

I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" As not every one is worthy to be invited to such participation, so also not every one who is invited will so appreciate the privilege as to participate in this matter joyfully and gratefully. Let us each resolve and say to the Lord, as did James and John, "Lord, we are able"—we are willing. By thine aid we will come off conquerors and more than conquerors.

THE NEW WINE—THE JOYS OF THE KINGDOM

Our Lord declared that he would no more participate in the fruit of the vine until he would drink it new in the kingdom. The thought is not that he would drink new or unfermented wine in the kingdom with them, but that until in the kingdom the new or antitypical thing represented in the wine would not be fulfilled. When the kingdom shall come all the sufferings and trials of the present time will be past, the treading of the winepress, the wine making, will all be over, and instead the wine shall be that of joy and exhilaration, representing the joys and the blessings beyond imagination or expression that will be the portion of all those who truly have fellowship with

our Redeemer in the sufferings of this present time and also in the glories that shall follow. The kingdom time is very close at hand now—certainly 1800 years and more nearer than it was when our Lord spoke these words—and the evidences of its steady inauguration are multiplying on every hand. Our hearts should be proportionately rejoicing in anticipation, and we should proportionately be faithful in the present time in the drinking of the cup of sorrow, suffering, shame and contumely, and thus testifying of our love and our loyalty.

Following this was the discourse which has blessed so many of the Lord's people down through intervening centuries recorded by John. (chapters 15, 16, 17) Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives—to the Garden of Gethsemane and to fresh trials upon all of the disciples. So it has seemed to us that with every recurrence of the Memorial season, and every fresh symbolization of our pledge to the Lord, come fresh trials, fresh testings, fresh siftings upon the Lord's people. Who shall be able to stand? Let us hold fast the confidence of our rejoicing firm unto the end, hold fast the faithful Word, hold fast the exceeding great and precious promises—hold fast to our Passover Lamb, our Deliverer!

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

POSSIBILITIES OF A EUROPEAN WAR

Newspapers and magazines are discussing the possibility of the Russo-Japan war eventuating in a world-wide war. It is generally conceded that it would be the part of wisdom for Russia to back down and sue for peace proposals, but equally certain that the pride of that great nation will hinder such a course. If, therefore, the land fighting should go against Russia it is surmised by many that her diplomacy would manage to bring on a general war, in which her own defeat by little Japan would be measurably lost sight of in the glare of still more momentous conflicts. Matters have this appearance, though they may not reach such a culmination very soon.

Meantime the great nations are preparing for emergencies—especially Great Britain, France and Germany. Naval warfare is steadily undergoing a radical change: the prospect is that the great battleships will soon be of little value under the new conditions. The new models of fighting craft are the auto-boats and the submergible-boats. The latter can be sunk completely under water—100 feet if desired—in six seconds, and can thus travel toward their opponents unobserved, and can discharge torpedoes at close range and be gone. England has about twenty of these boats nearly completed and a large number ordered. France has more, and by the close of this year she will have at least thirty. These boats carry gasoline for fuel—enough for a 400-mile journey, and require but small crews. They would, of course, operate near a harbor or in conjunction with larger vessels. The auto-boat can be operated by one intrepid man, can travel twenty miles an hour and in the dark could creep close to a great ship and attack her with a torpedo. A large, swift ocean liner could carry twenty or thirty of these little auto-boats and make great havoc—in the night or in a fog.

Experts are speculating on the possibilities of these two new craft and conclude that no port would be secure against them—that four-million-dollar battle ships with hundreds of men aboard could be sunk almost instantly and without a sight of their enemy. Others still believe that air-motors will soon come into prominence and be used in dropping explosives upon ships and cities and armies.

We are to expect great things—shortly. The passions as well as the ingenuity of men will ere long wreck present civilization according to the Scriptures. We recall our Lord's prophecy of the days now near at hand, "Except those days were shortened there should no flesh be saved." But, for the elect's sake, they shall be shortened;—the "elect," Head and body, will assume the kingdom control at the right time to stay the awful anarchy which will follow the great war.

The prospects for the immediate future are conceded on all sides to be more favorable for peace, because of the recent amicable settlement by Great Britain and France of differences between them which have long been a source of friction. The large navies of these two nations far outweigh all the combined navy power of the world.

THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS

Rev. R. Heber Newton, D. D., of New York City (Episcopalian), in a recent article in *The North American Review*, proves to his own satisfaction, and doubtless to the satisfaction of many of his readers, that all the religions of the world are really one;—that they differ merely in proportion to their de-

grees of evolution. This is the view of "higher critics" and evolutionists the world over. It ignores and laughs to scorn the Bible teaching of Adam, Eve and the fall. (Rom. 5:12 and 1:21-28) It has no place for Jesus except as a great teacher like unto Confucius, Moses, Darwin, Spencer, and others. His work as Redeemer—as the sacrifice for man's sins, by which alone reconciliation to God was possible—entirely discredits, but ignores because a few "good people" still so believe.

