time a mortgage will fall due; if he be fully seized of the importance of this, he will have it always before him, to the end that he may be prepared to meet it. The Christian is informed in the divine Word that "the reconstitution of all things" is determined, and that God has caused "all his holy prophets since the world began" to speak of it. The Christian will, if wise, seek information and guidance, so that he may, for his own benefit if nothing more, regulate his life accordingly.

And not the Christian only. This matter of the reconstitution is so far reaching, and the "all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" are so many, that all men, without exception, would be exceedingly well advised to take into their most earnest consideration the determined "reconstitution of all things," and so order their lives as to meet it favourably rather than in a hostile manner. Yet nothing is more certain than that all unbelievers and nearly all professed Christians are going on as though God had never said a word by any of His prophets about this most important subject. Unbelievers, of course, know nothing about it. Nearly all believers are in the same state of ignorance, although they have the Word of God in their hands to give them all required information. The ignorance of professing Christians on this subject can soon be demonstrated to the satisfaction of everyone who will take the trouble to ask a few Christian friends for an explanation of Acts 3: 21, and for references to words of the holy prophets about it.

If any have been neglectful of the things which God has spoken by His holy prophets, let them begin at once to amend their ways, and seek that knowledge which is available to all of God's people. Of course it cannot be expected that in these few pages reference could be made to all the Scripture says about the reconstitution; our effort at present will be merely to indicate the principal points, hoping

*The word here translated "restitution" is *apokatastasis*, which is defined in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance as meaning "reconstitution." *Apokatastasis* occurs only once in the Bible, but the verb from which it is derived, *apokathistemi*, which means *"to reconstitute"* (in health, tone, or organisation), is found in Matthew 12: 13; 17: 11; Mark 3: 5; 8: 25; 9: 12; Luke 6: 10; Acts 1: 6; Hebrews 13: 19, where it is translated "restore," "restoreth," "restored," or "restore again." As "reconstitution" seems the most apt definition of the original, it has been adopted in preference even to the Revised Version rendering "restoration."

thus to assist the searcher as he in private seeks further information from the Word.—Acts 17: 11, 12.

The Kingdom of God

There is one thing the reconstitution of which comprehends in itself the entire scope of the proposed great work, and that is the Kingdom of God. The reconstitution of the Kingdom of God comprehends the reconstitution of (1) the King, or throne, (2) the territory, (3) the subjects. All these we shall find included in the things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

We pray "Thy kingdom come"; but do we pause to consider that in so praying we are not asking for a new thing to appear on earth but for the reconstitution of something that has already been? The Kingdom of God was in existence on the earth thousands of years ago. God was the King, the newly-created Adam and Eve were the subjects. There was a command, with a penalty provided for the infraction thereof. To be sure, this was but a miniature kingdom in respect both of the number of subjects, who were only two, and the extent of territory, which was no greater than the garden which the Lord had planted eastward in Eden; nevertheless, this miniature kingdom was perfect and complete. It endured but a short time, for the loyalty of the subjects failed to stand the test. They betrayed their allegiance, and went over to the tempter. Promptly they were convicted, sentenced, and evicted from the garden to suffer the death penalty. And so that exhibition of the divine kingdom came to its end. The second and third chapters of Genesis supply the only connected account of it now available. There are, however, references to it in the New Testament, and in other parts of the Old Testament; for example, Psalm 8; 1 Chronicles 1: 1; Matthew 19: 4-6; 2 Corinthians 11: 3, 14; 1 Timothy 2: 13, 14; Hebrews 2: 6-8.

The next exhibition of the Kingdom of God on earth was when God took the children of Israel to be His people. There was the King, and there were many subjects; there was also a law of commandments and ordinances, with penalties provided against the disobedient. When they desired a visible king such as the other nations possessed, God gave them a king—first Saul, then David, then Solomon—who, it was said, "sat on the throne of the Lord." (1 Chronicles 29: 23.) But whilst there were many subjects of God's Kingdom in those days, their obedience was far from being perfect. Both priests and people frequently lapsed into idolatry, and they were constantly robbing God by their failures to bring to His altar the first fruits, tithes, and other offerings that they should have brought. Moreover, although God's Kingdom then had numerous subjects—millions of them—there were at the same time in the adjacent and more remote lands vastly greater numbers of people who were not God's subjects. They did not desire to be His, nor did He at that time desire them. No effort was made to bring them in. The Israelites were the only family of the earth recognized by God as His people, and He gave them no command in those days (known as the Jewish age) to make converts from among the heathen; though provision was made for the reception into the nation of the few individuals from among the heathen who expressed the desire for it. (*Deuteronomy* 4; *Amos* 3: 1, 2; Malachi 2: 1-13; 3: 7-12.) In Acts 2: 10 converts from the Gentiles are called "proselytes."

The children of Israel went on from bad to worse, and eventually the Lord removed the diadem and crown, overturning His Kingdom as then established, which overturned condition was to continue "until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." (Ezekiel 21: 25-27.) The words last quoted show that the overturned condition was not to endure forever, but only until the coming of the One who would have the right to the throne. These words are therefore a prediction, through one of God's holy prophets, of the reconstitution.

The One whose right it would be to reign was to be a son of David. This had been made known to David some centuries before "the throne of the Lord" on which he had sat was overturned. God would not allow David to build the house of the Lord; but He promised to build David a house, meaning that the Messiah should come in David's line, so that his house or family should stand forever. (2 Samuel 7: 1-29.) Agreeable to this wonderful promise, the angel who announced the Birth that was soon to occur said (Luke 1: 32, 33)—

> 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
>
> 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Christ the King of the Jews

The angel who brought tidings of Christ's birth to the shepherds said—"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2: 11.

The wise men who came to worship the Babe of Bethlehem inquired for Him—"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"—Matthew 2: 2.

At the beginning of our Saviour's ministry, the convinced Nathanael confessed—"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."—John 1: 49.

The prophet had foretold—"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee." And in the gospels we find the record of this prophecy fulfilled. —Zechariah 9: 9; Matthew 21: 1-11.

A few days later our Lord appeared before Pilate, who asked Him—"Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest."—Matthew 27: 11.

During the same interview, the Lord said to Pilate—"My kingdom is not of this world: . . . now is my kingdom not from hence."—John 18: 36.

When He was crucified they "set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS."—Matthew 27: 37.

While He hung suffering on the cross, the chief priests, scribes, elders, and thieves mocked him, saying—"He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God."—Matthew 27: 41-44.

Our Lord's earthly ministry was not the time for His exaltation, but for His humiliation, and for the sufferings which would be the ground of His elevation to the royal position, with all authority in both heaven and earth. (Matthew 28: 18; Romans 14: 9; Philippians 2: 5-11.) So we read concerning His resurrection from *hades* the death state, by the power of the Father—

God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.—Acts 2: 36.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.—Acts 5: 31.

It was in our Lord's resurrection and exaltation that the promise to David concerning his "house" was fulfilled, as the Apostle says (Acts 2: 30, 31; 13: 34)—

30 Therefore [David] being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

13: 34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

Reconstitution of the Throne

The first essential therefore to the "reconstitution of all things" is the reconstitution of the Throne.

Our Lord was not raised from death to sit on a material throne on the earth; He was exalted to sit at the right hand of the Father in His throne. The material throne which David occupied was doubtless a majestic piece of furniture, but it perished long ago, and has nothing to do with the promise God made to him. The essential thing is that David (1 Chronicles 29: 23) SAT ON THE THRONE OF THE LORD (i.e., he was the divinely appointed ruler in God's kingdom as then arranged), and that now CHRIST SITS AS DAVID'S HEIR ON THE THRONE OF THE LORD.

The throne of the Lord is thus seen to have been reconstituted on a larger scale, yet it is the same "throne of the Lord"—

Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king *instead of* David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.—1 Chronicles 29: 23.

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Until I make thy foes thy footstool.—Acts 2: 34, 35.

. . . I [Jesus] also overcame, and AM SET DOWN with my Father in his throne.—Revelation 3: 21.

In agreement with this was the preaching of Paul and his companions at Thessalonica, whom the Jews accused to the rulers of the city as "saying that there is another king, one Jesus."—Acts 17: 7.

In the exaltation of the risen Saviour to the throne of His Father was begun the "times of reconstitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets."

Reconstitution of the Territory

In regard to the "reconstitution" of the territory of the Kingdom, the rulership of the King Jesus is more widely extended than was that of either the Kingdom in Eden or the Kingdom among the Jews. David occupied that throne over a small part of the earth. David's Son has all authority in heaven as well as over ALL the earth. So we read—

And . . . his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.—Zechariah 9: 10.

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.—Psalm 2: 8.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [R. V. all authority] is given unto me in heaven and in [or, on] earth.—Matthew 28: 18.

In the resurrection and exaltation to the divine throne of Jesus Christ—"of the seed of David according to the flesh," and "the Son of God with power, . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1: 3, 4; Acts 13: 32, 33)—was fulfilled the promise that the tabernacle, or tent, of David, which was fallen down, should be rebuilt, or reconstituted, and set up.* Having been in this manner set up, that "house" began at once to accomplish the work predicted for it, of taking possession of "the residue of men" and of all the heathen, i.e., the Gentiles. All the nations outside the Twelve Tribes of Israel were called heathen, or Gentiles. The Lord Jesus being constituted King or Ruler over Gentiles as well as Jews, the territory of the Kingdom was also reconstituted, for all the territory of all the nations—the whole of the earth—became His. —Amos 9: 11, 12; Acts 15: 16, 17.

Reconstitution of the "Holy Nation"

The Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God, or Kingdom of Heaven, is a very real one. Its conditions and experiences were foretold in many of our Lord's parables. There is a King, and there are subjects. To be sure, the King is invisible, but He is very potent for all that. He has for his earthly subjects during this age those who have been translated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. These constitute the "holy nation."—Colossians 1: 13; 1 Peter 2: 9.

The King will not always remain invisible to all of His Gospel-age subjects. The faithful have the promise that they shall be made like Him, and shall see Him as He is. And then they shall also see God

*The use of the word "tabernacle" in Acts 15: 16 has led some to think the Jewish "tabernacle of witness" in the wilderness is meant, or at least the temple which was its successor. But the promises to David of a king to sit on his throne all pertained to his "house" or family; therefore the word "tabernacle" in this passage should be understood as meaning "house," or family.

the Father—His Father and their Father; His God and their God.—1 John 3: 1-3; Matthew 5: 8; John 20: 17.

Faithfulness in obedience to our King involves suffering; but, if so be that we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified with Him—as His joint heirs, and shall reign with Him.—Romans 8: 16, 17; 2 Timothy 2: 12.

These faithful ones shall be given their reward at the end of this age, in connection with our Lord's second presence, when "the dead in Christ shall rise first," and then those of the faithful still alive and remaining shall be caught up to meet the Lord.—1 Thessalonians 4: 15-18; 2 Timothy 4: 8.

The rewarding of the faithful Gospel-age subjects of the Kingdom, and the closing up of the work of the age and its High Calling, will not signify that the work of the Kingdom is finished. On the contrary, it will mean the opening up of a larger phase of the Kingdom work. For part of the reward of the faithful Gospel-age subjects is that they shall become "kings and priests," that they shall sit with Christ in His throne as He has sat down with the Father in His throne, and that they shall reign with Christ as kings and priests for the thousand years of the Kingdom age, during which the reconstitution of all things connected with the establishment of the Kingdom over the whole earth will be accomplished.—Revelation 3: 21; 20: 4, 6; Matthew 19: 28.

Reconstitution of the Kingdom at the Beginning of the Thousand Years

The Kingdom of God during the Gospel age has not been a very imposing spectacle in the eyes of the world. Its subjects have been living in an alien world, subject to the political powers that be, and often suffering violence and injustice at their hands. The Gospel message, inviting world subjects to transfer their allegiance to God's Kingdom, has seldom had a fair hearing, and has constantly been misunderstood and misrepresented. But during the Kingdom age all this will be different. Our Lord at the beginning of the Kingdom age will take to Himself His great power to reign, and will use that great power to put every enemy under His feet.

It must not, however, be supposed that the Kingdom age work will be carried on merely by an extension of the methods used by the Lord during the Gospel age. The Gospel age methods have been useful in gathering out a small number of people who would show their willingness—nay, their *determination*—to be obedient to Christ's commands, notwithstanding the great opposition of the most hostile environment *as well as of their own natural inclinations*. These methods, partaking largely of "moral suasion," have undoubtedly been the very best for the purpose in the circumstances. But in the operations of God's Kingdom during the Thousand Years they will be supplemented by other methods. The Kingdom of God will not be placed before men as an interesting and very promising experiment in sociology, and—Please, won't you try it?

The Lord Jesus will be reigning in power and great glory, sitting upon the throne of His glory, and with Him will be His joint heirs. Before Him will be gathered all nations.—Matthew 25: 31.

As His earthly representatives in the rulership of the world, He will have the great men and women of faith who obtained a good report through their faith before the Gospel age. (Hebrews 11: 1-40.) These earthly representatives of the King who has all authority in heaven and on earth will have for their own special inheritance and homestead the land of Palestine, as promised to Abraham and others. (Genesis 13: 14-18; 26: 1-5.) But their princely dominion will extend throughout the whole of the earth.—Psalm 45: 16.

Methods of government, laws, social regulations shall **be reconstituted for the enlightenment and blessing and bringing up to perfection of all the families of the earth**—provided they obey when enlightened.

During the Thousand Years the Lord Jesus Christ will reign as Absolute Monarch. Those who willingly obey Him will find themselves greatly blessed. Those who show unwillingness will be *made to obey:* none will be permitted to hinder the great work of that age by manifestation of his own selfish preference. 1 Kings 13: 4-6 gives a hint as to how the necessity of obedience to God might be impressed upon the mind of one inclined to be self-willed and rebellious. But if neither moral suasion nor compulsion moves him to willing obedience after enlightenment, he must be destroyed as a wilful rebel against heavenly authority.—Isaiah 65: 20.

The reconstitution of the King on His throne means not David personally on a magnificent chair in Jerusalem; it means David's Son on the Heavenly Throne. The reconstitution of the King's territory means not the land that was ruled over by David; it means that David's Son has authority over the whole earth, and in heaven as well. This much we have seen. Now, what about the reconstitution of the subjects of the Thousand-Year Kingdom?

Reconstitution of the Kingdom Age Subjects

This part of the Reconstitution of All Things Spoken is also on a grand scale. It will include not only those who were subjects in Eden and to the end of the Jewish age, but as well all who never were subjects and who are now in the graves, whence they shall be called forth by the voice of God's Son.

Sodom and Samaria shall be returned from death to their former estate, along with Israel, and shall be given to Israel for daughters in that great time of restitution or reconstitution.—Ezekiel 16: 44-53.

Egypt and Assyria shall be blessed of the Lord, and shall have the opportunity, which many of them will welcome, to become God's people in that wonderful time.—Isaiah 19: 23-25.

The evil neighbours of Israel and Judah shall be brought back to their former places, and shall have the opportunity to repent of their sins and be built in the midst of God's people.—Jeremiah 12: 14-17.

It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah and Tyre and Sidon than for some others, when brought back from death.—Matthew 11: 20-24.

The men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba shall be there, to be enlightened.—Matthew 12: 41, 42.

So one might multiply citations from the divine Word, showing that the Kingdom age subjects will include a "great multitude." (Revelation 7: 9-17.) They will not be brought back from the dead to their "former estate" for the purpose of continuing the manner of life to which they were then accustomed. They shall be brought back to have the opportunity to acknowledge their wrongdoing, and to reform, and to declare their allegiance to the King of kings and Lord of lords, who so loved them as to die to redeem them, and who desires their allegiance because it will be not only for the glory of God, but also for their own best interest, even unto everlasting life on an earth and in a society freed from every evil thing and influence.—Revelation 21: 3-8, 24-27; 22: 1-5.

Thanks be to God for the Reconstitution which He has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Thanks be even more to Him for the call to us to become joint heirs with His dear Son, and to take some part in bringing the Reconstitution of the Kingdom age subjects to its triumphant and glorious conclusion. Let us faithfully suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together, and may be kings and priests to reign with Him for the Thousand Years!

Apostolic Proclamations of Reconstitution

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL it has been the custom to proclaim to all concerned and to the world at large the accession of a new king. This is necessary in order that his subjects may know to whom to render honor and service—first to the king himself, then to his properly accredited representatives. On the death of Saul, David, who had reigned 7½ years in Hebron, was anointed by the hand of Samuel, and in the presence of the elders of Israel, to be king over all Israel. And proclamation was made to that effect. Whereupon the people signified their allegiance, and soon had the honour of taking part in the bringing back of the ark to Jerusalem. (1 Chronicles, chapters 11 to 13, 15, 16.) Great was the rejoicing, celebrated by David in the Psalm recorded in 1 Chronicles 16.

No less a proclamation and public rejoicing were in order when the Lord Jesus, the Son of David, came to Israel, preaching the Kingdom of God, and himself the King foretold by the prophets. Influenced by the scribes and Pharisees and a section of the priests, however, the people would not have Him to reign over them, though in a brief season of ecstasy they cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."—Matthew 21: 9.

Within a few days the rabble called out "Crucify him!" and He was led to His death by the decision of the Roman authorities. Was He then not a King? Yes, he was their King, for God had so appointed Him. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." (Matthew 21: 1-16.) Had the people not shouted, the very stones would have cried out.—Luke 19: 35-40.

For three and a half years the King Jesus was proclaimed, and then! All seemed to come to a sudden end. The disciples were perplexed, and they said to the Stranger who overtook them on the way to Emmaus—"But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel."—Luke 24: 13-24.

Then the Lord gave them the required enlightenment on the Reconstitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24: 26, 27.) Later in the same day, the Lord appeared "in the midst of them" while the eleven were gathered together, and told them more (Luke 24: 45-49)—

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
48 And ye are witnesses of these things.
49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Here was Reconstitution indeed: A King, not on earth, but in heaven, who suffered, and died, and rose again, who now as their King was giving them their commission, both as eye-witnesses of His ministry and death and resurrection, and as witnesses in the sense of testifiers and preachers. A Reconstitution of the basis of forgiveness of sins, not through the law of Moses and the Covenant entered into at Sinai, but "IN HIS NAME." A Reconstitution also of the extent of His dominion, and of His forgiveness, not confined to Israel, but taking in the whole world.

For this great preaching mission the disciples were to be "endued with power from on high."

Just before His ascension they asked Him again, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" This question the Lord did not answer directly, but said they should receive power, "the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you," and they should be "witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts 1: 6-8.

As we follow the apostles in their proclamation of the King, we shall see that after being endued with that power from on high they were able to explain clearly about the Kingdom—its King, its territory, its subjects, and its laws.

On the day of Pentecost Peter was chief proclaimer. Speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit, which had just been poured out upon the waiting believers, Peter explained that "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." It was the beginning of that great and notable day in which "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." These remarks were addressed to "Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem," and then he addresses "Ye men of Israel," thus taking in all the devout men of the various nationalities mentioned in verses 8-11.

Some centuries before these events the people of the Ten-Tribe kingdom of Israel had been taken captive to Assyria and settled in colonies. Later, the Two-Tribe kingdom—which included Judah and Benjamin and many Levites, as well as some members of the other tribes—had been conquered and the people carried off to Babylon. After the return under the decree of Cyrus, liberty was given to all the captives, whether in Babylon or in Assyria, to return to the Holy Land, and in the succeeding centuries those pious ones who did not return to live in Palestine went up to the three annual feasts. Some of those present at Pentecost may have come to the Passover and stayed on for the feast of Pentecost. At any rate, there was a representative gathering of citizens of God's kingdom as it existed in Palestine. With what interest must they have listened to Peter's proclamation of the new King—none other than the promised Messiah—to whom they should give allegiance! Read Acts 2 from verse 22 to verse 36.

Jesus of Nazareth they had taken and crucified and slain, but God had raised Him from the dead, and (in harmony with the prophetic utterance of David) this Jesus was raised up from death to sit on David's throne—

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost [i.e. the Holy Spirit], he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.
34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.
36 THEREFORE LET ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL KNOW ASSUREDLY, THAT GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME JESUS, WHOM YE HAVE CRUCIFIED, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST.

How clearly we are here shown that it is the resurrected Jesus, seated at the the right hand of God in the heavens, who is "both Lord and Christ." Lord: owner, controller, ruler; Christ, the Anointed.

Pricked to the heart, the multitude by their principal men said to Peter and the other apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Then Peter told them the terms laid down; how they could be received as loyal subjects of the new King, and how they could be freely forgiven for their part in slaying Jehovah's Anointed, and could come in line for a blessing—

38 Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [or Holy Spirit].

Then he refers to Joel's prophecy, which he had previously quoted; the promise there written "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."—Verses 39, 40.

Here was a call to come out from Judaism and all it stood for, and ally themselves to the One whom God had raised from the dead and made both Lord and Christ; a call to dissociate themselves from the action of their rulers (and that whole "untoward generation") in rejecting and crucifying the Son of God. Furthermore, they were to realize that through Jesus, and not through the sacrifices of the law, God now offered forgiveness and the blessing of the Spirit.

Believing members of the Israelitish nation thus became Members and Citizens of the New Nation to be built up under the authority of Christ Jesus as King. Many believed and were baptized and received the Spirit, and continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. There was much to learn, and the apostles were the inspired instructors in all that related to the Kingdom and their responsibilities under it.—Verses 37-47.

The first consideration among the Jews who were rightly affected by Peter's discourse was to be saved from bloodguiltiness—i.e., from endorsing in any way the challenge of the mob, "His blood be on us, and on our children." (Matthew 27: 25.) They no doubt also noted the threat in the quotation from Psalm 110: 1, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." To reject the One whom God so placed would be to constitute oneself an enemy. And that is a most unwise thing to do: to incur the displeasure not only of the new King, but of the Father who calls upon them to recognize and honour His Son.

This aspect of the matter was vividly set before them again, after Peter and John by the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus had performed that wonderful miracle upon the man lame from birth—"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." And he leaped and walked and praised God. Here was, as it were, a credential of the King Jesus—a proof that His authority was no mere fiction, as we read (Acts 3: 13-17)—

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God *of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered* up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.
14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;
15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.
16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Then Peter shows the mercy and kindness of God in taking into consideration that the bulk of the nation, including the rulers, did not at the time fully appreciate the fact that Jesus was the Son of God and their King: "And now, brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." However, even this had been shown by the pro-

phets, "that Christ should suffer." As for their part in bringing about His crucifixion, now that the truth was being placed before them it was their bounden duty to repent of their participation in it. Even those not present, such as the visitors from abroad, were concerned in it, because the Jewish Sanhedrin and priests and elders acted as representatives of the nation. Hence every individual of the nation, whether a descendant of the Two-Tribe or the Ten-Tribe kingdom, was bound to take his stand either for or against the King whose authority was now being proclaimed. God was merciful in giving them this opportunity to declare themselves, in view of His resurrection and power at God's right hand; in view also of the fact foretold that wilful rejection of the King would be severely punished.

Then follow the words exhorting and commanding them to repentance. And as the crucifixion of the Lord was the climax of the nation's disobedience and perversity, no doubt the whole of their sins from first to last were included, for Peter made no exceptions (verses 19-21)—

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when [or, that] the times of refreshing shall [or, may] come from the presence of the Lord;
20 And he shall [or, may] send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:
21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution [more exactly, reconstitution] of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Blotting Out the Sins

As a preacher and herald the apostle Peter proclaimed the necessity for the people to repent and turn away from their sins. Of equal if not greater significance was his proclamation of what their God whom they had served would grant them if they would thus acknowledge their fault. This favour God was ready to bestow upon each and every Israelite repenting, and was nothing less than **the blotting out of all their sins!** Let us remember that Jesus as King sits at the right hand of God, not to supersede God in authority over men, but to serve with His Father as associate, after the manner of the custom quite familiar to the ancients, where reigning monarchs often took their eldest son and heir as joint-ruler. So we must not be surprised that, when proclaiming Jesus as King, Peter speaking under inspiration of the Holy Spirit still gave God the supreme position in connection with the granting of forgiveness. When God forgives for Jesus' sake, the result is that the sins so forgiven are completely blotted out, and God remembers them no more. But in order to receive this great blessing, the individual concerned must believe in Jesus as the true Sacrifice for sin, and must be truly repentant. By so doing the individual brings himself under the terms of the New Covenant, which was ratified by the blood of Jesus, and which says—"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."—Hebrews 8: 6-13; 9: 11-22; 2 Corinthians 3: 6-9; Romans 11: 27.

In connection with all these references to the taking away and blotting out of sins, as promised in the New Covenant, we must bear in mind Peter's proclamation, that the sinner who desires to receive these benefits must repent of his sins and turn from his evil ways. We may also remind readers that the word "testament" frequently used in Hebrews 9th chapter should in every case be "covenant"—the new covenant superseding the law covenant. For further explanations please see the book "Comparisons and Contrasts" which treats of the entire epistle to the Hebrews and other relevant portions of Scripture.

Times of Refreshing

Having told the people what they should do in order that their sins might be blotted out, Peter makes a further proclamation of what God was prepared to do, in addition to blotting out their sins. And here the word "when" in the Authorized Version has caused some misapprehension of Peter's meaning; as though the times of refreshing were a long distance in the future and the sins would not be really blotted out until that future time whenever it might be. Thus an entirely false idea has been received and widely circulated among Christians of our day.

The Revised Version and some other modern versions are helpful here, the word "that," or "that so," being a more exact rendering of the Greek word of the text. The apostle said that consequent on the sorrow-stricken Jews doing their part, God would do two things, (1) blot out their sins, and (2) send times of refreshing. The use of the potential mode—"may come"—indicates this, and therefore the indicative future in the A.V.—"shall come"—is misleading. Both the blotting out of their sins and their enjoyment of times of refreshing depended upon their attitude toward God the Father and His beloved Son now the King of Glory set over them.

True to Peter's words, the "times of refreshing" did come upon those penitent and believing Jews. They came to them straight from the presence of the Lord [i.e. the Father], just as they had come to the believing and penitent ones described in chapter 2. To have our sins blotted out is a great favour. But if God's grace or favour stopped there, we should be still far from "saved," for our imperfect minds and bodies are prone to sin, and would sin again. Hence it is of great concern to know what God's arrangements are in regard to our naturally imperfect state and how we may continue to receive His favour. So we find the times of refreshing linked with another benefit contingent on faith and repentance. This is clear when we read the latter part of verse 19 with verse 20, using the potential mode in both:

. . . that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and he may send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.

Thus it will be seen that the apostle here made no reference to our Lord's second advent, which is an event provided for in God's plan entirely without regard to the attitude of the Jews or any other suppliants for the favour of forgiveness. So far from our Lord's Second Advent being in any wise

conditioned or consequent upon the repentance and faith of Jews and others, we are expressly informed that unbelief and disobedience would be increasingly rife during and right down to the end of the Gospel age. (Luke 18: 1-8; 1 Timothy 4: 1; 2 Timothy 3: 1-5; 2 Peter 3: 3, 4.) There is plenty of testimony in Scripture concerning our Lord's Second Coming, and it is not necessary to try to use in that sense this passage in Acts 3, which seems manifestly to refer to another feature of the Divine Purpose.

The sending of Jesus here referred to was the arrangement whereby the risen Lord Jesus accepted the penitents to be cared for by Him during the term of their discipleship, and to dwell in them, as He had foretold (John 14: 18, 21, 23)—

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.
21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.
23 Jesus answered and said unto him [Judas, not Iscariot], If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

When giving the disciples their commission, as contained in Matthew 28: 18-20, He said, "and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [literally, age]." So that when Peter and the other apostles called upon the people to repent and turn from their sins, in order that God might send Jesus Christ, their endeavour was to bring the people into the enjoyment of the same blessing that had been promised them, of having the Lord Jesus take up His abode in them; the prerequisite to this indwelling being their repentance and their acceptance of Jesus Christ as the atonement for their sins.

Then, as typified by the High Priest under the law, who, after having offered the sacrifice and taken the blood thereof into the Most Holy, there to sprinkle it upon the Mercy Seat—after having done all this the High Priest came out and blessed the people with the assurance of God's forgiveness. So our Lord Jesus, the antitypical High Priest, comes forth—is sent by the Father—to pronounce the blessing of sins forgiven and reconciliation with God.

Thus the "times of refreshing" come to each repentant one on his believing the Gospel. The Greek word translated "times" in verse 19 is a different word from that rendered "times" in verse 21. In verse 19 the word is "kairoa," which is defined by Strong's Concordance as meaning: "an occasion, i.e. set or proper time." That is to say, the refreshing comes on "an occasion," a set or proper time which God has arranged, and is a separate and distinct time or occasion for each converted one. To illustrate: One man's confession of his sins does not secure forgiveness for some other man, but only for himself; his sins are "blotted out," he is refreshed by the Lord's favour and by the sending of Jesus to comfort and bless and assist him in the path of righteousness.

The word "preached" is the proper English word in verse 20, there being no special suitability in the word "appointed," employed in the Revised Version.

Whom the Heaven Must Receive

We come now to verse 21, and the question naturally arises, "After telling the large concourse of Jews what to believe and do in order that God may blot out their sins and send the glorified Jesus to bless them, why did Peter proceed to say (vs. 21), "Whom the heaven must receive." How could heaven "receive" Him while He is being "sent" (compare vs. 26) with a blessing to converted sinners?

The answer to this question is that the Holy Spirit, using Peter as spokesman, associated heaven receiving Jesus with the long period of prophecy and promise, of which some details are given in verses 22 to 25. While this beforehand preaching by the prophets was going on, Jesus was a Spirit Being in heaven; interested, and co-operating in the Father's plan as then being wrought out. Until the throne had been reconstituted, Jesus could not occupy it, nor would there have been established the conditions for reconstituting even one of the invited "subjects" of the Kingdom.

The Force of Small Words

To obviate any sincere truth-seeker falling into error, the inspired preaching of Peter and other apostles has been carefully preserved in the inspired Writings. In apostolic days the seekers after salvation had the Old Testament Scriptures to search in confirmation of what the apostles taught. (Acts 17: 11; 2 Timothy 3: 15.) To-day we have both the Old and the New Testament Scriptures for our guidance, and the Holy Spirit is given to assist our understanding. If at any time sincere Christians adopt a wrong interpretation, their mistake may be due to "tradition;" that is, to wrong interpretations that have been handed down from some uninspired source. There is much false theology in circulation at the present day, both inside and outside the large denominations of Christendom.

Or, misapprehension of some truths may be due to inaccuracies of translation, as in the present case (verse 19), where in the Authorized Version the word "when" has diverted attention from the facts as Peter explained them.

Connective words, such as "when" and "that," although small words, sometimes have a large significance and a great influence on their contexts. Scrutiny of the whole passage (Acts 3: 19-26) reveals that the apostle was telling the multitude of a blessing available to them *then and there*, rather than pointing to something to be expected at some far distant time. As set forth in the reprint article (page 153), Peter was telling the people that "the times of reconstitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," HAD ARRIVED, and it was the duty and privilege of the Jews, who were the first to hear the good news, to avail themselves of the opportunity to repent and have their sins blotted out, and to exercise the privilege of being the first to acknowledge the King whom God had set in authority over them.

What Moses Said Beforehand

Verses 22, 23. Peter then cites Moses as having "foretold of these days;" "and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (verse 24)—the days for acknowledging Jesus as their King and the Reconstitution as having begun.

Moses had said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me." Moses was Prophet, Ruler, Lawgiver, Mediator, and Advocate over and on behalf of Israel. Jesus is the Prophet, Ruler, Lawgiver, Mediator, and Advocate of whom Moses was the type. They should hear this Prophet, their new Ruler and Mediator, and do whatsoever He commands them. Nothing could be more direct or positive than this. And the alternative was (vs. 23) that if any refused, it would be their loss—to be "destroyed from among the people." This also is plain. As Israel they were God's people, but now God's people were being reconstituted under Jesus the Judge and Ruler, King and Saviour from sin. Obviously whoever rejected Him would reject the offer of being reconstituted, and would thereafter cease to be recognized by God. It was an individual matter, which each and every Israelite had to decide for himself.

Verse 25. They were not being asked to accept something they had never heard of before, for the prophets had spoken for hundreds of years. They had also heard of the blessing—"And in thy seed shall all the kindreds [or, families] of the earth be blessed." This was the Covenant of promise made with Abraham, and confirmed to Isaac and to Jacob (Genesis 12: 1-3); and the children of Israel as descendants of Abraham were inheritors of the promise. But they could not be inheritors of the blessing itself unless and until they accepted the Seed—which is Jesus Christ (Galatians 3: 16)—as divinely sent, and gave allegiance to Him.

Those who heard Peter's discourse that day had the matter put before them very plainly; Peter made pointed application in a way no right-minded Jew could resist (verse 26)—

26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

The Head Stone of the Corner

By their boldness and plainness of speech Peter and John aroused the ire of certain ones, who were grieved at the success of the apostles' preaching. The whole of Acts 4 should be read to get the complete account. Cast into prison, and the next day brought before the high priest, rulers, scribes, and other influential persons, Peter and John were no less emphatic in their testimony. They were not afraid. The Holy Spirit gave them strength and power as well as the words to say, as the Lord had promised while He was yet with them. (Matthew 10: 16-20.) Of Jesus Christ they said (Acts 4: 11, 12)—

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.
12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

This was indeed a bold statement: to apply to those leading men the prophecy which placed the "builders"—"you builders"—in the wrong, as rejecters of the stone which God himself had now made the headstone of the corner; and then to tell them that only through this Stone could salvation be received! Of course, if these leaders had believed Peter and believed the testimony of the miracle by which God endorsed the apostles, they could have been saved. God would have forgiven any one, or all, of them had they repented of their share in the condemnation of the Just. But the majority nursed envy and hatred in their hearts, and refused to rejoice with the formerly lame man in his newfound freedom. By taking up this attitude they fastened upon themselves the verdict of verse 12—"Neither is their salvation in any other," and of Acts 3: 23, to be "destroyed from among the people."

Believing that the writers of the New Testament were inspired to include in the Acts and the Epistles the interpretations of prophecy necessary to the understanding of the Reconstitution, we may accept the lesson in Peter's words—that the reconstitution had then begun in regard to the people of the kingdom: following up and emphasizing afresh what our Lord had told the chief priests and Pharisees (Matthew 21: 43)—

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The place of honour in God's great plan is occupied by Jesus alone. He was the divinely appointed King, but the Jews refused Him. However, their refusal did not alter God's purpose in His Son, whom He afterward placed in that highest position in the heavens, next only to Himself. And that kingdom which Israel might have had in that higher sphere of jointheirship in the reconstituted Throne—a kingdom of priests—which the Lord opened up after His resurrection, the Jews as a nation never attained to. The invitation to the High Calling was left open, however, to any Jew who would accept it on the terms offered. For 3½ years after our Lord's death the message was confined to that nation, and then the message of invitation was sent to the Gentiles. Thus a new nation was formed, as Peter subsequently wrote, addressing his letter to the—

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. —1 Peter 1: 2.
But YE ARE a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, AN HOLY NATION.—1 Peter 2: 9.

This holy nation does bring forth the fruits which Israel refused to render; to them the exalted Lord Jesus "is precious." To them therefore is given the Kingdom—an inheritance in the Kingdom in its Gospel age reconstitution.

The Only Name

Is it not worth while in our day, when so many say, "It does not matter what you believe," to imitate the boldness of the apostles, and say plainly, It does matter what you believe. There is only the one way of salvation—through Jesus Christ, the King on the reconstituted throne, the Name which

God has given His Son, and which is "above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2: 10, 11.) The apostle followed this statement with emphasis upon obedience now, by all who hear of this Name. It is not a matter to be trifled with.

A Prince and a Saviour

Another notable proclamation was made after the high priest and others again placed the apostles in prison, and the angel of the Lord came by night and released them, telling them to go and stand in the temple and deliver the message (Acts 5: 30, 31)—

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.
31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

No fear, no hesitation marked the attitude of the apostles, or the divinely-inspired authority in their command to render fealty and obedience to the new King. And so we might go through the Acts—Peter sent to Cornelius the Gentile, announcing the new King, the Judge of quick and dead; Paul at Athens calling upon the philosophers and other great ones to turn from their idols and serve the living and true God: God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent—Jesus raised from the dead, the Judge of the whole world. The new King was real, as real as Cæsar, and more so, for all power in heaven and in earth is given to Him. By their preaching the apostles were said to have "turned the world upside down, . . . saying that there is another king, one Jesus."

As already said, during the Gospel age the Kingdom is being reconstituted in that its joint-heirs with the King are being chosen, who shall live and reign with Him during the Thousand Year Kingdom to be set up in full control of the earth and all on it; and the subjects of that Thousand Year Kingdom will be reconstituted on the basis of faith in Christ, the New Covenant mercy of forgiveness of sins and full enlightenment by the True Light. Then also the authority of the King will be proclaimed, and every knee will be compelled to bow to Him. Finally, the wilfully disobedient will be shown up in their true inwardness, and their contempt for the loving Saviour who died for them will demonstrate their unfitness for everlasting life in God's Kingdom of righteousness and peace.

All through the Epistles the apostles write with authority to impress upon all the necessity of acknowledging and serving the King of kings; and all who hear should obey. Many myriads of humanity have not heard as yet. But they shall hear, and then the responsibility will be upon them to have faith and accept the terms—to turn from sin, seek forgiveness, and render obedience. Then, as now, it will be true that the name of Jesus is the Only Name.