Doctor Newton likens the religion of the world to a great tree with many branches and sub-branches. Buddhism is a branch, Brahminism is another, Confucianism is another, Mohammedanism is another, Christianity is another—its various shoots and smaller branches representing the various sects and denominations of Catholicism and Protestantism.

As usual, the wisdom of this world misses the mark it thinks it hits. It is Devilism that the Doctor sees as a tree with these many branches. In every branch it has a "form of godliness" to deceive men—to satisfy the craving originally a part of man's nature when he was in the image of God—a craving which since persists notwithstanding the fall, though now through the blinding influences of Satan deteriorated into superstition and formality. Let us ask the Apostle Paul's inspired judgment on the subject. He tells us respecting these heathen worshipers that they worship devils and not God. See his testimony in 1 Cor. 10:20, 21; 1 Tim. 4:1.

When the Apostle would use a tree to illustrate the church, he pictured a very different tree and very different branches. This inspired account is found in Rom. xi. There his olive-tree represents not all nations, but the one nation of Israel, each Jew a branch, drawing strength and vitality from the root, namely the oath-bound covenant made with Abraham and his seed. The Apostle shows plainly that no other tree is recognized in the divine plan, and tells us that when the Jews rejected Jesus all the rejectors were broken off from the relationship the tree represented, and that only believers in Jesus were privileged to be engrafted to take the places of the broken-off branches, as members of the spiritual seed of Abraham.—Gal. 3:29.

Our position as Gentiles he distinctly pictures as "children of wrath even as others"—strangers and aliens and foreigners—without God and having no hope in the world. (Eph. 2:3, 19, 12) How different the view of this modern Divinity Doctor from that of the great Apostle to the Gentiles! Mark the agreement of the Apostle John's testimony. He says of the Christian believers and all the world outside,—“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Wicked One.” (1 John 5:19) This reminds us of our Lord's words to some of the nominal Israelites: “Ye are of your father the devil.” (John 8:44) Doctor Newton says:—

“Religion develops the same great institutions in different lands and ages which the varying religions of man vary indefinitely.

“The Church, spelled with a capital C, was an institution of Chaldea, India and Egypt, millenniums ago, as it is of Italy and England and America today. The Buddhist felt toward his ‘order’ much as the Romanist feels toward his church. A sacred ministry, a class of men set apart for the divine offices of religion, would have been found of old in Babylon and Thebes, as it is found now in Rome and London. The pagan temple was the Christian basilica and cathedral, baptized with another

name. The altar stood in the sacred spot of the heathen temple, as it stands in the holy place of the Christian minister. Monasticism developed in the East long before it arose in the West. Monks and nuns and hermits would have been found along the Nile valley ages before Christendom poured its host of sad-souled ascetics up the sacred river, peopling the hills for thousands of miles. Good Father Huc was utterly astonished to find in the Far East tonsured priests bowing before splendid altars, while acolytes swung the fragrant censers by their side. His *naïf* explanation was, that the devil had counterfeited in advance the mysteries of true religion, in order that the elect might be deceived into perdition. A less heroic solution of the problem finds in these resemblances hints of the oneness of religion, generating the same sacred institutions among different religions."

"Good Father Huc," in recognizing the similarity between the Catholic and the heathen ceremonies, was not astray in attributing the heathen ceremonies to Satan's instigation. He should have gone farther and have realized that he and his associates had likewise fallen into the "snares" and "wiles" of the adversary.

Doctor Newton proceeds to prove that all religions are shown to be from one source because related in *worship*. We agree that all world-religions are of one spirit—the spirit of "the prince of this world." But the true church, "whose names are written in heaven," is in all but a "little flock,"—not of the world, but separate from it. "I have chosen you out of the world." Of the world's worships the Doctor says:

"The sacred symbolisms through which art ministers to worship meet us in the temples of paganism as in the churches of Christendom. The circle, the triangle, and the trefoil were graven by pagan chisels on the walls of the sacred buildings reared by religions which thought of themselves only as aliens and foes one to the other, for the unity of God, signed by the circle, and the triunity, the oneness in variety, of God, signed by the triangle and the trefoil were truths known to no one religion alone, shared by all great religions in the same stage of evolution."

The *beliefs* of men, though seemingly wide apart, Dr. Newton finds to be substantially one:

"All great religions pass through one general course of evolution. In the same stages of development, all alike will bring forth, as the same institutions and worships, so also the same

beliefs. Arrange these different religions synchronously, in respect to their evolution, and the same ideas will be found in all, more or less modified. As they grow, they grow together; over all differences of environment and heredity, the forces of the common life of man asserting the oneness which exists under black skins and yellow, red skins and white. In their higher reaches they strain toward each other. The flowering of all beliefs is in one faith—all religions seeding down one religion. So, beneath the variant and discordant beliefs of the present the germs of the future *universal religion* can even now be traced."