For the Children

PAUL AGAIN VISITS EPHESUS

While Apollos was still at Alexandria he heard of John the Baptist and his mission. Jews returning from Galilee and Jerusalem would inform the Jews living at Alexandria (and there were many Jews there) of what they had heard and seen; what John said, and how multitudes came to him to be baptized for the remission of their sins. Apollos would also hear how John taught that a greater than he would soon appear, and his (John's) work was to prepare the people to receive the Messiah. And so it happened that many if not all Jews baptized by John would seek to convince other Jews of the need of repentance and to look for Messiah the Coming One, and thus John's baptism became known in Alexandria and other foreign parts; for the Jews were scattered in many countries.

Apollos, who was well versed in the Scriptures, was glad to learn of John's mission, and in turn became a preacher of John's teaching, so that when he came to Ephesus he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath days, and told the Jews there all he knew, urging them to repentance for their sins and to come back into true relation to God as Jews, while they awaited the Great One of whom John spoke. And so it came to pass that Apollos preached boldly in the synagogue for some time, teaching diligently all that he knew.

During this period his eloquent preaching would influence numbers of Jews who attended the synagogue, and they too would be moved to repentance and to look for the Coming One; but they would know no more than Apollos was able to tell them.

Aquila and Priscilla had come to Ephesus shortly before this, having travelled with Paul from Corinth. At Corinth Paul had lodged with them and engaged in tent-making, and every Sabbath day he visited the synagogue to reason with the Jews. As a consequence, Priscilla and Aquila and others were well instructed in the Gospel teaching, and became followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since that was the case, they would understand Christian baptism; and when they heard that Apollos had been speaking in the synagogue, and knew only the baptism of John, they brought him to their home, and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Writing to the Romans Paul said, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house." This shows that

they were fully qualified not only to show Apollos that Jesus was the Christ, whom John the Baptist had preached, and who should now be believed in, but were also able to make clear to Apollos the significance of Christ's baptism. So that when Apollos left Ephesus and went to Corinth he was well equipped to explain these matters to the Corinthians, and he did so with power, giving great assistance to those already believers through grace: "For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ." —Acts 18: 28, margin.

In the meantime Paul arrived in Ephesus, and would doubtless receive a warm welcome at the home of Aquila and Priscilla, with many quiet talks over their experiences in Christian work since last they met. There was also the church in their house, who would be glad to see the apostle and listen to the words of wisdom on divine truth.

As Paul made a practice, wherever he went, to visit the synagogue and preach the gospel, it was most likely there that he met "certain disciples" who had heard Apollos at the first, and consequently knew only the baptism of John, and had become believers in the One whom John said should come. For when Paul inquired, "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" they replied that they had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit." They had heard from Apollos how John the Baptist had said that their Messiah was about to appear, and that John was baptizing the Jews as a sign of their repentance and of the forgiveness of their sins, so that they might be ready to receive Him when He came. And these twelve men all believed what Apollos said, because he proved everything so clearly from the Scriptures. So they had repented, had been baptized, and were "prepared," or ready. That far they had been brought Paul could see, and that was very good.

But this showed that they were really only at the beginning, and needed to be brought along further into the fuller knowledge. John's baptism they understood, but Christ's baptism they did not. Then Paul explained to them the meaning of Christ's baptism as being different from that of John's. For while John's baptism was the sign or token of repentance unto forgiveness of sins, Christ's baptism was the sign or token of the believer's burial into Christ, and also his devotion to the will of God, for that is what it meant for Jesus himself.

When they heard all this, they believed it fully, and were then all baptized again. Why? would not their first baptism do? No; because John's baptism was for a limited time only, and that time had passed. The baptism now in order was baptism into Jesus Christ. And when they heard this, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

This baptism was a token of their new belief and desire to do all the will of God as full followers of the Lord Jesus. It was then—when they believed Paul's word and were baptized—that Paul laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. He laid his hands upon those men, and immediately "they spake with tongues, and prophesied." Now they were made miracle workers, speaking in different languages, and explaining the Scriptures.

How marvellous it all was! And what a difference there was in them before Paul came and after! Before, they were believers according to John's teaching as far as they knew, and men of no special abilities. After, they were believers according to the teaching and example of Jesus, with marvellous gifts of power. And seeing such powers surely their friends and others must have marvelled and wondered. We can see then that to believe John's word was good; but to know Jesus and to love and serve Him was better; was indeed the greatest and best thing anyone can get in this life.

Effects of Paul's Preaching

For about three months Paul continued to preach and persuade the Jews in all the power and wonder of his message, apparently without any hindrance. But it would be impossible for Paul to go on in that way for that long without there being some visible effects. All of his hearers would have to make up their minds whether they were going to believe the message or not, and a division would have to come, separating the sincere and earnest ones amongst them from those of a different heart. That division can never be escaped wherever the Gospel is preached. And the sincere ones coming over to Paul's side would be more and more persuaded of its truth as time went on, and would experience the joys of believing it. The others would move away from Paul and become more and more hardened against it, speaking of it as of something evil. Both these things happened in that synagogue in Ephesus: some believed, others were "hardened." And as good cannot remain with evil the good must leave the evil to itself. That also happened in the synagogue at Ephesus; for Paul and those with him went out and took a place elsewhere in the city for their meetings.

Thus the separation between the sincere and the hardened ones was made as plain as it could be; for they were not only different in heart toward the message, but were now in different places. And every traveller or trader leaving the great city and passing along the many roads which led from it into all Asia and beyond could now carry information with him to Jews and Greeks wherever they were.

"When you go to Ephesus," the traveller could say, "you have only to visit the building known as the school of Tyrannus, and there you will hear all about Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah."

But there were others besides business men and traders coming to and going from the city.

We already know that Ephesus was remarkable for having within it the temple of Diana, which was one of the "seven wonders of the world." We are told that it was 220 years in building, and as Diana was widely worshipped—by "all Asia and the world"—it drew many people from many countries to Ephesus for the purpose of seeing it or engaging in the idol ceremonies. But these visitors in time

would hear of Paul and his message; and, even if they remained idolaters and were therefore not the Lord's proper messengers, they also would be carriers of *some* word about Jesus to their own parts of the world.

But the school of Tyrannus was where they could all come, see and hear for themselves, and from whence, in time, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

It would therefore be of God's overruling that Paul stayed in Ephesus teaching and preaching daily for two whole years. No doubt the words of Paul, and indeed of all those with him who had the special gift for preaching, were powerful and convincing, and turned many from the synagogue and from idolatry to belief in Jesus. But, in addition to this, and for a reason we shall now explain, "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul" in the city of Ephesus where the idol Diana was. For that city, being almost wholly idolatrous, and the stronghold of Satan and the demons, was full of what is called Magic.

Magic is a remarkable thing. It is the power to do things above the ordinary, "little miracles" we might call them, which come not from God but from the demons. As we know, the demons are mightier than men, and can work their "little wonders" through men. A large number of men in Ephesus was so used, and they were known as "magicians." But other names applied to them as well; such as soothsayers, necromancers, exorcists, wizards; and the women doing such things were called witches. When Paul came to Ephesus the practice of magic was in full swing, and the whole city was under its spell and the worship of Diana. The ignorant people were quite carried away by the magicians, and looked upon them as "super-men;" that is, as men higher than or above the ordinary on account of the special powers they were supposed to possess. So they were already used to "little miracles" which mystified and puzzled them at the time Paul came to them.

What notice were they going to take then of a poor man coming amongst them if he only talked about another God and did no wonders such as the worshippers of Diana did? Or, even if he did some ordinary miracles, they might still reason that the God he spoke of was no greater than their own Diana, for her worshippers could do much the same.

Now that is where the "special miracles" of Paul came in. They were so remarkable that they threw all the "little wonders" of the magicians into the shade, and all reasonable men were forced to confess that the God of Paul was greater than Diana.

When we read of "special miracles" we should understand they were "special" because the evil spirits could not do any like them or even approaching them, and so the Ephesians had never seen the like, and Paul himself had never done such. And if you are now asking why should they have been done in Ephesus particularly, the answer is, Because Ephesus with all its idol worship was a stronghold of Satan and the demons, and there would be the place for the mighty power of the Lord to be displayed and the weakness and foolishness of idolatry to be shown up. For what could prove a better testimony to God's power and be more surprising than when they found that a small garment such as a handkerchief or apron brought from Paul to a sick person made him well immediately? And even those who were made mad with evil spirits were delivered in this way; for the evil spirits were forced to come out.

In all these miracles Paul did not even see any of the sick or possessed—they might have been miles away—and it may be that he did not always know that the people were using him in that way. That would make the healings and deliverances all the more wonderful in the eyes of these idolaters, for the magicians could do nothing like that.

All heathen and ignorant people are easily captured by things that are strange and mysterious, and since the works God wrought through Paul surpassed anything they had ever known, it should have been an easy step for them to leave Diana and become believers in the great God who was so much above their idol. And we shall see that many did so and forsook Diana and all magic. But most remained with Diana and the demons, for Satan, who is the chief of them, is still allowed to be so strong!

Please read Acts 19: 1-12 for this Story.

Our Lord's answers in temptation, Matthew 4: 1-11.

What Jesus' baptism signified, Hebrews 10: 7; Philippians 2: 5-8. And ours, Romans 6: 3-5.

The Holy Spirit given to believers, Ephesians 1: 13, and Changing their lives, 2 Corinthians 5: 17.

The gifts of the Spirit in the Early Church, 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11.

The two possible effects of the Gospel, 2 Corinthians 2: 14-16.

The whole world lieth in the Wicked One, 1 John 5: 19.

Satan can do miracles, Exodus 7: 8-25; 8: 1-19.

—UNCLE FRANK.

The Field is the World

TWO WORDS that loom largely in the public mind to-day are "security" and "fear." All that the average family asks is to live at peace and have the opportunity of earning a living — whether on farm, in shop or factory, or some form of labour, skilled or otherwise. Something to do to earn the daily bread. For security of tenure and maintenance of avenues of trade all look to the Government under which they live, and rightly so. The world has developed along national lines, the beginnings of which are recorded in the Bible. After the Flood the descendants of Noah migrated in different

directions, the means of livelihood being simple—the possession of flocks and herds, agriculture, fisheries, some manufacture and mining, and trading. Exchange of goods was general, but very early came the use of precious metals as a medium of exchange. Some tribes became nomads, others became settled and grew into nations. The many possessing no property of their own were as a rule content to serve. And, if called on, fought as required by their chiefs, either in self-defence or as aggressors.

As nations grew, some were more warlike, others more peaceably disposed, but in any case security *for themselves was wanted. The title* "king of kings," made familiar in the Press of late in connection with the Abyssinian Emperor, pertained to any ruler, like those of Assyria and Babylonia, who had conquered and secured the allegiance of a number of tribal chiefs. Leagues of offence and defence were common. The stronger the power by its own might *and by alliances, the more* widespread and enduring the "peace" permitting development and culture. The Roman empire illustrates this—strong as iron, with great iron teeth, able to crush and to devour; lasting for centuries, and for the most part protecting its inhabitants; in the providence of God preserving peaceable conditions for the preservation of Israel, and, later, the propagation of the Gospel.

The same sort of social order obtained in Eastern Asia, as shown later by the organization existing among the invaders of the West—the Tartars, Goths, Turks, and others; the invasion of China by the Mongols, etc. A conqueror subdues many near tribes, and then overflows like a flood on more distant lands. The Saracens overran the Holy Land and across to Egypt, along North Africa to Spain, spreading and establishing Mohammedanism as they went.

As a rule such waves are absorbed in the population of the countries inundated, making them either better or worse than before. But some resisted, as the Copts of Upper Egypt and Abyssinia refused to accept the Mohammedan religion. Coptic Christianity being Christian in a debased form, it is not surprising to read among the many descriptions of Abyssinia *now appearing in the Press, that ignorance and superstition* prevail, with a very primitive standard of living.

The absorption of Korea by Japan some years ago is said to have benefited the Koreans; and the Japanese operations in Manchuria and setting up of the new state Manchukuo are said to have established *more settled conditions and greater "security" for* the inhabitants.

THE OUTCOME OF IT ALL. Can we not see then, from what the Bible tells us of ancient peoples (much of which has been confirmed by archæological discoveries), and from the history of the nations during the Christian era (some of which was foretold in the Book of Revelation), as well as from what is going on in the earth to-day, that the *social order has been much the same throughout.* The apostle Peter refers to the period following the Flood as "the heavens and earth" [i.e. ruling authority, religious and political, and social order] which are now," as being "reserved" for a certain end. The heavens and the earth —the ruling political and religious powers and the social arrangements—constitute a "world" or "order of things." This we learn from 2 Peter 3: 6, where the order of things before the Flood is called "the *world that then* was."

By keeping ourselves posted on what the Bible says, we are able to view what is going on in the world to-day from the divine standpoint, hence with a grasp impossible to those who see only their immediate difficulties and dangers without regard to what God foretold will be the developments and finally *the Outcome of it All.*

WE WANT A NEW WORLD is, in a nutshell, the view of Sir Samuel Hoare, British Foreign Secretary, *expressed in his policy speech in Parliament and in a* broadcast to the United States. He emphasized "the sincerity of the British faith and hope in the new order of international relations" represented in the League of Nations; and urged the necessity of the member nations living up to principles expressed in the League Covenant—

"We *have felt, and still feel, what in truth has been* present to the mind of everyone in every member State of the League, that neither the League nor, indeed, our civilization, can condone the multiple breach of treaties and survive. . . ."

"The League cannot be said to have failed until the provisions of the Covenant have been effectively tried out. We are at present engaged in trying them out, and so far as the British Government is concerned we have been earnestly and sincerely trying to make them succeed because we are convinced that if they fail THE WORLD AT LARGE, and Europe in particular, will be faced with a period of a most unrelieved danger and gloom."

"The crisis which confronted them was not of a few days or a few weeks, but of much wider and more protracted movements, which could only be controlled by steady pressure and constant determination TO FACE THE *FACTS OF A CHANGED AND CHANGING* WORLD."

RULE OF LAW OR RULE OF FORCE. The Labour Opposition Leader (Major Atlee) said, in the course of the *debate,*

"The overmastering matter was the vindication of the rule of law against the rule of force and the protection of the international system against a relapse into anarchy."

HEARTS FAILING THEM FOR FEAR. These two expressions of hope that the League of Nations and its International System will function by all member States *performing their obligations* under it are like two voices expressing the Fear which our Lord said would characterize these last days—"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21: 26.) The League of Nations was formed and set up in the "heaven" of *political control.* It was to be a permanent influence for peace and security and good will, and it was hoped that it would grow by the accession of additional nations until the whole world would be controlled by it. The absence of the United States, Germany, and Japan, three strong Powers which prefer to shine in the "heaven" in their own strength, has so *far prevented the accomplishment of that aim.* In fact, Japan is taking advantage of Europe's preoccupations to extend itself in Asia, and is now sus-

pected of designs to absorb the whole of China. None of the Western powers that once sought to maintain the integrity of China is in a position to render assistance, since all have their own problems and hesitate to involve their peoples in war at a time when most nations are working for world peace.

A SUPER STATE. Hence the growing propaganda for a Super State to which all nations should send representatives, and which would "police" the world with its own army and navy. And hence the recommendation of some of the powers that the present League of Nations should be granted such a force which could be sent anywhere at short notice.

But as individual Powers are shaken, and as the League of Nation's Power is now being shaken, so will any Power of man's creation be shaken.

The world has changed in that "the time of the end" spoken of by Daniel the prophet came in at the end of the 1260 years, which reached to 1799. Knowledge has been increased. Education is more widespread. Facilities for intercommunication have increased from the slow sailing ship to the speedy ocean liner, from horse transit to lightning "express" and motor car, airships and aeroplanes. So that, while the population of the world has increased, the world has in a sense grown smaller; and telegraph, telephone, and "wireless" give quick communication and ability to know at any moment what the whole world is doing.

Mechanization has provided improved possibilities in standards of living; and has also multiplied facilities for destruction. So that while with one hand "civilization" is ready to feed and clothe the world, with the other hand it is equally ready to destroy it. Hospitals and asylums, child welfare, and other things are a change from crude methods of the past. But still the destructive forces are at work through drugs and bad habits. While the comparatively healthy must still look forward to that final catastrophe death.

DELIVERANCE AT LAST. So that whether with or without Leagues, collective security, peace treaties and other devices of man, that original penalty of death pronounced by a righteous God falls upon all.

And what is the root of all the trouble? Sin—sin in a thousand shapes and forms. Sin is the spanner that wrecks the machinery of the nations.

What the world needs is the Great Deliverer. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now, waiting for Deliverance from sorrow and pain. Deliverance from Sin, and Deliverance from Death! Thank God that great Deliverance is near.—Romans 8: 17-22.

ABYSSINIA'S CHURCH. Knowing that the Lord Himself will bring deliverance, we may the more hopefully view the events occurring all around us. Whether people like it or not, they have the history of the past more or less forced upon them as well. The following from the Melbourne "Herald" gives useful information—

Coptic Religion

Romance is associated with the news that Abuna Kyrillos, head of the Coptic Abyssinian Church, has been directed by the Emperor to proclaim a holy war, and recapture the sacred city of Aksum. Mussolini is also playing up to some of the Coptic priests of Ethiopia.

The Coptic branch of Christendom is an old story. The Church of Abyssinia was not founded until the fourth Christian century by the Church of Alexandria, and its genesis was one of the earliest instances of a religious mission following a scientific discovery. Moripius had gone exploring the Red Sea, with two young relatives, Frumentius and Edesius. The party were attacked and mostly massacred while watering at an Ethiopian port, but the savages were struck by the two studious youths, who consequently became tutors to the Ethiopian king's household.

Frumentius, like a later Livingstone, used that opportunity to introduce Christianity, and actually became the founder of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia.

It is significant that in those days, and up to the fifth century, Alexandria rivalled Rome as the headquarters of Christianity. Even to the present time the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria is styled "The most holy Pope of Alexandria, of all Egypt, of Jerusalem, of Nubia, Abyssinia and Pantapolis," although his jurisdiction now extends only over Egypt and Abyssinia.

* * *

The word Coptic literally means Egyptian, and the Coptic Church is to-day the most remarkable monument of Christian antiquity. Within its narrow limits have now shrunk the learning and lineage of ancient Egypt. The language of the Coptic services, understood neither by people nor priests, is the language, although debased, of the Pharaohs.

For Australians and other outsiders, the Coptic faith has several unique features of surprising interest. There are people who see in a nation's canonised saints a reflex of that country's character, and it is worth noting how different are the saintly lists in various European States. But the Abyssinian Church beats all others in one daring direction, by canonising Pilate just because he washed his hands and declared himself "innocent of the blood of that just man."

Another unique Abyssinian touch concerns ordination. Generally the Christian Church ordains by the laying on of hands, and for centuries the Church of Alexandria used the dead hand of its first bishop for that purpose

Alone in Christendom, the Coptic Church now confers ordination, not by the imposition of hands, but by the act of breathing upon the recipient.

* * *

Only in Abyssinia, also, is still observed both the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday, while other Jewish relics are the banning of swine, hare and aquatic fowl for food, the continuation of the ritualistic dancing that once formed part of the worship in the ancient Hebrew Temple at Jerusalem, and a lingering form of Hebraic polygamy.

The holy kiss is a striking ceremony in which the entire Coptic congregation participates. It is worth remembering in this connection that kissing, as a symbol of Cupid, is comparatively a modern innovation.

The early see of Alexandria was for a time the most important in the whole of Christendom. Its patriarch was the only potentate of the time who bore the name of "Pope," and amongst its famous personalities were Athanasius, Origen, Cyril and the martyred St. Anthony. The Copts of to-day are dubbed Monophysites by their theological opponents, because they deny the human nature of Christ.

The present Church of Abyssinia is the world's one example of a nation both savage and Christian, a singular compound of vanity, meekness, ferocity, devotion, superstition and ignorance. She perpetuates, in her devotions, many relics of Jewish and old Egyptian ritual, carrying such outward observances to weird extremes.

One cannot but be glad that the Copts as well as other benighted races are nearing the end of their ignorance and superstition; for false religions must go, along with all the other falsities, and soon the Lord Himself will set up His Kingdom for their enlightenment. That Kingdom will take control of this evil world, and will give it its final shaking, and cast it aside. But the people of the world are His. He

loved them and died for them, as He did for us more enlightened ones. All glory to Him the true King of kings!

At the same time the Coptic church, like the Greek Orthodox and the great Papal system, serves as a warning and an evidence of the consequences of following man-made creeds instead of adhering to the Word of God. At the present day in the more advanced nations Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox have added some of the refinements, and have been forced to open schools to keep pace with Protestant educational influences. But in some of the purely Roman Catholic countries illiteracy, ignorance, squalor, and superstition prevail as in the Abyssinia they wish to change into a Roman parish.

THE POPE'S IMPOTENCE. Among indications of the present-day decline of the Papacy we may mention that when the Eucharistic Congress met recently in Cleveland, Ohio, the Pope sent the assembled ecclesiastics a message, that the assemblage unite in prayer for peace. Yet peace has not come. If the Pope meant a peace between Italy and Abyssinia that would advantage Rome, of course that may yet come. Or it may never come.

In further evidence of the Pope's waning power is the following newspaper item—

Pope Asks for Prayers

The Rev. Father Boylan, who is editor of the "Australian Messenger," a Roman Catholic publication, and the official organ of the Apostleship of Prayer, has received a cable message from the Pope, asking for the prayers of members for a special intention. The cable message, which was received yesterday, was lodged in Vatican City at 4 p.m. (Rome time) on Sunday [October 20]. It asks that the request to members be made known by spoken addresses, through the press, and by wireless.

The Apostleship of Prayer has a membership of 40,000,000 throughout the world, and it has 67 newspapers, issued in 50 languages. It is not unusual for the Pope to ask for prayers for some specified intention; but the fact that no such intention is named on this occasion suggests to Church authorities in Melbourne a crisis which the Vatican authorities deemed it unwise to broadcast.

A membership of forty millions, 67 newspapers, and 50 languages sounds like a great deal of power. Over the forty million membership the power may be considerable, especially when they are asked to pray for something of which they are in ignorance.

They are asked to believe that the Pope's intention is a good one.

But the failure to mention the nature of the crisis (if any) and the end desired as a result of the prayers indicates weakness and fear. If the prayer were known to the public, and the Pope did not receive or accomplish what he and the forty million persons addressed prayed for, then all the world would know what small reliance can be placed on such prayers.

The Anglican Church and Security

The Church of England (known in America as the Episcopal Church), being an established Church supported in large part by the Government, might be expected to make a statement in connection with the present crisis. Thus we have the following despatch from London, dated October 21—

Speaking at the Church Conference today the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Cosmo Lang) said: "Italy has been for generations our close and constant friend, and there is no desire deeper in the hearts of all of us than that that friendship may continue.

"It is most important to make it plain that the present dispute is not between this country and Italy, but between Italy and the League of Nations.

"Moreover, in passing judgment upon the acts of Italy we are only echoing the judgment by some 50 nations of the world.

"We are bound by the obligations of the Covenant which we have deliberately undertaken. If, unfortunately, Italy has made a breach in observance of the Covenant, that is no reason why we should follow that example, but rather there is every reason why we should be more determined to keep our own word and encourage other nations to keep theirs.

"**The only security of peace in the world is the collective acceptance of the common rule of law among the nations.** It was to establish that rule that the League of Nations was founded and exists.

"To protect and defend the Covenant of the League is the surest way of protecting and defending the way of settled peace."

The Primate said that he had **invited the authorities of all Christian communities** to send simultaneously a solemn reminder of their obligations to members representing them in the League. He added:—

"I learn **that the Pope is unwilling** at present to say more than what he has publicly said. We must generously recognise **the peculiar difficulty in which he is placed.** I hope that the Anglican Protestant communions will soon unite in uttering an assertion of the supremacy of the Kingdom of God."

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the chief bishop of all the bishops in the Anglican Church. Hence his words have special significance. He invites authorities of all Christian communities to take a certain course. This would mean Christians of other denominations, presumably. And it is understandable that such help might be desired to influence the members of the League of Nations. But what does he mean when he says, "I hope that the Anglican Protestant communions will soon unite in uttering an assertion of the supremacy of the Kingdom of God." Does he omit the Anglo-Catholics in the Church of England from such a hope and expectation? And how shall the supremacy of the Kingdom of God be asserted? and what shall the Kingdom of God be expected to do to assert itself? What has the Kingdom of God to do with the League of Nations?

If the Archbishop of Canterbury means that the Anglican Church is the Kingdom of God and should rule the world, then he is falling into the same mistake as the Pope, who claims the right to rule the world at the present time. During the present age the Church is not to rule, but to suffer, and will be disappointed in any attempts to rule.

From Far and Near

REDEEMING THE TIME. That the truth is a source of strength in time of stress we are all aware. Its assistance in illness is here described—

Dear Brother and Sister Henninges. Please use the enclosed as you think fit. [Placed to Advocate Sustaining Fund.] Am also sending payment for three extra copies N.C.A. sent.

Our city is in the grip of a "flu" epidemic, and I've had it three times in three months. Still I read a great deal while recovering, and found fresh

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———, *New South Wales.*

Yes, there is nothing to equal Bible Study as a solace in illness or the tediousness of recovery. And as we are not all situated with time and facilities to fossick out all the historical facts from ancient and modern authorities, many have found the "Daniel" book useful. So too in regard to events since Napoleon's day, the "Daniel" book has proved useful in pointing out the "signs" indicating the progress of the Lord's work of dealing with "the beast and his image."—Revelation 13.

The "Advocate" Sustaining Fund

Voluntary donations to this fund have been received as under, since our last report. As the "Advocate" is regularly published at a financial loss, it is obliged to depend upon the loving co-operation of its friends until it shall become self-sustaining. Let the good work continue!

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it, *β* repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

33 ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, [c] which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and [d] went into a far country:

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, [e] that they might receive [10] the fruits of it.

[y] Lk. 14. 16. Rev. 19. 9.
[z] ch. 3. 1, &c.
[a] Lk. 3. 12.
[b] Pro. 8. 2.
[c] Ps. 80. 8. Cant. 8. 11. Is. 5. 1. Jer. 2. 21. Mk. 12. 1. Lk. 20. 9.
[d] ch. 25. 14.
[e] Cant. 8. 11.

4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: [f] my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the [1] marriage.

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to [2] his farm, another to his merchandise:

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* [3] spitefully, and slew *them*.

VAR. REND.—[9] *V.* 19. *i.e. immediately* (soon *in v.* 20 *is the same word*) ——[10] *V.* 34. his fruits, R.——[11] *V.* 41. miserable. ——[12] *V.* 44. scatter him as dust, R. —— CHAP. 22. [1] *Fs.* 3, 4, 9. marriage feast. ——[2] *V.* 5. his own. ——[3] *V.* 6. *Rather*, shamefully.

VAR. READ.—*V.* 29. *β Note that the affirmative answer is placed first* (he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I go, sir, and went not) *by* B, *Memph., Mel. We. WH.*; *the common order is retained by* ℵ C D L Z, *Cur. Pesh. OL. Vulg., Orig. Eus., La. Ti. Tr.* R.——*V.* 31. *β So* ℵ C L Δ, *Cur. Pesh., Al. Ti.*; The latter, B, *La. Tr. We. WH.* (*Tr. however takes this reading to mean* he who afterwards repented); The last, D, *OL.* (*most MSS.*) *Vulg., Mcl.*——*V.* 32. *β So* ℵ C L, *Ti.*; did not even repent, B, *OL. Vulg. Cur. Pesh. Memph., La Tr. Mcl. We. WH.* R.——*V.* 38. *β* take, ℵ B D L, *Edd.* R.——*V.* 44. *β So* ℵ B C Z, *Vulg. Cur. Pesh. Memph., Al. La.*[1] *Tr.*[1] *Mel. We. WH.*[1]; *omit*, D, *OL.* (*leading MSS.*) *Orig. Eus., La.*[2] *Tr. WH.*[2] R *marg.* *Cf.* Luke 20. 18.

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[1] Tim. 2. 6. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 19.
[a] ch. 26. 28. Rom. 5. 15, 19. Heb. 9. 28.
[e] Mark 10. 46. Luke 18. 35.
[heb.] 9. 27.

30 ¶ And, behold, [h] two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, [9] because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

ing, [4] [g] Hosanna to the son of David: [h] Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; [i] Hosanna in the highest.

10 [i] And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus [k] the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

12 ¶ [l] And Jesus went into the [5] temple *β* of God *β*, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the

[g] Ps. 118. 25.
[h] Ps. 118. 26. ch. 23. 39.
[i] Mark 11. 15. Luke 19. 45. John 2. 13, 15.
[k] ch. 2. 23. Luke 7. 16. John 6. 14. & 7. 40. & 9. 17.
[l] Mark 11. 11. Luke 19. 45. John 2. 15.

VAR. REND.—[4] *V.* 20. sons.——[5] *V.* 23. *So Me. De W. Da., and similarly* (it is for them) R; save to them, *Wo. Mcl.*——[7] *V.* 24. *Lit.* about.——[8] *V.* 26. *i.e. desires to be.*——[9] *V.* 31. that.

VAR. REND.—CHAP. 21. [1] *V.* 4. is come to pass *Li.* R.——[2] *More strictly*, through.——[3] *V.* 8. the most part of the multitude, *Al. De W.* R; the exceeding great multitude, *Be.*——[4] *V.* 9. *i.e.* O save now.——

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The Christian's Warfare and Preaching of Peace

— Cup Day Conference, November 5, 1935 —

IN A WORLD filled with doubts and forebodings, the friends of the truth in Melbourne enjoyed a time of special blessing in discussing the Certainties. These Certainties were not those of the racecourse thronged on Cup Day, where so-called certainties led many to disaster. Ours were the Certainties whereof our God has informed us in His Word—made vital to us by the great work and the atonement sacrifice of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Warfare on the one hand and peace on the other go hand in hand in the great plan of God. How this can be was brought out under fourteen subtopics—in the light of God's dealings with man from the beginning. Following are the titles—

1. All Creation at Peace.
2. Justice the Habitation of God's Throne.
3. How Men Used Force in Patriarchal Times.
4. Moses, Deliverer and Warrior.
5. Joshua and the Canaanites.
6. Wars of Self-Defence.
7. Our Lord, King of War and Prince of Peace.
8. The Christian's Equipment for War.
9. The Preaching of Peace.
10. The Conflict of Light and Darkness.
11. The Fellowship of His Son.
12. Warfare Pulling Down Strongholds.
13. The Rider on The White Horse Makes War and Preaches Peace.
14. The Beauty of Holiness.

All Creation at Peace

WHEN GOD FORMED MAN of the dust of the earth and planted a garden eastward in Eden for him to dwell in, He established the first kingdom on earth—God being the King, Man the subject, and the Garden the territory. Man was made after God's likeness; that is, capable of thinking, reasoning, feeling, etc., although we know the substance was different, because Man was made a fleshly being, whilst God is a Spirit.—John 4: 24.

Man was created a perfect human being, and along with the remainder of God's creation was pronounced "very good." (Genesis 1: 31.) The animal creation was also constituted perfect, each in its kind, and all in willing subjection to Man, the lord of the earth.

Man, being perfect, and not knowing sin, was living in harmony with his Maker, and peace and good-will reigned, with happiness and plenty for all. The earth was suited to the human creation, and the human beings were suited to it, and they were satisfied. Everything necessary to this end had been supplied by God, and nothing was wanting to make conditions more agreeable or more peaceful.

After the expulsion of our first parents from the beautiful garden, came the first war. Not that the sins of the first two members of the race were a war, because war usually implies more than a single conflict, more than a single fight or battle. Persistence in conflict constitutes war.

Such a war was begun by Cain, and it will be interesting to read the account of it (Genesis 4: 2-16)—

2 . . And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou *doest not well, sin lieth at the door.* And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13 And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15 And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

16 And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

There is no reason to suppose anything but that Cain and Abel were properly instructed by their parents in

the offering of sacrifices appointed by God, and it is apparent that the shedding of animal blood was part of the necessary offering, and part of the mode of worship accepted by God in those times. There is a hint of this in the fact that the Lord God made coats of skins for Adam and Eve, these necessitating the slaying of an animal or animals, and this probably was the beginning of animal sacrifices.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Sacrifices

The thought that Cain and Abel were aware of the correct sacrifices is further supported by the fact that throughout the Scriptures we do not find any instance of God expecting His will to be performed without the subject or subjects being properly informed beforehand. Also, in special connection with what we are considering, it is written in Hebrews 11: 4—

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain [offered].

Faith is not credulity. It is the believing of something made known about things that are unseen, because of credible evidence or testimony or of recognized authority.—Hebrews 11: 1.

It would seem therefore that Abel had faith to offer the animal sacrifice as already instituted by God, the instructions concerning which were already part of the knowledge of both Cain and Abel.

Abel would of necessity have to believe in something definite before he could demonstrate the faith spoken of, for if the choice of sacrifice had been left to themselves there would not have been the opportunity for the exercise of faith.

Instead of purchasing an animal, or exchanging his fruit of the ground for sheep, as an offering to God, Cain thought he could override the ruling of the Almighty, and bring gifts of his own choosing. When he saw they were not accepted, he was influenced by jealousy and became annoyed with his brother Abel, whose offerings were in line with what God was pleased to accept.

Notwithstanding the envy and opposition of Cain, Abel kept right on with the offerings he knew, and had faith to believe, were what God required, whilst Cain's envy and hate increased. This was a war of an evil doer against a righteous man, and we can believe that God allowed Abel to be tested over a period of time so that his character could be proved, and that Cain could have space to repent; because God, although all-powerful, is not vindictive, and has always been longsuffering toward evil doers.

The Scripture does not state how long this evil feeling existed in Cain, but the murder of his brother was the climax of the envy and hatred generated in his heart, and the culmination of his evil works.

The Apostle John's Comment

We might here notice 1 John 3: 11, 12, which reads—

11 For this is the message [margin, commandment] that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.
12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

The evil works of Cain are held up as a warning to believers of the Gospel Age. If he had loved Abel, he would not have murdered him. By his conduct Cain clearly showed that he possessed the spirit of the wicked one, who was, as our Lord said, "a murderer from the beginning"—the first murderer. (John 8: 44.) But even before he committed his awful crime of murder Cain's works were evil.

We who now have the privilege of looking back on these events should absorb the knowledge and experience to be gained thereby, and see to it that no seeds of bitterness are sown in our minds, which may grow, as in Cain's case, and culminate in actions which will surely lead to God's great displeasure, and perhaps His entire rejection of us. We should not be slow to learn by what has been written for our edification concerning the lives of similarly imperfect people of olden times.

We have seen that there dwelt in Abel a spirit of faith and trust in God which moved him to offer the prescribed sacrifices. Of this spirit Cain was evidently destitute, and presumptuously he brought articles for sacrifice of his own choosing, which of course would not be acceptable to God under any circumstances. God's sovereignty had to be recognised by His creatures, and Cain had to learn the lesson to his sorrow.

We are not told in what manner God manifested His acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, whether by fire from heaven as was done at a later date, or in some other way. (Leviticus 9: 24; 1 Kings 18: 38.) The result, however, was that Cain, instead of being humbled by the non-acceptance of his offering, "was very wroth, and his countenance fell."

Annoyance usually follows the failure of one to have his own way, and Cain was no exception, especially when he could see that Abel's sacrifice was pleasing to God and his own rejected.

The Lord God was patient with Cain, and condescendingly reasoned with him, also asking why he was wroth, and why was his countenance fallen, saying that if he did well he would be accepted; but, if he did not do well, "sin lieth [or, R.V. coucheth] at the door." If he did well, God would accept His gifts, and would be with Him as his God. But if he did not do well, that meant he was harbouring Sin as a wild beast at his door, and the end could only be disastrous, for Sin would not be satisfied until he had gained complete mastery. Whereas (marginal reading), Sin should be subject to you. You should rule over him. That would mean driving Sin out, and keeping him out.

Cain was disappointed that his offering should be rejected whilst his brother's was accepted, but he did wrong in being envious, and if he was not clear on the matter he could have asked God for information, and this would have been given. Cain's mistake was to adopt the wrong spirit and become sulky; and, considering himself wrongly treated, he brooded over it, and began to hate Abel.

God asking him Why? gave him the opportunity even then to discuss the matter, and God would have put him right. But no; his whole attitude was wrong. God intimated that he was not doing well by the attitude of rebellion, envy, etc., that sin was as an enemy crouching or lying in wait to take advantage of him. It was a warning that the next step might be disastrous because a narrow margin only remained.

Up to the moment God spoke these words there was evidently time left for Cain to remedy his position, and he could then and there have repented of his evil attitude and have asked God for guidance. By so doing Cain would have put sin outside the door, and would have invited God in to dwell with Him.

But his unreasoning self-will gained the upper place; and, although refusing to shed an animal's blood in sacrifice, he did not hesitate to shed that of his own brother. The righteous Abel did not kill Cain, his persecutor. It was the evil Cain who made the war against his righteous brother Abel.

Did this murder improve Cain's position? How could it? Abel was still acceptable to God, and his very blood cried to Him from the ground. By his faith and obedience he had been counted as righteous, by his works he had approved himself before God, and in due time he will reap a righteous man's reward.—Hebrews 11.