Coming to the contrast of the Christian's life with the life of the heathen, Doctor Newton says:

"Goodness knows no native soil. Virtue is at home in every land. The Ten Commandments form the law of Egypt and of Persia as of Christendom. The Golden Rule proves the rule of Hindu and Chinaman, as the Christian. It waited not for Jesus to reveal it. The spirit of the Christ had already revealed it through Jewish Hillel and Chinese Confucius, and great spirits of well nigh every land. The Beatitudes exigently call upon the Buddhist as upon the Christian, '*Sursum corda.*' Saints are of blood kin the world over. There is nothing alien to the truly devout Christian in the devoutness of the Hindu Guru, or of the yellow-robed saint of Japan or of the mystic worshiper among the Iranian Mountains. When the soul of man fronts the infinite and eternal Spirit, beneath the bo-tree of India or amid the rugged fastnesses of Tibet or in the cloisters of the Christian abbey, it is one and the same God who is seen. Wherever we overhear the communings of a soul with God, we hear in our own tongue. In the presence of the man of the spirit, be his name what it may, we know that he is of our family and household of God."

Could evidence be more clear than the foregoing to prove that the Doctor does not know what constitutes a Christian—that he does not know that, according to Christianity as taught in the Bible, acceptance of God rests not upon perfection of life, for "there is none righteous, no not one"? (Rom. 3:10) Its teaching is not, either, that none are justified by *doing the best they can*, but that none are justified except by faith in the Son of God—"faith in his blood"—our ransom-sacrifice. If these *justified by their faith*, do the best they can, such obediences and efforts are acceptable to God as *though* they were *perfect*—Phil. 3:9; Rom. 4:7, 8; 8:4.

VOLUNTEER WORK, 1904

The free volunteer tract distribution reached larger proportions last year than ever before: more friends than ever engaged in the service and the quantity circulated was greater. This year bids fair to see the work carried forward with the same zeal and possibly to a still greater extent—though at some points seemingly no more would be possible. For instance, in Allegheny, Pittsburg and suburbs 112,000 tracts were placed in as many houses—practically every house was reached.

We urge co-operation,—that each little church unitedly take charge of its own district, elect a captain for supervision and lieutenants for sub-districts, and that all who can shall volunteer and serve under such beneficial regulations. A few of the

captains sent us reports at the close of last year's campaign, in November, showing the number of tracts distributed and giving the names of all participating. We request that all captains follow this course this year.

As for the *method* this year: We urge that the careful house-distribution be continued, except in neighborhoods where there are many foreigners or Catholics, where it would best be done *near* (but not *at*) the churches, as their congregations are dismissed. The house-to-house circulation has reached some who do not attend public worship. Many good, moral people are becoming so confused on religious subjects that they attend no services.

"CHOOSE YE THIS DAY"

MARK 15:1-15.—JUNE 5.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man."—Luke 23:4.

How much depends upon our proper decision of the questions of life as they come before us day by day is well illustrated in this lesson. When our Lord and the eleven apostles left the upper room for the garden of Gethsemane, Judas—who earlier in the evening had reached a decision—had left their company to conspire with the chief priests, etc., and to guide their followers and servants to where Jesus could be apprehended quietly in the night, without the knowledge of the multitude in the city at that time for the Passover occasion. For the friends of Jesus, it was anticipated, might arouse a commotion amongst the throng of people, which might make the religious rulers of the Jews appear to be seditious, the Romans always being very much alert at such times for the suppression of any indications of revolt against the Roman authority. Judas doubtless had already conferred with the chief priests, and was probably present at the Passover Supper, partly for the purpose of learning the direction which Jesus and the others would take after the supper. Our Lord's words to him, "What thou doest do quickly," seemed to imply that the matter was already arranged, and that Jesus by supernatural power was aware of it. That was the moment of final decision for Judas. He was a money

lover, and decided to sell his Lord for money. Perhaps indeed he surmised that Jesus could deliver himself, and possibly he thought to gain the money without our Lord being injured; but in any event it shows a baseness of character and willingness to do evil for selfish reasons that remind us very much of the Prophet Balaam, who so greatly desired Balaam's rewards of iniquity.

BARTERING THE TRUTH FOR POTTAGE

This matter of selling the Lord for money cannot be practised today in the same manner in which Judas practised it, yet we believe there is somewhat of the same ignoble spirit manifested by some in our day. It perhaps does not go to the same extent, but it is of the same kind, and who knows but that under favorable conditions it might be willing to go to the same length? We refer to some who are willing to sell the truth for financial profit, for social advantage, for money; and others willing to sell the members of the Lord's body as Judas sold the Head, for earthly advantage, to deliver one another up to evil, to assist in bringing evil, tribulation, adversity, reproaches etc., upon the members of the body of Christ. Yet with each of these as with Judas, there was a time when they were perfectly

innocent of such base ingratitude and wicked designs; there was a time when neither self-love, nor money-love, nor any other consideration would have moved them to do injury to members of the anointed body. Let us beware of the little things which, like a switch upon a railway, turn a train into an entirely different track, and may let us off far from the goal we at first desired to reach. We cannot be too careful in the way we meet the trials and testings of character which come to us daily, and whose determination means so much to us respecting the present and the future life.