Abel by his death became the first martyr, and is referred to by Jesus as "righteous Abel." (Matthew 23: 35.) He was the first of a long line of martyrs who have fallen victims to the persecuting intolerance and ruthless cruelty and rage of those in whom dwelt a spirit of envy, hatred, and opposition to good works in contrast to their evil ones.

"Am I my Brother's Keeper?"

After his sin of murder Cain became further involved by constituting himself a deliberate liar, replying to God

that he did not know where his brother was, and impertinently adding, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Not a loving way to refer to his own brother.

In lying Cain misjudged and seriously underestimated the power and high character of the Lord, and that He could not be lied to with impunity; although even after the crime Cain should have been moved to great sorrow and remorse, and should have endeavoured, even at that late hour, to seek forgiveness from God and to humble himself before Him. But no; he made an impudent liar of himself, and showed his unrelenting spirit and his gross hardness of heart. He certainly was anything but his brother's keeper; had he been, he would have been ready to help and protect him always, rather than to harm and eventually kill him. The answer was contained in the question.

God then pronounced the punishment on him; and, after Cain's remonstrance and his fear that every one (or, according to the Variorum footnote, any one) that findeth him would slay him, God "set a mark upon Cain;" or, as the R.V. has it, appointed a sign for Cain.

We notice that capital punishment was not to be the penalty for murder just at that time. God showed great mercy in not destroying Cain immediately, although that God is opposed to murder is demonstrated, also the justice of punishing the murderer. Exactly what the mark or sign was is not explained in the narrative. However, we can readily see that, whatever was its nature, the mark or sign was for the purpose of protecting Cain while he lived in the earth.

God did not pronounce sentence of death upon him, and he was not to be allowed to die by the hand of man either. By this fact and arrangement the Divine Sovereignty and Majesty were again emphasized.

Capital punishment as a penalty for murder was not imposed or allowed until after the flood, when it was given as a law to be observed by Noah and his sons and their descendants.—Genesis 9: 6.

God's purpose was to fill the earth with people in His own image, not with murderers, who are the very opposite in character. The sad narrative concerning Abel and the warlike Cain serves to teach a wonderful lesson of the faithfulness, justice, and power of God, and his intolerance of anything in opposition to His righteous will, which will eventually have justice and righteousness done in the earth by and to all His creatures, with peace abiding in the whole of His creation.

—H. H. F.

Justice the Habitation of God's Throne

Justice and judgment are the habitation [or, foundation] of thy throne: Mercy and truth shall go before thy face.—Psalm 89: 14.

IN CONSIDERING our Conference Topic it is necessary to realize that the warfare referred to is given us by God, and therefore must be conducted in a manner consistent with the Divine Character and purpose. This being so, the Christian's warfare can bring no evil effects in its train; but, being waged according to God's will and plan, must eventually result in blessings both to the Soldier of Christ and to all the misguided victims of Satan's deceptions.

Justice and Righteousness being the foundation of God's throne, He could not Himself be guilty of either injustice or unrighteousness of any sort. The previous speaker has told us how Cain waged war against Abel even to the extent of murder, and for that murder Cain was punished. If we go further back, to God's dealings with our first parents, we see that God's justice and righteousness required absolute obedience from man as in man's highest interests. And disobedience would so work evil in him as to unfit him for everlasting life. Hence he was warned (Genesis 2: 16, 17)—

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The Death Sentence Executed

Adam and Eve, although they had everything necessary for the sustaining of life, disobeyed this reasonable command, and so immediately brought upon themselves the punishment of which God had warned them, that they should surely die. But God did not immediately execute the penalty in full. They were allowed to live for many years outside the garden, though in less pleasant circumstances, for the Lord said to Adam (Genesis 3: 17-19)—

17 . . . cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;
18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;
19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The cursed condition was "for thy sake," hard labour and sweat of face in the conflict with thorns and other pests being designed for health. Useful employment is also the best preventive of further degradation in sin, and assists to turn the mind toward God the provider of the good things.

Before the death penalty was executed upon Adam in full, sons and daughters of our first parents began to people the earth, and were confronted with the same problems, but not from the standpoint of perfection in which man was created. For Adam's posterity inherited from their parents a constitution already bent in the direction of sinfulness, and therefore deserving the same penalty of death as transgressors. God's plan was that all should be condemned in the one who brought in the sin, as we read in Romans 5: 12 (margin)—

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.

Our first parents repented of their disobedience, and God forgave them; nevertheless they died, because that was the penalty God had placed upon them. Once the sentence had been pronounced it could not be altered. This fact is borne out in our text—"Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." God could not by His very nature reverse His own sentence. With Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—James 1: 17.

A Message of Hope

God, however, did not leave this wilfully disobedient, but repentant, pair without hope. For, speaking to the serpent which beguiled Eve, He said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3: 15.) This promise, although somewhat obscure, must have given them very real hope. The head being a vital part, the bruising of the serpent's head would indicate something disastrous to come upon him, whereas the bruising of the heel of the woman's seed would be some minor injury in comparison.

The hope, then, was of a Deliverer to come, who would deal with the Evil One who in the first place suggested the sin, and who would also make possible some new arrangement whereby God's favour might be again vouchsafed to the race which inherited both the sinful tendencies and the death penalty. For that all have died is a well es-

tablished fact; there have been no exceptions; even those of mankind who learned to love God and who served Him to the best of their ability have died. And all around us to-day we see death operating by one means or another upon all humanity.

A Day of Judgment

The question then arises, If death was the just punishment for sin, and it must have been, because God is infallible, why did God give that message of hope? And, another question, Why has God appointed a Day of Judgment?—as our Lord said, referring to the evil things said of Him by the Pharisees and others (Matthew 12: 36)—

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

The Apostle Paul also mentions a day of judgment (Acts 17: 31; 2 Corinthians 5: 10)—

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

In answer it will be necessary to consider for a few moments God's plan of salvation and its relation to mankind generally.

The vast majority of the human race do not realize that there is a Divine Being who is in control of the universe and who has a plan concerning them which will work out for their benefit and happiness far exceeding their wildest imaginations. But though they are ignorant of Him and His laws, they do experience the dire results of the breaking of those laws and of their living out of harmony with Him.

God's purpose then is to allow men to experience the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to experience in their own bodies the effects that sin has wrought on the race during the thousands of years of its influence, and ultimately to bring them to the understanding that they cannot live without God. Man will be brought to the realization that he cannot govern himself; that all his plans were failures and none was equitable, and that he needs laws formulated by the Supreme Being, whose commandments are just and who has the necessary power to execute His judgments.

A Corresponding Price

God by His wisdom and foreknowledge knew that His human creatures would fall into sin and disobedience, and He provided beforehand the Deliverer and Judge referred to in Genesis as "the seed of the woman;" this being none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who in due time came and gave Himself freely as a "ransom for all."—1 Timothy 2: 5, 6.

The Lord Jesus, when He came to live on this earth, was not, as some would have us believe, both man and God, but he became a human being, as shown in Philippians 2: 6, 7 R.V. margin—"who, being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."

Hebrews 2: 6-9 shows clearly how Jesus was a perfect corresponding price to Adam—

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Seeing that death passed upon all men as the result of one man's transgression, it is readily seen how Jesus by the payment of Himself as the one corresponding price was able to purchase the whole of mankind. By that one payment He became Lord or Owner of all.—Romans 14: 9.

It is in this that the economy and justice of Jehovah's plan are manifest. Had each individual of the human race been given the same opportunity under the same conditions as Adam and Eve were given, it is safe to say that each and all if tested as they were would have succumbed to the same temptation. In those circumstances each individual would have needed a separate redeemer, and thus millions of ransomers would have been required to redeem them all. In God's plan one Redeemer who paid one Ransom Price is sufficient for all humanity.

The purchase of the race of mankind (including all in the graves) was a great transaction, but that alone would not have brought the deliverance necessary. An essential part of God's plan is what the Lord Jesus could and would do for them after having purchased them. This includes the opening up of the New Covenant, under which sins may be forgiven, and remembered no more. (Matthew 9: 2-8; Luke 22: 20; Hebrews 8: 6-12.) Contrasting our Lord's obedience with Adam's disobedience, Paul wrote (Romans 5: 19)—

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

It should be noted that the penalty for sin is death, and not eternal misery as some believe. Under God's justice it was necessary for Christ, in paying the ransom price, to experience death. If eternal misery were the penalty for sin, it would have been necessary for Christ to have experienced that, but we know that He did not. We also know that His sacrifice is complete, a ransom for all; it therefore follows that death and not eternal torments is the penalty for sin. This is what the Scriptures teach, and this is what we must believe.

God can now justify all who believe in Jesus, and accept Him as their Saviour and Mediator under the terms of the New Covenant which was sealed and ratified by His shed blood on Calvary. This is the Great One promised: The "seed of the woman" who should bruise the serpent's head. This is the Son of David whom God had sworn to set upon his Throne. (Psalm 132: 11.) And when He raised His Son from death God set Him upon that throne at His own right hand.—Hebrews 1: 3-9; 10: 12, 13; Acts 5: 31.

Jesus the Judge of Living and Dead

As King and Lord of All, seated at God's right hand, our Lord Jesus is also Judge—the title Judge in Old Testament times being given to those whom God raised up to rule over Israel, before the people demanded a king such as the Gentiles possessed. The apostle Peter was sent to tell Cornelius the Gentile that Jesus whom God raised up "was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Hence "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."—Acts 10: 42, 43.

Because the day appointed for judging had arrived Paul said, God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17: 30.) Those who hear this command to repent are held responsible. Those who accept Christ and the terms offered are reckoned as God's children and invited to the high calling. And of these invited ones those who are faithful shall sit with Christ in His throne to engage in the second phase of the Judgment Day; namely the Judgment of the Thousand Years. —Revelation 3: 21; 20: 6.

Come to an Accurate Knowledge

We begin to see now why the righteous God, who justly condemned Adam and all his race to death on account of the sin in Eden, appointed a Day of Judgment. It was in view of the fact not only of our Lord's paying the ransom price and becoming the Owner of the race as well as the true Atoning Sacrifice for sins, but because some of the condemned race when enlightened under the new Judge would desire to turn from sin and live unto Him.

God's plan in this respect was set forth by the apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 2: 3-7)—

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
4 Who will have all men to be saved [literally, preserved], and to come unto the knowledge [or, exact knowledge] of the truth.
5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;
6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time [more exactly, as in margin, a testimony in due time].
7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle . . .

Thus Paul's words signify that the Gospel is now being sent out in order to bring men to an exact knowledge of the truth concerning Jesus as our Ransom and also as the one Mediator. Those who hear the Gospel are also brought to the knowledge of Him as Judge of all. Hence they have given them the opportunity to repudiate the sin of Adam, and to turn from their own sins and follow the new Master in righteousness, with the hope held before them of life everlasting and joint heirship in the second part of the Judgment. Jesus said, "as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just."—John 5: 30; 12: 46-50; 9: 39-41.

Resurrection of Just and Unjust

The whole number of persons from the beginning to the present day who have believed God has been few compared with the vast bulk of humanity, the majority of whom have gone down to death without so much as hearing that there is a God of mercy and love. How can they come to an accurate knowledge of the truth? Paul anticipated this question by saying (Acts 24: 15)—

that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Our Lord declared that God "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." He further emphasized that God had given Him also authority to raise the dead (John 5: 28, 29)—

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,
29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.

The Authorized Version has resurrection of damnation (vs 29), as *though there could be only damnation for* those who have done evil. But the Greek word means judgment, which indicates that sentence has not been passed upon them other than the original sentence imposed on all because of Adam's sin. The resurrection of judgment means that the vast majority who went into death in ignorance of the Saviour's love and His death on their behalf will be given the opportunity to hear when they are called forth from the grave. That Judgment will occupy the whole of the Thousand Years of the Kingdom Age, when Christ and His joint heirs will reign. During that thousand years Satan is to be chained, and all men are to be brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth. At the end of the thousand years Satan is to be loosed for a little season to deceive whom he can, who will then be destroyed, together with the deceiver.—Revelation 20: 1-10.

During the Thousand Years men will be taught about God and His plans, and this teaching will be part of the Judgment. For we must remember that the office of Judge in our Lord's reign, as in the rule of the Judges in ancient Israel, comprehends more than mere decision for or against. The office of Judge was that of a Ruler who had the welfare of the people at heart and taught them to forsake evil and obey the righteous Word of the Lord. The Lord's Judgment also includes instructing the people in the terms of the New Covenant, showing them the necessity of repenting of the sins committed in their former life and accepting the Lord Jesus as their Saviour from sin and death.

Thus we see why God appointed a Judgment Day and set His Son as Judge upon His Father's throne. It was because God saw that, given full enlightenment, many would renounce sin and accept salvation gratefully at the hands of Him who bought them.

Special Direct Punishments of the Past

From time to time God has sent direct punishment on man for disobedience. The Flood, for example, was God's own direct act that cannot possibly be explained away. The evil angels sought to people the earth in a way God had not arranged for, and God intervened to destroy their evil works.

The fact of the Flood having occurred was confirmed by Jesus in His reply to the disciples' question as to what should be the sign of His presence and of the end of the age, as recorded in Matthew 24: 37-39—

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,
39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The Apostle Peter also confirms the Flood, and tells how the Lord will similarly intervene in the affairs of this present evil world, and will destroy the evil works of men and the evil systems which are in control (2 Peter 3: 5-7)—

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:
6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Verse 10 also tells of what is coming upon the earth, a day "in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." And verse 13, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

This truly is a great promise for us to look forward to and believe, as Noah believed when told that the Flood would come. Let us pray too that we, like Noah, may be saved from this time of trouble that is coming upon the earth.

The progeny of the evil angels who were destroyed in the Flood were not authorized, and so no provision was made in the Ransom Sacrifice of Christ for their purchase. The apostle Paul clearly shows that only the Adamic race is included in the Ransomed. "For since by man came death, . . . For as in Adam all die." (1 Corinthians 15: 21, 22.) In verse 3 of the same chapter Paul says, "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," and the Scriptures tell of none others for whom He died than the members of the *human family*.

And the salvation is by faith in Christ who died (vss. 21, 22)—" . . . by man came also the resurrection of the dead. . . . even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus is shown the necessity of accepting the work of Christ and believing in Him before any can be "made alive," whether in this age or the next.

It is seen then that the whole of the Adamic race is the subject of God's provision in the New Covenant for mercy and forgiveness through Christ; and everlasting life to as many as will accept the grace of God in Jesus Christ the Redeemer and Mediator of the New Covenant.

The justice and wisdom of God are truly manifested in His plan to people the earth with contented and obedient human beings who will realize His love for them and who will never wish to go contrary to His commands. Amen. —E. T.

How Men Used Force in Patriarchal Times

THE WORD Patriarch comes from a combination of two Greek words, and signifies "head of a family." It occurs four times in the New Testament—"the patriarch David" (Acts 2: 29), "the patriarch Abraham" (Hebrews 7: 4), "the twelve patriarchs," referring to the sons of Jacob who afterward became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel (Acts 7: 8), and "the patriarchs" (Acts 7: 9), referring to those sons of Jacob who "sold Joseph into Egypt."

From these occurrences it is seen that the term was applied to the heads or princes of the families which became the tribes of Israel, chiefly to those who lived before the time of Moses. The first of these patriarchs was Noah.

The term "Patriarchal Times" refers to that period between the Flood and the beginning of the Jewish age, during which God dealt with, and gave promises to, one individual or patriarch at a time.

Before the Flood mankind was given for food every herb bearing seed and every tree bearing fruit and yielding seed, and the beasts of the earth were given every green herb.—Genesis 1: 29, 30.

Evidently God's design for mankind was vegetarianism at first; but, after the Flood, a change took place, and Noah and his descendants were told to value human life and to preserve as much as possible the purity of blood by using care in selecting their food. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." That is, every beast of the earth, every fowl of the air, and all the fish of the sea were added to their dietary. The eating of blood, or of flesh from which the blood had not been drained, however, was prohibited. (Genesis 9: 1-6.) Doubtless this addition of animal food was designed to support and sustain man's strength under the severe changes of climate caused by the breaking down of the waters above the earth at the Flood.

This ring of water served to prevent the direct rays of the sun from shining upon the earth and thus helped to produce an equable climate. Great extremes of cold and heat were experienced after the Flood.

The descendants of Noah led a more or less nomadic life, continually seeking new pastures for their flocks and herds. Each head of a family of substance employed shepherds who were armed for self-protection and the defence of their flocks. The history of the fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—affords an object lesson in the exercise of discretion and a peace-loving spirit.

How Abram used Force

In Genesis 12: 1-3 we read of the Lord's command to Abram—"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee," and then that wonderful promise, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And verse 5—"And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

Abram and Lot both had large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep—so great, it seems, that there was not sufficient pasturage in the land to carry both herds. This led to strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle. So, rather than have contention in the presence of the Canaanites and the Perizzites, Abram said to Lot (Genesis 13: 8)—

> Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

And then, since it was necessary and advisable for them to separate and pursue different paths, Abram gave Lot the opportunity of choosing the direction he preferred to follow. This is a wonderful example of generosity, because doubtless Abram had a heart that could be attracted by "well watered" plains just as powerfully as Lot's heart. Abram had the right to force Lot to do his bidding, but he preferred to give Lot the choice of pasturage. So Lot, having chosen the plains of Jordan, journeyed east, and pitched his tent toward Sodom, whilst Abram stayed in the land of Canaan.

Lot, having taken up his abode in Sodom, was deeply affected some years later by the wars of the four kings with five, and, following the flight of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, he was taken captive by the confederate kings.

Abram Rescues Lot

When told by one who had escaped that Lot was a prisoner, Abram did not say, It serves him right for associating himself with the unrighteousness of the Sodomites. Abram took the opposite course and armed his 318 trained servants and pursued the kings unto Dan. (Genesis 14: 14.) Although the marginal reading is "led forth" instead of "armed" in this verse, Abram certainly used force in the rescue of Lot, for, after pursuing them unto Dan, "he divided himself and his servants against the kings by night, and smote them," and pursued them still further, and brought back Lot, his family, his "goods," and his people.—Verses 15, 16.

This, however, was not aggressive warfare, but really just the giving of a cup of cold water to Lot who had been so foolish as to pitch his tent amongst the extremely wicked Sodomites. But Lot failed to profit by this experience; he continued to live under the protection of the king of Sodom.—Genesis 14: 17; 19: 1.

The present state of affairs indicates the general belief of all nations that might makes right, and doubtless the petty kings of those days thought the same. But Abram was different. He used force tempered with righteousness, and only to rescue his relative from a marauder; taking nothing of the spoil.—Genesis 14: 21-24.

Pleading for Lot's Safety

Later still, Abram made intercession for the righteous in Sodom, doubtless thinking of Lot and his family, and possibly hoping that there might be some Sodomites not as corrupt as the majority.

In Genesis 18: 23-32 we read of Abram's drawing near to the Lord; his first plea being that, if fifty righteous persons be found within the city, the place be spared; and further, that if but forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, and finally even if only ten righteous persons be found there, that the city should not be destroyed. The Lord agreed to spare Sodom for the sake of ten.

However, not even this small number could be found, and Genesis 19: 24, 25 records the fact that—

> 24 Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;
> 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

In this, we have the lesson of the manner by which Abram used force tempered with righteousness. The fact of being able to conquer the kings proves that he had the power behind him. For the sake of peace he preferred to keep out of the way of the Sodomites and other tribes round about.

When a raid resulted in Lot being taken prisoner, he exercised that force only for a good object on behalf of Lot. And when he saw Lot in danger in Sodom, Abram used what powers he had in the effort to dissuade the Lord from destroying that city.

The Way Isaac Conquered

Abram was highly regarded by the Lord, on account of his faith, and was given the covenant of promise already referred to, containing the statement that in Abram all the families of the earth should be blessed. In addition

to having the disposition to bless, Abram had the strength of will to command his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord, and do justice and judgment. To do this required force of a kind in the control of his household, we may be sure always showing the patience and kindness exhibited in his dealings with Lot. It is not surprising, then, that Abram is held up as a model to all future generations.—Genesis 18: 17-19; John 8: 39, 40.

Abraham's son Isaac manifested the same character and disposition as well as the same faith.

There was a famine in the land, and the Lord appeared unto Isaac, and said, "Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of."

And Isaac dwelt in Gerar, and sowed in that land, and grew until he became very great; for he had large flocks and herds and many servants: and the Philistines envied him. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, "Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we." Then Isaac departed and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

"And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing [or living] water." In other words, they found a spring. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, "The water is ours." So Isaac called the name of the well Esek, which means "contention." Rather than contend with the natives Isaac moved away and dug another well. The natives strove for this one also, and he called the name of it Sitnah, which means "hatred." Isaac moved away again, and dug a third well. This time they strove not, and Isaac called the well Rehoboth (which means "room"), and he said, "For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." These references may be found in Genesis 26.

Isaac had been commanded by the Lord to "dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of," but there was evidently room in other parts of the land, so he willingly moved about rather than argue with the natives over possession of the wells. With the result that he finally was rewarded, for he said, "now the Lord hath made room for us."

Jacob's Manner of Using Force

In Genesis 27 we read of Isaac's purpose to bless his son Esau, having apparently by reason of his age overlooked or forgotten the decree of God, pronounced before the birth of the twins, that "the elder shall serve the younger."—Genesis 25: 21-23.

Esau had previously showed by his actions that he was not worthy of the birthright, that is, of the promises which had been given by God to his father and grandfather. He had regarded the promises so lightly that he was willing to sell the birthright—as eldest son and heir—to Jacob for bread and pottage. (Genesis 25: 29-34.) Esau had also associated with the idolaters of the land, causing grief to his parents. (Genesis 26: 34, 35.) Paul describes Esau as "a profane person, . . . who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." (Hebrews 12: 16.) And Genesis 25: 34 says, "thus Esau despised his birthright."

But, though Esau was profane and despised his birthright, he was covetous of the large estate which would fall to the heir, and so he tried to contrive that his father should grant his deathbed blessing upon him, notwithstanding that he had sold the birthright. Hence Jacob and his mother used "force" in the sense of strategy to outwit the evil Esau, and secure what was Jacob's right at the hands of Isaac. In this they were successful, and Esau's further evil disposition is shown by his hatred of Jacob and his determination that, when the days of mourning for his father, which were at hand, were past, he would slay Jacob.

Jacob had no wish for strife; so on his mother's advice he fled to Haran, to her brother Laban, to stay with him till Esau's anger had turned away. Leaving all his rightful inheritance, Jacob committed himself to God.

By leaving all, Jacob showed his willingness to suffer for the sake of peace, and his father Isaac gave him a parting blessing. (Genesis 28: 1-5.) And God signified his approval of Jacob's action and of his faith.

On the first night of his journey the Lord God appeared to Jacob in a dream, and confirmed to him that wonderful promise previously given to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac, that in him and in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."—Genesis 28: 10-16.

Jacob's Strategy on His Return from Haran

After twenty years in the service of Laban, during which he retained his faith in God and in the promises, Jacob left with his wives and sons and all his possessions to return to the land of Canaan. No feelings of hatred or anger moved him toward his brother Esau. On the contrary, he returned in a spirit of peace and goodwill. He sent messengers on ahead to deliver a message to Esau, hoping to "find grace" in his sight. The messengers returned, and warned Jacob that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. Jacob was greatly perturbed by that which he feared Esau would do when they met, and he prayed to God for wisdom, reminding Him of the promise to bring him back to the land of promise. (Genesis 28: 15.) Jacob asked God's help, and no doubt received it, for he developed a strategical plan for winning his brother should he still entertain feelings of anger and hate.

So he divided the people that were with him and his flocks and herds into two camps for greater protection, and camped for the night. Then he sent his servants with a succession of presents to Esau, so that he would be appeased by the gifts.—Genesis 32: 13-20.

Conquering by Love

Jacob appreciated the value of the birthright which God had given him, though it meant suffering and privation and necessitated his fleeing from his home away from the wrath of his brother. However, instead of gathering strength and returning to claim the property in flocks and herds which was rightfully his he waited for twenty years and then, when he got the report that his brother was still wrathful, preferred to send him a present.

These friendly advances disarmed Esau and overcame any aggressive motive he might have had when he came to meet Jacob with four hundred men. Jacob also arranged that there should be no armed force around him—only himself and his wives and children to greet Esau on his arrival.

The result was that, when they came near to each other, "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him: and they wept." (Genesis 33: 4.) What a remarkable difference! What a change from his avowed intention before Jacob fled to Haran!

So Jacob conquered Esau, not with carnal weapons, but by love.

Thus Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all recognized the covenant which God had made as of vast importance, and were willing to go through varied experiences which, they had been foretold, would in some instances cause them to experience privation and suffering, rather than use unjustifiable means to accomplish the end. They had faith in God as indicated in Acts 7 and Hebrews 11, and they looked for a city—a new government on earth—which God would establish.

The Abrahamic covenant was a covenant of blessing, kindness, and generosity—not of envy and war.

May we, in our time, manifest that same spirit of love that is portrayed in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. —A. J.

Moses, Deliverer and Warrior

OUR CONFERENCE Topic—"The Christian's Warfare and Preaching of Peace"—is a very appropriate subject for discussion at this time, in view of the present condition of affairs amongst the nations of the whole world. Never in the past history of mankind has there been such an intense longing and desire for peace; and never have greater preparations for war been made, with all its destructive horrors and cruelties, than we are at present witnessing amongst the nations of the world. Such a distressing state has the world of mankind drifted into, that our greatest statesmen have publicly proclaimed that another great war will mean the wrecking of our present civilization.

Is there no remedy, then, for the fearful conditions of this present evil world? Is it impossible that mankind will ever attain to a condition of perfect peace, concord and harmony between individuals and nations? Left to themselves, perfect peace and harmony are impossible among the nations; but there is a grand remedy provided by the great Creator of mankind, and plainly stated and revealed in the Word of God. That Kingdom which our Lord came to establish and which He taught His disciples to pray for—"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth"—(Luke 11: 2)—is God's remedy for the great evils which afflict humanity. God has foreseen, and has foretold in His Word, the terrible condition into which mankind would fall, and has provided the remedy; first in the sacrifice and work of Jesus Christ to take away sin, the root-cause of all the trouble and distress, and, second, in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, we believe, will soon be set up "to cure the world of all its woes," by a world government capable of dealing with all man's problems of the present. Then the whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.—Romans 8: 21.

That will not, however, be the first kingdom of God on earth. Of the kingdom set up in the garden of Eden we have already heard. We are now to consider the course adopted by God when taking one nation and establishing it on earth in a land of their own. And we shall see that in accomplishing this purpose God became a God of war after all offers of peaceful agreement had been rejected and despised.

Cruel Bondage in Egypt

We are all familiar with the Bible account. How the children of Israel in famine time went down into Egypt, after Joseph had become established there as a great Ruler, and were given the land of Goshen to dwell in. (Genesis 47: 5, 6.) There they prospered, and there they continued to worship God after the manner of their fathers.

In the course of time another king arose in Egypt, who "knew not Joseph," who evidently was unaware or unmindful of the great service which Joseph had rendered to Egypt. This king enslaved the Israelites, and afflicted the people, placing them under hard taskmasters, to which they became subject for the space of 400 years.

This state of slavery reached such a pitch eventually, that one of the Pharaohs commanded the destruction of every newly-born male child. However, this cruel order was generally disobeyed, and thus when Moses was born, he was preserved from death, and even reared and educated in Pharaoh's household by the daughter of Pharaoh as her son. Thus Moses became a prince of the reigning family of Egypt, a man of power and influence in the affairs of that nation. As Moses grew up to manhood, he sympathized with his own people over their harsh treatment by the Egyptians, and this led him to smite one who was illtreating an Israelite, killing the Egyptian.

Moses the Deliverer

This rash deed, on becoming known, caused Moses to fly from Egypt to save his life, and thus severed his connection with the Royal family. By the providence of God Moses was thus placed in antagonism to the Egyptian taskmasters, and when the time for Israel's deliverance was due Moses was appointed by God to be the Deliverer.

As the Israelites were entirely helpless of themselves, Divine power was exerted on their behalf to break down the stubborn will of Pharaoh in order to effect their deliverance. Had the King been less stubborn the plagues need not have come. But the plagues and miracles attending the deliverance gave God a great name from that day to this, as he said it would.—Exodus 7: 3-5.

Thus we see how God's faithfulness to his promises, and His interest in establishing justice, were demonstrated, and He proceeded to make other demonstrations of His sovereign power, using the Israelites as an object lesson.

A New and Elaborate System of Justice

At Sinai, Moses, who had been raised up as a deliverer and warrior, was in addition made Mediator and Lawgiver—standing between God and the people to arrange the Covenant of the Law. The Law Covenant was a most marvellous arrangement for keeping the people separate from the idolatrous nations and their wicked ways. The Law, by its elaborate code, taught honesty and fair dealing, consideration for the poor, and many other principles of righteousness. To do this successfully penalties for the infraction of the Law were necessary, and to insure justice a system of tribal government, with heads of tribes and tribunals before which offenders could be brought.

This all meant war—war against sin and evil in every form; war against all forms of idolatry and all its attendant wickedness, with punishment to fit the sins and crimes, and judges and people were made responsible for carrying out the punishments.

There were also constructive measures: the reading of the Law, and worship, on Sabbath and other days, laws concerning sanitation, food, etc., to develop a healthy, pure-minded race, a credit to Jehovah their God.

Also the law, with its sacrifices and feasts, made many types of great interest to the Christian.

War against Law Breakers

Our concern just now is to note that God endorsed perpetual war against sin, punishment of evil doers, and the death penalty for wilful murder. For accidental killing provision was made by establishing cities of refuge. (Joshua 20: 7-9.) But God's will as expressed in Genesis 9: 6 (Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man) was made God's will for Israel. "He that killeth any man shall surely be put to death."—See Leviticus 24: 17-21.

The scope of the death penalty was enlarged under the Law to include other offences, such as that recorded in Numbers 15: 32-36, where a man was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath Day. See also 31: 14; 21: 29; 22: 22-24; Deuteronomy 13: 5, etc. Thus the Lord taught the people the stern necessity of obedience to His just laws, and there was no mercy extended to those who **deliberately** flouted the just and reasonable requirements of God's Law.

There are some who may be inclined to cavil at the seemingly harsh dealings under the Law, but when we realize the enormity of **deliberate sin and disobedience against God** the great Creator and Ruler of mankind, we can see the necessity of strict obedience to His laws instituted for the wellbeing of His creatures. God gave life, and man must not destroy it. But legal executions,

as divinely commanded, of persons by due process of law found guilty of capital crime, are not murder.

The Object of Punishments

Thus we can discern that the object of all these laws given to Israel was to preserve the righteous from the evil doers, who otherwise would have preyed upon them, and were only deterred by fear of the Law. They also served to demonstrate a general principle of the divine government, that God's qualities of wisdom and justice require both constant antagonism to, and adequate punishment of, sin in all its forms.

So great is God's abhorrence of evil that He sought to implant that abhorrence into the minds of the Israelites. Charging them with the responsibility of recording and executing the punishments prescribed against transgressors would assist to that end. But as events proved zeal for righteousness was limited to a few out of the nation, the majority flouting the law and the righteous and going after the abominations of the heathen. When this occurred—and it was not infrequently—God took the nation in hand and administered the punishment with other instruments, as He had forewarned them (Leviticus 26: 14-39; Deuteronomy 28: 15-48). Famine, pestilence, droughts, locusts and other pests, and a multitude of other such foes, were sent against them, besides invasion and sack by enemy nations. At these punishments the children of Israel had no cause for surprise, for God's arrangement with them under the law covenant entered into at Sinai was that He reserved this right to himself. But preferably they were under their twelve tribal governments to set up their own tribunals for the equitable judgment of all offences.

Thus God in His wisdom chose the people of Israel, gave them His laws and ordinances, put them through a course of training in righteousness, brought them out of a condition of abject slavery in Egypt, and enabled them to dispossess a wicked and idolatrous people of their land, giving them the land of Palestine, according to His promise to the fathers. (Exodus 13: 5.) This people were accounted a holy people because of God's covenant with them, and God blessed them while they obeyed His Law, but when they transgressed and fell into idolatrous and other evil practises they were severely punished, their enemies prevailed against them, and sickness and pestilence consumed them. Thus God's dealings with Israel—*His Laws and ordinances, blessings and chastisements,* wars against idolaters and evil doers—were all designed to prepare and purify a people ready for the coming Messiah, who should come and find acceptance.—Luke 6: 13-16.

Forgiveness on Repentance

The Law was strict in all its requirements, but it provided amply for forgiveness upon repentance. The various sacrifices under the Law Covenant when offered by the penitent to the priest as sin and trespass offerings secured the forgiveness of the sins against the law for which they were offered. And also the obligation to bring them would serve as a deterrent against a repetition of the offences. There were also the tribal offerings and the day of atonement sacrifices for the nation as a whole.

None of these sacrifices could take away the tendency to sin, nor could they give perfection in place of the imperfections inherited from the beginning. But they were typical of a better and more efficacious offering for sin which our Lord would give.

In the meantime these sacrifices repeated from time to time and from year to year conveyed the stern lesson of the enormity of sin and disobedience, pointing out that God could "by no means clear the guilty," but must exact *a just punishment for sin.* (*Exodus 34: 6, 7; Romans 3:* 19.) This is the basis of God's dealings with mankind. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." (Psalm 89: 14.) He is "the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1: 17.) Therefore, in due time God himself provided the true offering for sin, the Antitypical Sacrifice, our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, as the "Lamb of God" which alone could take away the sin of the world. That great sacrifice could alone open up the way for the sinner to harmony and reconciliation with God. Thus we can clearly understand that the Israelite who exercised faith and looked forward to the Prophet greater than Moses *and a greater High Priest than Aaron were counted* righteous in God's sight, even although that great event was still in the future. God in His wisdom and foreknowledge foresaw and foreknew the death of our Lord Jesus as the Antitypical Lamb of God and could therefore impute righteousness to the truly repentant sinner. Thus we have a long list of names of Old Testament saints in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews who "obtained a good report through faith," who were approved of God, and will be given ruling positions in the earthly phase of the Kingdom.

Thus we can clearly understand that these ancient people of God were justified by their faith in anticipation of the New Covenant sealed and ratified by the blood of Christ. When we realize this truth we can understand the apostle's statement that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."—Hebrews 10: 4.

How marvellous are God's dealings with men! In the language of Scripture (Romans 11: 33, 34, 36) we can only say—

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

—A. M. A.

Joshua and the Canaanites

THE STORY of the Invasion by the Israelites of the land of Canaan is well known by everyone who is acquainted with Jewish history. Many look upon this event as just one of the many invasions that have occurred at different times in world history, but this idea cannot be entertained if a consideration is given to the miraculous happenings that were associated therewith, as recorded in the Bible. The Bible contains the only authentic record of those days, and it reveals one of the most outstanding events in the history of the world, an event which was authorised and directed by God Himself.

To begin, we read in Genesis (chapter 15) that God made a promise to Abraham, that his descendants should possess the land of Canaan after the lapse of a certain time, and furthermore what would befall them during this intervening period. We will read verses 12 to 16 of this chapter—

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

The children of Israel, who were Abraham's descendants, experienced exactly what God had foretold about them. Four hundred years they suffered cruel bondage in Egypt at the hands of the Egyptians. In due time, however, the Lord God raised up Moses to be their Leader and Deliverer; through whom God exercised and demonstrated His mighty power by signs and wonders which He wrought in the land of Egypt; and delivered them from their oppressors, and brought them forth by way of the wilderness to Canaan. The experiences of the children of Israel and God's deliverance of them are described in the books of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and in Acts 7: 31-36.

Joshua Divinely Appointed

We read that Moses was not permitted by God to lead them into the promised land because of his disobedience at the waters of Meribah Kadesh (Numbers 20: 8-12; Deuteronomy 32: 50); and he died in the land of Moab.—Deuteronomy 34: 5-8.

Shortly before his death Moses, who was directed by God to appoint Joshua as his successor (Numbers 27: 18-23), gave him a charge from God with the words—

> Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee.—Deuteronomy 31: 23.

Later, Joshua received a direct charge from God to the same effect.—Joshua 1: 1-6.

So we see that Joshua was divinely appointed to the high office of Judge and Leader to the children of Israel, in order that the promise which God sware unto Abraham might be accomplished. It is as well to mention just here that the term Judge was applied to Rulers who combined with rulership the administration of the law and the execution of justice. (In passing it may be noted that some of the later Judges of Israel were Deliverers before they became Judges and Rulers.)

Joshua being therefore the representative of God did not act on his own devices as an invader when he fought the Canaanites. On the contrary, he was acting on the commands and instructions of God, which of course he was bound to carry out. Joshua's order to his men to exterminate the enemy, including women and children, was a Godgiven command, and therefore to be obeyed.—Joshua 6: 17, 21; 8: 1, 2, 25-27.

Why the Order of Extermination?

What was the reason why God gave to Joshua the order of extermination of the Canaanites?

In answer to this question we will refer back to the verses previously quoted. (Genesis 15.) Verse 16 is the one in particular. What does it say? "But in the fourth generation they [that is, the Israelites] shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

Although the Amorites only are mentioned in verse 16, we may gather that the cups of the other tribes named in verses 19 to 21 were also under consideration, inasmuch as the Lord told the Israelites when they entered the land to exterminate all of the nations they found there. The Amorites were originally west of the Dead Sea, and later also occupied the high table-lands on the east of the Jordan. It will be of interest to add a quotation from Smith's Bible Dictionary.

> AMORITE, the AMORITES, i.e. the dwellers on the summits—mountaineers—one of the chief nations who possessed the land of Canaan before its conquest by the Israelites. In the genealogical table of Genesis 10 "the Amorite" is given as the fourth son of Canaan, with "Zidon, Heth [Hittite], the Jebusite," etc. As dwelling on the elevated portions of the country, they are contrasted with the Canaanites, who were the dwellers in the lowlands; and the two thus formed the main broad divisions of the Holy Land. "The Hittite, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, dwell in the mountain [of Judah and Ephraim], and the Canaanite dwells by the sea [the lowlands of Philistia and Sharon] and by the 'side' of Jordan" [in the valley of the Arabah]—was the report of the first Israelites who entered the country (Numbers 13: 29; and see Joshua 5: 1; 10: 6; 11: 3; Deuteronomy 1: 7, 20, "mountains of the A.;" 44). In the very earliest times (Genesis 14: 7) they are occupying the barren heights west of the Dead Sea, at the place which afterwards bore the name of Engedi; hills in whose fastnesses, the "rocks of the wild goats," David afterwards took refuge from the pursuit of Saul (1 Samuel 23: 29; 24: 2). [Hazezon-Tamar.] From this point they stretched west to Hebron, where Abram was then dwelling under the "oak-grove" of the three brothers, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre (Genesis 14: 13; compare 13: 18). From this, their ancient seat, they may have crossed the valley of the Jordan, tempted by the high tablelands on the east, for there we next meet them at the date of the invasion of the country. Sihon, their then king, had taken the rich pasture-land south of the Jabbok, and had driven the Moabites, its former possessors, across the wide chasm of the Arnon (Numbers 21: 13, 26), which thenceforward formed the boundary between the two hostile peoples (Numbers 21: 13). The Israelites apparently approached from the south-east, keeping "on the other side" (that is on the east) of the upper part of the Arnon, which there bends southwards, so as to form the eastern boundary of the country of Moab. Their request to pass through his land was refused by Sihon (Numbers 21: 21; Deuteronomy 2: 26); he "went out" against them (Numbers 21: 23; Deuteronomy 2: 32), was killed with his sons and his people (Deuteronomy 2: 33), and his land, cattle, and cities taken possession of by Israel (Numbers 21: 24, 25, 31; Deuteronomy 2: 34-36). This rich tract, bounded by the Jabbok on the north, the Arnon on the south, Jordan on the west, and "the wilderness" on the east (Judges 11: 21, 22), was, perhaps, in the most special sense the "land of the Amorites" (Numbers 21: 31; Joshua 12: 2, 3; 13: 9; Judges 11: 21, 22); but their possessions are distinctly stated to have extended to the very foot of Hermon (Deuteronomy 3: 8; 4: 48), embracing "all Gilead and all Bashan" (3: 10), with the Jordan valley on the east of the river (4: 49), and forming together the land of the "two kings of the Amorites," Sihon and Og (Deuteronomy 31: 4; Joshua 2: 10; 9: 10; 24: 12). After the passage of the Jordan we again meet with the Amorites disputing with Joshua the conquest of the west country (Joshua 10: 5, etc., 11: 3, etc.). After the conquest of Canaan nothing is heard in the Bible of the Amorites, except the occasional mention of their name among the early inhabitants of the country.

This then was the reason; their cup of iniquity was full in Joshua's day. We see that as far back as Abraham's day, the nations occupying the land were already sunk deep in sin and iniquity. But God had judged that their cup of iniquity was not then "full;" and in His long-suffering he allowed them to continue their abominable practices until the time of Joshua, whom He used as His instrument of execution. Apparently as a result of their continued wickedness, they had come to a condition of utter corruption and wretchedness; their cup of iniquity was full, and God saw fit to destroy them.—Deuteronomy 9: 3-6.

Other peoples prior to this time were exterminated because of wickedness. In Noah's day, for instance, wickedness was rife among the people, and God sent the Flood and destroyed them all—saving only Noah and his family in the ark. Later on, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire which God sent down from heaven.—Genesis 6: 5-8; 7: 17-24; 18: 20-33; 19: 24, 25; Ezekiel 16: 48-50; 2 Peter 2: 4-9; Jude 5-7.

All these terrible incidents recorded in the Divine Word are examples to show that the Almighty will not tolerate wickedness for all time. Sooner or later His wrath falls upon the evil doers in no uncertain manner. These incidents show to us also God's unchangeable attitude towards sin. Although we know Him to be loving, merciful and kind, yet we must not overlook the fact that in dealing with wickedness God sets a limit. His punishments are severe, nevertheless they are just and righteous; and although they might appear to some minds hard and cruel, yet we can depend upon Him giving only such necessary punishment as the case requires.

An Act of Mercy

We must remember also that all mankind are condemned to death because of Adam's transgression, so whether they are killed by the sword or die naturally, the end is the same. Death must be faced by all; and, this being the position, one cannot think that the extermination of these peoples was cruel—especially when we consider also, that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now as a result of death working in the human frame. Rather it was an act of mercy on God's part, in cutting short their additional corruption and suffering caused by their sinful practices. (Genesis 3: 14-19; Romans 8: 22.) The fact is that God has not finished His dealings with these peoples, nor with the thousands of millions of others who have gone down into death unenlightened, and corrupted in their ignorance. For He will in due time through His dear Son bring them

back from the dead and give them the opportunity to repent and receive forgiveness, to learn righteousness and obtain Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ is the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. When the Sodomites and others realise this, then those of them who are amenable to correction will praise God for His justice, mercy, and loving kindness.—John 1: 9; 5: 28, 29; Ezekiel 16: 44-63; Matthew 11: 23, 24; Acts 24: 14, 15; 1 Timothy 2: 3-6.

Inheriting the Land

Joshua faithfully carried out the Divine command, utterly destroying all that came against him, possessed the land, and divided various portions amongst the tribes of Israel. But the work was not completed in Joshua's day, nor in the days of his assistant Leaders and Judges who overlived him and who were in sympathy with Joshua and loyal to the Lord God. (Joshua 24: 31.) When these all died, the children of Israel became negligent of God's orders and saved alive many of the Canaanites, who became a corrupting influence amongst them. As a consequence the Israelites suffered severe punishment for their laxity.

When is a Cup of Iniquity Full?

We see then that God had in mind in Abraham's day to destroy the Canaanites, and postponed the execution until such time as He had judged that their cup of iniquity would be full, using the nation Israel as His instrument of execution.

But the question arises, Who shall determine when the "cup" of any nation is "full"?

This is a live question to-day, as it has been for centuries, whenever a strong nation (perhaps nearly if not quite as iniquitous) sees fit to seize the territory of some other nation, and seeks to justify the action by quoting Joshua's orders.

But the cases are not parallel. God himself took responsibility for that course at that time. 1 Chronicles 5: 22 states that "the war was of God." As we have seen previously, God had a twofold purpose in taking that course; firstly, the destruction of the Canaanites because their cup of iniquity was full, and, secondly, that the promise made to Abraham might be fulfilled. This divine purpose was made plain to Israel on the eve of their entry into Canaan, as it is written (Deuteronomy 9: 5)—

Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Many incidents during that invasion show how God fought for Israel, assisting them in every way to victory. Take, for example, the capture of Jericho, a city that would be considered by invaders in those times impregnable because of its mighty, high walls which completely enclosed the city. But we read that those great walls fell flat through the operation of Divine power, and Jericho was taken. Another striking incident was during the great battle against the five kings of the Amorites. We read how that God sent down great hailstones from heaven which wrought havoc amongst the enemy, destroying more Amorites than the sword of Joshua.—Joshua chapters 6 and 10.

No such action has God taken on behalf of modern nations. No king since the Lord's advent as King of the Jews has been given any such Divine mandate to exterminate another nation or group of nations; for Canaan was occupied by seven distinct peoples. And what God commanded to be done in the Jewish age, for the establishment of an earthly kingdom, cannot be applied now in this Gospel age, when the work is to gather out a people from the nations to form a spiritual kingdom. We are now subject to His commands as set forth in the New Covenant, which was proclaimed by His Son Jesus Christ.—Matthew, chapters 5 to 7.

In the Jewish age God favoured one nation only, as He declared, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3: 2; Psalm 147: 19, 20.) He entered into a Covenant with them at Mount Sinai known as the Law Covenant, to the effect that if they would obey His commandments they would be a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation, as it is written (Exodus 19: 4-6)—

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.
5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:
6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.—Exodus 19: 4-6.

God's object therefore in exterminating the Canaanites was to cleanse the country of their defiling practices which would have placed before Israel the temptation to depart from God and indulge in the same.—Exodus 23: 24.

No such reason can be advanced to-day to justify invasion and slaughter of a backward people. What invaders have done through lust of power and wealth, as the Spanish and Portuguese Conquests in South America, can not justify their murders and thefts by reference to God's orders to Joshua and the people of Israel.

Although Israel was justified in their action at that time, because they were the people of God and were given Divine orders through God's representatives, namely, Moses and Joshua and subsequent Judges of Israel, yet these orders were not to stand for all time. For Moses intimated to Israel that different orders would be given by God at some future time through a greater prophet than he (Moses), whom God would raise up unto them.—Deuteronomy 18: 15.

A People for His Possession

That great prophet was our Lord Jesus, who came to His people with a message of peace not war. (Matthew, chapters 5 to 7.) He gave out the rules and conditions of the New Covenant, which He at the end of His ministry on earth ratified by His own blood.—Matthew 26: 27, 28.

His orders were that men should love their fellow creatures and not kill them; and, instead of seeking for power and rulership in this world, they must forsake the things of this world with its entanglements, and prepare themselves for jointheirship in a kingdom to be set up at some future time by the Lord Jesus Himself. (Luke 12: 31; John 5: 45-47; 14: 1-3; 15: 9-12; Matthew 5: 43-48; Romans 12: 1, 2; Revelation 2: 26-29; 3: 21.) These are the orders that the people of God have to obey now, as Paul says (Hebrews 1: 1, 2)—

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds [ages].

As for the nation of Israel, they were cast off from Divine favour because they rejected and crucified their divinely appointed King when He came to them with this glorious gospel of peace; and as a consequence for their wickedness Divine wrath came upon them to the uttermost, at the hands of the Romans in A.D. 68-70; their city and temple were destroyed, and they were taken away captives into all nations. And never since that time have they been a nation.—Luke 19: 41-44; 21: 20-24; John 1: 11; Matthew 23: 37, 38.

Nevertheless God is determined to have a "peculiar people," a "holy nation," a kingdom of priests, and seeing that the children of Israel as a whole have rejected this great high privilege, God has sent out the invitation by the gospel to the Gentiles, and this is the appointed work allotted to this Gospel age, which is to "take out" from among the Gentiles "a people for his name."—Acts 15: 14; Matthew 28: 19, 20; 1 Peter 2: 9.

Instead of obeying the orders given out by God's Son, we find Christendom to-day endeavouring to rule the world without Divine authority. But God tells us in His word that He will deal with Great Babylon in His due time, and Great Babylon shall fall never to rise again.—1 Corinthians 4: 8; Revelation 16: 19; 19: 11-21, and Revelation 18th chapter.

Anyone desiring to enrol as a candidate for this high calling must pay strict attention to the rules and conditions of the New Covenant as laid down by the Lord Jesus, and these rules do not permit such actions as seizing territory and slaughtering people; no, indeed not: a totally different warfare must be waged, as it is written (2 Corinthians 10: 4, 5)—

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

The work for every believer to do now is to preach the gospel far and wide, so that those who desire to serve God may obtain salvation and enter in the running for the prize of the high calling which is of God in Christ Jesus.—2 Corinthians 5: 17-21; Acts 8: 4; 1 Peter 1: 1-6; Philippians 3: 13, 14. —E. L. C.

Wars of Self-Defence

WHILE THE ISRAELITES were told to clear the promised land of the nations whose iniquity was come to the full, they were just as carefully instructed by Moses and Joshua and other leaders not to engage in acts of aggression against the nations outside that area. They were to have the land that God promised them, and no more. They were not to intermarry with other nations, for such intermarriages would prove to be cords to draw them from God. Such was the case with even so great a king as Solomon. Neither were they to form alliances with other nations, or take sides in their quarrels.

An Army for Defence

While in Egypt the Israelites had maintained so far as possible their tribal distinctions, and kept their genealogies. Very soon after leaving Egypt—before they had proceeded far on the wilderness journey—Moses arranged a system of rulers to judge the people (Exodus 18: 25, 26)—

25 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

26 And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

During the wilderness journey the tribal system was maintained, and camp was pitched in regular order around the tabernacle. (Numbers 13: 1-16; 2: 1-34.) In the plains of Moab a census was taken, and the number of fighting men was found to be over 600,000. (Numbers 1: 46.) With these figures in mind one can have some idea of the wisdom and skill God had given Moses to lead this great body of people in an orderly passage through the wilderness. (Numbers 33.) And one can see also how the Israelites were prepared in a military sense for protection in the wilderness, for the entry into Canaan, and for overcoming the resistance of the nations in possession of Canaan.

When they were settled in the land these tribal and military arrangements enabled the children of Israel to maintain their portions of the land and resist the efforts of the Canaanites to drive them out.

So long as the Children of Israel were obedient to God's commandments, He would be with them and help them to fight against their enemies and to defend themselves.

But notwithstanding all the warnings, they were often disobedient; and this led to many wars, some of which were very disastrous to Israel.

It will be sufficient to illustrate this by citing the case of Saul who was the first king of Israel. He was anointed by Samuel and received from the Lord his authority for his kingly office, with a command of obedience to God.—1 Samuel 10: 1-8.

In the earlier part of his reign, Saul was a good king and did what the Lord had commanded him. When Nahash, king of the Ammonites, cruelly threatened the Israelites with a large army, many of the Israelites were afraid, forgetting that they had God on their side. When tidings of the crisis were brought to him, Saul was not afraid of the power of the enemy, but organised a powerful army and attacked the Ammonites. They were taken so unexpectedly that their army was completely dispersed. Saul at that time acknowledged that "the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."—1 Samuel 11: 13.

Saul and the Witch of Endor

Later, Saul's heart fell away from God with subsequent disastrous results. In his campaign against the Amalekites, the command of God was openly violated. Saul spared all the valuable property, reserving it for himself and his people, making false excuses to Samuel for his conduct. On account of his disobedience, God withdrew his favour; and Saul, seeing that God had thus dealt with him, and wishing to know how he would fare in his campaign against the Philistines, wrongly sought the advice of the witch of Endor. The following day his armies were crushingly defeated by the Philistines, and he and his sons died, thus bringing calamity to himself and the children of Israel through his disobedience.

After David had established himself as king over all Israel, God gave them rest and Solomon's reign was peaceful. But through subsequent years there was a succession of evil kings who encouraged idolatry and rebellion against God. This continued iniquity of the Israelites ended in the captivity into which God brought them, sending Nebuchadnezzar against them.—1 Chronicles 6: 15; 2 Chronicles 36: 5, 6; Jeremiah 39: 1.

Many were taken captive to Babylon, and the Lord instructed them through Jeremiah not to resist, but to submit peaceably, and He would still be with them, ultimately bringing them back to their own land.—Jeremiah 15: 1, 2; 38: 17-23; 42: 11-22; 29: 4-7.

Jeremiah prophesied that for seventy years they would serve the king of Babylon—"And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." (Jeremiah 25: 11.) The return from the captivity was as distinctly foretold as the fact of the captivity—"For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." (Jeremiah 29: 10.) This promise was fulfilled under Cyrus the Persian, whom God raised up at that time.

Later, the Persians were conquered by the Greeks, and the Greeks later on by Rome. The Jews were forbidden to rebel against any of these great empires.

God Fought for Israel Only

Since all these events had been foretold, and no one but God could have foretold them, for only He had and has power to accomplish such things, we do right to accept the Scripture statements regarding them. But we should do wrong if we looked upon every war in every part of the world as being directly God's doing. That mode of operation concerned Israel only. When the Lord Jesus came, a new age was opened (the Gospel age), and a new work was begun. And we need to look carefully in order to know what is HIS will, and His over-ruling

providence (if any), in regard to the nations and the individual members of those nations.

Gentile nations now fight and war and contend for territory and power very much as they have always done. They form defensive and offensive alliances, and use very much the same methods of diplomacy. But God is not in all their thoughts.

As predicted, the Jews never regained independence, and to-day they are still dependent upon the hospitality and the good will of the Gentile nations.

To the perverse Jews who rejected His Son, God gave no blessing. And when they rose against the Roman power they were defeated and dispersed to the four corners of the earth. No longer under their special law and covenant, they are now on the same level as the Gentiles. The favour of God will return only to those who repent and accept Christ as their Saviour. No other nation was taken in place of the Jews under the law, for the law was nailed to the cross.—Acts 2: 38, 39; Galatians 3: 23, 24; Colossians 2: 13-15.

Our exalted Lord Jesus in now King over all nations. What He has done and will yet do with the nations will appear as this Conference proceeds. But before leaving Jewish history, we may say this much, that the Lord chose a remnant from among the Jews to begin a new nation, under a new covenant. —Mrs. J. McK. W.

Our Lord, King of War and Prince of Peace

OUR LORD JESUS, the onlybegotten Son of God, was the One whom God had appointed to sit on David's throne, and He came to the Jews as their King, *in accordance with the promise given to David* (2 Samuel 7: 5-13), of whom Jesus was a lineal descendant. But not through Joseph, because Joseph was not His father (Matthew 1: 20); neither indeed could have been, since the line of Solomon to which Joseph belonged became for ever barred from the throne by reason of transgression. (Jeremiah 22: 28-30.) Jesus was of the line of Nathan (who was a son of David), through Mary His mother. (Luke 3: 31.) He came in due time preaching repentance, and that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand.

But the preaching of repentance does not sound very war-like. *As King of war one would expect fiery patriotic* speeches directed with the intention of stirring up the Jews to the fact that they were a subject people, and had no right to be, and that He, Jesus, had come to deliver them. But the Lord Jesus made no such speeches, neither did He exercise any influence that might have caused rebellion. His answer, to those who questioned Him about taxation, was unmistakable (Matthew 22: 21)—

> Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Thus showing that He was not in any way sympathetic towards *insurrection*, nor had He been sent for that purpose.

Not Peace, but a Sword

What, then, was His position in regard to war? Did He look upon Himself as sent to deliver the Jews from the Romans?

No, He did not. The disciples had something like this at the back of their minds. Indeed, most of the Jews who believed in the promises concentrated on those things which spoke of their Messiah as a great Deliverer, and minimized or overlooked entirely those which spoke of *His death. Nevertheless His authority as their King* was none the less real, though He did not exercise it to the full, nor support it with carnal weapons and rebellious agitation as was done by a succession of rebels. (2 Chronicles 36: 13; 2 Kings 24: 1, 20; Acts 5: 35-38.) This being so, what did He mean when He said (Matthew 10: 34)—

> Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

As we know, the Scripture usage of the word "sword" is not always to be taken in a literal sense: it is often *used to represent something quite different. For example,* in Hebrews 4: 12 we read, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." Here we see the term "sword" applied to the Word of God, as in Ephesians 6: 17. There God's Word is also spoken of as a sword—the sword of the Spirit.

But in Matthew 10: 34, now under consideration, the word "sword" has a different significance from either of these two. It neither means a literal sword, neither does it mean the Word of God, although the latter is closely associated. This will be readily seen if we read the verse again in connection with the context (vss. 35, 36), thus—

> 34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.
> 35 For [or, Because] I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.
> 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

This explains exactly what the Lord means. He is foretelling the effect His preaching would have upon the community, and among families in particular. To them the truth would not bring peace, but the very opposite: the sword of division, causing trouble, enmity, distress, even to the cutting away of friends, and near relations; *and this, as we know, has been exactly the case.* Wherever the truth has gone and been accepted, it has—with perhaps few exceptions—caused variance and separation at home. But this is not surprising, because the gospel is an invitation—or rather a command—to follow Christ, and forsake the old taskmaster Sin, and if we cannot bring his slaves with us then we must forsake them, too. Father or son, mother or daughter, it makes no difference, because, as He says (vss. 37, 38)—

> 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
> 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

The Lord Jesus requires our complete surrender; it is useless making a pretence of following Him if the heart and mind are really set on other things. If home, family and friends, and other earthly considerations are of more importance in our own estimation than the Lord's friendship and invitation, then we are not really His disciples.

Attack on Traditions of Men

Armed with divine authority, Jesus Christ was attacking Jewish perversions of the truth. As King of war He had come to wage a totally different warfare from that which is common among nations. His weapon was the sword of truth, the Word of God, and with it He was called upon to combat the errors, superstitions, and traditions of the Jews—exposing and denouncing sin, and calling men to repentance.

In one of His parables (Luke 14: 31, 32) the Lord warns the people of their folly in resisting Him, their King. Any man who did so was like a king with an army of ten thousand attacking another who had an army of twenty thousand. The king with 10,000 should consider well whether with that force he could overpower a king with an army twice the size.

God had appointed Jesus king of the Jews and had supplied Him with all authority. Not only so, Jesus had supernatural power to back up that authority; for, as the finger of God, He cast out demons, healed all manner of disease, and even raised the dead. These powers none

of the Jews possessed, therefore they could not fight Jesus on his own ground.

As the parable goes on to point out, the best and most advisable thing for them to do in the circumstances is to call a truce, forsake their own wills and join forces with Him, accepting Him as their King under the terms of the New Covenant which He was then and there laying before them.

The scribes and Pharisees as leaders of the Jews should have been the first to join up with Jesus, encouraging the people to do the same, but they would have none of it. They would not enter the Kingdom themselves, neither would they suffer those who were willing to enter in. Outwardly they professed righteousness, but when the Lord Jesus came against them with the sword of truth their righteousness was revealed to be nothing less than hypocrisy. The truth shone like a light in a dark place, and because their deeds were evil they loved the darkness, and desired to put out the light. Nevertheless, despite the opposition of the rulers, there were a few who accepted Jesus and desired to be obedient. It was this little band who formed the nucleus of the Kingdom, and was engaged with Him in preaching the truth.

As King of the Jews the Lord Jesus had a right to rule, but he had no intention of setting up His kingdom at this stage. His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore He made no resistance to arrest, as He explained to Pilate when brought before him (John 18: 36)—

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

That His servants were willing to fight is shown in Peter's action when he smote off the ear of the High Priest's servant (John 18: 10); but the Lord did not at any time authorise His people to support the gospel with force. On the contrary His reply to Peter teaches the very opposite when He said, "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matthew 26: 52.) Their commission was to preach the truth, with the object of making disciples, as the Lord had said—"Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." —Mark 1: 17.

The trouble was that the disciples had got a wrong conception of the kingdom. They seem to have got the idea that the Lord had come to set up His kingdom straight away, and that Israel was going to be restored and made again an independent nation. That with Jesus as King they were to subdue all other nations and that they the Jews—as the seed of Abraham and Kings and Priests under him—were to be the channel through whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, and this in fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham.

With such thoughts as these in their minds, their bewilderment when the Lord told them in advance of His death is not surprising. (Luke 9: 44, 45; 18: 32-34.) It was on one such occasion as this that Peter openly rebuked Him, saying—"Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."—Matthew 16: 22.

Peter, like the rest of the disciples, did not realize the purpose and importance of the Lord's mission. And after the event had happened, and the Lord had been raised from the dead, even then they did not understand. This can be seen by referring to Luke 24. It will be remembered how Jesus on the day of His resurrection overtook two of the sad and perplexed disciples while on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and enquired the cause of their sadness.

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?
19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people;
20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.
21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: . . .

Here again we see the same thought still lingering in their minds: "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Little did they realize at the time that the Stranger to whom they were talking had, by virtue of His death and resurrection, not only redeemed Israel, but the whole of mankind.

It reveals to us, does it not, how difficult it is to root out a cherished thought from the mind. Let their attitude in this regard be a lesson to us. May we endeavour to keep our minds well open, ready at all times to cast out any cherished error in exchange for the truth, lest like Peter we may be found unwittingly opposing the Lord's will. But they were slow of heart.

25 Then said he unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:
26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?
27 *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded* unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

He showed them that the very things which had disheartened them were the things which the prophets had foretold concerning the true Messiah. That now, raised to life and glory by the power of His Father, He would fulfil all that was written by the prophets concerning His glory and honour, as surely as he had fufilled those prophecies which foretold His suffering, humiliation, and death.

No wonder their hearts burned within them as they listened to such a great sermon! Nevertheless, the thought that Israel was to be restored and made a great nation still remained uppermost in their minds, because a little later it was made the basis of the question recorded in Acts 1: 6, when, on the day of the Lord's ascension, they asked Him saying, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

But the Lord directed their thoughts to the promised Holy Spirit—"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power [or, authority]. But ye shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you: . . ." (Acts 1: 7, 8). Their duty for the present was not to fight for the kingdom on His behalf, but to tarry, as He had said (Luke 24: 49)—

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

It was only after they received the Holy Spirit that they realized what before they could not understand. It was only then that they began to see how necessary was the Lord's death and resurrection in relation to the forgiveness of sins and to their permanent position in the Kingdom. How necessary also it was for Him to die on a cross, that He might take captive those bound under the law, for the purpose of liberating them from its curse and dealing with them on a new basis of love and mercy.

He had promised the disciples great positions as judges in the kingdom, sitting upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19: 28.) But such a promise would have little value if death were to overtake and hold them forever. But our Lord Jesus by the method pursued, and His death on the Cross and resurrection by the Father, was Victor over those enemies which dominate the present order of things—Sin, and Death, and the Grave, thus ensuring a permanent foundation for his Kingdom, and empowering Him to give everlasting life to all them that obey Him.

The Greatest of all Peacemakers

Although a great warrior, our Lord Jesus is the greatest of all peacemakers. There is a good deal of talk these days about the brotherhood of man, but let us not be deceived, for there is no peace in Satan's family. Peace and harmony can exist only amongst those who are at peace with God. As members of His family, we are indeed, and in truth, brothers and sisters. This is the true brotherhood. Jesus Christ as the great Prince of Peace has made this possible by bringing to us the message of reconciliation. He came to establish a New Covenant under the terms of which God can be merciful to our unrighteousness, and forgive and completely forget our sins. And in agreement with His Father's will He emp-

tied himself of His previous glory, and became a man for the very purpose of ratifying the covenant with His own precious blood. Having been made a great High Priest, and Mediator between God and men, He is now able and willing to reconcile all who come to God through Him. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Romans 5: 1.

Peaceful Ambassadors

By His life on earth our Lord demonstrated how to conquer without resorting to the methods of this present evil world.

As His disciples we are called upon to discard the weapons of this evil world, and use the weapons He showed us how to use most effectively. He sent His disciples out to preach the gospel of peace to all the nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them, and we as His followers are to do the same, as the apostle said (2 Corinthians 5: 20)—

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Let us rejoice in the privilege of being His ambassadors, let us rejoice also in the gospel of peace, this good news, which we by His grace have come to know and believe and love better than anything the world can offer us.

—R. E. C.

The Christian's Equipment for War

"PUT ON the whole armour of God." From these words of the apostle it is very evident that Christians are men of war, and are equipped with weapons of some kind, and are undergoing training. If elsewhere in Scripture they are instructed not to wage war, that they are not to try to turn out the rulers of the nations and attempt to establish a Christian religion and kingdom over the earth, how then can they "fight the good fight"? And what need then to "put on the whole armour" as the apostle exhorts us to do in the letter to the Ephesians (6: 11)?

And are these weapons to be used for aggression, or only in selfdefence?

The apostle tells us that these weapons are for both offensive and defensive purposes, and are to be used "against the wiles of the devil." The Evil One is ever ready to entice us away from the truth, even as at the beginning of our race, by twisting the word of God into a lie. Being made aware of this subtlety of Satan, the Christian must be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of HIS might," Paul says (verse 10).

God's mighty power aids us largely through the Scriptures, as He helped our Lord when tempted in the wilderness. In our case Satan's misuse of Scripture to mislead and injure us is done largely through human agencies, and we must be watchful and prepared with scriptures that will give the complete answer to his subtleties. We must not do as they do, and quote "bits" here and there in support of any teaching or practice. Nothing is gained by throwing odd "bits" at each other. Careful examination should be made of the context. By "context" is meant the words preceding and following those quoted. Sometimes a whole chapter needs to be read to get the right sense of the "bit"—the verse or part of verse we wish to use to prove our point.

Fight the Good Fight

We are not at liberty, for instance, to quote "Fight the good fight," and then call any fight we see fit to put up a "good" fight. Nor may we endorse as a "good" fight what some one else brings about for his own unscriptural purposes. Those who would lead us into an unprofitable fight are often ready to use the Lord's name. Thus did the false prophets to Jehoshaphat the king.—1 Kings 22: 2-6.

They said, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." But the Lord had not said it; this was only a ruse to mislead the king. Then God's prophet came, and warned him not to follow the false prophets' advice. But to no avail. The result of Johashaphat's disobedience was that he was slain in battle, and so was demonstrated the fallacy of listening to false prophets.

Even so it is now. When Paul said to Timothy, "Fight the good fight," did he say, and lay hold of the property or persons of the enemy? No! He said, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called." (1 Timothy 6: 12.) The whole nature of the fight, with its ultimate results to Timothy, is illuminated when we read the passage in full.

Well may we take "Fight the good fight of faith" for our slogan; a fight authorized and commanded by God; a good fight, with no weapons of evil, but bringing us off conquerors because Faith in God is our reliance. While doing our best, we trust Him to fight for us, and to give us that eternal life which He has promised to the overcomer. It is a fight like that which made the walls of Jericho fall down. It is a fight of faith, which does God's will however inefficient it may seem to be. For the adverse and entrenched forces of the Evil One are being dealt with by the Lord of hosts himself, and in due time Satan's kingdom also will collapse, as did Jericho's walls. Then also all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them shall pass away. But the overcomers shall rejoice in the glory of the everlasting and immovable Kingdom of God.—Hebrews 12: 26-29.

The Whole Armour Required

When the apostle says, "the whole armour," we are reminded that we are to be fully equipped for the contest, no portion to be omitted. In his day the apostle himself took part in this contest; and by his writings he is still taking part—giving us warnings and directions, pointing out the enemy, and telling us the various pieces of armour required so that we may be successful in the combat. He shows us how the enemy under cover of darkness would steal a march on us. There may be persons under his influence who are our enemies seeking to destroy our faith or in various ways to lead us astray from the truth. These human enemies we are not called upon to destroy, but we are called upon to destroy their influence as far as possible, by exposure of their unscrupulous methods and theories. So he tells us (Ephesians 6: 12)—

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [or, wicked spirits] in high places.

These powers of darkness of this world, and the wicked spirits who serve the Evil One, make use of any and every person available for the purpose of our defeat in the warfare—making things uncomfortable for us; with all manner of deceptions and discouragements trying to get us if possible to say, "What's the use?" and give up the fight.

But if we have on the whole armour, as the apostle says (verse 11), "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil," then these things and all the other forces of the devil, though they be hurled at us, will not strike us down. Their missiles will go wide of their mark; or, if they strike the armour, will have no evil effect.

The kind of armour the apostle tells us to put on has stood the test all through the centuries, and is just as good for use to-day.

It is all important then to know the significance of each piece of the Christian's armour, also how to use it so as to get the best results. Every one of the various pieces is necessary; and woe betide the Christian who thinks he can do without any one of them in any conflict. There is no excuse for ignorance or carelessness, for the Apostle names them all (Ephesians 6: 13-17)—

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Girt About with Truth

The first thing is to "take unto you." The armour is useless as a trophy hanging on the wall. It must be taken down and seen to be fit, and then it must be put on. To gird up the loins is an expression frequently used in the Old Testament as indicative of preparation for war.

Paul's admonition—"having your loins girt about with truth"—would mean preparedness for action. If we visualize a warrior getting ready to don his armour, we see how necessary for general fitness and utility is this attention to his girdle.

Truth here would represent not only truth in the sense of doctrine to be held, but also personal love of truth—love to feel its strong grip and its sustaining and supporting power (like that of a belt) inspiring sober confidence and a spirit of preparedness. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 Peter 1: 13.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The most vulnerable portion of the human body is the trunk. In it are enclosed the vital organs—lungs, heart, etc.—which need to be well protected by a suitable piece of armour. The military breastplate was of plate armour, or chain-, ring-, or scale-mail. The Christian's breastplate might be taken to signify righteousness: whether imputed as a righteousness from God (Romans 3: 22), or, in so far as possible, actual right doing. A person who has accepted imputed righteousness and seeks to exhibit righteousness in his daily conduct is protected from many assaults of evil.

Shoes of Peace

Shoes are a protection for the feet. The Gospel of Peace is the best preparation for the Christian soldier, indicating the manner as well as the direction of his walk; it also assists him to stand firm on principles of truth while at the same time living peaceably with all men as far as possible. The ground of peace is mentioned in Romans 5: 1—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And our desire is to help many more to that same peace.

The Shield of Faith

In ancient times shields were large or small. The large shield could conceal the whole person. The small shield was attached to the left arm, and was moved as required to intercept the arrows or other missiles of the enemy. This latter would appear to be the shield referred to by the Apostle, since it is said "wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." As these darts would come from various directions, the soldier, by attention and quick movement, would be able to catch them on his shield, himself remaining unhurt.

Fiery darts may refer to darts to which burning material was attached before being shot from the bow (Psalm 120: 4), or the allusion may be to the burning pain set up by an arrow or other missile striking the body. In either case the shield gives protection.

The statement that faith is the shield gives us a good lesson. Faith, like a large shield, protects from assault the entire person of the one behind it. Faith also, like the small shield, protects from the multitude of darts. Stinging words are like fiery darts; but if we are quick with our shield we catch them on it, and so they are quenched; that is, they lose all their ability to hurt. The enemy has wasted his ammunition on us.—Psalm 64: 1-10.

The Helmet, the Hope of Salvation

This piece of armour, protecting the head, the seat of the mind, is well named, for it is with the mind that we apprehend the call to, and the hope of, salvation. It is with the mind we grasp the reasons for the contest with the Evil One and are able to comprehend our Captain's strategy in dealing with him. While we do our best, we still rely upon the Captain of our Salvation to direct the issue, and did we not possess strong hope the enemy might sometime cause us to slack our efforts. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians of the importance of the right armour and of watchfulness (1 Thessalonians 5: 8, 9)—

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation.
9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sword of the Spirit

Defensive armour is good and necessary, but a fortress would soon be captured did the enemy know there were no offensive weapons to fear. Hence the importance of the sword—a weapon for hand-to-hand combat. The Christian's sword is a fine one, better even than Damascus steel. It is the sword of the Spirit tempered and prepared by the Lord himself, as the Apostle says, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The word of God is quicker, sharper, and more powerful than any twoedged sword that men can bring against us. It can pierce to divide between soul and spirit, between the joints and marrow, and lay bare the thoughts and intents of the heart.—Hebrews 4: 12.

So that while we as his soldiers have the privilege of wielding this sword of the Spirit, our success is due to the wonderful quality of our weapon and to the grace and commandments of our Leader and Captain. And if the heart of any one is laid bare by the sword, we have the privilege also of showing the defeated one where he can receive help and healing.

Withstand and Stand

If we have faithfully attended to the Apostle's commands concerning the whole armour of God, we shall be able to withstand (resist) the wiles of the adversary and all his assaults; and having done all, we shall not be overcome, but shall be able still to stand in the evil day.

Faith in God gives us confidence in the good fight of faith. We fight not only for our personal safety as God's children and soldiers, but we "contend earnestly for the faith." That is, we defend from attack "the faith [system of belief] once for all delivered to the saints," and we also defend our brethren when they are assaulted or subtly tempted to forsake the fight. This contending for the faith also implies exposing the errors, false doctrines, and wrong practices which war against the soul, and which take some unawares.

Brethren, "Take unto you the Whole Armour of God."

Praying with All Prayer

Prayer is the line of communication by which we maintain contact with the God of our salvation. That line must not be allowed to slacken or get out of order. Constantly it must be used that we may obtain help in time of need. And not for ourselves alone, but for all saints—

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

—F. R. McK.

The Preaching of Peace

PEACE, REST, QUIET; isn't it grand to have peaceful surroundings once again! This cry of appreciation has no doubt been used many a time, especially after a cyclone has passed over a country, uprooting trees, wrecking houses, and causing great damage to property, as well as endangering people's lives; after which all was calm again.

There are others, whose daily occupation is in some factory, wherein is a great deal of noise from the rattle of machinery, or the din of constant hammering; others again having the continual noise from the busy streets of a great city as they go about their daily business. How glad they are when their duties cease for a time and they are able to return to the peace and quiet of their homes.

When the disciples were storm-tossed on the raging sea, and they feared for their safety, they awoke Jesus, who was with them. He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still." (Mark 4: 39.) And there, instead of the tempest was a great calm. How the disciples would appreciate this kind of peace and wonder at it!

Remember how the people rejoiced when peace was declared after those years of the great and dreadful war which brought suffering and misery in its train. There were some sincere-minded people who believed in the Creator, and they cried from the bottom of their hearts, Thank God, peace has been declared, and this wholesale destruction of human life has ceased for a while.

There is also the peace that comes when the troubles of sickness, business worries, or quarrels have been patched up and causes remedied.

Yes, peace is a grand thing, if it be of its kind suitable for any of the reasons just mentioned, and therefore much to be desired. But there is one other kind of Peace, even more desirable; in fact, it is absolutely necessary for our eternal welfare, and that is, to be at Peace with God.