Our Lord, as he went with his disciples from the upper room and crossed the brook Cedron to the Mount of Olives, to the garden of Gethsemane, was likewise entering—a trial. His trial was from the opposite standpoint to that of Judas; his hour was fully determined, his consecration was completed, he wavered not in respect to the work he had come into the world to accomplish, he had no thought of anything else than dying for our sins. But as he stood upon the brink of death and realized that in a few hours the whole matter of his consecration, his "baptism into death," would be "finished," two matters presented themselves forcefully to his attention. One was that he perceived clearly that his arraignment would take place before the Roman tribunal—that his death would be according to the Roman form, by crucifixion—that, in order to secure his condemnation by the Roman government, the chief priests and scribes, his enemies, would misrepresent his character and teachings, and that his record before the world would stand as that of a blasphemer against God and an evil worker amongst men.

We have no doubt that there are characters in the world who would measurably gloat over an opportunity to suffer as outlaws and desperadoes; they would feel themselves more or less heroes, and would be regarded more or less as heroes amongst their own class, similarly depraved in mind. But for those of more refined temperament—for the upright and honorable and pure in design—to pass through the same experiences would be a terrible ordeal. We may well imagine that our dear Redeemer, perfect, and with sentiments not in the slightest degree degraded, would feel the shame and ignominy of his position in such circumstances more than any of us could do. It was this shame, this reproach of being executed as a blasphemer against God and an injurious person amongst men, that we believe our Lord referred to as the cup which he prayed might, if possible, pass from him, saying at the same time, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

"OF THE PEOPLE THERE WAS NONE WITH HIM"

That sad hour in Gethsemane's garden, his disciples asleep, unable to appreciate the situation as he did, was the most trying hour of our dear Redeemer's experience. Added to the cup of grief and shame and ignominy came the thought that it is written in the law, "Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree," and thus he would be held up and marked amongst all the people of God as being accursed. A further thought was: "Is it possible that I have failed to meet the entire demand of the law perfectly? Is it possible that I have failed in some little particular, and that thus the curse of the law of God is to rest upon me, and that I shall lose life entirely after having striven to do the will of the Father and the fulfilment of perfect manhood under the divine law?"

The strain upon the nervous system became so intense as to produce a bloody sweat, a form of illness very rare indeed and yet not unknown to medical men. This was the greatest agony of all. If he had failed in the slightest degree he had no future, but all of his bright prospects of returning to the Father's love and favor and heavenly conditions by a resurrection would all be vitiated. The Apostle refers to this saying, how in the days of his flesh he offered up strong cryings and prayers unto him who was able to save him from [out of] death, and who was heard in that he feared. (Heb. 5:7) He was heard in respect to that he feared: he was delivered from death by a resurrection. More than that, he was delivered from the fear of death, from all doubt as respected his faithfulness to the Father's will and his acceptance of the Father down to that very moment. An angel, a heavenly messenger, appeared and strengthened him, comforting him and assuring him of the Father's love and care, and that he was well pleasing in his sight. Such an assurance to the loyal heart of Jesus was all that was necessary. He could go through any experience courageously while confident that the Father was well pleased with his course, and that the result would be his reattainment of the glories he had left when he came into the world to be our Redeemer, and the attainment also of all the other joys set before him in the Father's promises. Here was a trial upon a great heart that resulted in great blessing to himself as well as to others. The result of his trial was the peace, joy and confidence which, during that night and the next day, kept him the most calm of all, even to his dying moment, and which, as the Apostle declares, led to his glorifica-

tion in the resurrection, and which eventually shall bring blessings to every member of the human family in the lifting of the curse, the right to lift which was secured by his faithfulness even unto death.

BETRAYED BY A PROFESSED FRIEND

Presently Judas arrived on the scene with a company of the high priest's servants—not followers in the ordinary sense of the term, but court followers, resembling more the police of the present time. Some of them carried swords and some carried clubs, as our Lord's language to them indicates. Peter and another of the apostles had swords with them—a not unusual matter in those times, though unusual for the apostles, as the context shows. They doubtless had the swords with them to demonstrate that our Lord was not taken contrary to his own will. He had with him eleven able-bodied men, willing to lay down their lives at his command in his defence. One of these, Peter, drew his sword and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant, and doubtless the defence would have been carried on vigorously if our Lord had said the word, or rather had he not interfered by intimating to Peter that what he had done was enough. Jesus bade Peter put up his sword—he was not to battle for his Lord with carnal weapons—and meantime healed the wounded ear. Our Lord, in surrendering himself, stipulated that his apostles were not included in the arrest.

Thus awakened, surprised, dismissed by the Lord, his disciples saw him taken from them, and were bewildered and confounded, notwithstanding our Lord's words to them on several occasions previously, intimating that some such calamity might be expected. It was a trial to them at the time, as the Master had already intimated, saying, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." They had not sufficiently appreciated his words, had slept while the trial hour was coming on, and were, therefore, the less prepared for it.