It is in connection with the preaching of this peace I am presenting a few thoughts for your consideration.

Enemies by Wicked Works

The preaching of peace while engaged in warfare might seem a contradiction of ideas, but is this not the usual procedure?

What kings, statesmen, army or naval officers, have not let it be known that they were willing to make peace, on their own terms; and that is usually complete submission to the demands of the conqueror—which sometimes impose more burdens and oppression on the vanquished than the actual warfare, and leave them still enemies at heart.

Looking back, we see that the God of heaven has enemies; a very large number of them. In fact, the whole race of Adam are His enemies by wicked works, as is also Satan that wicked one who led our first parents astray.

Statement of Terms

Many of these enemies have not only been unrighteous, going against God's will, but have blasphemed Him. Nevertheless God has always been willing to be friends, provided His enemies will acknowledge their wrong course and turn to Him and accept the terms of peace. Not many are willing to do this. Some are ignorant of the existence of God, while others, who think there must be a God, are without understanding of their position as enemies, or of the terms upon which that enmity may be turned into friendship.

God made known to the children of Israel how they could be at peace with Him. Instead of substituting other burdens on the acceptance of His peace proposals, He promises them some wonderfully good things.

The Peace Conditions of Old

"If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them" (Leviticus 26: 3); You will receive rain in due season, land yielding her increase (vs. 4); To eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely, and neither shall the sword go through your land (vss. 5, 6). There is a promise well worth having, as many would say who have been cursed with the slaughter of wars. And God let it be further known through Moses that He "will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them." —Leviticus 26: 4-13; Deuteronomy 4: 31.

Yes, they were wonderful peace terms which God offered to Israel if they would be obedient in that age.

Pleading for Renewed Peace

When, as the Bible tells us, they, God's people, went astray despite these peace offers, He gave them opportunities to repent and receive forgiveness. He pleaded for Israel to return unto Him.

He said, "For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off."—Isaiah 48: 9.

The Psalmist truly said, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, . . . Psalm 103: 8.

Nevertheless, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, for the wicked." (Isaiah 48: 22.) And He cannot be true to Himself and alter that fact.

God can never honour with His friendship one who is willingly, and knowingly, opposed to righteousness. Yet He repeatedly offered the terms of peace, not to all men everywhere, for, as said before, many were ignorant of the existence of God, and certainly had never heard any such offer of peace and goodwill.

Peace More Widely Offered

But there came a time when the preaching of peace, with the terms of peace, was made known more extensively.

For this purpose special preachers were sent—preachers with a definite offer, an offer so liberal as to be within the reach of all. Any who have not made their peace with God should do so now, the moment they hear of these great advantages, too great to be missed.

The basis of this peace is laid down by God Himself. In it He has shown the most wonderful love and mercy possible.

He "gave his onlybegotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3: 16.

The Peacemaker

His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, came as a Peacemaker; He gave a most wonderful sacrifice on behalf of mankind. But, before doing so, He, the greatest teacher and preacher that ever was, made known to all His hearers just what was expected of them.

They were to believe on Him as the Messenger from God, the Prince of Peace spoken of by Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 9: 6); the One whom Moses said they were to take heed of.—Deuteronomy 18: 15.

For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.—John 3: 34.

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.—John 7: 16.

Why Jesus Was Sent

Jesus was sent because God loved the world and did not want people to be at enmity with Him. He does not want to take the good things away from them like the invading nations of this evil world do. No, He offers terms of peace, through Jesus Christ, that would give them many great and wonderful blessings, the really good things worth having.

So important was Jesus as Messenger of Peace, that angels sang at His birth. Let us read about this wonderful witnessing, as recorded in Luke 2: 8-11, 13, 14—

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.
10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the *heavenly host praising God, and saying,*
14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.

Indeed a beautiful testimony, giving God the praise.

A Voice from Heaven

He, our Lord Jesus, had God's witness at His baptism. A voice from heaven was heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3: 17). And a further witness—the giving of the Holy Spirit, by which during the three and a half years of His ministry He performed many wonderful miracles.

John the Baptist for six months heralded Christ's approach, and testified at His baptism that He was "the Lamb of God, which taketh [or beareth] away the sin of the world." (John 1: 29-34.) He was the One promised, the Son of God.

A World Wide Preaching of Peace Terms

The Jews were very much favoured in the preaching of John by having pointed out to them this wonderful messenger of God. But they did not heed Him.

When Jesus commenced preaching the gospel and inviting men to make their peace with God, He personally did not go outside of Palestine. But His preaching has since been given world-wide prominence by His disciples, down through the Gospel age.

When He was about to ascend to the Father, after having given on the cross "the ransom for all," He said to His apostles (Matthew 28: 19, 20)—

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: . . .

And as His witnesses they would have the Holy Spirit to assist them in their work.—Acts 1: 8, 9.

Peace through the Blood

The basis of peace is the acceptance of the death of Christ as the atonement for our sins, whereby God is able to forgive them, and remember them no more, as proclaimed in the New Covenant (Hebrews 8: 10-13) which Jesus ratified by His blood; "having made peace through the blood of his cross."—Matthew 26: 28; Colossians 1: 20; 1 Timothy 2: 4-7.

Those who sin are at enmity with God, but, as before said, God is ever ready to be friends with men conditionally. Therefore He sent Christ to preach the gospel of repentance and remission of sins. (Luke 24: 47.) And though the invitation to be at peace was preached first to Israel, now the message goes to all who hear it. They are "made nigh" by the blood of Jesus Christ, who is our peace. He abolished the law covenant so that He might reconcile all, both Jew and Gentile, unto God by His death on the cross.—Acts 10: 36-48; Ephesians 2: 11-17; Colossians 1: 19, 20.

Christ Died for All

The apostle Paul tells us that Christ died for all, and that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again. He said also that God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; and, having received it, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Be no longer at variance with Him. —2 Corinthians 5: 14, 15, 18-20; Ephesians 5: 14-20.

We ourselves, as enemies, were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, became friends and servants, even joint heirs with His Son. We can joy in God that through the Lord Jesus Christ we have received the atonement for our sins.—Romans 5: 10, 11.

A Body of Peacemakers

So now we meet together with others in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, preferring the unfeigned love of the brethren—that body of peacemakers who have accepted the terms, and made their peace with God; building one another up to go forth as Christian soldiers fighting against sin and darkness, preaching the terms of peace for others to hear and benefit by.

We do not go about saying, I'm as good as you are; I pay my way; I don't harm anybody; and if that Christian Mr. So-and-So gets to Heaven, I'll get there too.

We do not make weak excuses as to why we should not do this, that or the other, putting off service until to-morrow which should be done to-day. The Lord is not pleased with excuses: He said so.—Luke 14: 16-24; Matthew 8: 21, 22.

Rather we seek opportunities to give reasonable service in the Christian warfare with Christ as the Captain of our salvation, our Pattern to measure up to: and not Mr. or Mrs. So-and-So.

It is our desire to be obedient footstep followers of Jesus Christ, in whom, as stated before, we have the atonement for our sins. He was obedient unto His Father in all things and became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.—Romans 5: 10, 11; Hebrews 5: 7-9.

If we wish to be at peace with God, we are to obey the laws and teachings of the New Covenant, revealed to us by Christ and His apostles, and made possible by His death on the cross.

Good Things to be Gained

What are the good things to be gained? Eternal life in perfection and righteousness. To be made sons of God; joint heirs with Christ.—Romans 8: 14-17.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God."—Matthew 5: 9.

Revelation says, They shall be Kings and Priests, to live and reign with Christ the thousand years.—Revelation 20: 6; 5: 10.

And as for those who go contrary to Him, He gives a warning to them. Take heed of the preaching of the gospel, for NOT to do so is SERIOUS. No excuses asked for; they must be destroyed.—2 Thessalonians 1: 8, 9.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.—1 Corinthians 1: 18; John 3: 16.

The Only Way

Some of the leading men of the nations of the earth have preached peace in their own way to the nations of the world, and have tried to bring it about; but their task is too great on account of the selfishness of all men. Others have tried arbitration to set at peace the differences between capital and labour, and self again is the chief obstacle. Others have tried to bring about peaceable conditions where differences occur, and selfishness once more is uppermost.

Though one might admire the sincerity of these attempts, the truth remains that no true peace is possible outside of harmony with God.

So long as men are opposed to God and indifferent to His laws their imperfections will be manifest, and their judgments go astray. But if they only gave heed to the glorious message of peace and goodwill preached by Jesus Christ and His messengers of good tidings and became reconciled, submitting themselves to the will of God to be at peace with Him, then all would be well, they would eventually get rid of their selfish desires.

But, we know, most men will not do this until the Kingdom age. Nevertheless, it is our duty and our

privilege during this age to preach the gospel of peace, looking for those few who will not think it foolishness but will love and serve the Master; as true Christian soldiers, giving God the glory in all things.

So let us with love and praise in our hearts raise our voices in song, and sing always that beautiful song of the angels—

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men." Amen.

—C. M.

Conflict of Light and Darkness

UNKNOWN TO THE WORLD there is a war—a very real war—which has been going on for hundreds and hundreds of years. Soon after the creation of man this conflict began, the great conflict between Light and Darkness. In every war there are two opposing sides, and the sides in this great conflict are variously described as light and darkness, good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error. A brief consideration of light and darkness from the natural standpoint may help us to appreciate light on spiritual things.

When light is shining brightly, everything is clear—not only the outlines, but the colours, textures, modelling and details of objects of all kinds, are clearly visible. When all is dark, silhouettes only may be dimly seen, or even these may not be discernible. Just as natural light and darkness are entirely different conditions, so also are light and darkness spiritually absolute direct opposites; and interested parties or persons must, therefore, as in every war, choose one side or the other.

To the extent that light has shone men have had the opportunity of choosing between it and darkness. The Lord said, in condemnation of those who chose darkness rather than light (John 3: 19)—

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

In choosing the darkness when the light of Jesus shone upon them, even closing their eyes to the meaning of His wonderful miracles, the scribes and Pharisees and others brought about their own condemnation: they loved darkness rather than light.—John 3: 19-21; Matthew 23: 1-3, 15-33.

In choosing light or darkness the individual must of necessity choose one of the two commanders—the God of Light, or the Prince of Darkness.

The Prince of Darkness

Who is the Prince of Darkness? The Scriptures clearly indicate Satan as being the one variously described as the Prince of this world, the god of this world. Of him Jesus declared (John 8: 44)—

He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Other references to the Prince of this world and his evil character are John 14: 30; 16: 11; 12: 31; 2 Corinthians 4: 4.

Activities of the Prince of Darkness

Though Satan is the Prince of darkness, he is not the Prince of a condition of inactivity. Rather his kingdom is called a kingdom of darkness because of the abundance of activities under his direction and control. These evil activities will not stand the light of day, and therefore Satan's subjects prefer that condition, in which they can carry on their evil works unseen, as they think; "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Darkness is a condition preferred for his subjects by the Prince of darkness himself, as we read (2 Corinthians 4: 4)—

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Satan's Unwitting Subjects

This statement by the apostle and our Lord's statement taken together show us that Satan the prince or god of this world has two classes of subjects. The apostle (v. 3) tells of some from whom the gospel is hid, and says they "are lost." That is the condition of mankind in general, all of whom are "lost" in that they are members of the race condemned at the beginning on account of sin. The apostle is contrasting that "lost" condition with that of the "saved," the "saved" being those who believe in Jesus. The unenlightened masses of humanity therefore can be deluded by Satan. And that this is the case can be realized when we consider the condition of nations such as those which Paul visited, where idol worship was rampant. The "god of this world" has always been interested in keeping these peoples in the darkness of superstition and fear and slaves of sin. These "are lost," but not irrevocably so, for to such as these—unwitting subjects of darkness—God has commanded light to shine.—2 Corinthians 4: 5, 6.

Evil Works of Darkness

What then are the evil works of darkness? If we are to engage in a victorious conflict with darkness we must know what we have to fight. Romans 13: 12-14 informs us on this matter. Addressing those who have seen some light, he says—

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts [or, desires] thereof.

All who have enlisted under the banner of the God of Light must fight—fight hard and incessantly—the works of the flesh, such as hatred, malice, wrath, envy, and all those things which are contrary to the fruits of the spirit. (Galatians 5: 16-26.) By so doing they not only gain advantages for themselves by reason of improved character, but they also, by so doing, give a testimony to those still in the darkness that the works of the Spirit are greatly to be preferred.

The God of Light

The great One whom Satan presumptuously fights against is God. God the Creator of the Universe, who is rightly called The Almighty, The Ever Existing One. There can be no question then as to whose will be the final triumph—God or Satan. What is necessary is for us to endeavour to understand why the God of Light has allowed the Prince of Darkness to continue for so long. The unbridgeable distance between God and Satan is described by the apostle John (1 John 1: 5)—

5 **This then is the message we have heard of him [i.e. of Jesus], and declare unto you, that God is light, and IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL.**

God's character as the God of Light is unimpeachable and unchangeable. He is the Giver of good—not evil—gifts, says James (1: 16, 17)—

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.**

God being invisible, man's knowledge of His character has been dependent upon what He has chosen to reveal of himself. This revelation of God has come through His works of creation and as a result of His dealings with mankind. (Psalm 19; Romans 1.) But to bring that knowledge closer to us, to enable us to enter intelligently into the operations of the Divine Mind and to appreciate the absolute perfection of His character, God sent to us His beloved Son.

Jesus the Light of the World

Being like-minded, and having the same perfection of character, the Son could truly say of himself (John 8: 12)—

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

This then is the way out of the darkness which the god of this world has imposed on the world, namely, to follow Jesus, the Light of the world.

But while He was on earth, the shining of that light was limited to the Jews. He was to them a light not only in the sense of a teacher of truth, an expounder of the will of God, but in the perfection of His life. Had His shining been limited to His earthly life, the vast majority of mankind would have remained ignorant of it. John the Baptist was sent before Him to bear witness of the Light. But John "was not that Light." God's will to enlighten the world extended beyond the confines of Palestine. As John the apostle tells us (John 1: 9)—

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

So that our Lord's position as the Light of the world did not cease when His earthly life ended. Exalted now to the Father's right hand, all power and authority having been given to Him in heaven and in earth, He is now in a position to continue His office as the true Light until "every man that cometh into the world" has been enlightened.—Matthew 28: 18; Ephesians 1: 20, 22; Hebrews 1: 2, 3.

The Light of the Cross

To the true believer in the Gospel age, Jesus' life on earth has shone as the perfect example (Hebrews 12: 3)—

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

His life had the effect of clarifying to fallen human minds the difference between light and darkness. One example of this which might be cited is the contest with Satan and His triumphant victory over temptation. He was described as the One who was to be the light "to them which sat in darkness" (Matthew 4: 14-16), and His titles include that of the Day Star, the Bright and Morning Star. He began to shine to those few who could see the light at His first advent. (Matthew 4: 17; John 12: 35, 36.) This shining was displayed brilliantly in the light of the cross; for we can see in the work our Lord performed on the cross His implicit obedience to the Father.—Philippians 2: 7, 8.

Jesus, who has shown us what it means to walk in the light and oppose the deeds of darkness, now calls us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2: 9), and commands us to walk in the light as emphatically as He called upon the Jews so to do.

Do we realize fully what that means? It is not a call to obtain an inheritance as a perfect human being—which was the original inheritance of man lost through sin, but to an even higher inheritance. Paul wrote, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, TO THE OBTAINING OF THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." (2 Thessalonians 2: 14; compare 1 Thessalonians 2: 12; 1 Peter 5: 10.) It is the call to a heavenly inheritance—the "high calling" to joint heirship with Jesus. (Philippians 3: 10, 11, 14; Romans 8: 16, 17.) What a contrast! and what a privilege!—are offered to us who are called out of the gross darkness of sin and error to walk in His marvellous light!

A Change of Citizenship

Those who give heed to this call experience a change of citizenship—a transfer from slavery to Satan, the god of this world, to the liberty of Christ, the true Light; from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. (Colossians 1: 13; Ephesians 2: 1-3; 2 Corinthians 4: 4.) It is not possible for anyone to be a member of both the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light at the same time. Darkness and light, we have seen, are absolutely opposed to each other; and whenever light enters, darkness must recede into the shadows. Paul writes (2 Corinthians 6: 14, 15)—

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

The obvious answer to the question is, "None whatever." Hence, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."—Vs. 17.

With the Father, and with His Son

There is, however, a fellowship which one who walks in the light can have, and this is mentioned by the Apostle John (1 John 1: 3)—

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Since we must in this conflict choose our side, let us be on the side of Light, of Truth, of Fellowship with the Father and with His Son. Then and then only can we have the advantages of Fellowship with God and with Christ—including the necessary and tremendous advantage of the forgiveness of sins, as the Apostle says in the same connection (1 John 1: 6, 7)—

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:
7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Rather than wish for fellowship with the powers of darkness and their adherents at the same time that we seek membership of the kingdom of light, the true believer will find that it is a constant conflict with the powers of darkness in which he is called upon to engage. There can be no serving of God and Mammon. "No man can serve two masters." (Matthew 6: 24.) It is a conflict in which there can be no armistice, no truce, no making of peace. The war must be fought to the end.

Furthermore it is a conflict which will involve persecution and suffering. The Lord said—"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."—John 15: 18-20.

The gospel was not sent to teach people how they might have the impossible: to have the darkness as well as the light, but "to **turn them from** darkness to light." (Acts 26: 18.) And, having come into the light, the children of light have to renew their minds, to increase in the knowledge of the Lord, to put off the old man and put on the new, to improve in appreciation of the enlightenment they have so graciously received.—Romans 12: 2; Colossians 1: 10; Ephesians 4: 22-33; 5: 6-17.

It is a matter of progress—a matter of walking in the light, of walking in the Spirit, and of exercising the fruits of the Spirit, of adding the Christian virtues, of doing the Word as well as hearing it. (1 John 3: 3-10; Ephesians 5: 8; Romans 13: 12; Galatians 6: 16, 17; 5: 22-26; 2 Peter 1: 5-10; James 1: 22.) If the Christian warrior has his mind filled with thoughts of things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, of virtuous and praiseworthy things, then there is no room for thoughts of the things of darkness; and "the God of peace shall be with you."—Philippians 4: 6-9.

How much we all need to watch and pray that we may not be tempted to turn our affections again to the works of darkness! Enlightenment brings serious responsibi-

lity. Jesus spoke of this when He referred to the judgment which attended the light when it was rejected by the men of His day who had the opportunity of comparing it with darkness and who rejected the light because their deeds were evil. (John 3: 18-21.) The choice of darkness **rather than** light is indeed a very poor one, fraught with the danger of a lost opportunity for everlasting life. (Matthew 12: 31-32; 23: 33; Hebrews 6: 4-6.) Is our choice then to be for darkness, for the rejection of God's grace, for everlasting destruction? Surely, we can say to each other as Paul said, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." (Hebrews 6: 9.) Since light is preferable to darkness, and right to wrong, let us be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might!

May God hasten the time when all the world shall see the shining of the true Light, when the resurrection is an accomplished fact, the new heavens and the new earth established, and Christ and His Church reigning in power and glory.

Let us pray earnestly for the time when darkness shall be no more, and, as the Revelator foretold (21: 11, 23-26), the nations in harmony with God shall bring their glory and honour into the glorious and triumphant City of Light. —H. S. W.

The Fellowship of His Son

THESE Words are found in 1 Corinthians 1: 9: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." What does this fellowship mean? How does it affect us, as believers of the Gospel age?

The word itself means: participation in the same things, to share the same things, or to have things in common.

The Lord founded a fellowship when He called His disciples to separate themselves from the world as a people for His possession. The Lord gathered this little band of disciples that they might be always with Him, to be instructed by Him. They were not only to follow in the sense of being near Him in person; but must separate themselves from worldliness and sin.

God through Jesus had begun to take out a people for His possession by another means than the Law, which, though it had been in operation for many centuries, had failed to bring forth the "holy nation," as arranged by God through Moses. The Law had not brought forth the fruit as hoped by those who so eagerly entered into it. However, the Almighty had other plans and another covenant in view which would fulfil all expectations, and by which the comers thereunto would have fellowship with His Son.

His Personal Possession

During the 3½ years of His ministry Jesus prepared His disciples to carry on the work which He had begun; and when He died on the cross He gave Himself a ransom for all, and they became His by right of personal possession; for they were "bought with a price," even "the precious blood of Christ."—1 Corinthians 6: 20; 1 Peter 1: 18, 19.

The apostle Paul said to the elders at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God [some MSS. read of the Lord], which He hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.) Other passages which speak of the church as "purchased" or a "possession," or "redeemed," are Ephesians 1: 14, "until the redemption of the purchased possession;" Hebrews 9: 12; 1 Peter 1: 18, 19.

The apostle Paul addressed these "separated ones," called "Christians" first at Antioch, as "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints."—Acts 11: 26; 1 Corinthians 1: 2.

Called Saints

The word "saint" means holy one, a believer, whether in present or past ages. You will notice in the Authorized Version the words "to be" in italics. All such words have been inserted at the translator's discretion, with the idea of making the text readable or better conveying the sense of the original. Such words are not inspired, so do not necessarily need to be considered. They are often quite in order and helpful; but just here they rather obscure the very idea the Apostle desires to have understood, because they seem to support the generally believed opinion that when a Christian dies he or she becomes a saint; or, by others, that they become saints only when "canonized" by the church, perhaps centuries after their death. But this is not what the Apostle says. He refers to the sanctified ones "called saints." They were saints while they were still living; not "to be" at some distant future or at their death, but right now. This includes "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ," right down the age to our time. Thus it is our privilege, if we are "sanctified," to be called "saints." Paul referred to the "poor saints" at Jerusalem, and to "all the saints" with certain ones at Rome.—Romans 15: 26; 16: 15.

The Lord prayed that the disciples might be "sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 17-20.) Those persecuted by the "beast," Daniel (7: 25-27) calls "the saints of the Most High."

Predestination

God was the author of this wonderful plan in which it is our privilege to be received as His children: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus to himself."—Ephesians 1: 5.

We believe that the Almighty has the ability to foreknow all things from the beginning to the end; that is amply demonstrated in the prophecies and their historical fulfilments. God can, if He so desires, know which of His children will continue faithful unto the end of their race; yet the fact will not influence the individual free will. We must realize that to foreknow is not necessarily to predetermine.

In the account (Acts 9) of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, we read that the Lord told Ananias that Saul is "a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." (Verse 15.) The Lord here exhibited His ability to foreknow that Saul would fulfil his ministry faithfully. In the case of Judas, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" indicates that Jesus selected Judas with the full knowledge that he would later betray Him; indeed, it was for that very reason that he was chosen. (John 6: 70.) Yet Judas was responsible for his action in betraying the Master. He saw daily the perfect character of the Lord, His good deeds and His mighty miracles, yet he was a thief. And from that to greed to secure a price for his evil work of betrayal was but a step.

Predestined to What?

Concerning predestination many wrong ideas have been read into Ephesians 1: 4, 5. A widely published teaching has acceptance, that God has beforehand—before the foundation of the world—chosen certain individuals who are to be saved; others are chosen or predestined or

foreordained to be for ever lost. We might ask, If the Almighty had forearranged that you or I were among those who were to be for ever lost, what would be His object in calling us by the gospel? What useful purpose could be served by testing and trying us over a great number of years, if it were already decided that we were lost forever? Would it not seem foolish, and a great waste of time and trouble for no good purpose? Indeed it would. Such an unfair arrangement, by which a prisoner would be sentenced before he had committed an offence and been proved guilty, is altogether unthinkable in the great Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." God is just as well as holy: "who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work." "For there is no respect of persons with God."—Colossians 2: 3; 1 Peter 1: 17; Romans 2: 11.

Furthermore: If our eternal destiny were fixed before we were born or had done either good or evil, how could the Apostle speak of "the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2: 6-9)—

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:
7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:
8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,
9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

There is a way of understanding "predestination" by which God's abilities to foreknow and forearrange can be harmonized with His righteous and just judgment without respect of persons.

To Be Conformed to the Son's Image

In His plan for the redemption of the fallen race, God has arranged that His Son shall be the King of kings. He has also arranged that His Son shall have a number of assistants in that throne as joint heirs; these are called the "church," or, sometimes, the "elect." When the Apostle uses the word "us" (Ephesians 1: 5), he does not use it in reference to himself and his individual hearers, but in regard to the church as a whole, which, it has been arranged, is to take a part in God's purpose; and certain qualities to fit the church for this work, which God has purposed or forearranged or predestined. This is clearly stated in Romans 8: 28, 29—

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
29 For whom [the elect, or church] he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [the Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.

It is the purpose of God that each member of the church shall be conformed to that standard of character which is exhibited in His Son. And in this God helps us by first forgiving our sins, and accepting us as His children.

If we look again at Ephesians 1: 4, 5 we will see that here also the predestination is to sonship and to the character pertaining to sonship—

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that **WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE:**
5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of **CHILDREN BY JESUS CHRIST** to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

Thus, having predetermined to have a church of believers as joint-heirs with his dear Son, God also arranged that through the Son they should be fitted for the position of sonship, and to the same end He grants the Holy Spirit as a means of assisting that development in the likeness of His Son. So that we can ensure our permanent membership in the church only by strict attention to the conditions laid down by the Almighty through His Son.—1 Peter 1: 19, 20; Revelation 13: 8.

God was the author or originator, or first cause, of these arrangements, by His Son who was His agent in all creation, not only in the earth, but all things in heaven as well.—Colossians 1: 16; John 1: 3; Ephesians 3: 9; Hebrews 1: 2.

The Apostle says (1 Corinthians 1: 9) "ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son." If we wish to attract the attention of anyone, we call out loud enough to ensure their hearing us. So God has called us; we have heard the glad tidings through the Word. Paul said to the Thessalonians that "he [God] called you by our gospel." (2 Thessalonians 2: 14.) And "when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thessalonians 2: 13.) The Thessalonian brethren, having heard the call, "sounded out the word of the Lord" so that it was heard far away.—1 Thessalonians 1: 7, 8.

We have been called: Why? For what purpose? So that we might have fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let us dwell for a moment on the significance of each of these titles.

Son

In seeking to teach men of heavenly things, God often uses earthly arrangements with which men are familiar to illustrate His meaning. For instance, a "son" is begotten of his father; younger than his father; and, if he be a wise son, he is willing to learn and be guided by the wisdom of his father.

Applying this reasoning to God and His Son, we are assured by the inspired Word that Jesus was "the firstborn of every creature:" or, as in Revised Version, "the firstborn of all creation." (Colossians 1: 15.) He is "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God,"—not the beginner, as is sometimes thought, but "the beginNING," a commencement or first, in order or rank. (Revelation 3: 14.) We must therefore believe that Jesus was the first and only Being whom God directly created, the Son being then used as the Father's agent in creating all else.—John 1: 1-3.

This is in line with the Lord's attitude toward His Father during His ministry, and indeed at all times; He was sent by His Father, He spoke the words of His Father. He and His Father were two entirely separate beings, God dwelt in heaven and Jesus dwelt on the earth during the days of His flesh, being a man, being perfect mentally, morally, and physically, as was Adam before the fall.—Philippians 2: 6-8; John 1: 14.

In Hebrews 5: 7-9 "the days of his flesh" are distinguished from the days before He became flesh (when He was with His Father in Heaven) and the days after His flesh, when, having been "made perfect" in obedience during the days of His flesh, He was exalted to the presence of His Father in heaven, having accomplished the work His Father had given Him to do.—John 16: 28; 17: 5; Hebrews 9: 24; 10: 12-14.

In Hebrews 2, verses 6, 7 Adam is described as having been "made a little lower than the angels." Adam was a flesh being, suited to live on the earth. In verse 9 Jesus is described in identical terms; showing that on earth Jesus was a man exactly similar to Adam as he was when created perfect in the image of God and before sin entered.

Jesus

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, and told him that his wife Mary "shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." The word "Jesus" signifies Saviour.—Matthew 1: 21, 25.

Luke tells how an angel appeared to shepherds watching their flock by night; saying, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2: 10, 11.) Little did the shepherds realize how great the tidings really were, and what blessings He would bring to the fallen race.

Christ

The word Christ simply means "anointed," and is so translated in Acts 4: 26, Revised Version. Jesus was the

Christ, or the Anointed, of God. When inducted into office Aaron and his sons were anointed with the holy anointing oil, which was poured upon their heads. Saul and David were anointed with oil as kings under God's appointment. The oil was a figure of the Holy Spirit with which Jesus was anointed after His baptism by John. (Exodus 29: 1, 7; 30: 30-33; 40: 12-15; 1 Samuel 9: 15-17, 27; 10: 1; Matthew 3: 13-17.) He was thus acknowledged and proclaimed from above as the anointed of God in both these offices, as King and as High Priest, the One foretold by the prophets. (Psalm 2: 6; 45: 6, 7; 110: 1-4; Hebrews 1: 8, 9.) He was also proclaimed by the Voice from heaven on other occasions. The vision on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1-9) is thus referred to by Peter, one of the three disciples who witnessed it (2 Peter 1: 16-18)—

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.
17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. [Matthew 17: 5 has the additional words, "hear ye him."]
18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

Our Lord

The word Lord means master, ruler, owner. Jesus said to His disciples—"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." (John 13: 13.) Jesus is Lord in a greater sense since His resurrection, having been given "all power" by His Father in heaven and in earth; all things are now subject to Him. It was with this object in view, that He died on the cross. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."—Romans 14: 9; Matthew 28: 18; Acts 17: 30, 31; 2 Corinthians 5: 10.

Fellowship

Realizing as we do something of the dignity of the position to which God has exalted His Son, to be the King of kings, sitting at the "right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1: 2-9; 6: 20; 8: 1), what an exceedingly great privilege is ours, to be called of God that we might have fellowship with His exalted Son!

In the first Epistle of John are expressed many beautiful thoughts concerning fellowship among the brethren, and not only among fellow believers, but even with the Father and with His Son. The fellowship in this case was the sharing of the same knowledge. John told them all things he knew and had seen about the love of God; so that he and they shared the same knowledge of these things, they could all rejoice in them, and be joint participants in the blessings of sins forgiven, and in the love of God and of the Lord Jesus, who had made all things possible by His sacrifice. He explains that to have fellowship with God they must walk according to God's will; they must not continue to carry on according to the former desires. Claiming to have fellowship with God, while so doing, would be acting a lie. "But if we walk in the light, as He [God] is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."—1 John 1: 1-7.

All the called, then and now, are participants in the same light (or knowledge of God), all participate (or should participate) in the same service of the truth, passing by worldly gain for the truth's sake. All have the same warfare against sin and Satan; all share in the promise of the incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven; all shall share the position of power and influence over the earth with the Lord Jesus in the blessing of all nations, always of course being subject to Him, "that in all things he might have the preeminence."—Colossians 1: 18.

All the sons of God have been given the Holy Spirit as a token of sonship; they are all members of the called-out body or church, being a kind of first fruits of His creatures. They are all members of His body, knit together, and making "increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Ephesians 4: 16.) All are partakers of the same sanctification, or set-apartness from the world—its evil ways, its pleasures, its pastimes, frittering away time which should rightly be given in service for the Master. In so doing we shall have fellowship now, not only with each other, but with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.—Ephesians 1: 17-19.

Sitting Together in Heavenly Places

God in His mercy, even when we were "dead in trespasses and sins, . . . hath quickened us together with Christ," or, in a sense, has raised us up from the dead; "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2: 1, 4-6.) Those who thus sit together in Christ Jesus have their sins forgiven, and have been received into the Divine favour.

To sit in heavenly places may mean, to be lifted up above worldliness and sin, to that which is true and Godlike; to be established according to truth. All believers have one Lord, even Jesus Christ; one faith, one Spirit, one baptism, "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—Ephesians 4: 1-6.

The Afflictions of Christ

When our Lord Jesus was on earth He suffered much contradiction of sinners against himself, and we are exhorted to "consider him . . . lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." (Hebrews 12: 3, 4.) We have therefore to expect similar contradiction: making our path more or less a thorny one. The promise of reigning with Him is given only to those willing to suffer with Him. (Romans 8: 17; 2 Timothy 2: 11, 12.) Hence (1 Peter 4: 12, 13)—

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:
13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

In 1 Peter 1: 7 we read of our faith being tried as gold is refined in a furnace to remove the dross. This being so, each one of us who is seeking the incorruptible inheritance "reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time," must expect trials and sufferings of such sort and quantity as our heavenly Father sees best for us to that end.

Therefore as we go along suffering affliction we know that there are still other trials and afflictions to come before our course is finished. In every place the apostle Paul visited on his missionary journeys difficulties of all kinds awaited him, and he could expect nothing else during all the years of his service of the Lord. Yet he rejoiced in his sufferings for others and accepted his afflictions as the to-be-expected. Of this he wrote to the Colossians, in connection with his ministry as a preacher of the Gospel (Colossians 1: 24)—

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.

Some have taken a wrong view of Paul's words, as though he thought the Lord Jesus had not suffered the full measure of affliction and therefore had left some for the apostle to "fill up." But if the whole of verse 24 be taken, with its context, it is clear that Paul speaks of affliction suffered "for his body's sake, which is the church." And as his ministry and evangelism were not finished when he wrote to the Colossians, he could well refer to trials still awaiting him in God's service as that which is behind, or still lacking, still to be experienced of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh. Our Lord Jesus suffered all the afflictions which pertained to the offering of the sacrifice for sin, the payment of the ransom, and the bearing away of the sin. All this was finished when He died on the cross.

The Fellowship of Affliction

But there was a fellowship of affliction, a suffering with Him, a oneness in "conflict" (Colossians 2: 1); and this fellowship in affliction is participated in by all who follow in their Lord's footsteps and who imitate Paul's good example. Paul rejoiced in these afflictions, and so may we rejoice to fill up that which remains to be filled up in our experience of similar afflictions. The apostle Peter wrote (1 Peter 5: 7-10)—

7 Casting all your care upon him [God]; for he careth for you.
8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that **THE SAME AFFLICTIONS ARE ACCOMPLISHED IN YOUR BRETHREN** that are in the world.
10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **AFTER THAT YE HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE**, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

In conclusion, let us always bear well in mind that "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," in order that we should be partakers with Him in many privileges—His Father and our Father; to be partakers of His afflictions, and if so, partakers of His glory in the incorruptible inheritance reserved for all such; that we shall sit in the throne with Him, to reign for a thousand years, having the honour of being His assistants in the blessing of all nations, languages, and tongues, in that glorious kingdom age. Let us each therefore seek by every means at our disposal to cultivate His image and likeness in every detail, so that we may have fellowship with Him in the fullest sense, even now. And when our race is finished, may it be our happy portion to have fellowship with Him in the throne of the universe. May the dear Lord help each one of us so to do!

1 Peter 1: 3, 4; 1 Corinthians 6: 2, 3; Revelation 2: 26, 27; 3: 21; 20: 6; 1 Corinthians 15: 57. —A. K.

"Warfare Pulling down Strongholds"

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after [or, according to] the flesh:
4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;
5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;
6 And having in a readiness to revenge [or, avenge] all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

WRITING to the Ephesians, as we have heard today, the Apostle Paul likens the Christian warrior's equipment to military armour as understood in those days, consisting of helmet, breastplate, etc., and the sword. Having on these pieces of armour—the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, etc., and wielding the sword of the Spirit, he is able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand; particularly if that other weapon, prayer, be much availed of. And his shield of faith is able to quench all the fiery darts the enemy may hurl at him.

But in this passage (2 Corinthians 10: 1-6) Paul speaks of himself as engaged in active warfare in the course of which he purposed to visit Corinth. As part of his campaign he had already written the brethren one letter, and was now addressing them a second, in which he dealt with the conditions prevailing in Corinth.

Strongholds of Imaginations

Strongholds are fortified entrenched positions of the enemies of the truth, which require to be pulled down. Our text mentions "Imaginations," which immediately brings us into a wide, open field. All the products of men's untutored minds in spiritual things may be included under this heading, such as idolatry in all its various forms. But applying the word to the Corinthian church, "Imaginations" would refer to all the unscrupulous theories circulated amongst them regarding Paul personally and the teaching generally.

As an outcome of pure imagination, those Divisions that were rife amongst them—in which some said, "I am of Paul," and others, "I am of Apollos"—are an example.

Of these divisions, the outcome of their own imagination and contentious spirit, Paul wrote in his first letter (1 Corinthians 1: 11-13, 10)—

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, . . . that there are contentions among you.
12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.
13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?
10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Paul had never mentioned such a thing to them as organising into factions, or using his name; nor had Apollos. It was not a true spiritual growth, but was fleshly in its beginning. These factions exhibited the party spirit or spirit of rivalry, and were productive of strife amongst them. Under such circumstances there could be no proper spiritual development, about which the Apostle has so much to say in his first letter. Hence his immediate attack on this "imagination" which was fast becoming a "stronghold."

Paul's Apostleship and Personal Appearance

Another bad feature of affairs in that church was the denial of Paul's apostleship. Paul had done enough miracles before them to prove the genuineness of his claim; still it was fought and opposed by many. To allow such a charge to pass unchallenged simply meant leaving the way open for the triumph of all the false teachers and false apostles abroad, for he was thus put on an equality with them! And so would follow the early destruction of the true faith in that city. Paul attacked the error with great vigour, but with wonderful grace and selflessness. He was not a rival contestant, but received his authority as an apostle from God. Therefore he should be received as God's instrument for their benefit.—2 Corinthians 11: 12, 13; 1: 1; 1 Corinthians 1: 1.