Our Lord, his hands bound, was led away to Annas and Caiaphas. Although it was night time, about one o'clock, some of the chief officers of the Jews and the Sanhedrin had gathered, being informed that the arrest would take place that night, that one of his disciples would pilot the officers to take him, and the matter was urgent, so that his death could take place as quickly as possible on the next day, before the people in general learned about the matter and before the Passover week would begin. It was not lawful to try a man for any capital offence between sundown and sunrise, and hence this trial was in one sense an informal one—it would be required to be ratified by the Sanhedrin after sunrise. They were willing, however, to come as near as possible to breaking the law that thus they might accomplish their purposes.

THE VILE CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY

As he stood before the high priest, and as his enemies brought witnesses and the trial progressed, our Lord may be said to have made no defence; it would have been useless anyway, as they were intent on finding a charge of some kind—they had murder in their hearts. The charge they sought to establish was blasphemy, one of the few charges the penalty of which under the law was death, and it was his death they wanted. The blasphemy against God was declared to be proven in that he claimed to be the son of God, and blasphemy against the Temple was claimed to be proven in that some had heard him say that if the Temple were destroyed he could rear it again in three days. A decision was reached, but nothing could be done until daylight. Meantime the petty officers of the court spat upon the Lord, blindfolded him, and struck him, saying, "Prophecy, now, who is he that smote thee?" and thus the weary hours passed till daybreak. The Jews thought it a trial of the Lord but his trial was all in the past. It was the trial of their high priests, of the court officers and of the members of the Sanhedrin and of the Jewish nation. It was a trial of whether they loved truth or a falsehood, righteousness or unrighteousness. They decided for unrighteousness.

Meantime the Apostle Peter was having a great trial, too. He had gained access to the outer room of the court and could probably hear or see something from where he stood and warmed himself at the fire. The first instinct of nature, self-preservation, overpowered him. It flashed upon him that if he were recognized as one of Jesus' subordinates he might be treated in the same manner as the Master, and in his desire to avoid the troubles that had come upon Jesus he denied that he knew him, and on a second occasion of the same kind he even swore that he did not know him. Poor Peter! It was a time of severe trial, and, alas! he failed. How he might have gloried afterwards if he had suffered something for Christ's sake and for his acknowledgment of being his follower! But had he done so, all of the Lord's followers since would have lost a very valuable lesson conveyed to us in Peter's experiences.

Peter's weakness on this occasion, afterwards so bitterly lamented and acknowledged and forgiven, has in some respects

been a great blessing to all of the Lord's followers as they found that they, too, had weaknesses, and that sometimes they were overtaken in a fault as was Peter. They have learned from Peter to weep bitterly for these shortcomings, and have not been utterly cast down when they have found that Peter was received again by the Lord and heartily forgiven, and that the lesson thus learned made a deep impression on his life and resulted evidently in his favor. It is related of Peter that ever after this he arose every morning at cock crowing, made a fresh remembrance before the Lord of his weakness on that occasion, and accepted divine forgiveness. It was a testing time to Peter, and so similarly testing times come to all of us. Let us see to it that under no circumstances shall we ever deny our Lord. More than this, let us remember that the Lord places himself and his Word and his brethren on a par, and assures us that those who deny his truth deny him, and those who deny his Word of prophecy are thus denying him.

TREASON AGAINST ROME

With sunrise the Sanhedrin met officially, and, accepting the testimony of the high priest, that he had examined witnesses and that it had been proven that Jesus had blasphemed God and the Temple, the verdict was reached that he should die. Then, as related in our lesson, they held a private consultation respecting how they should present the matter before Pilate, the Roman governor. They well knew that he would pay no attention whatever to their charges of blasphemy and would tell them that was not a crime under the Roman law. They determined that the charge against our Lord before Pilate should be treason against the Roman government. In support of this charge of treason they said that he declared there was another king besides Caesar, namely, himself, the Messiah; and to seemingly corroborate this they declared falsely that he had forbidden to pay taxes to Caesar's government, whereas when they tried to catch him on this very subject two days before he had answered to the contrary, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Moreover, he had paid taxes himself. Peter being sent for the fish to pay the tax for them both. But this false allegation would seemingly prove the truth of the original charge of treason.

Now Pilate's time had come for trial. He stood as judge, and the principles of right and wrong, truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, in this case were for him to determine. What a wonderful chance he had! Suppose he had refused to connive at the malice of the high priest when he recognized that it was "for envy they had delivered him." Suppose that Pilate had dismissed the high priest and Sanhedrin and the multitude and had set Jesus free, and had cautioned them that if any of them did him injury they would be answerable with their lives! What a noble picture it would have been before the eyes of history! But, instead, his course and reputation have been anything but commendable and admirable. Nevertheless, while recognizing that he thus had a test and that he failed to take the noble part, we are far from sharing with the majority in their very ignominious view of this governor.

We are to remember that Pilate was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a heathen man—without God and having no hope in the world. We are to remember that he did not believe in the Jews' religion, whatever he may have believed. He did not believe in Jesus, nor had he any respect for the Messianic promises. He was filling the office of governor as the representative of Caesar's government at Rome. He had his own pleasures and self-gratifications distinct from the Jews and their festivals, etc., for which he cared nothing. He was amenable not to our God, for he knew him not, but merely to Caesar, and Caesar expected nothing of him except that he would preserve the peace and quiet of the city and maintain the dignity and authority of Rome. Rome cared not if one or ten or hundreds of innocent persons were put to death, if only the peace of the country were maintained. It was, therefore, Pilate's first duty as Roman governor to keep the peace in Jerusalem.

ART THOU THE KING OF THE JEWS?

From this standpoint we can say that Pilate's course was noble and just—though not the noble and just one which we would have preferred for him. Pilate did not readily accept the charges of the Pharisees: he knew them to be hypocritical, and really we may here say that the worst wickedness in the world at any time, at every time, in its history has been that form of wickedness which parades under the cloak of religion, which does evil in the name of that which is right, true, good. Pilate asked for specifications respecting the treason, and this seems to have surprised the chief priests, who presumed that their word would be taken on that subject without proof. If they thought a Jew had been worthy of death by treason then Pilate should certainly so suspect and so believe, for they were not supposed to wish the destruction of any fellow-Jew on such

a charge. Pilate looked at Jesus and saw in him no criminal appearance, saw that he did not look at all like one who would become a leader of sedition; that, instead, meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering love, were marks of his features. Pilate inquired of Jesus respecting this charge, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Our Lord's answer was not quite equivalent to yes, and yet it intimated that he did not wish to dispute the charge. To have attempted to explain the kingdom of God under such circumstances would have been improper, for none there were prepared to hear and appreciate or understand; to have done so would have been in conflict with our Lord's own instruction on the subject, not to cast pearls before swine. Those present were not prepared to understand that the kingdom would come a spirit kingdom, that it would have earthly representatives, etc.

Meantime the chief priests accused him fiercely, Jesus saying nothing—"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He was not there to defend himself, nor to protest against his execution. On the contrary, he was there to sacrifice his life, to lay it down, to permit it to be taken from him without resistance. Pilate himself marveled that any one could be so indifferent to the results of his trial. All this, however, proved the more conclusively that there was nothing dangerous to the interests of Rome in connection with our Lord's life or teachings: it all disproved what the chief priests were charging, and demonstrated that they had some ulterior malevolent spirit of opposition to Jesus.

PREFERRING BARABBAS TO JESUS

There had been a real sedition, a genuine movement against the authority of Rome, at a previous time, and Barabbas and others had been made prisoners on account of it. Some one in the crowd started a call on the governor to do as was his custom every year at this time—to release some prisoner as a matter of clemency and favor. Soon the whole mob took it up, and Pilate inquired, "Shall I then release unto you the King of the Jews?"—Jesus. His thought evidently was to arouse in them to some extent an enthusiasm in favor of his liberation of Jesus, for we read that he perceived that it was the chief priests and not the multitudes that were against Jesus. He hoped to turn the rabble to the side of Jesus and to release him on their request. But the chief priests, who had accused Jesus, stirred up the multitude to request the release of Barabbas, the seditionist, the rioter. One wonders that they were not ashamed in the presence of even a heathen governor to manifest their perfidy in this manner—to accuse Jesus of being a traitor to Rome and asking to have him crucified and in the same breath to urge the release of one about whose rioting there was no question.

Pilate evidently heard something said about Jesus' work being largely done in Galilee, and thought to be rid of the matter by turning the case over to Herod, the ruler of Galilee, who was present in Jerusalem at the time. He therefore sent Jesus bound to Herod, with the explanation that, as he was a Galilean, Pilate was pleased to acknowledge Herod and to submit the case to his adjudication. Really he was glad to be rid of the case, for he preferred not to put to death an innocent man, yet he perceived that the chief priests could make very violent charges against him if he refused to put to death one whom they charged with treason against the Roman government. At Rome such conduct would have the appearance of favoring rebellion; and if Pilate should reply that there was no danger of rebellion, that the man was merely a quiet, innocent man, they would have probably responded that he was entirely too particular anyway, that he should be prompt in the execution of anybody and everybody charged with the slightest degree with rebellion in word or act against the Roman power. Thus, no doubt, he would have lost his position and would have been degraded for the remainder of life. Pilate was in a very trying position.

HEROD'S OPPORTUNITY AND FAILURE

The coming of Jesus to Herod meant a trial for Herod. How would he receive Jesus? What would be his conduct toward righteousness and truth and justice and purity and goodness? This is the same Herod who about a year and a half before had beheaded John the Baptist, and who, hearing of Jesus, had suggested that he might be a reincarnation of John. Herod, we are told, was glad to see Jesus and hoped to see him perform some miracle of which he had heard so much; but the Lord was absolutely silent before him, not a word had he to say before such a man. Such a course was probably the most striking rebuke he could have administered to Herod, and was entirely in line with the whole conduct of our Lord—his determination to do nothing that would hinder the accomplishment of that which he knew to be the divine purpose—his death that very day.