The personal appearance of Paul was also contemptuously spoken of by these Christians, referring perhaps to his eyesight which was, it appears, defective. But really it was contemptible of them so to speak. His meekness was also brought in as a subject for ridicule. And when the charge of contemptibility of speech was laid against him it seems wholly unwarranted. Judging by the language and deep reasoning of his letters and the records of some of his addresses, they should have had an entirely different opinion.

But Paul's answer was that he was rejoicing in his infirmities, especially the "thorn in the flesh" (as defective eyesight would be to a public speaker), for it was permitted of God. And if he was meek in demeanour, it was for their sakes and the truth's sake, and served to distinguish him from the false apostles, who were bold and impudent; for meekness is a mark of a true follower of Jesus.—2 Corinthians 11: 30; 12: 7-15.

The divisions amongst them, the denial of his authority, the personal attacks, were all designed under the influence of the carnal mind with the object of destroying his authority, which, if they had entirely succeeded, would have been disastrous for the church, as is indicated in his letters.

Necessary Attacks on Entrenched Positions

Paul's attacks on these entrenched positions could not be carried out without in some measure bringing in the persons involved in them. Therefore when the error is being dealt with and exposed the person or persons attached to it are necessarily affected by what is said about their theory, whether names are mentioned or not. Thus by Paul both persons and theories were together exposed in the church, that peace might be established amongst them on the lines of truth and purity. Never is there any suggestion of compromise with error, as though he should say "we will agree to differ for the sake of peace; let us keep together." Just the reverse, he says.—1 Corinthians 11: 19; 2 Corinthians 6: 14.

He tells Timothy that those who stir up strife and sedition in the church, bringing in false doctrine, "speaking lies in hypocrisy," presenting their theories as truth in order to gain disciples to follow them, must be dealt with. And some of these false brethren he goes so far as to name.—1 Timothy 1: 20.

A Good Warfare and Mighty Weapons

But there must be absolute freedom from anything of this sort in those who are to do the dealing. Timothy and the others must "war a (properly the) GOOD warfare." Almost his first word to Timothy is that "the end of the commandment is charity [love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

And the Apostle commands Timothy that the church always should be led by well-chosen honest believers who also hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Any other state would leave them in the same position as the promoters of false doctrine with no one warring the good warfare in the interests of real peace.—1 Timothy 1: 18, 5; 3: 1-9.

But Paul's two epistles to the Corinthians and his two letters to Timothy, as well as his other epistles, show that these conditions of faithful leaders of good conscience and gatherings of believers where all was harmony were impossible. Many have a form of godliness, but deny the power. Persecutions were to be expected, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." And all must decide their attitude toward such. The preferred course is to win them by showing them their errors of life and teaching, as Paul wrote: "strive not about words to no profit," "shun profane and vain babblings," and (2 Timothy 2: 23-26)—

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.
24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive [i.e. engage in these useless strifes]: but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patien.,
25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;
26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

"In meekness instructing" means the use of the sword—"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Timothy had known the Scriptures from his youth, and would have been an adept with the sword—for reproof and correction, as well as for instruction (2 Timothy 3: 16, 17)—

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

In these things Timothy was to exercise himself; he was to command and teach them; to put the brethren in mind of them. (1 Timothy 6: 1-5, 11, 12.) Verse 5 contains instruction on the right course to pursue in extreme cases, which, if the church had followed, would have prevented much of the "falling away" in the church—

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

To withdraw from those who associated with the believers for the sake of gain is here enjoined; that a distinction may be made between the true and the false brethren. To the same effect is Paul's beseechment of the brethren at Rome (Romans 16: 17, 18)—

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Other Scriptural reasons for withdrawing from certain others who profess to be believers are found in 1 Corinthians 5: 9; 2 Thessalonians 3: 6; 2 Timothy 3: 1-5; Titus 3: 10, 11; 2 John 10, 11.

Being commanded by the apostles, such withdrawals can not be regarded as "carnal weapons," and may help the heretic or the one walking disorderly to reconsider his position. In any case the apostle John gives a good reason for separation: "For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." This may seem severe, but it is a good principle of conduct.

Here then are clear-cut definite statements as to what is to be the prepossession of those who are warring the good warfare: entirely spiritual in outlook, "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," and clothed with all the other "armour" of which we have heard to-day, and faithfully wielding the sword. But as though to emphasize this fact our text teaches us that in the contest with those who pervert the truth and lead others astray our weapons are not carnal.

Amongst the carnal weapons military instruments and political power will first come to mind. But there are others; e.g., misrepresentation and lies. These together are fleshly or carnal weapons chiefly used by the ungodly, and by those who would if possible "deceive you with vain words;" "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."—Ephesians 5: 6, 7; 2 Peter 2: 1-3; 2 Timothy 3: 5, 7.

Mighty through God

But the true weapons are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" because God has ordained that the strongholds of error and sin, deceit and corruption shall fall, and therefore in assaulting those strongholds the Christian warrior is working in harmony with God.

The progress of Christianity in the beginning of the age illustrates this. The men who "turned the world upside down" did so by preaching the Gospel of King Jesus, while at the same time they lived holy lives consistent with their preaching. These—right living and right teaching—might be called spiritual weapons, or weapons of the Spirit.—Acts 17: 6.

The temple worship and the synagogues were strongholds of Pharisaism, Sadduceeism, hypocrisy, the traditions of the elders, and other evils. The preaching of the Gospel drew away many from their support, and God disowned the worship of the rejectors of His Son. Finally divine wrath came upon them "to the uttermost"—the temple was destroyed and the people dispersed among the nations.—Acts 2: 41; 1 Thessalonians 2: 13-16.

Similarly with the "stronghold" of Idolatry, as practised in the Roman empire by the different peoples with their own particular temples and gods. The Gospel weapon was so potent that the silversmiths and others who profited by the worship of the great goddess Diana found their craft in danger, and sought the expulsion of the apostle and his helpers.

But these Gospel weapons are the very last things that a man following his natural mind would think of using. His impulse is to attack his opposers with carnal weapons; and the Christian church has realised this throughout its whole history.

For while the work of setting forth the Truth and the practice of its precepts has been going on, another work, an evil work, has developed which has been injurious to the truth. Paul spoke of it as the "mystery of iniquity" already working in his day, and culminating in the Papacy and other state supported (and at times state ruling) systems.—2 Thessalonians 2: 7.

These have used or caused to be used on their behalf all the ungodly weapons and devices we have named in the prosecution of what they claimed to be God's work on earth. They have caused one lot of Christians to slaughter another for differences of doctrine, or for supposed politicial necessities, or trade, or territorial expansion; with all of which the professedly Christian church, being attached to the States (or having ambitions in that direction), has associated itself.

Every High Thing that Exalteth Itself

The Papacy and its offshoots and the governments of the Western world have been strongholds of "imaginations" in the form of false religious teachings and practices and deceptive political theories, but they have not been the only ones. Other "strongholds" for centuries, which the true disciples of the Lord have attacked with the spiritual weapons, include the Eastern portion of the old Roman empire. In Greece, Egypt, Russia, and some of the Balkan States there have been fortresses of the Greek Orthodox Church, bulwarks of superstition and fear and gross illiteracy. In some of these countries the church is no longer established, but the people are still in ignorance of true Christian teachings, so that now these Governments are strongholds of confusion in religion and in political theories. There are also still the Armenian Church in Asia Minor and parts of Syria, the Coptic Church in Egypt and Abyssinia, both strongholds of error and superstition. There are many religous organizations, clubs, societies—strongholds of anything but the truth.

Going outside professed Christian strongholds we find strongholds of the Near East and Far East. Mohammedanism, though disestablished in Turkey, is still entrenched as the religion of many millions in both Near and Far East. In India, Persia, China, Malaya, Japan are the ramparts of Buddhism, Brahmanism, Shintoism, Confucianism, etc, with their millions of adherents illiterate, superstitious, idolatrous. These "strongholds" also must be pulled down. Missionary effort has accomplished a few conversions to Christianity, but in most cases the Christianity taught has been far from that taught by the Lord and His apostles. Paul wrote (2 Corinthians 10: 5)—

5 Casting down imaginations, and **EVERY HIGH THING THAT EXALTETH ITSELF AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**. . . .

The whole world is buttressing itself to carry out its own will based on misconceptions of Christ's teaching or on utter superstition and idolatry, and great "Babylon" is desirous of being the leader and controller of all. But the Lord is now dealing with all false religious and political systems, and has issued the call to his people to come out of Babylon; and each individual Christian is to accept this as a personal call direct from the throne of God (Revelation 18: 4, 5)—

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.
5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

The Lord God **will** have peace on the earth. The Lord Jesus preached peace, and commanded His disciples all through the age to preach it; but peace with God, not peace with the foes of God. All strongholds in opposition to Him must be pulled down, that His will may be done, and the church is honoured with a share in this great task—beginning with themselves and using their influence as far as possible outwardly.

The disciple's life therefore is one of constant combat. But true peace is his happy portion so long as the combat is going on. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." This is the legacy which the Master left for all His disciples; for all those who turn to God through Christ and receive forgiveness —John 14: 27.

—F. S.

The Rider on the White Horse Makes War and Preaches Peace

THE PRICE OF PEACE is surrender. And the victor dictates the terms. Sometimes while the war is still on peace is made by negotiation and the influence of other powers. The Saracens used to dictate terms by which a city at their mercy might avoid assault and more or less extermination by accepting the Mohammedan faith. Many avowedly Christian cities saved the natural lives of their inhabitants by thus bartering away their spiritual life (such as it was).

Our Lord Jesus is called the Prince of Peace, and so He is, having given men a way by which they could have peace with God and submit to the peaceful rule of the Saviour. Against sin and evil of all kinds He has made war by sending out the message of the Gospel to enlighten men's minds and turn them away from sin.

The Purity of the Gospel

As sent forth at the beginning of the Gospel age, the purity of the Gospel is represented by the white horse and his rider (Revelation 6: 2)—

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

This work, it was foreseen, would result in turning only a few, comparatively speaking, to righteousness. The world in general has continued evil, and many of the religious systems have come under worldly influence and have given out erroneous teachings.

But this state of affairs was not to continue always.

"Michael" Shall Stand Up

The vision of Revelation 19: 11-21 shows how the great Prince of Peace, to deal effectively with the present world order for the establishment of permanent peace, must first make war. But it is a different war from any other that has ever been. It involves all the nations of the earth, and is in demonstration of the fact that He is King of kings and Lord of lords, and that the time has come for Him to establish His own kingdom in their place, as had been predicted by the prophet Daniel (Daniel 12: 1)—

1 And at that time shall **Michael** stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: . . .

Michael is the name of the Lord in His prehuman estate. Mentioned also in Jude 9—"Michael the archangel," the meaning of archangel being chief messenger. And the meaning of "stand up," as in Daniel 12: 1, is to take control.

Up to that time there was a different work to be done, but when the time came the great Prince was to take control and so order things that everything that opposed Him and the establishment of His kingdom would be removed out of the way. This particular time is shown by another illustration, as given in Revelation 19: 11-21, already referred to—

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.
12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.
13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God.
14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS.
17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;
18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.
19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.
20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.
21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Much might be said on this wonderful vision of the Great One who makes war and preaches peace. But a few brief comments must suffice.

It will be recognized that this vision, like others of the book of Revelation, is symbolic. The student of the Scriptures will see that it refers to our Lord as it were going forth with pure and righteous judgment, to remove out of the way everything that can be shaken, so that only truth and righteousness shall stand.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire"—quickly discerning, nothing will escape Him; "on his head were many crowns," signifying His right to rule all nations, as King of kings and Lord of lords.

His name, "The Word of God," the embodiment of God's will and wisdom for the conquest, having "all power," as in Matthew 28: 18.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations."

The Armies in Heaven

This great Conqueror was followed by an army, or "armies," indicating a large following under His command, "clothed in fine linen, white and clean"—symbols of purity and righteous character. Hence co-operating with the Lord Jesus in a righteous war.—Verse 14.

Were there no opposition, this righteous Conqueror and His army, ready to establish a righteous government upon earth, would be welcomed, were His mission understood, by all lovers of something better than the present governments of the world can offer.

Armies in Opposition

But what do we see? Determined opposition by another armed force, the Revelator tells us (verse 19)—

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

Although only a few words are employed to describe this army, they indicate a conflict covering a period of time during which the "beast" and the kings—the rulers and statesmen, dictators and parliamentarians—agree among themselves on a line of policy and method of co-operation to maintain their positions at the head of the affairs of the world. Being in opposition to the pure government which Christ is to establish in the earth, their standards of right, justice, and truth are much lower than His. Hence the vision is a revelation of the fact that when the time came at the end of the 1260 "days" for consuming and destroying that iniquitous system referred to as the "beast" (Daniel 7: 11, 25) it would not yield voluntarily, but would seek to fasten itself still more securely upon the social order and retain the support of the nations which it has misruled. Daniel 7: 26 shows these efforts would be in vain—

26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

Who "they" are and how "they" will take away the dominion of the "beast" is shown in this vision of Revelation 19: 11-21 as being none other than the Lord Jesus and His army composed of the saints of whom it is said (Revelation 2: 26, 27)—

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

In this "rule," given the overcomers, as well as the "rule" mentioned in chapter 19: 15 the word translated "rule" means to tend as a shepherd, and that part of a shepherd's work here taken as a symbod is the gathering together of his flock by the shepherd's rod with its crook for bringing all the sheep together. And just as in 2: 27 this gathering or ruling is done for the purpose of "breaking them in pieces as a potter's vessel"—by a hard crash, so in 19: 15 that same destruction is symbolized by the Lord treading "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Each of these visions brings out certain events which the Lord's people are to expect to occur in that period between the close of the 1260 "days" and the end of the Gospel age, and indicates that this present "order of things" among men, hard as it may fight to retain control of the earth, will be "broken to shivers," pressed out as grapes in a winepress. While 19: 19 shows the stubborn fight the great political and religious institutions will put up to prevent (if possible) the conquest by the King of kings and his army.

One of the notable achievements of the great military conquerors in the past has been their skill in manoeuvring, by which the enemy is forced into certain positions and surrounded without hope of escape, with the result that the officers in command are taken prisoner, and their army is at the mercy of the victor. This is the illustration used in 19: 19, 20. The great Conqueror, our Lord Jesus, manoeuvres His forces, takes the "beast" and the "false prophet," and what does He do with them? "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone"—described in 20: 14 as "the second death;"—not a place where people are suffering eternal pain and anguish; that would be a contradiction of chapter 21: 4 which says, "neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." But the beast and his image will be destroyed while they are still operating—"cast alive into the lake of fire" and destroyed as completely as was the garbage that was cast into the lake of fire or valley of Hinnom outside the walls of Jerusalem.*

The symbolism of verse 21 is based on another common practice in war, the complete annihilation of the opposing armies. Such massacres were common in ancient warfare, and are still known in small tribal wars, where the enemy is trapped in a valley or defile of the mountains and put to the sabre or sword. So the armies (the peoples of this present evil world) who allowed themselves to be generalled by the beast and the false prophet and the kings or political leaders of the earth are held responsible for their action. By submitting to such generalship they have opposed the Lord, is the lesson in verse 21, and they are "slain with the sword." Let us remember that we are considering symbols, hence must not conclude the teaching here to be that every human being is to be literally killed in order to make the Lord's victory complete. Being "slain with the sword" means that every one of them in his life and actions is out of harmony with the new order the Lord will set up, and that no man will be allowed to carry on again on the lines of the beast and the present order of things.

Fowls Filled with their Flesh

After they are slain, the vision says, "and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." This refers to fowls mentioned in vss. 17, 18, who, previous to and at the beginning of the conquest, were called on to be in readiness for a feast—"the supper of the great God." The fowl are carrion birds which hover over all places where carrion is likely to be found. Men dying of thirst in desert places

*Readers who wish to look further into this subject of The Lake of Fire, Gehenna, etc., or who wish to lend to friends the scriptural explanations are invited to write us for the book, "Everlasting Punishment," mentioned in Book List

have seen such birds overhead waiting for them to die. There is always a class of people in the world ready to profit by the calamities that befall a community, such as a flood or fire or invasion. It is their opportunity to loot. But how much the lower elements among men will be allowed to demonstrate their true character as vultures during the trouble we may not be able to say. But this much can be said, the symbolic picture shows the complete riddance of all the selfish, deceitful, and wicked people and powers from control of the earth. The Lord himself will rule with new kings and priests to set up a better "world," or order of things in the earth.

In other words, the Judgment of Him who sits on the white horse, who is Faithful and True, is not to consist exclusively of war and winding up the evil order of things. He also Preaches Peace. His title, King of kings, and Lord of lords, means rulership. The people will be there to be ruled over, and myriads of the dead shall be raised so they will participate for the first time in their lives in the benefits of a perfect government. As King and Judge He will continue to issue judgments, and His judgments will be firm and sure as the rod of iron which as the Shepherd's crook He still holds in His hand—no getting past them; they must be obeyed.

The Judgment or Rulership of the Thousand Years

A brief description of this new Judgment or Rulership is given in Daniel 2: 44—

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, AND IT SHALL STAND FOR EVER.

There are many things around us that we can very easily recognise as being contrary to that kingdom over which our Lord shall reign in righteousness as King of kings and Lord of lords, where His will shall be done on earth as in heaven. All the evil conditions will be forcibly removed. When the people learn righteousness, they will see their folly in having given their support to false systems such as are deceiving the majority of people at the present time, including the vast systems of false religion prevailing in China, Japan, India, and other countries which have largely resisted Christianity even in its debased forms.

Chaining the Serpent

There is still another foe of mankind, well known to the Prince of Peace. That foe is the devil, and he is to be dealt with in a manner that will prevent him from interfering with either governmental arrangements or subjects of that Kingdom. He is to be bound for a thousand years, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." Then, for the purpose of testing the loyalty of the subjects of that great Kingdom, he will be let loose for a little season, and finally he also will be cast into the same condition as the beast and the false prophet had previously been cast into, to be destroyed. So that then there is nothing left in the whole of creation that is out of harmony with God.

When this time comes the work which our Lord has set out to do will be complete, God's will being done on earth as it is done in heaven. Then will our Lord deliver up the kingdom to God (1 Corinthians 15: 24-26)—

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Earlier we mentioned that when the Saracens had a city at their mercy they dictated terms of peace.

So with this great King. He has long since given out His peace terms, which are whole surrender to Himself. As we have it in Philippians 2: 9-11—

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

—H. S.

The Beauty of Holiness

TO SEE THINGS as God sees them is one of the greatest privileges He has given His people. That is not to say that we see all that God sees. We have to remember the limitation: that God is not obliged to tell us anything. That He has told us much is purely of His favour. And when He reveals, it is to those whom He chooses, as the Psalmist says (25: 14)—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."

To "see" sometimes means more than to behold with the natural eye. Often it means to understand and to appreciate. And that implies similarity of mind and of mental processes. Daniel saw visions, some of which were explained in part to him. Others were sealed up to be understood at a later date. But Daniel nevertheless had the mental capacity to grasp whatever God might have chosen to reveal.

This ability to understand God and His purposes was given to man at the beginning, although at that time not much of God's purpose was made known. In other words, man was made in the image of God—the mental and moral image. Therefore our first parents could understand why God drove them from the garden; they could also understand His forgiveness of their trespass; and His promise of a great Deliverer to come appealed to their minds as something greatly to be desired.

To the extent that men have gone into sin that divine image has been marred, their tastes have become depraved; greed and strife appear to them to offer the highest enjoyment in life. And God has looked down in sorrow upon the disfigurement of the work of His hands.

But God saw—or rather foresaw—something else. The divine image—the mental and moral capacity to understand righteousness and to obey a righteous God—was not like a thin veneer; it was an intimate part of the man—continually appraising that with which he had to do. As Paul said of the heathen—the nations—they still had, even in his day, enough of the image left in them to want to set up standards of right and wrong, and judge themselves and others by those standards.—Romans 2: 14, 15.

What God foresaw at the beginning was that, contrary and self-willed as the race would become through the working of sin, there would yet be in the majority a remnant of discrimination; more or less dissatisfaction with themselves and with the world around them, and, as Paul said to the Athenians, a feeling after God, if haply they might find Him.

God's Appeal to Men

Not that such remains of good in men would make them acceptable to God or worthy of eternal life. But God saw the possibility of saving men from the consequences of their own stupidity by an appeal which they could appreciate. And what was that appeal? It was, and is, an appeal to their sense of beauty—a sense of the wonders and beauties which God has made, and from that a sense of the beauty of God himself.

Adam and Eve could tell their children of the beauties of the garden, associated with their obedience to their Creator, contrasted with the thorns and thistles; the pleasure and delight and ease of cultivation in the garden contrasted with the sweat of face and groaning associated with their outcast condition and their path to death.

Yet even under the curse they could see the beauty of God in His kindness to them, in permitting them to live for a considerable period, and in providing bountifully for their sustenance despite the curse. Nearly a thousand years Adam was given in which to meditate on those things. In the golden grain and the fruitful trees there were beauty and life. In the ravages of blights and pests there were ugliness and destruction. And God accepted the worship of those who regretted the sin and yearned for righteousness, and were willing to come to Him in His appointed way.

Abel was a man of faith, and pleased God with his gifts.

Enoch "walked with God;" he saw beauty in God's step, and in faith kept in step with God. And God saw beauty in Enoch; i.e., in Enoch's faith and devotion.

Abraham believed, and God blessed him, as also his believing family. And so God taught men the beauty of faith and His appreciation of it wherever found. And men learned more of the beauty of God as His character and kind providence were more and more revealed to them.

Through Moses and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt God showed the majesty of His power. He showed also the beauty of faithfulness to a promise made hundreds of years before.

In the wilderness God showed the beauty of patience and longsuffering; and Moses saw that beauty, and imitated it save for one or two lapses, which demonstrated the flesh to be still imperfect. But "Moses was faithful in all his house" (we are told)—that great burden of Israel which was laid upon him.—Hebrews 3: 2.

At Sinai God demonstrated to Israel His superhuman power and majesty; exhibiting at the same time His wisdom in first impressing upon them His ability to enforce the law and execute the penalties attached. God's whole plan from the beginning demonstrates His wisdom, but here was a concrete operation for developing a whole nation into a peculiar people separate from all other nations—on the one hand placing before them commands for their obedience; on the other, specifying innumerable faults and sins, iniquities and transgressions to be avoided.

Impartial justice was provided for, that they might learn the unchangeableness of God, and themselves strive to be just in all their dealings. At the same time God showed great forbearance and mercy, thus recommending these qualities for their imitation. And that they might understand the depth of His love for them, He illustrated it by the love and devotion of a husband.

Thus by the innumerable precepts of the law was the exceeding sinfulness of sin brought home to them, and the beauty and desirability of righteousness were implanted in their minds, so far as they would permit.

Sanctify Yourselves, and Be Holy

But, as distinct from doing or not doing, they were told of a state or condition, expressed on numerous occasions; for example, Leviticus 20: 26—"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." Also vss. 7, 8—"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: . . . I am the Lord which sanctify you." They were to sanctify or set themselves apart from the nations, and from all the evils commonly practised by those nations; and, in addition, they were to allow God to sanctify them or set them apart, by keeping His commandments "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."—Leviticus 19: 2.

To be holy therefore comprehended a state of mind and heart in exact agreement with God—loving what God loved, and hating what God hated. The law did not make the nation holy, but those who were aided by its means to see the beauty of holiness, and who availed themselves of the cleansing provided by the sacrificial offerings, were blessed. Their faith was counted unto them for righteousness; they had the testimony, equally with those of faith before the law, that they pleased God.—Hebrews 11.

Worship in the Beauty of Holiness

The prophets of God are called "holy men of God," who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1: 21.) Theirs was not a spurious holiness like that the Lord condemned in the Pharisees. The prophets were genuinely devoted to God. They were pureminded, and kept themselves from the evils into which the people had fallen. Therefore they could be used as messengers by a holy God to exhort and urge the people to reform, as well as to foretell events to come.

One of these holy prophets, King David, wrote many Psalms which were used as hymns of praise. Having been inspired by the Spirit of God, they emphasized what God desired to see in those who came to worship Him. Certain Levites under Asaph their chief were appointed to perform the regular service of praise, accompanied by musical instruments. This is related in 1 Chronicles 16, together with the Psalm sung on the occasion of bringing back the ark of the covenant. Verse 29 reads—

> Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Because the word rendered "beauty" means also adornment, some take this to be a reference to the holy garments worn by the Levite singers in the tabernacle and temple service. But the words, "bring an offering, and come before him" indicate that the whole nation, and not the Levites only, were to worship in the beauty of holiness, for it was with such gifts that the people in general came to the courts of the Lord. However, the word adornment implies beauty, and holiness is beautiful. From our Lord's words recorded in John 4, we may take those white garments of the Levites as symbolic of purity of mind and heart. For the Lord is more concerned with the worship than with the clothing. Jesus said (John 4: 23)—

> But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

This worship in spirit and in truth we are now privileged to render when we come in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the sanctified or holy devotion of our minds and hearts. That we might render this acceptable worship in true beauty of holiness, the Lord came and died for our sins, and when we believe righteousness is imputed to us on account of our faith. And then we have laid upon us the duty of practising righteousness in our daily lives. This is what Peter meant when he said (1 Peter 1: 13-16)—

> 13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
> 14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts [or, desires] in your ignorance:
> 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [or, conduct];
> 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

This is the beauty the Lord desires to see in those who draw near to the throne of grace—the beauty of a holy mind, a holy life, a state of incorruptible holiness, proof against the wiles of the devil and the enticements of the world (these being sometimes presented by professed Christians, who should know better), a state or condition of holiness in imitation of the holiness of God and of our Lord Jesus, of whom it is said (Hebrews 1: 9)—

> Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Coming through Him, our holiness, deficient as it inevitably is of itself, becomes glorified, becomes a thing of beauty in God's sight. And we know that there is still an age to come in which many myriads more will

be enlightened and come to believe and to worship in spirit and in truth. Then of them also it will be true, that they come to worship in the name of Jesus and in the beauty of holiness, and therefore their worship will be acceptable, and the whole earth will rejoice evermore.

But of those who refuse to believe when fully enlightened, who refuse the forgiveness offered through Jesus Christ the Sinbearer, who will not adorn their hearts and minds with the beauty of holiness—God will not hear them. God will never change His standard of holiness so as to try to ingratiate himself with them. In the final contest the holiness of God must be paramount.

A Line of Beauty

What then did God see when He formed His great plan of ages? He saw a succession of generations of men fallen—born in sin, and shapen in iniquity, far from the image of Himself in which the first pair of human beings was created. He saw also, despite the darkness and corruption, the strife and sorrow, of which we have heard to-day, a line of beauty, a line of holiness—a line of devoted ones who—grieved with the sinful conditions and longing for something better—gladly laid hold upon the promises, and then upon the loving Saviour, and turned their hearts and minds to marvel at the holiness, the beauty of the great Creator and Father, who yet was willing to dwell with him of a lowly heart. And in His Justice, Love, and Mercy, God sent His Son.

The Dew of Thy Youth

De Soto and others sought in America the fountain of eternal youth, and found it not. Had they read the Scriptures, they would have learned of One who had found the secret of eternal youth. Psalm 110: 1-4 tells of One seated at the right hand of Jehovah, exalted as King and as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek; One who had had the protective covering of the morning, and who had still the dew of His youth, because He had the beauty of holiness.

In the early morning in Palestine the dew often is very heavy after a previously hot and dry day. God used the dew to represent His blessing on the children of Israel when they were obedient. Thereby they were protected, soothed, and refreshed.—Psalm 133: 3.

Flower lovers gather the blooms early in the morning "while the dew is on them." They are then beheld in their most perfect sheen and tint. Words fail to express one's sense of wonder at the sight. One can only exclaim, "How beautiful!"

So it is in regard to God's beloved Son.

In the very dawn of creation our Lord was the loving and worthy Son of the great Creator—beautiful in holiness, and devoted to His Father's will. He had upon Him the dew of the morning—His Father's blessing. He came to earth, and His perfection of beauty was marvelled at. The dew of the early morning was still upon Him, for He had done nothing to forfeit the Father's love and care. The common people hung upon His words, and officers sent to take Him said, "Never man spake like this man." But the Pharisees and others who were envious saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. (Isaiah 53: 2.) It was not that Jesus was lacking in beauty, either mental or physical. For Pilate was so struck by His appearance that he said, "Behold the man!" It was because He was of staunch character, and carried out His Father's will to the confusion of the unfaithful Pharisees and others, that they saw no beauty in Him.

But though the Lord was crucified, and died, yet when God raised His Son from the dead the Son had still the dew of His youth. And in that beauty and freshness He now sits upon the throne, and shows us the secret of perpetual youth and beauty. That secret, as already said, is to do the will of God. The dew of heaven comes down upon us, and keeps us ever fresh and renewed in spirit, while we have also hope for the future life. Jesus said—"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."—John 11: 25, 26.

To believe in Jesus is the first item in doing the will of God. When the people asked him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6: 28, 29.) With that beginning of belief in Jesus, we are receiving the greatest Teacher who ever lived. He it is who reveals the Father to us, and enables us to see the beauty of holiness.

We see in the Son the perfect pattern for our imitation. We want to be as much like Him as we can in our present imperfect condition, and if we are faithful we shall later be with Him and shall see Him as He is in the glory of the Father. And we shall be like Him.

All this God foresaw and arranged for, and now acknowledges such as His dear children, and joint heirs with His dear Son.

The Triumph of Holiness

All nature is wonderful, and calls forth our admiration, both for the Creator and for His work, as we may see in the starry night as well as on a sunny day. But in man God made a creature unique. The animal and vegetable worlds carry on. God said there should be such, and there were such. Trees and plants multiply themselves. The plant world with no thought and the animal world with limited mental capacity fulfil each their functions as He designed them. No moral qualities are ascribed to them.

In man, who was set over the animal creation, there are higher faculties, which, as said before, constitute man the image of God. And men have been given great freedom to exercise their own way in contradistinction to God's way. Here and there, now and then, there have been checks upon men's freedom when they have gone too far in one direction or another. But even while giving men laws and an example to enable them to cultivate humility of mind and true holiness, God has for the most part allowed men freedom of choice. He made them with mind and will and faculties enabling them to discriminate between good and evil, and He has allowed them to make their own choice. The ultimate triumph of God and of Christ will be that out of so many billions of humanity so large a proportion will, when enlightened, choose God, and live. The demonstration of the beauty of holiness in God and in Christ will not be lost on them. At the end of the Kingdom age there will be not only the church and the ancient worthies who have faithfully discharged their duties in connection with rulership and administration of the Kingdom; there will also be the millions and billions of subjects of the Kingdom who will have exercised their intelligent minds and voluntarily will have confessed their sins and gratefully accepted Christ Jesus as their Saviour, and will have acknowledged the beauty of holiness and incorporated it into their own being by those methods which the Lord will set in motion in the Kingdom age. So then with no ruthless taking away of free moral agency from man, God's holiness will have so appealed to them that they, with love and gratitude for the Saviour who laid the foundation of their salvation, will use their mental and moral freedom to glorify God by imitating His virtues. They will desire to assist in the fulfilment of God's original plan to have the earth filled with a race of perfect human beings, and they will take delight in demonstrating to their Father in heaven that His love and sacrifice and the love and sacrifice of His dear Son have not been in vain. So John sees the whole creation joining in praise—

> And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.—Revelation 5: 13.

Seeing What God Sees

And what do we see—as we look back through that same long era of sin and sorrow and death, the confusion

and the strife that have marked man's relationship to man?

We too see the long line of faithful ones—primarily ignorant sinners, but willing to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, glad to hear the promises and to believe them, and suffer in defence of them, and glad to receive the Saviour when He came. We see ourselves, the last of the chosen ones of the Gospel age, found and forgiven, taught the beauty of holiness, and how to worship the Father in spirit and in truth through His dear Son who died for us. How are we approaching the throne of grace? Do we come as did some of old—with His name on our lips only, while our hearts and minds are far from Him? Or, are we daily putting into practice those principles of true holiness which are God's own, and which were revealed to us in the perfection and beauty of His beloved Son?

Forward, too, we look, and see the wonderful triumph of God and of Christ in the Thousand Years, and the glories to which we are invited—to sit with Him in His throne, and participate with Him in the great work of that Kingdom age, and then to the everlasting ages beyond.

And then we must needs turn our thoughts again to the present: to the armour and the sword, the good fight of faith, the contending earnestly, the making sure of our calling and election, the incessant witnessing to the truth-message for these last days, the preaching of peace on the only sure and permanent basis—the acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10: 15.) May the Lord graciously assist every one of us, and bring us also to a triumph through grace!

—Mrs. E. C. H.

For the Children

THE NAME OF JESUS MAGNIFIED

When God caused Paul to do wonders so much greater than any the Ephesians had ever known it was to teach them the lesson that He was greater than their goddess Diana. The miracles also showed that those who did them were His servants and were telling out His message to men on earth—the word from heaven, the Gospel.

All this proved that God loved them even though they were worshippers of idols, and wanted them to know the good and true things. These were the first lessons they should quickly and easily have learned after they had seen the mighty miracles and had heard Paul preach.

But because the demons and the priests of Diana's temple and others were so strong in Ephesus, and would use every means to keep the people worshipping Diana and to make the true message from Paul look of no account, another lesson befell the whole city. By it they learned the evil nature of the spirits, and as being incapable of love for those who worshipped and served them through Diana. So, if God had real love and the spirits had none there could be no connection between them; and those who would know the love of God must come away from the evil spirits, from Diana, and from magic and such bad things.

All idolatry is falsehood; it is deception; and of course those who practice it are deceivers. Magicians, sorcerers, witches, and such like, are amongst the deceivers, and now we must add others—the exorcists.

Vagabond Jews

God is always very displeased with all people who deceive others, but He must have been more than usually vexed with those Jews who became magicians, sorcerers, or exorcists, because in their Scriptures He had warned them so much against these things. And although the Jews knew that, some of them disobeyed God and joined in with them and became deceivers as much as the rest. And they travelled about doing their deceiving, practicing the "magical arts," for the reason probably that they were not wanted by the pious Jews who would not disobey God in that manner. So they were outcasts, "strollers," "vagabonds."

Amongst the "vagabond Jews" there was a family of seven brothers, the sons of Sceva, who all seem to have been at Ephesus while Paul was there. As all the city knew about Paul and the school of Tyrannus, it would not be long before these seven men would find him. Their interest would quickly be aroused by Paul's miracles, and they might even see him casting out evil spirits from sufferers. They had heard Paul preaching and speaking of Jesus, and could scarcely have missed seeing miracles.

And what would strike them most was that all his miracles were done in "the name of the Lord Jesus."

As Paul never failed to heal or to cast out the evil spirits, they could see how mighty that Name was. Nothing to equal it in all they had ever seen or heard. And it was all so very simple; merely call upon the spirits in the name of the Lord Jesus to come out, and they must obey—as they had seen time and again.

Misusing the Name of Jesus

Like all people who deceive, these men were very bold; they were impudent. They seem to have seen no reason why they should not attempt to do what Paul was doing. Paul was only a Jew; so were they. Paul wished to do good and was doing it; they wished the same, and why should not they do it? Was he any better than they? Why should not they "call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus" and drive them out? And they quite expected the same results on their own word.

In all of this reasoning which they seem to have gone through and applied so favourably to themselves we know of answers which are a stop to all of it. Paul was a servant of the Lord Jesus; they were not. Paul was no deceiver; they were. The Lord Jesus had not sent them to preach the Glad Tidings and cast out demons; Paul He had. So of course they had no authority from Jesus to use His name, and Jesus would not use His power to cast out the demons if they did. But what if Jesus had allowed them to use His name? What would it have meant?

It would have meant that Jesus recognized them as His servants and was with them in the evil practice of magic and deception (for it was by miracles that He showed everyone that Paul was His servant and messenger), and who could think of such a thing as Jesus being on the side of evil? How we do wish that these men would go no further, but would humble themselves, believe on the Lord Jesus, and become His servants and not the servants of sin any longer! Then the authority to do wonders in His name would be given as it had been to all others who believed. But no; they wanted to do the wonders and at the same time remain "vagabonds;" and they went so far as to try.

A Surprise for the Sons of Sceva

Their opportunity came when they found some man who was "possessed" of an evil spirit. Over him they "called" the name of the Lord Jesus. They commanded the evil spirit "by Jesus whom Paul preacheth" to come out of the man.

In all cases like this one in which Paul had used the name of the Lord Jesus the spirits were bound to obey; they could not resist; they had to come out, and usually it was immediately that they did. And these exorcists knew that. But in this case the spirit caused the man to say some words in answer, there was an argument. The spirit, using the man's voice, said, "Jesus I know, and *Paul I know; but who are ye?*" *In this answer the* spirit made a distinction between Jesus and Paul, for the first word "know" in the Greek language means "acknowledge;" that is, the spirit acknowledged the power and authority of Jesus. Paul he knew, was acquainted with, and with the power Paul exercised in Jesus' name.

This answer and attitude of the evil spirit would give the sons of Sceva a feeling of surprise, of astonishment; perhaps of dismay—for it meant that the spirit did not intend to obey them. Why should he, when the exorcists themselves were the servants of the evil spirits, and not their masters?

By this resistance the spirit showed greater strength than they had; and when a weak man meets a stronger one in a fight or contest he always gets the worst of it. In addition to this we know from a story we told you long ago that men possessed of demons are often tremendously strong. The spirit could not be cast out, and the man possessed could be made like a madman at the evil spirit's will. All the spirit needed to do was to urge the man to attack the exorcists still standing before him; and this the man did with terrible fury. He leaped on them, tore their clothes, and wounded their bodies.

On the authority of the oldest three Greek MSS., which have "both of" before "them" (vs 15, see also Revised Version), we understand that although there were seven sons of Sceva engaged in the evil practice of exorcism or magic only two were immediately concerned in this impudent act of using Jesus' name without His consent. But even if there were only two present and not the whole seven it seems rather a wonder that they did not try to hold the man down. But he was a furious-looking madman, and his attack was sudden; and this, with their fear of the defiant evil spirit within, blew out whatever courage they may have had and filled them with terror. Escape was the only thing they thought of. Ragged and wounded they ran out, with perhaps, for some way at least, the madman after them.

The news of this extraordinary happening spread rapidly, so that, not only were these two sons of Sceva in terror, but all in that city were filled with fear. With some it was likely a fear of the evil spirits. The event they either witnessed or heard of had opened their eyes, and they could see that while Paul by the power of Jesus was master of the spirits, the magicians and worshippers of Diana were not, but were their servants and under their power. They could also now see that the spirits could get annoyed and would turn on their own servants and injure them whenever it suited them. They were evil beings which could not be trusted, of whom all people should beware, and leave severely alone.

As for the evil spirits themselves, they also feared: they feared Paul, and had feared him for two years. The evil spirit in the man acknowledged that he knew Paul. By the power of Jesus Paul had withstood all of them. They were helpless in his presence: could work no injury upon him: indeed they were subject to him. All this also the people could see.

This was partly the great lesson the whole city learned. And another part came naturally: it was that they were obliged to regard the name of the Lord Jesus with respect. After what they had seen or heard about the sons of Sceva no one would want to use His name except by His authority as Paul was doing.

The Name of Jesus Magnified

But there is another meaning to the word "fear"—to be in awe of; sometimes it means to revere or reverence. Awe is the sense of wonder and admiration with which we view some sights. We are filled with awe when we see a rainbow extending over half the sky. The same feeling of awe comes when we hear of wonderful things happening. So while some of the Ephesians who were under the influence of the magicians and exorcists would have fear and be afraid when they heard of the treatment the sons of Sceva received, other of the Ephesians who had heard the Christian preaching and of Paul's wonderful work in healing disease and casting out demons, but had taken no definite steps to declare themselves, would now be so filled with awe and godly reverence that they would now declare themselves definitely on the Lord's side. Thus the name of the Lord Jesus was "magnified," or made greater or better known in Ephesus.

But that is not all. Paul and his helpers had been preaching for two years, some of them longer; and there were among the people quite a good many who thought well of the teaching but still kept in with the worshippers of Diana and with the magicians, readers of omens, etc. They had found it difficult to tear themselves completely away from their old associates, perhaps found it hard to realize that the true God was not in astrology and fortune telling. These people now took courage to break away completely from idolatry and all connected with it. In order to do this in the true Gospel manner, they saw that God's favour would come to them only if they confessed their sins, and asked God for forgiveness in the name of Jesus. That is what they did, and the Lord forgave them and blessed them; and we may be sure the church of believers was glad to receive these earnest converts amongst them.

Among those who believed and became Christians were many who "used curious arts" and were convinced that idolatry with the magic and all else connected with it should be renounced and denounced, since the demons who were at the back of it had now been thoroughly outclassed; shown up to be nothing alongside Paul and the Christian brethren. They brought their books of magic together and publicly burned them.

In those days it required an immense amount of labour to make a book, and they were rare and valuable things. It was therefore a great sacrifice on the part of these men to put them in heaps and burn them. We now burn things that are of no further use and are only in the way. New and better things come into our knowledge and into use which we desire to have. So it was at Ephesus when Paul preached the Gospel and did his mighty works there. He had brought them something better. And this together with the affair of the sons of Sceva, in which an evil spirit had openly shown the true evil character of all of them, had the effect of bringing many magic workers to the point of becoming believers in Jesus. They had at least taken an important step: they had burned their evil books. The books burned were worth about £2,000 ($10,000) of our money.

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

Please read Acts 19: 13-20 for this Story.
The Lord's warning against magic arts, Deuteronomy 18: 9-14.
A curse on deceivers, Malachi 1: 14.
Great strength of the demon-possessed, Luke 8: 26-29.
The awe inspired by miracles, Matthew 9: 8, 33; Luke 1: 65, 66; 7: 16, 17.
The day of relief and blessing, Revelation 20: 1-3; 21: 1-5.

—UNCLE FRANK.

Back to the Bible **You are cordially invited to the Bible Talks given every Sunday Evening at 6.45, in the Foresters' Hall, Chapel st., between Toorak and Malvern Rds., Melbourne. These addresses are undenominational, and they take you "Back to the Bible." The Editor of this Journal is usually the Speaker. COME, and WELCOME!**

Encouraging Words

Dear Bro. Henninges: We are enclosing the sum of ten shillings towards the Funds, and are sorry we cannot give more, and hope that the full sum needed for the year's expenses will be contributed. We enjoy the "Advocate" *very much, and it is comforting to read such convincing* expositions of Scripture without malicious reference to others.

We continue to spread the glad tidings whenever we go into town or come into contact with anyone, but very few show any interest. Would you not think the people would hail the news with joy? We find that many to whom we give the glorious news pretend not to see us the next time. However, we must continue in the good work.

We like the Letters to John very much; they are splendid. Will you please send us some, and we will send them along per post to people.

With good wishes and love to you both, Your brother and sister in Christ, —— **New South Wales.**

Yes, it is the experience the Lord told us to expect, that not all would be glad to hear the good news, but rather rebuff the messengers of truth. In this we are a living witness to the truth of God's Word that it would be so. As we go along in the service, we find many other experiences similar to those of the Lord and the apostles, and of brethren all down the age.

And the financial shortage is not unusual. Paul was often hungry and footsore, and the expense of travel was considerable. In these days of the printing press and worldwide postal facilities, we are given a tremendous arm for reaching out over the world with the good message, and the financial needs are always a consideration, since the more funds available the greater the amount of printing that can be done and the greater the areas that can be covered. It is a good plan to post to friends, and also any other intelligent persons whose addresses may become available. For the whole world is the "Field" the Lord spoke of as embraced in the "harvest." So that we join heartily with our brother and sister in Christ in the hope that we shall be able to present the Annual Report in a month from now with a credit with which to begin the New Year. **But please see the monthly statements of the Funds in last page of this issue.**

"Many hands make light labour" is an old proverb, and the laborers in Christ's harvest rejoice together in the *privilege of serving the best of all Masters. He will say* at the finish, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."—Matthew 25: 21, 23.

Dear Brother and Sister in Christ: Herewith we enclose M.O. for renewal of subscription to the N.C.A. and a copy of the New Era, and if there should be a few cents left over, please use it in the work. We received the October number last week, and we surely do enjoy every copy. And are sorry we are unable to send more to help in the work. May the dear Lord continue to bless you all in the work of faith and love is the prayer of, Your Brother and Sister in Christ, ——, **Canada.**

Dear Friends: I do not know who has been kind enough to send me the magazine I received this morning. Some time ago I received "The New Era" and a leaflet in which you *mention "Armageddon."* I would *indeed* appreciate the loan of the book, as I am earnestly interested along Biblical lines in all that concerns prophecy and the near approach of our Lord. So many earnest souls are praying for deliverance from the evil conditions which have swept the world and which still envelop humanity with its depressing influences. Yours sincerely,

——, **New Zealand.**

To the Editor, Dear Sir: Many thanks for sending me a copy of the N.C.A., and I also would like you to send me a copy of "Armageddon: What is It? What does It Mean?" I am so pleased to get other people's views *of the Scriptures, so few agree, having been misin*formed from childhood. For instance I was taught that if a person was not converted (or saved, as it was explained) in this life they had no prospect of life except everlasting misery.

Through studying the Bible I have learned that since Christ died for all an opportunity to hear of it will be given every individual who has not had that opportunity in the present life. It has worried me all my life how I could save my dear Home people, for I thought if my dear ones are not in heaven neither do I wish to be there. How pleased I am to understand that there is a "due time" for their enlightenment, and they will be proved when the light comes to them. Just now I desire to know what you think of Armageddon, and if it is near. I think it is not very far off, and that nothing else matters, nothing else seems worth thinking of but the prospect of it. Faithfully yours, ——, **New South Wales.**

[We were glad to be able to send this earnest enquirer the "Armageddon" (see Book List), wherein not only the conflict called "Armageddon" is explained, but also the hopeful prospect beyond.

As for spending eternity with our dear ones, that would be as the Lord wills. For we know that the promise of entering heaven is given to the "overcomers" only. But, knowing that the Lord is good, and that His plan contains an age for their enlightenment, when all the dead, small and great, will be enlightened under the rulership of the Kingdom soon to be set up, we may well leave the decision in God's hands.—Editor N.C.A.]

OLDEST MANUSCRIPT OF THE BIBLE

Found on Rubbish Heap

"A ragged piece of Greek manuscript 3. inches by 2 1-3 inches, found on a rubbish heap in Egypt and later acquired by the John Rylands Library, Manchester, has been officially identified as the oldest manuscript of the Bible in any language. It was written two centuries before the Codex Sinaiticus. Mr. Henry Guppy, librarian of the Rylands Library, says that it is the earliest witness of the Gospel of St. John, and probably was written, before the ink on the original had dried, in the early part of the second century after Christ, or even, perhaps, in the last part of the first century after Christ. Scholars had thought that the Gospel of St. John was one of the last to be written. This discovery proves that it was one of the first of the gospels. The fragment contains only verses 31 to 33 and 37 to 38. The 18th chapter of the gospel varies slightly, but not materially from the present version. The manuscript probably came from the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, where the 1897 document giving the new sayings of Jesus was found."—Melbourne "Argus."

Assuming the identification of the fragment to be correct (and we see no reason to question it), this little ragged piece of manuscript is one of the most significant finds of all the centuries. Having been written almost if not quite in the lifetime of the Apostle John himself, this tiny fragment of his Gospel, which "varies slightly but not materially from the present version," seems, as though by his own hand, to authenticate the version (with emendations based mainly on the Sinaitic, Vatican 1209, and Alexandrine MSS.) now in use. Thanks be to God for His kindly Providence, which has watched over this tiny fragment, to preserve it for nearly 1900 years, and has now caused it to come to light again to bear its testimony to the authenticity of the Divine Word!

Extra Copies of This Issue

ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE in the present time and circumstances of the Nations, this issue of the N.C.A. should be useful for wide circulation. Although it is oversized, being more than twice the usual number of pages, and three times the usual amount of reading matter, no extra charge will be made. It will be posted singly to addresses in Australasia for fourpence per copy; elsewhere, fivepence (10 cents) per copy. In quantities to one address in Australasia, 2/6 per dozen; elsewhere, 3/6 (85 cents) per dozen; in half-dozens if desired. Order from Melbourne, Bristol, or Brooklyn.

LET THE TESTIMONY GO FORTH!

The "Advocate" Sustaining Fund

Voluntary donations to this fund have been received as under, since our last report. As the "Advocate" is regularly published at a financial loss, it is obliged to depend upon the loving co-operation of its friends until it shall become self-sustaining. Let the good work continue!

122, 2/-; 123, 10/-; 124, £5: 4: 6; 125, £1: 4: 4; 126, 2/-; 127 (Odd coins in Little Box), 4/-; 128, 10/-; 129, 2/-; 130, £2: 10; 131, 2/-; 132, 2/-; 133, £1; 134, £1; 135, 10/-; 136, £1: 15; 137, £3; 138, 16/-; 139, 18/-; 140, 2/-; 141, £2: 10; total for 6 weeks, to November 17 inclusive, £22: 3: 10 ($107.85); previously reported, £322: 13: 1 ($1567.95); total for 11 months, £344: 16: 11 ($1675.80). Of this sum a portion was required to clear off the Deficit from 1934, the amount remaining for use in the work for this year being £257. The expenses of the Advocate Sustaining Fund for the whole of this year to December 15, 1935, are estimated at £400 ($2000); thus leaving £143 to be accomplished in the last remaining month from November 18 to December 15.

The Cheerful Givers

Voluntary Donations, as under, have been received since our last report for the spread of the Good Tidings concerning the Grace of God in Jesus, our Mediator and Intercessor under the terms of the New Covenant.

54, 11/6; 55, 3/-; 56, 4/7; 57, 6/-; 58, 10/-; total for six weeks to November 17 inclusive, £1: 15: 1 ($8.53); previously reported, £149: 2: 10 ($723.82); total for 11 months, £150: 17: 11 ($732.35). The estimated expenses of the Cheerful Givers' Fund for 1935 amount to £200 ($1000); though more than this sum can be beneficially utilized should it be available.

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"Other Sheep I Have"

— John 10 —
(Reprinted from N.C.A., February, 1920)

OCCUPIED as it mainly is with testimony concerning the identity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel according to John presents many "infallible proofs" on this vital subject. Like the first of John's epistles, the Gospel opens with a declaration on this point (John 1: 1-3; 1 John 1: 1-3), while near the close of each is stated the principal purpose of the writing. The Gospel was written to assist unbelievers to become believers in Jesus, while the Epistle was written to believers to confirm them in the faith. This is shown in the following quotations—

John 20: 31—But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through [literally, "in"] his name.

1 John 5: 13—These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life. [The remainder of this verse as given in the Authorized Version is wanting in the oldest manuscripts.] The Revised Version reads—

13 These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.

Life in His Name! The great need of the human race is Life; the grand mission of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, is to be the Lifegiver, the Supplier of every real need of those who acknowledge Him. And what abundance of direct statement and wealth of imagery are combined in the inspired writings to point out these facts! "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1: 4.) In His death He was the antitype of the uplifted serpent in the wilderness (John 3: 14-17); in His resurrected life He is the Director of His people and the Supplier of their needs—oftentimes allowing them for their own good to have a full realization of their own impotence and of their dependence upon Him.—John 21: 3-14.

Jesus is pictured as the Bread of Life, and as the Passover Lamb (John 6: 32-35; 19: 36), slain that food might be provided for those whose hearts have been sprinkled with His blood, and who have cast out the leaven of sin, as far as they are able, from their lives by a sincere repentance and resolve to have nothing to do with it. Jesus is the Vine, the believers are the branches, deriving from Him the quickening energy of the Holy Spirit, manifest in the abundance of beautiful fruit (Galatians 5: 22), which every believer-branch is expected to bear to the glory of God the Father, who is the Husbandman. Jesus is the True Light, which is to enlighten every man that has come into the world. Some have been thus enlightened; others will be enlightened in the future by the True Light.—John 1: 9.

But it is as Shepherd of the sheep—by no means the least interesting and instructive of these illustrations—that our lesson requires us to view the gracious Lifegiver. The chapter embodying this lesson is a continuation of the discourse the record of which begins at John 9: 41, the text being the question of the Pharisees—

"Are we Blind also?"

The man born blind had been healed, to the great astonishment of his acquaintances. So great was their surprise that the eyes of one born blind should have been opened that some of them, doubting the man's identity, said (9: 9), "He is like him." The man himself, however, assured them by saying, "I am."

This is precisely the form of speech used previously by our Lord—"Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8: 58.) The Gospel of John has been the battleground of many a fierce conflict between Trinitarians and those opposed to them. The former have made much of our Lord's statement just quoted, as though His words, "I am," were to be considered as a claim by Him to be the Almighty, who adopted them as His own Name. But this surely is stretching the simple expression beyond anything intended by our Lord! For, if His use of the first person singular of the verb "to be," in proclaiming His prehuman existence, is to identify Him as Jehovah, it must equally identify the man born blind as Jehovah. Neither our Saviour nor the man whose

sight had been given him used the words "I am" as a name or title; each used the clause as an affirmation of a fact.

Taking the Pharisees at their own estimate of themselves—as He sometimes did to their discomfiture—our Lord replied—

41 If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.—John 9: 41.

The Scriptures throughout impress the lesson of responsibility in proportion to the measure of light enjoyed (Luke 12: 47, 48)—

47 And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.
48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

The Jewish nation, and the Pharisees in particular, had been brought into contact with a great deal of light—as much as was possible for any of God's people at that time to see (Matthew 4: 13-16)—

13 And leaving Nazareth, he [Jesus] came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:
14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,
15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;
16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.
Compare Isaiah 9: 1, 2.

National and Individual Responsibility

The responsibility of the Jewish nation toward the light which shone upon them at the first advent of Christ was such that their city and polity were destroyed, and they themselves were separated from the chief of God's favours, the high calling—which was made known first to them—because they rejected the light.—Matthew 23: 38; Romans 9: 4.

While Jerusalem, which stood for the nation as a whole, was left "desolate" when they rejected the Lord as the promised Messiah and would not allow Him to gather them to Himself as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, the gathering time for individuals of the nation who would believe was extended. All the things predicted would come upon that generation, He said (Matthew 23: 36-38); and Paul tells us of the fulfilment of this prophecy. (1 Thessalonians 2: 14-16.) At the same time, as shown by the book of the Acts and the apostles' epistles, every preparation was being made to give to each member of the Jewish race an opportunity to disown the action of their leaders in crucifying the Lord. This may be seen by Peter's declarations on the day of Pentecost and subsequently; also by Paul's, who wrote to the Romans (10: 16), "But *they have not all obeyed the gospel.*" And verse 18, "But I say, Have they not heard? Yea verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Wherever Jews were to be found the apostles and their helpers sought them out, and gave them the opportunity to repent. For a time the gospel went to Jews (this term comprehending all Israelites of every tribe) exclusively, and after the gospel began to be sent to the Gentiles, Cornelius and his household being the first Gentile converts, the Jews were given the first hearing of it by visits to their synagogues, as we read in Acts 13: 46—

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and JUDGE YOURSELVES UNWORTHY of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

The call was to the high calling, and joint-heirship with Christ in His Kingdom. This honor unbelieving Jews failed to attain. Nevertheless, the Lord has arranged a time when Israel, together with Sodom, Samaria, and other "evil neighbours" will be resurrected from the dead, under the rulership of the Kingdom, and then many will regret their previous blindness and hardness of heart.—Ezekiel 16: 46-55; Jeremiah 12: 14-17.

As for the scribes and Pharisees at the time of our Lord's first advent, their position was so favored, and their responsibility so great, that the Lord said to them, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Gehenna?" (Matthew 23: 33.) He did not say that they could not or would not escape the second death, but plainly intimated that it will be a marvellous thing if they do get clear of it.*

Thus does our Lord teach us the lesson of responsibility in proportion to privilege. Let us heed it, and not be forgetful; there is much temptation within and without us that would lead astray from the right path all who have been enlightened; hence all the more need for us to "Watch and pray," lest we enter into temptation. (Matthew 26: 41.) Have we been favored with light above that enjoyed by many? Our responsibility is to let that light shine; not as being ourselves sources of light, but rather as being candles which Christ Jesus has lit, to the glory of God the Father.—Matthew 5: 15, 16.

Free from the Chains of Sin

Another matter the scribes and Pharisees found difficulty in apprehending, although our Lord constantly alluded to it, was the fact of their bondage to Sin as to a great Taskmaster. His mission was to free from that bondage those of the covenant people, Israel, who felt its galling chains, and longed for liberty. (John 8: 31-36; Matthew 11: 28-30; Luke 5: 30-32.) He found the companionship of poor and despised "publicans and sinners" more congenial than contact with wealthy and influential scribes and Pharisees, because the former were more conscious of their shortcomings, more willing to acknowledge them, and more ready to accept the way of escape provided in the Messiah than were the latter. Much of the discussion in regard to the healing of the blind man turned upon the connection, if any, between his blindness and sin. The

*"Gehenna" is the Greek word used in Matthew 23: 33, and not "hades" which is often rendered "hell" in the Authorized Version of the New Testament. For the distinction between these two, how the Lord will call forth the dead from "hades," whereas none shall ever rise from "Gehenna," please see the book "Everlasting Punishment," mentioned in Book List.

disciples in their question, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" doubtless voiced a query often asked by passers-by like themselves. (John 9: 1-3.) The selfrighteous Pharisees were ready not only to condemn the blind man and his parents, but also to condemn the Lord himself, who presumed to heal the blind man, and so upset their theories. Finding their contention that Jesus was a sinner warmly disputed by the one who had experienced miraculous healing, they turned on him fiercely, saying (v. 34), "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" And they cast him out; i.e., out of the synagogue.—Verse 22.

These considerations give added point to our Lord's comment on the action of the scribes and Pharisees in which He links blindness and sin, and declares that those who assert that they see, and yet are bound in sin, are blind indeed.—John 9: 39-41.

The Sheepfold

Continuing His discourse, our Lord illustrated the relationship of Himself to the Jewish people by a parable, using as symbols shepherd, sheep, fold, porter, thieves, and robbers—our Lord occupying the two positions of "Shepherd" and "door;" "but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them."—John 10: 6.

But the Jews had been taught to look upon themselves as sheep enjoying the "green pastures" and the "still waters" provided by Jehovah their God, Psalm 23 being read in the synagogue services and also sung in the temple and other services of praise. So they should not have been altogether surprised to hear false shepherds condemned and the true Shepherd approved, or slow to draw the lesson of the parable.

The Jews were in the Law Covenant "fold," of which Moses had been the principal earthly shepherd, and his successors undershepherds, including in the later years the scribes and Pharisees, of whom the Lord said: they "sit in Moses' seat." (Matthew 23: 2.) There had been faithful and unfaithful shepherds. The latter had their own ends to serve, and attended to the sheep, not for the good of the flock, but for mercenary purposes. (Ezekiel 34.) The faithful shepherds had the welfare of the flock as their chief concern—their own convenience, or life itself, being less important.

It was not intended that the Jews should remain permanently in the Law Covenant fold. However, there was but the one way to open the "door" of deliverance from that fold, and that was by the sacrifice of Jesus, who shed the blood of the New Covenant. Before His days, some had tried to show the Jews another way; the effect of their evil teachings was but to lead the people into idolatry and immorality, just as "the thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." The evil teachers had climbed up "some other way," and had thereby demonstrated their evil proclivities. (John 10: 1.) Their voices were "strange," and those who were "Israelites indeed," in whom was no guile, did not follow, but fled from such evil ones; "they know not the voice of strangers." (Verse 5.) These strange voices did not have the ring of truth; they did not speak according to the Law and the Prophets; therefore the true "sheep" in the Law Covenant "fold" were terrified, and fled from them.

The True Shepherd and the Porter

When Jesus, the True Shepherd, came to the Law Covenant fold, the "porter" in charge was John the Baptist. He knew the True Shepherd's voice, and opened to Him the door of recognition as the One described in the Law and the Prophets. In fact, the special mission of John the Baptist as a messenger from God was to herald the coming of the Messenger of the Covenant, as foretold by the prophet Malachi (3: 1)—"Behold, I will send my messenger." Our Lord said that John the Baptist was the messenger referred to. (Matthew 11: 10.) For nearly six months John preached and baptized, calling on the Jews to repent and to look for the Coming One. In those days in the narrow crowded city streets it was the custom for a person of note, riding, to send ahead a servant to clear a way through the crush, at the same time announcing the name and position of the Personage. Such a work John the Baptist performed.

But this was not all, for at the beginning of his mission John had been given a sign by which he might recognize the One who was to be accepted as the Messiah, as he afterward explained. (John 1: 30-34.) John was thus by divine instruction preserved from announcing some other than the One whom God designed to be and described as "the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in."

But even while in some uncertainty as to the identity of the One upon whom the Holy Spirit should descend, John knew the false leaders or "shepherds," as his language plainly shows, and he was not at all backward about pointing them out, and reproving their evil deeds. (Matthew 3: 7-10.) For his faithfulness he met the usual fate of the Lord's prophets, who had to protest against evil teachings and evil conduct. And all the while the great ones were desiring his removal, they were professing the most profound admiration for the faithful prophets who had suffered in the past. They would not have done as their fathers did. Yet they filled up the measure of their fathers in their treatment of John the Baptist and of Jesus.—Matthew 23: 29-32.

The opening of the door into the sheepfold was therefore John's action in announcing to the Jews that Jesus was the One for whom they had been told to look (John 1: 29, 35, 36)—

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh [or, beareth] away the sin of the world.
35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;
36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

Andrew was one of these two disciples of John who followed Jesus and asked for more informa-

tion. Andrew then sought out his brother Simon, saying, "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."

Jesus in the parable referred to His credentials (verses 2, 3)—

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.
3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

The New Fold

All Jews who had been rightly exercised by their experiences under the Law Covenant were ready to follow the call and leading of the True Shepherd. They realized that the Law Covenant was not the condition in which they were always to abide, with the Law of God written upon tables of stone, and contrary to them. They had respect to the promises which God had made, in which it was recited that a New Covenant would be made with Israel and with Judah (Jeremiah 31: 32)—

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord.

Under the New Covenant God would have a more satisfactory arrangement, as quoted by the apostle (Hebrews 8: 10) ". . . I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in [margin, "upon"] their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:" and this writing would be (2 Corinthians 3: 3) "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." And under this New Covenant, He would forgive their iniquities, and would be merciful to their unrighteousness, to an extent impossible under the Law Covenant.—Hebrews 8: 6-13; Acts 2: 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 3: 3.

Not only were the Jews under the Law Covenant in bondage to a law they were unable to keep, but their very inability to fulfil its demands brought them under the still heavier taskmaster, Sin. By the law was the knowledge of sin, for the Jew had not known covetousness, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (Romans 7: 7, 8.) By reason of the power of Sin, the law—which he thought to be good to bring life—he found brought instead bondage to Sin, and condemnation to death. Under the Law Covenant the Israelites indeed were in despair, for they realized the impossibility of satisfying its requirements. Their condition was described in Zechariah 9: 11—"prisoners" in "the pit wherein is no water." And again in Romans 7: 24—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The True Shepherd, Jesus, came to lead the Israelites indeed out of despair into hope, out of condemnation into justification, out of death into life. He was indeed the Strong Hold toward which they were admonished to turn. (Zechariah 9: 9, 12.) Whereas Moses *had been* their prophet, he himself had foretold that God would raise up another. Whereas Moses *had been* their lawgiver and leader, Jesus was to become such for all the Israelites indeed. Whereas Moses *had been* the Mediator between God and Israel, and had subsequently interceded for the sinful covenant people, thus demonstrating himself to be also their Advocate, Jesus was to be the Mediator between God and the Israelites indeed, and was also to be their Advocate before God, "if any man sin."—1 John 2: 1.

For This Cause

And all this, as the Apostle explains, in order that the called-out Israelites indeed might not only be freed from the bondage and condemnation and other disadvantages of the law covenant, but also in order that the special favor of the High Calling might be placed before them. But before any of these favours might be enjoyed it was necessary that another and different sacrifice be offered for their sins, as the apostle states (Hebrews 9: 13, 14)—

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:
14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

With the law covenant were associated animal *sacrifices; an alteration of the sacrifice—the* acceptance by God of the blood of Christ as the atonement for sin—in itself indicates the necessity of some other covenant under which the benefit of His death might be granted, he says (Hebrews 9: 15)—

15 *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament* [i.e., the new covenant], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament [or, covenant], they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

How explicitly the Apostle states the truth! "FOR THIS CAUSE"! **Had Jesus not become the Mediator of the New Covenant, neither of the two blessings subsequently mentioned could have been granted**: *that is to say, (1) the transgressions under* the Law Covenant could not have been atoned for, and (2) the promise of eternal inheritance could not have been received by the Israelites indeed. What extraordinary folly it would have been for one of *those* "Israelites indeed" *to suppose* that he could have been delivered from the condemnation of the Law Covenant, and could have been made a partaker of the promised eternal inheritance of the High Calling, except by means of the work of Jesus *in His capacity of Mediator of the New Covenant!*

Again, whereas the Israelites indeed, under the Law Covenant, had had Moses, Aaron, and the latter's successors as intercessors before God on their behalf, they were henceforth to look upon Jesus as their High Priest, ever living "to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7: 25.) Jesus could not, of course, be a high priest after the Aaronic order, because He was not of the tribe of Levi. Christ's priesthood is of the Melchisedec order, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." (Hebrews 7: 11-17.) And He exercised this priestly office on behalf of the Israelites indeed whom He called out of the Law Covenant fold into the New Covenant fold—into a new relationship by a New Covenant, of which Himself was both Mediator and Covenant Victim, or "testator," as the Authorized Version faultily puts it.—Hebrews 9: 16.

That Covenant Victim is meant in verses 16, 17 is indicated in verses 18-20. The ancient custom was to ratify a covenant or agreement over the bodies of animal victims. The law covenant was thus ratified; that is, both parties agreed to the obligations involved in the covenant. Jesus Christ was sacrificed, and was therefore the "Covenant Victim" for the ratification of the new covenant, entered into between God and all who come to God through Jesus: "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," He said.—John 14: 6.

What would the Apostle have said to anyone who said he was willing to take advantage of the intercession of Christ as Advocate, but declined to accept *Him as Mediator*? *Hear him*—

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he IS the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.—Hebrews 8: 6.

But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by how much ALSO he IS the mediator of a better covenant, . . .—Revised Version.

But now has he attained to a more distinguished public ministry, by so much as, of a superior covenant also, he IS mediator.—J. B. Rotherham.

But now he has obtained a Superior Service, even by so much as he IS the Mediator of a Better Covenant, . . .—Emphatic Diaglott.

I.e., his ministry is as much more excellent as the covenant is better.—Variorum Bible, explanatory footnote.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the [literally, a] second.—Hebrews 8: 7.

Benefits from a Priestly Service

The benefit derivable from a priestly service depends on the covenant under which the priest acts. The value of the covenant depends on the nature of the promises on which it is based. Aaron, as high priest, acted under the Law Covenant. But that covenant was weak because of the inability of the fallen flesh to comply with the conditions attached.

Our Lord Jesus, as High Priest, acts under the New Covenant. This covenant is "established upon better promises," so arranged that God can "be merciful to their unrighteousness," and remember their sins no more.

Therefore, the priesthood of Jesus is as much better than that of Aaron's was, as the New Covenant, of which Jesus IS Mediator, is better than the Law Covenant, of which Moses WAS Mediator. The New Covenant is better than the Law Covenant, because it is established upon better promises. But *there is another reason why the New Covenant is* better than the law covenant was. It is because the New Covenant has a "better" High Priest than the law covenant had. Under the law the high priest could pronounce blessings only in accordance with the limitations of the law, which made remembrance of sins every year on the day of atonement, notwithstanding that many offerings had been made throughout the year. And, as we saw in Hebrews 9: 13, 14, observance of the law brought a certain amount of purifying of the flesh. But it never did and never could purge the conscience from the dead works, i.e., the works of the law which failed to bring life, no matter how efficient was the High Priest in the discharge of his duties.

Hence God provided not only a New Covenant better than the law covenant and a New Mediator better than Moses, but also a High Priest better than Aaron—better able to meet the needs of the people, and guarantee to them the great blessings of forgiveness and life.

This is set forth in Hebrews 7: 20-22, where the fact that Jesus was made High Priest under the New Covenant by an oath of God, whereas the Levitical high priests were not, also that there were many high priests under the law, but there is only one High Priest to serve all the needs of the believers under the New Covenant—these two things make our Lord Jesus a far greater High Priest than Aaron was. And verse 22 adds—

22 By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament [more exactly, covenant].

Jesus as Surety

Certainly that High Priest who combines in himself the mediatorial functions also, and that Mediator who combines in himself the priestly functions also, is greater than one could be who holds only one of these offices. And particularly is our Lord's position superior, *in that He sits at the Father's* right hand, has been made higher than the heavens, higher than angels, and ever lives to make intercession. Thus He is able to act as Surety on behalf of the New Covenant and on behalf of every one who under that New Covenant comes to God by Him. Judah was surety to bring Benjamin home again to his father. And he successfully pled with Joseph—not recognizing him—on Benjamin's behalf.

Trusting in Jesus, forgiveness and many other blessings are guaranteed. Any failure will be due to our own wilfulness. To those who put their trust absolutely in Him, salvation and everlasting life are assured.

Thus would the Apostle show to the Israelites indeed, called out of the Law Covenant fold, that Jesus became the Covenant Victim and the Mediator of the New Covenant in order that the Israelite indeed might (1) be delivered from the curse of the Law, that (2) he might be received into the new fold, and that (3) he might have the benefit of a better High Priest than Aaron could possibly have been.

"I am the Door"

In verse 3 of our chapter the true Shepherd enters the fold by the "door" of fulfilled prophecy, opened and acknowledged by John the Baptist. In verses 7 and 9 the Lord asserts that He is the "door of the sheep." Faith in His sacrifice was the means by which the true sheep were delivered from the Law Covenant fold, and by which at the same time they had access to the New Covenant fold.—Romans 10: 4.

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.—John 10: 9.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.—John 14: 6.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost [Greek, "completely"] that come unto God by him, . . .—Hebrews 7: 25.

He became the "way" by His sacrifice on Calvary —"a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."—Hebrews 10: 20.

"I am the Good Shepherd"

That our Lord claimed this title is good and sufficient reason for our acknowledgment of Him as the Shepherd. And His character, as portrayed in this parable, gives us every reason for confidence, especially when contrasted with the selfishness and heartlessness of intruders into the fold (verse 10)—

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Instead of wishing to harm the flock—to steal, kill, and destroy—the Lord, just the opposite, came to give them life. Not a bare subsistence on desert tracts, but an abundance of pasture, loving care, and all else required for their wellbeing He gives to His sheep. The Revised Version reads, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." The "Emphatic Diaglott" has a noun instead of an adverb—"The thief comes not, except that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came, that *they may have Life, and may have abundance.*" Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines the Greek "perissos" as an adjective, meaning—"superabundant (in quantity) or superior (in quality)." The Lord's provision for His sheep is both: it is superabundant in quantity, and it is superior in quality.

Among the superabundant and superior blessings which the Good Shepherd provides are certain invitations which are limited to a few out of the vast numbers whom He bought with His precious blood, while for the remainder also good things are arranged. When calling the "sheep" out of the Law Covenant fold to come into the New Covenant fold, He invited them to a special calling, described by Paul as "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul said he was "*reaching forth*" to this which was set before him. "I follow after, if that I may *apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of* Christ Jesus."—Philippians 3: 7-14.

The invitation to the high calling was not for Paul alone; it was for other Jews as well, who had come out of the Law Covenant fold into the New Covenant fold in response to the Good Shepherd's voice. And in this same chapter Paul includes the brethren as followers together, whose citizenship is in heaven. —Verses 15-21.

The Great Shepherd of the Sheep

As our Lord's sacrifice, whereby He sealed the New Covenant, also called the "everlasting covenant," entitled Him to be called the "way" of approach to God and the Mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2: 4-6), so also did His sacrifice procure for Him the title of the "great shepherd of the sheep." (Hebrews 13: 20.) All the Scriptures show how intimately our Lord's precious New Covenant sacrifice, "shed for many for the remission of sins," is bound up with His work of saving the Israelites indeed with the High Calling. They are inseparable. The Israelites indeed could not possibly get the High Calling promise of eternal inheritance unless the transgressions of the past were atoned for, and the inspired explanation plainly states that Jesus became the Mediator of the New Covenant to accomplish this very thing: viz., the settlement for their past sins, in order that they might receive "the promise of eternal inheritance." Thus is emphasized the significance of our Lord's words, among His last, that His New Covenant sacrifice was for the remission of sins—

This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.—Matthew 26: 28.
"This cup is [i.e., represents or symbolizes] the new testament [covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you."—Luke 22: 20.

It is "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," i.e. the New Covenant, that God has arranged to "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-*pleasing in his sight, through* Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."—Hebrews 13: 20, 21.

This fact is further emphasized, without the use of the word "covenant," by the preaching of the Apostles, by whom the arrangements in Moses and in Christ are contrasted (Acts 13: 38, 39)—

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;
39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

That the New Covenant is necessary for the forgiveness of sins of the Israelites indeed is not only intimated in our Lord's words at the institution of the Memorial Supper and in the above citations from Acts 13: 38, 39; Hebrews 8: 6; 9: 15; it is also shown in the terms of the Covenant itself (Hebrews 8: 12), and again in Hebrews 10: 8-13—

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;
9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. HE TAKETH AWAY THE FIRST, THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH THE SECOND.
10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:
12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;
13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

Our dear Saviour, by His "one sacrifice for sins for ever," became at once the antitype of all the propitiatory, cleansing, and covenant binding sacrifices of the law of Moses. As Mediator of the New Covenant, having "sprinkled" His blood before Jehovah, in an antitypical manner, as Moses sprinkled the blood of bulls and of goats of the Law Covenant upon the "book," our Lord is "sprinkling" His blood upon the contrite, repentant believer who desires to enter into Covenant relation with God through Jesus as Mediator, and who for this purpose comes "to Jesus, the Mediator* of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12: 24), just as Moses sprinkled the blood of the Law Covenant sacrifice upon the people who had *drawn near to enter into Covenant with God under* the Law.—Exodus 19: 7, 8; 20: 18-21; particularly Exodus 24: 3-8.

Oh, how weighty these matters! How important to recognize rightly the relationship of the "Israelite indeed" to God by the New Covenant! It was

*Variorum Editors' Footnote—Rather, Jesus as Mediator.

because of the importance of this that the Apostle warned some in his day—"Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets" (Acts 13: 40, 41); and again (Hebrews 12: 25)—

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.