Finding that Jesus would not even reply for him, nor per-

form any miracles for his entertainment, Herod suggested to his men of war that they robe him as a king and have some sport with him, as it seems was a custom of that time in respect to criminals—the soldiers were granted opportunity to give them mock homage and then to buffet them, etc., before they were executed. This done to Jesus he was returned to Pilate, Herod in turn expressing his appreciation of Pilate's course, but declining to interfere in Pilate's territory. From that time Pilate and Herod were friends, though previously they had been adversaries.

"DO NOTHING AGAINST THIS JUST MAN"

The case returning to Pilate, and the chief priests evidently fearing some slip of their plans, were very persistent in demanding the death of Jesus and in inciting the multitude to clamor for it. Some six times in all Pilate declared the innocence of Jesus, yet under the circumstances already narrated he hesitated to absolutely refuse the demand of the Jewish priests and multitude: especially did he feel the point of the argument made by the priests, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend," which meant, "You are an enemy to Caesar and to the government of Rome." Pilate realized that such a course would not be understood by his superiors, and hence he tried every method to get the Jews satisfied in the matter. One step in this proceeding was to order that Jesus should be scourged. He hoped that the scourging would satisfy his adversaries' thirst for blood. Meantime Pilate's wife sent a message to him urging that he do nothing against this man, for that she had had a dream in the night to this effect. Under the circumstances Pilate evidently did everything that could be expected of a worldly man in the times and under the conditions in which he lived. The only exception to such a procedure that we could expect would be on the part of a Christian, or of some one who under Christian influence had gained a much more than ordinary love for justice, and willingness to sacrifice every interest in its behalf.

It was in connection with his endeavor to free Jesus from those who sought his life that Pilate stood Jesus forth so that they might see him, exclaiming, "Behold the man!" The impression we get is that Pilate himself was struck with the quiet dignity of our Lord in his facial expression, in his composure under trying conditions. His words seem to mean, "Look at the man you are talking about crucifying! Why, Jews, you have not such a man in all your land. I doubt if there is any man his equal anywhere." But it was all of no avail; the multitude had become excited and were clamoring for our Lord's blood. In the expressive symbolic language of the time, Pilate, before delivering Jesus for crucifixion, indicated that he was averse to the sentence they were compelling him to pronounce, and that wherever the responsibility lay he was not the guilty party. He did this by washing his hands with water in the presence of the people, exclaiming, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person."—Matt. 27:24.

THE RESULT OF THESE TRIALS—RETRIBUTION

What a number of trials, testings and provings we have found in this lesson—and now let us briefly glance at the results. Judas, as a result of failure in his trial, died soon by his own hand. Pilate, the unwilling instrument of the condemnation and not one hundredth part as guilty as the Jews, shortly afterwards lost his commission as governor and in despondency committed suicide. Annas, the high priest, was subsequently dragged through the streets, scourged and murdered. The multitude who cried out, "Crucify him!" and who in answer to Pilate's declaration that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus, declared, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," experienced a baptism of blood not many years after when the entire city of Jerusalem was a scene of most horrible atrocities, which culminated in the utter destruction of their city with great loss

of life, in the overthrow of the entire Jewish polity in Palestine, and the scattering of the survivors amongst all nations and peoples. The curse they thus brought upon themselves still remains to some extent; his blood is still upon them, and from that day until the present time the Jews have suffered greatly; and although the divine disfavor has been passing from them as a nation since 1878, it will continue in some measure until nearly or quite 1914. The curse will be remitted because of its being forgiven through the grace of God in Christ.

On the other hand, note the blessings which came to those whose testings were received in the proper manner, demonstrating their loyalty to the Lord. Our Lord Jesus was highly exalted, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named—because faithful unto death, even the death of the cross. Peter the Apostle, although partially overtaken in a fault, nevertheless through repentance and bitter tears was accepted back again to the Lord's favor, profited by his sad experience, and became one of the noblest of the apostles, one of the most honored, and is yet to be honored in the kingdom as joint-heir with his Redeemer.

THINK NOT STRANGE YOUR FIERY TRIALS

We are not to expect similar trials, in all respects like those of our lesson, but we are to expect fiery trials, and we are to note that the results will be in accord with the manner in which we meet them. The lesson to us is that we should follow in the footsteps of Jesus and resolve to be faithful to our heavenly Father, to do his will at any cost, at any sacrifice of earthly interests—not grudgingly, but, as expressed prophetically of our Lord, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; they law is written in my heart." Another lesson is that if temporarily we should stumble in following the Master we must not be discouraged, but turn the failure and stumbling into a blessing by permitting it to bring us into closer relationship to the Lord and to make us more and more careful and more faithful in our walk with the Lord henceforth.