The New Covenant is God's arrangement by which He is prepared to forgive sins and extend *mercy; it is not to be trifled with or lightly turned* away from.

On account of the fundamental importance of this subject, reference has been made in the foregoing pages to every New Testament passage that mentions our Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator of the New Covenant.

The Hireling Fleeth

Continuing the consideration of the parable—

The Lord then contrasts Himself with an hireling who might be in charge of sheep, but without real interest in them (John 10: 11-15)—

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.
13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.
14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.
15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Nothing could more beautifully portray the love and care of the Good Shepherd. On the cross He laid down his life for the sheep whom He had called out of the Law Covenant fold to come into the New Covenant fold. And since His resurrection the Lord has been actively engaged on behalf of the sheep, in devotion to their interests and in the constant love and watchcare He gives them.

The shepherds in those days knew each sheep by name—even of a large flock. So we may think of our Good Shepherd as knowing each one of His followers by name. He knows them, and they know Him. Is any one weary of the futilities of this life, dissatisfied with the husks of false teaching and traditions of men? Let any such come to the Good Shepherd and ask admittance to the Fold where *spring the waters of eternal life; where spiritual* food in abundance will satisfy every longing and ease every pain.

The "Other Sheep"

But the sheep called out of the Law Covenant fold were not the only ones the Lord came to gather to Himself and to the green pastures (verse 16)—

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

In accordance with the Father's will, which had been made known to Him, Jesus laid down His life for all the sheep, and these "other sheep" would be brought into the New Covenant Fold in which those called out from under the Law Covenant entered first, as the Record shows.

How to identify these other sheep has been a much discussed question. Various answers have been propounded, some of which have been very fanciful; such as, seeking to find the "other sheep" in the far-off stars.

We understand the "other sheep" to represent the Gentile believers of the Gospel age, who have been made fellow-heirs with the Jewish believers in Jesus of the High Calling. These "other sheep" were not originally of the Law Covenant "fold." *They have been brought from another direction,* responsive to the voice of Jesus as uttered by His disciples, and they have been united with the few who came out of the Law Covenant "fold" into the New Covenant "fold" over which Jesus is the "Chief Shepherd."

Thus united to the flock of Jewish believers in Jesus, safely folded in the New Covenant, the Gentile believers in Jesus come into the same benefits as the Jewish believers enjoy. They enter the High Calling blessings made possible because Jesus is Mediator of the New Covenant; they also have Jesus as High Priest ever interceding for them, which He could not do except He had become Mediator and Surety of the better covenant.—Hebrews 9: 15; 8: 6; 7: 22.

In this connection Ephesians 2: 11-19 is very instructive—

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.
14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:
17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.
18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.
19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

The "commonwealth of Israel" had been reduced *to a "remnant" too small for God's purpose* (Romans 11: 5, 7), wherefore the invitation to the Gentiles to enter the fold and enjoy the blessings granted to the "remnant" of fleshly Israel. The Gentiles who joined were not maintained as a separate community, but were joined to spiritual Israel, as proselytes to the Law Covenant formerly became part of Israel. Gentile believers in Jesus are not brought under the Law Covenant, as were proselytes from the Gentiles to the Israelitish faith. Nor do Jewish believers in Jesus remain under that arrangement, since the Law was nailed to His Cross. (Colossians 2: 14; Romans 7: 4.) "For CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" in Him. (Romans 10: 4.) The Lord Jesus, the "Good Shepherd," who laid down His life for the sheep, has brought both Jewish and Gentile believers into the New Covenant fold; or, as the Apostle expresses it, He has made "in himself of twain **one new man.**" He has indeed made them to be one flock under one Shepherd; and to those who faithfully follow Him is given the promise that they

shall receive life incorruptible; they shall be like Him, and shall see Him as He is.—Romans 2: 7; 2 Timothy 1: 10; 1 John 3: 1, 2; Romans 8: 17, 18.

"I lay down My Life, that I Might Take It again"

John 10: 17, 18 has been much discussed, and we believe a great deal misunderstood—

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.
18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

These words as they stand in the Authorized Version have been supposed by those who think that Jesus did not really die, but only appeared to die on the cross, to support their view, stress being laid by them on the use of the word "take." They reason that if our Saviour had the ability to "take" His life "again," He could not have been really dead, and that He must have raised Himself from the grave.

That Jesus actually died is attested by very many scriptures—

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.—1 Corinthians 15: 3.
He . . . was cut off out of the land of the living: . . . he hath poured out his soul unto death.—Isaiah 53: 8, 12.
And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.—Daniel 9: 26.
And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.—Luke 24: 20.
Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.—Acts 2: 23.

That our Saviour was raised from the dead not by His own power, but by the power of God His Father, is equally well attested by the Scriptures—

. . . according to the working of his mighty power,
Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.—Ephesians 1: 19, 20.
Whom God hath raised up.—Acts 2: 24.
This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.—Acts 2: 32.
And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.—Acts 3: 15.
Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead.—Acts 4: 10.
But God raised him from the dead.—Acts 13: 30.
32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,
33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Since these scriptures declare unmistakeably that God raised Jesus from the dead, how can we harmonize John 10: 17 and 18?

We reply: In John 10: 17, 18 the word "received," and also the word "take" in its two occurrences in the phrases "take it again," are translations of the same original: "taketh," in verse 18, is from a different word.

Further: "power," in verse 18, is from a word meaning "authority," "liberty," or "privilege," but not physical power. It occurs also in John 1: 12 and other places.

From all this it appears that the Authorized Version has seriously mistranslated John 10: 17, 18. But with the proper understanding of the meanings of the words all is clear, and the passage reads—

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might RECEIVE it again.
18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power [authority] to lay it down, and I have power [authority] to receive it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Thus it is clear that nothing in John 10: 17, 18 contradicts the testimony of the Scriptures: that our Lord voluntarily laid down His life, that He really died for our sins, that He had authority, or privilege, to receive it again, and that by the power of His Father He was raised from death.

His Soul Not Left in Hades

In his important announcement on the day of Pentecost Peter under inspiration of the Holy Spirit explained the words of David (Psalm 16: 8) to have been a prophecy—not concerning David himself, but concerning our Lord Jesus. (Acts 2: 22-32.) His soul, or being, was not left in hades, the death state. Hades, the death state, could not hold Him. But this very prophecy and Peter's application of it prove that during the three days between His death and His resurrection, Jesus was really dead. Early on the third day God raised Him from the dead. Hades is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Sheol, used throughout the Old Testament of that state of unconsciousness in death to which all the race of Adam was condemned. In the period Jesus was in Sheol or Hades He, the Innocent One, bore in His own person the penalty pronounced upon Adam on account of sin. Thus He redeemed or bought back the race of mankind, and they belong to Him, the Father having raised Him from death and given Him all power in heaven and in earth. Only by this scriptural explanation can we understand how the Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep, and yet is now their Owner and still their Good Shepherd. And that death to Him was the same as to men in general, we are taught by the following—

Colossians 1: 18: THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD.
Acts 26: 23: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be THE FIRST THAT SHOULD RISE from the dead.
1 Corinthians 15: 20: But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT.

"My Sheep . . . shall never Perish"

Our Lord's statements recorded in John 10: 27-29 have been made the basis of the teaching that, though a believer may fall short of the best things he might have gained by faithfulness, it is impossible that he should be ultimately lost.

A division among the Jews followed our Lord's parable of the Good Shepherd. At Jerusalem, later, Jews asked Him questions, showing that they doubted, and He replied—

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.
26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.
27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

No doubt the believer in Jesus has "passed from death unto life," and is regarded as a new being as far as the mind is concerned (John 5: 24; 2 Corinthians 5: 17; Romans 12: 2; Ephesians 4: 22-24); but it is equally true that Adam before he sinned was a living—not a dying—being, and that he had perfect life, and could have kept on living had he been obedient to God's commands. As Adam was placed under a test to determine his loyalty to God,

so is every believer in Jesus tested for the same purpose. Adam could have remained obedient; his sin was not compulsory, but voluntary. Similarly, the believer in Jesus is favoured with all the divine assistance required to enable him to avoid sinning; but he must lay hold of that assistance in order to get its benefits. There is no need for the believer to be overcome of evil; yet if he does not lay hold of the grace to help in every time of need, he will surely be overcome, and the life which God has given him will be taken from him as certainly as Adam's was taken from him.

The possibility of the believer in Jesus sinning away his life is several times mentioned in the New Testament. One of the places is the following well-known passage (Hebrews 6: 4-9)—

4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened,* and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,
5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world [or, age] to come,
6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.
9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

In the following passage the Apostle mentions the possibility of *sanctified* persons coming by reason of wilfulness under a sorer punishment than the death penalty inflicted in certain circumstances upon transgressors of the Mosaic law. As death is the taking away of life in any case, the only way of making the death penalty under New Covenant conditions "sorer" than it was under the Law Covenant would seem to be to deprive the New Covenant wilful sinner of the hope of a resurrection which was still left to the sinner under the Law Covenant (Hebrews 10: 26-39)—

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,
27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:
29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy [literally, "common," not mean or unclean, but something held or shared in common] thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? . . .
31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.
39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Another apostle distinguishes between the "sin unto death" and sins "not unto death," and instructs the Lord's people as to the course they should take (1 John 5: 16, 17)—

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.
17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

The Apostle here teaches that the observant Christian may be able to recognize that certain transgressions committed by his brethren are "not unto death," and therefore that it is appropriate for him to pray to God on behalf of those transgressors, though it would not be appropriate for him to offer prayers on behalf of one who had sinned unto death. How necessary it is for all of us to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation and even stray into the hopeless conditions! How necessary it is for all of us to observe the instruction in Matthew 7: 1-5 and Galatians 6: 1, and, where possible, restore the erring brother in the spirit of meekness, remembering ourselves, lest we also be led astray. Let us draw out the beams from our own eyes, so that we may see clearly to assist, by our prayers and otherwise, the erring and ignorant ones into the paths of equity and truth, and so perhaps save a soul from death, as well as hide a multitude of sins.—James 5: 19, 20.

The Father's Hand

The sheep are in the "hand" of the Good Shepherd. He cares for them, and protects them from harm while they remain in His green pastures. But, making assurance doubly sure, He adds (verse 29)—

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.
30 I and my Father are one.

Those who claim that a believer can never be lost by digression into sin seem to overlook the importance of the human will and the fact that the Lord does not interfere with its freedom. Undoubtedly, God is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck the sheep out of His hand, or to violently take them away from our Lord Jesus. Yet sheep can stray; in fact, their proneness to wander is used in Scripture as an illustration of a similar disposition in God's people. "All we like sheep have gone astray;" "For ye were as sheep going astray." (*Isaiah 53: 6; 1 Peter 2: 25.*) We *must*, therefore, recognize that, while no one is able to steal the sheep of the Lord from His New Covenant fold, because the faithful Shepherd is watching against all thieves, robbers, and wolves, yet the sheep *can take themselves away* from the shelter of that fold and from the care of the Shepherd. For the sheep to do this repeatedly and wilfully, notwithstanding the Shepherd's carefulness to go after them and bring them back, involves the risk of forfeiting entirely the tender care of the Good Shepherd, in which case the sheep would certainly be destroyed by the wolves in the wilderness.

"I and My Father are One"

Few of our Lord's sayings have been more sadly misunderstood than this one, and that in the face of Scripture and reason, as well as the ordinary and well understood use of language. It has been thought by some that our Lord desired to proclaim Himself as the Father, yet as being at the same time the Son. No effort is required to show the unreasonableness of this idea. Merely to state that the Father is His own son and that the Son is His own father is quite sufficient demonstration of the unreasonableness of this misunderstanding of our Saviour's words.

The correct view of John 10: 30 is found by referring to John 17: 11, 21-23, where it is recorded that our Lord prayed for the sheep which God had given Him out of the Law Covenant fold—

Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, **AS WE ARE.**

Oneness of Mind

The Father and the Son were in perfect accord on every subject, and our Lord's prayer for the disciples was that the same oneness of mind might subsist between them as between the Father and Himself. This, then, is the oneness to which our Saviour referred when He said, "I and my Father are one." This oneness of mind can be maintained among the Lord's people only if the sheep follow closely the guidance of the Shepherd, letting "this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2: 5), and so preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is not always easy to do this. Sometimes an effort is required to subdue ourselves to the mind of Christ, and so the Apostle was inspired to use the word "Endeavoring" in Ephesians 4: 3. Let us all take from this the appropriate lesson, and all of us "endeavor" in this direction, realizing full well that the greater portion of the endeavor must be in the matter of overcoming and subduing one's own self to the mind of Christ.

Oneness of Glory

In our Lord's prayer for those who believe on Him, including not only those given Him out of the Law Covenant fold, but also all who should afterwards believe on Him through their word (John 17: 20), He mentioned an additional feature of the oneness; viz., a oneness of glory, which is to be enjoyed by the faithful with the Father and with Himself. These are His words (John 17: 21-23)—

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:
23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them ["because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."—John 16: 27], as thou hast loved me.

The idea that the sheep called out of the Law Covenant into the New Covenant fold, and the "other sheep" added to them from among the Gentiles, will become partakers with their Shepherd of divine glory would seem too presumptuous to entertain, were it not abundantly and emphatically stated in the inspired Word. So we read not only the Master's beautiful prayer on our behalf, but in corroboration of it we read further (1 Peter 1: 3-5)—

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
4 To an inheritance INCORRUPTIBLE, and UNDEFILED, and that FADETH NOT AWAY, RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU,
5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

That this inheritance means participation in the divine glory of our heavenly Father himself is clearly indicated in the following (Romans 5: 1, 2)—

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and REJOICE IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

As already said, were it not definitely stated in many scriptures, one could not realize that the privilege of joint heirship with Jesus in "glory, honor, and immortality" is extended to Gospel age believers who continue patiently in well doing. (Romans 2: 7.) Yet so it is, and one can but accept, with deepest feelings of gratitude and sincere efforts to be worthy of the honor, this most marvellous condescension on the part of the Almighty Father and His beloved Son.

When these joint heirs shall all have been united with the Lord, and the oneness in glory completed, the rest of mankind will receive its blessing under the same New Covenant and its beneficent terms, for the operations of this New Covenant are not limited to the present age, nor is its purpose merely to gather out a body of joint-heirs for the heavenly inheritance. The New Covenant includes also an arrangement for the bringing of mankind generally to perfection and everlasting life on earth; but the Church is to be glorified first, as shown in the appended passages of Scripture—

John 17: 21: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
Romans 8: 18-21: For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
19 For the earnest expectation of the creature [or, the creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. . . .
21 Because the creature [or, the creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
1 Corinthians 15: 54: So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality [that is, when the sons of God shall have been manifested in their glory at the second advent of Christ, as stated in Colossians 3: 4], THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

The saying that is written, referred to by the apostle, is found in Isaiah 25: 6-9, by which it is seen that the swallowing up of death in victory is accomplished only in part by the resurrection of the Church to reign with Christ. The complete victory comes when, as a result of that reign, "the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces," as described again in Revelation 21: 3, 4. But the parable of the Good Shepherd and His Fold, and our Lord's explanation of it, are applicable only to the call of the "sheep" during the Gospel age, who shall inherit His glory, as the scriptures already cited show conclusively.

"Thou . . . Makest Thyself God"

When our Lord said, "I and my Father are one," the Jews took up stones to stone Him as a blasphemer. (John 10: 30, 31.) They misunderstood and misapplied these words, but not in the same way as many Christians have done. The Jews did not accuse our Lord of claiming to be God Almighty, known to the Jews as Jehovah. (Exodus 6: 2-8.) Their speech literally was—"because that thou, being a man, makest thyself a god."—John 10: 33.

On a previous occasion the Jews had tried to kill Him, because He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."—John 5: 17, 18.

The Greek word *isos*, translated "equal" in the Authorized Version of John 5: 18, is defined in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance as meaning "similar (in amount or kind.)" So that these Jews did not accuse our Lord of claiming to be "equal" with

God, but of claiming to be "similar." Jesus worked in harmony with God His Father, and necessarily rebuked the scribes, Pharisees, and others who, while claiming God as their Sovereign, worked contrary to Him. These Jews were only looking for excuses to put Jesus out of the way that they might go on as before uninterrupted. Equally perverse was their action described in John 10: 31, although they sought to justify it as deserved.

Bearing in mind the meaning of the Greek word translated "god" in the New Testament—*theos*, meaning, "a divinity," or object of worship, and corresponding to the Hebrew *el*, meaning "mighty one"—one need not go astray and misunderstand the Jews' accusation and our Saviour's reply (John 10: 33-36)—

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself a god.
34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?
35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of the God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;
36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am a Son of the God?

The Reader will observe that this quotation is according to the Authorized Version, amended to exhibit the presence or absence of the article corresponding to "the" before *theos*, also its absence before *huios* (son) in verse 36.

The scripture to which our Lord referred is Psalm 82: 6, "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." This was applied in the Psalm to the Israelites who had received God's Word through Moses and the Prophets. Psalm 82 speaks of God's purpose to judge "among the gods," or mighty ones, referring to the leaders and priests who exercised the direction of the children of Israel. Our Lord's ministry proved to be such a judgment of the great ones, as He said to them.—John 12: 47-50.

When the Jews saw that Jesus had completely answered them, they would not admit defeat; "they sought again to take him." But Jesus "escaped out of their hand," and went away to a place where people came to Him, and believed on Him.—John 10: 39-42.

Practical Lessons

The tenth chapter of John's Gospel abounds in practical instruction for God's people. If we recognize Jesus as the door of the sheep, we must not seek to minimize the significance of His position in this capacity, as is to-day being done throughout Christendom. To describe those who sought entry by some other way, our Lord used language of no uncertain sound—"the same is a thief and a robber." While we are bound to recognize the vast difference between our Lord and ourselves in the matter of forming opinions of others, and are to beware lest we in the least seem to usurp His position or any of His functions which are reserved to Himself, we should, as sheep, be able to recognize those who climb up "some other way," and should, with fear, "flee from him."

The love of the Good Shepherd for the sheep is contrasted with the mercenary spirit of the hireling—

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.—John 10: 11-13.

A picture altogether delightful is that of the intimacy of the Shepherd and the sheep—

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. . . . I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.—John 10: 3, 4, 14.

If the sheep are quick to recognize a stranger's voice as such, they should be equally quick to recognize the voice of their shepherd. Our Shepherd does not speak to us direct, but through His servants, the apostles and prophets. One of His first commandments after His resurrection was to Peter—"Feed my lambs." And again (twice), "Feed my sheep." By faithfulness in this Peter would show the depth of his love for his Lord and Shepherd.—John 21: 15, 16, 17.

Before he finished his own course Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit to send a message of instruction and encouragement to the undershepherds (1 Peter 5: 2-4)—

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.
4 And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

And Paul, another faithful one, wrote (2 Timothy 4: 8)—

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Even the apostles and prophets do not now speak to us direct, except by their writings which have come down to us, which contain also some of the sayings of our Lord. But there are undershepherds—some of them faithful, and some of them not. None of these can speak with inherent authority, or even by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as did our Saviour and His apostles and the prophets of Old Testament times. The sheep have therefore to discern whether these undershepherds speak with the accents of the Chief Shepherd. By the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments must each "voice" be tested and proved.—Acts 17: 11; 1 John 4: 1-3.

The care of the Good Shepherd for His sheep is manifested not only in His provision of undershepherds to consort with the flock and help them (Ephesians 4: 11-13; 1 Peter 5: 1-5; Acts 20: 26-31); His care is manifested also in the overruling providences which form no small portion of the experience of all His people. What sheep of the Lord's hand but can remember and recount to His praise a number of such items in his experience? But in order that the Good Shepherd may thus lead each individual member of His flock, He must know His sheep to be such; and in order that the sheep may follow confidently along all the way the Shepherd leads,

they must know Him, and must be able to trust Him implicitly. Have we this knowledge of our Shepherd? Are we rejoicing in His tender care for us as members of His flock? Do we under His guidance go in and out and find pasture? Are we ready to follow Him through everything, trusting Him to bring us home safe at last as well as to provide for the necessities of the present? Have we thus cast all our care upon Him, knowing that He careth for us?

Finally, the Lord's people have to recognize that their Good Shepherd has been sent by God, the Father. While meditating upon the love of the Saviour in laying down His life for the sheep, it is also to be borne in mind that He said—"This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10: 18.) Many have been misled by the one-sided thought that the sacrifice of Jesus, accomplished on Calvary, was a display of the vindictiveness of God. Without doubt the severity of God was there manifest, but equally so was His goodness; for it was His love for the world that sent the Son to be the one, only sacrifice for the sins of all, "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood;" "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 13: 12; 2: 9.) It was not divine vindictiveness that caused the death of the Redeemer; rather, it was the loving plan of the gracious God, who desires to be generous, but who realizes that He must first be just. To the inviolability of divine Justice is due the stability of the universe, the reliability of God's Word, and our confidence in His precious promises.—Romans 3: 24-26.

Thanks be unto God for sanctifying His Son, and for sending Him into the world to die for us, to be our Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant!

For the Children

AN UPROAR IN EPHESUS

I trust, dear girls and boys, that we are now seeing how great were the consequences of Paul's work in Ephesus. Luke says that the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed. That is putting it strongly; and, from what we are to learn to-day, those words mean that Diana, idolatry, and the evil practice of magic in that city were hard hit and much shaken as many began to appreciate the truth and reasonableness of Paul's words.

But Paul was now thinking the time had arrived for him to move on. He had not yet been in what was then the "capital city of the world;" and, as the "apostle to the Gentiles," his missionary work would seem to be incomplete without such a visit. Therefore he said, "I must also see Rome." But as his thoughts were constantly for his beloved converts, many of whom were not so many miles across the sea from Ephesus, he planned first to visit them in "Macedonia and Achaia," afterwards to go to Jerusalem, and then to Rome.

This was an immense program, for the two last-named cities were about 1,800 miles apart. And, although the whole program was ultimately carried out, it was only done after many years had passed, with many painful experiences and hindrances, and more than twice that distance actually covered.

The Spirit's Guidance

Although the apostle said, I must see Rome, the thought to do so was not entirely his own. He was led to it by the Spirit of God which was guiding all *his life and journeyings.*

And when it came to the question as to how this program might be carried out in the best possible way, *the apostle was led first to send someone ahead of himself, for a beginning at least. And here we* can see how wise and good that way was; for it provided the Christians in Macedonia with much *more help, encouragement, and instruction than if* the missionaries had all gone together, and was more like two visits to them instead of one. And meanwhile Paul could himself stay *a little longer in* Ephesus as he wished to do. As advance agents the faithful Timothy and another brother named Erastus (*of whom we now hear for the first time*) were sent.

Erastus was, we understand, only one of the many *who were now in the school of Tyrannus as believers* of Paul's message. His proper home was in Corinth, where he was the treasurer of the city. Perhaps it *was there that he first heard the true words of God* and had joined with Paul and was then with him at Ephesus as a helper in his mission. That the high honour of being sent with Timothy should fall to him assures us that he was a faithful and zealous Christian, and we believe he remained one to the end of his life.

Diana and the Silversmiths

As Paul was in Ephesus for at least two years (and perhaps it was nearer to three), that time would have included three or four of the months of May. It was during this month that great religious festivals were held in Ephesus in honour of Diana. May was the "month of Diana," and for the whole month games and entertainments entered in as part of the festivals. Paul would thus have seen three or four of such great gatherings—when all Ephesus and crowds from neighbouring cities were present.

All of these people were worshippers of the great idol Diana; and keen business men, manufacturers, *and others did a great trade at these times making*

and selling silver shrines of Diana, which included small representations of the goddess. These the visitors especially liked to have to carry about with them, or set up in their homes, to show their devotion, and thus to invite the supposed favours of the goddess. Immense amounts of money were spent in this way, and very many people became more or less rich through it.

Demetrius and His Speeches

But since Paul came to Ephesus, each year the manufacturers and traders found their business falling off, and it troubled them. They well knew who was the cause of it, and one of the manufacturers amongst them named Demetrius made a determined move to stop the drift. He therefore called together all those who were engaged in the trade, and began to tell them about "this Paul" who was doing their trade so much harm.

Demetrius was a clever man. He knew how to speak, and to the workmen particularly who no doubt were in the greater number and were the ones who could make the most noise and disturbance if he could stir them up.

He first said to them, "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth." By "craft" he meant the whole business of making and selling the "silver shrines for Diana." All of these workmen came in for their share in the way of wages in "this craft," and there was good money in it. So they could all agree with Demetrius when he said in effect that their living depended upon the trade; and that, to them, was the uppermost matter.

Next he tells them something they also knew quite well, for they could see it going on every day in Ephesus, and heard that it was spreading in all Asia; viz., that Paul had "persuaded and turned away" many from believing in the goddess Diana. So again they were all in with Demetrius.

Thus they were quite prepared and ready for the next thing from Demetrius, which was that their whole business was in danger of being looked upon as worthless. For Paul, ever since he arrived, had told all the people "that they be no gods, which are made with hands." Many people were already believing that, hence their loss of trade with no knowing where it would end.

Stirring Up Religious Fervor

Although they all knew that their own means of a living, selfish interests, and profits were of first importance, Demetrius makes it appear that they were as much if not more concerned about the temple and the great goddess Diana being despised and her magnificence destroyed. All these workmen, as well as "all Asia and the world," were worshippers of Diana and in love with the beautiful temple, and to think that now (besides loss of wealth) the temple and their goddess should be thought little of filled them with wrath.

That is exactly what Demetrius wanted. And when he heard them begin to shout out in their excitement, **Great is Diana of the Ephesians!** he could wish for nothing better. He knew that such excitement would soon spread throughout the whole city, gathering up more from amongst the citizens and strangers present, and then something would be done to preserve the honour of their temple and goddess and drive out or even injure Paul, and thus save their trade.

And before long the whole city was filled with confusion. There was something like a riot on, at *which times people get confused. But those who* understood best what the excitement was about, somewhere found Gaius and Aristarchus—two believers from Macedonia and Paul's companions in travel—and rushed them off to the theatre, followed by the crowds. They seem to have been unable to find Paul, and took the next best—his companions. But Paul was not purposely in hiding: it was only another instance in which God took care that he was out of their reach for his own safety.

Paul knew from many similar experiences how dangerous idol worshippers were when their idols were attacked, for they were ready to injure and even put to death anyone who opposed them. But Paul was fearless, and thought little of his own life in doing what he believed to be the Lord's will. As soon therefore as he heard of what was going on it was in his mind to set out for the theatre to speak to the crowd and to reason with them, and perhaps also with the object of saving his companions. But the disciples could see that his presence there would only excite them all the more, with very probable injury to himself and no good done for others.

Influential Friends

We cannot tell whether Paul would have been persuaded by the disciples alone to have stayed out, but he was decided when a message was sent by some of the chiefs of Asia urging him strongly not to go. These men were officers of very high rank, and although they do not seem to have been Christians, they had high regard for Paul's character and purity of life, were friendly towards him, and were certain he would be injured if not killed by that wild mob. And if Paul had any anxiety for Gaius and Aristarchus who were now held in the theatre he would trust in the Lord to preserve them from any possible violence as He had cared for him so far in this uprising.

Predicament of the Jews

Now we know there were a good many Jews in Ephesus, and although they were separate from the Christians they also hated idolatry and therefore had no love for Diana. All the Ephesian idolaters knew this; and the Jews seem to have feared that the multitude in the theatre would mix them up with the Christians, and would turn their anger on them as well, for both stood out from idolatry.

This would mean that, if there came any trouble with the Roman government over this riot, the Jews would be in it no less than the rest. So they took steps at once in the theatre to explain that they had nothing to do with starting the uproar. They drew Alexander (one of their own nation) out of the crowd, and sent him to the front to speak for them.

As Alexander faced the excited people he put up his hand as a sign that he wanted them to listen. But when they knew that he was a Jew—either from a few words he might have been able to say, or his appearance, or dress, or all put together—they would have none of him. It was enough for them to know that a Jew would say nothing in favour of their goddess; and they would have nothing else. They stopped him by raising the old cry in which all of them joined as one man—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians." And that went on for about two hours! Well can we imagine the roar, the excitement, and the confusion in the theatre, especially as the most of them did not know what it was all about. In those two hours those words for Diana must have been repeated thousands of times, and the shouters would be an uncontrollable mass and would remain so until they had worn themselves out.

Magic of the Town Clerk's Voice

It was then that the town clerk of the city came on the stage. He was a great and important person, and it is not likely that the uproar could have been going on for two hours without his knowing it. It would be within his business to find out the reason of it, and it might easily take him two hours to trace out its cause. This might explain why he did not come amongst them earlier than he did: he was busy finding out how it began. On the other hand, as a Roman official, with instructions not to interfere unduly with the religious activities of the people, he may have thought the Ephesian idolaters were enjoying themselves in their own way, and as they had as yet done no damage, he would let the excitement fizzle out—as excitement sometimes does.

Being a man of high authority, the people were bound to respect him; yet it was some time before he succeeded in appeasing the people sufficiently to secure their attention. Besides, the people themselves were probably just about tired of roaring and would be glad of an excuse to stop.

Clever as we think Demetrius was in stirring up the passions of the workmen and through them the whole city, the town clerk had equal if not more skill in calming them and getting them away to their homes.

His first few words when they had become quiet were intended to show them how little harm a few men among them could do against their great goddess Diana which (as they said) "fell down from Jupiter" (or "heaven"). And as no one could say anything against that, there was no need to make such an uproar and do things in a hurry or thoughtlessly.

He then showed them that he knew who was at the bottom of the trouble. It was not those men they had brought there (meaning Gaius and Aristarchus), for they had done nothing to injure the temple nor had they said anything against their goddess.

Hearing this, the crowd, now quiet and orderly, knew the Christians were not the direct cause of the uproar, for their town clerk had said so; and the Jews had denied all connection with it. The blame for this uproar or tumult, which they knew to be illegal, must fall therefore upon themselves, and some one of their own must have started it. And that was the next thing the town clerk told them; for he then mentioned Demetrius, and said that instead of proceeding as he did he should have gone to the courts with his trouble in the proper manner. And, said the clerk, "we are in danger to be called in question [by the Roman government] for this day's uproar." So that was the "magic" in the town clerk's voice—the magic of the power of Rome! with its legions scattered all over the empire! The political power again quells religious fanaticism, as it has done many times before and since. The people like children might play with their marble gods and their silver shrines, and have their feasts at the temples. Riots and upsetting the general run of affairs no Government can tolerate.

In the face of a danger of this kind, now put plainly before them, the rioters would be greatly sobered in their minds and brought to their senses; for the Roman government was very severe on law breakers.

The town clerk then dismissed them, and we can see them going out of the theatre in a very different state of mind from what they came in. For while they were ready enough to inflict punishment on others, they were humble and wanted to appear good when it was likely to fall upon themselves.

And we also see Gaius and Aristarchus who, by the overruling providence of God in all that happened that day, had had no need to say even one word in their own defence: we see them now free, and Paul and all the other Christians comforted.

Please read Acts 19: 21-41 for this Story.
Concerning Erastus, Romans 16: 23; 2 Timothy 4: 20.
Concerning Gaius, Acts 20: 4; Romans 16: 23; 1 Corinthians 1: 14; 3 John 1.
Aristarchus, Acts 20: 4; 27: 2; Colossians 4: 10; Philemon 24.

—UNCLE FRANK.

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The Field is the World

WITH THE LAST month of the year come reflections on what it has brought. One may say the year 1935 has been marked by diplomatic pleasantness while each Nation has worked for the success of its own plans. Japan has been notoriously pleasant in speech while continuing to develop its own plans in the new state Manchukuo and in the absorption of the vast country between Russia and China. The division of China, now being openly spoken of, practically began when the Republic was proclaimed and there was no Central government powerful enough to keep the whole of the provinces under control.

Hence Japan's opportunity with what is regarded among the nations as a legitimate excuse for expansion—the need of more room for a rapidly increasing population, and of soil to produce their necessary food. And again trade adjustments must be made, for Japan is one of Australia's best customers for wool, and also takes shiploads of grain. Japan is also a good customer of America. While refusing to accept an influx of Japanese, America desires friendly relations with Japan and with all Pacific bordering nations, and is just now inaugurating a direct aeroplane service to New Zealand, the Philippines, and Japan; and a direct service to China is being arranged.

In the meantime Japanese penetration of North China continues, and a new company has been formed, headed by the President of the South Manchuria Railway, for the purpose of developing coal, iron, and cotton, and for the construction of new railways.

CHINA'S HUNDREDS of millions, awakened and working under energetic Japanese leadership, could provide a new invasion of Europe—not on millions of horse, like the Tartar invasion of Russia, but on up-to-date mechanized transport; or possibly on both. It is well that the Lord has concealed from view the details of the troubles coming upon the world whereby great Babylon will be caused to fall. From Revelation 9 we know that the Lord made use of three "woes" as scourges upon an apostate Christianity which had adopted from the nations the use of idols, images, etc., thus debasing Christianity to the level of heathendom. Those scourges were invasions of tribes from the East, who worked great destruction, but the idol worshipping Christians "repented not." The worship of idols and pictures given the names of "saints" canonized by the church continues, and a glance over the East shows thousands of millions of men inured to hardship, who if wanted, would make another "scourge."

But they may not be the instruments, or only a portion of them. There is also the menace nearer the West, of which many are thinking to-day. Sufficient is it to know that whatever kind and number of instruments are required will be ready for use at the right time.

INDIA ALSO has its millions of illiterates that, mobilized, would make a vast army. The present division between Hindu and Moslem on religious grounds, which also pertain to food, would prevent unity. The policy of the British Government and of the co-operating native Princes is to proceed cautiously in any effort to make the people politically self-conscious while their standard of living is on so low a scale. And education to raise the masses would be unsettling, especially if there were no outlet for newly created abilities higher than their present peasant level of existence. One can be glad that the Lord has not forgotten the "untouchables" and other ignorant peoples of the earth.

PERSIA is taking again the ancient name Iran, and wishes henceforth to be known as such. Iran has valuable oil wells. It is said also to have come somewhat under Soviet influence.

THE ARABS—in view of the Italo-Ethiopian dispute—held a conference at Amman, the capital of Transjordan, in August, to discuss the attitude Moslems should take. The Red Sea has come into greater prominence as a result of the number of war ships passing through.

EGYPT also has been much concerned, and a move has been made toward a better understanding among the 1,000,000 Bedouins, who live on the desert oases and have little to do with other nomads or with the main part of the nation.

In July delegates from 75 Bedouin tribes met at Cairo and named a committee to discuss questions affecting their common interest, says "Current History." "Among them were the development of compulsory education among Egyptian Bedouins; the protection of Bedouin rights; the preservation and maintenance of Bedouin customs and the stimulation of intellectual intercourse between the Bedouins of Egypt and those of other Arab countries.

SYRIANS living under a French Mandate are restless and inclined to become bolshevik, owing to conditions. Many who regularly found work in Palestine when not engaged on their own are aggrieved at the Jewish occupancy, for the Jewish colonists do their own work. The East as well as the Far East is astir.

THE TURKS have introduced many reforms since Mustapha Kemal set up the present government. For some time past public utilities have been bought up by the Government, the latest being the acquisition of the Istanbul Telephone Service from a

British corporation. A new simplified Turkish language is in the making. President Mustapha has approved 1,000 words selected by the Language Commission as being really Turkish and free of foreign taint. The mosque of Santa Sophia at Istanbul was opened Feb. 1 as a museum of Byzantine Art. Women for the first time voted (in February) at the Parliamentary elections, and seventeen women won seats in the Assembly.

GREECE HAS VOTED the return of King *George, and an amnesty has been proclaimed for* political prisoners numbering some thousands. Political exiles are invited to return. Greece, which upholds the Greek Orthodox as the national religion, is perturbed at Italian activities in the eastern Mediterranean, and Italian occupation of an island belonging to Greece.

And eyes are looking to Cyprus as a base. The *possibilities are great, but as the chief work of the* age—the gathering out of the church—is not yet accomplished, it is likely that there will be still a period of peace. Ere long the Abyssinian affair may be settled by some sort of distribution of sections of the country, leaving the rest to the Abyssinians. Who knows?

But beyond the querying as to what the near future will bring forth is the certain knowledge that God has in reserve a blessing for all these peoples. For the day is near when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and war shall be no more. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

ENCOURAGING WORDS

PREPARING THE CO-HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM. Dear Brother. Greetings in Jesus' Name. *I am enclosing* £1:1:0; please send me a Variorum Bible, same as the one I got. I find the Variorum a great help in our study; footnotes give an ever ready summary of other renderings and translations. We are having a very quiet and peaceful time, and are studying the book of Revelation at present. We have got as far as chapter 2, and we are deeply interested in the Church's experiences in the various periods of her probation, as there outlined, and of our Lord's watchful care over those who are being prepared to be His joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

In our daily life we, like the apostle Paul, find the need of a watchful attitude, and we daily seek a renewal of Grace sufficient to overcome all failures and to maintain the good fight of faith.

Kindly forward another dozen June 1, '34 N.C.A. This subject (Armageddon) is of special interest at this time, and we are placing this N.C.A. in their hands in order that they may have a clear understanding of this most vital truth. Trusting that our Lord and Master will so overrule that some may be enlightened thereby. Your brother by His Grace,

———, *Queensland.*

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