Some one has said: "This scene has often been alleged as a self-condemnation of democracy. *Vox populi, vox Dei* (The voice of the people is the voice of God), its flatterers have said; but look yonder. When the multitude has to choose between Jesus and Barabbas, it chooses Barabbas. If this be so, the scene is equally decisive against aristocracy. Did the priests, scribes and nobles behave any better than the mob? It was by their advice that the mob chose Barabbas." This is a very wise and a very truthful suggestion. The voice of the people can be relied upon in some matters, and, on the whole, the republican form of government is probably the best of any in the world for civilized peoples under present conditions; but as respects religious things the voice of the people is far from being the voice of God. On the contrary, the Apostle declared, "The world by wisdom knows not God." It must not, therefore, prejudice our judgments to find the popular voice against us. What we seek for and listen for is the voice of the Lord through his Word. With this let us be satisfied as was our Redeemer, content whatever lot we see since it is our God who leadeth us. It is possible that the closing scenes of the Church's experience may in some respects resemble that of our dear Redeemer; it is possible that some of the Lord's people may be branded as blasphemers and hailed before governments on the charges of preaching Christ as another king. Should it ever come to such a pass, we should have no doubt whatever respecting our position. It should be that of full confidence in the Lord, and thorough faithfulness to him, to his Word, and to all the brethren. Let us leave the outcome of these trials and testings in the hands of the Lord, as assured by his Word that he will make these afflictions to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

HOW AND WHY CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED

MARK 15:22-39.—JUNE 12.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."—1 Cor. 15:3.

Victor Hugo wrote, "Waterloo is the change of form of the universe." Another amends the statement thus, "Calvary is the change of form of the universe." The story of our Lord's crucifixion is related with a pathos which stirs our souls with sympathy, and begets in us a responsive love from the moment we truly recognize the purport of our Golden Text. Others have died just as cruelly, and a few have gone to death voluntarily and composedly. The Lord's death, however, was the first one in which the victim was entirely innocent, entirely unworthy of the death sentence,—the only one, therefore, in whose case the matter of dying was wholly voluntary, the only one who needed not to die had he not so willed.

CROSS-BEARING EXEMPLIFIED

The evangelists relate the incidents of the crucifixion with

very slight variations, and the whole matter is before us when we group together the various statements, each of which is true. From Pilate's Judgment Hall, after the governor had consented to Jesus' death because unable to stem the tide of Jewish prejudice and vociferous demands, the centurion, with three Roman soldiers, took Jesus to Calvary to crucify him. As was the custom, the culprit—in this case the victim—bore his own cross, which must necessarily have been a terrible task. Our Lord apparently was overcome by the weight of the cross, when a countryman named Simon coming along was forced to assist him. The statement of Luke 23:26 implies that Simon did not carry the cross entirely, but merely assisted Jesus, carrying the hinder part of it, which usually dragged.

We have often wondered, Where were Peter and John and

James that they did not see the Master's burden and run to proffer assistance? If disposed to envy Simon his privilege of assisting the Master in the bearing of the cross, let us reflect that many of the Lord's brethren are daily bearing symbolic crosses, and that it is our privilege to assist them, and that the Lord agrees to reckon any service done to his faithful followers as though it were rendered to his own person. Yet if no brother sees the privilege of giving a helping hand let not the burdened ones lose heart. The Lord knoweth the need and will send the aid necessary, even though it be impressed, and that because of the sympathy of the worldly—as in Jesus' case, when the soldiers provided the aid. As the wooden cross was not our Lord's heaviest burden, so, too, his followers have crosses which the world sees not, but which the "brethren" should understand. "Bear ye one another's burdens and thus fulfil the law of Christ."

Sympathetic Jewish women walked near, weeping. Quite probably these included Mary, our Lord's mother, Martha and Mary of Bethany, and Mary Magdalene. The particulars are not given us, but the sympathy of woman is markedly testified to. Our Lord was full of composure, though weak and fainting, not only because of the expenditure of his vitality previously in the healing of the sick, etc., but additionally because he had been under a most terrible nervous strain throughout the entire night, without sleep or food. It was now nine o'clock of the day of his crucifixion, and he had wearily borne a share of the weight of his cross for about three-quarters of a mile, from Pilate's Judgment Hall to Calvary. Golgotha, the name usually given to this place by the people of the vicinity, signified "the place of a skull," because that particular slope of the hill very closely resembled a skull in shape and in color, dark crevices in the face of the rock corresponding to the eye sockets, nose cavity, etc.

The offering of wine mingled with bitter myrrh, otherwise styled gall, was not an indignity as is usually supposed, but an act of kindness. A Women's Society for the Relief of the Suffering furnished sour wine with bitter narcotics with a view to deadening the sensibility to pain, and it was customary to provide this draught for all the poor unfortunates to reduce their terrible sufferings to a minimum. Our Lord tasted the wine, Matthew informs us, doing so probably to assure himself of what it was, or as a token of his appreciation of the kindness expressed by it. But he refused to drink of it, evidently preferring to experience the full measure of the pain and suffering which the Father's wisdom and love and justice had prepared for him—had permitted to come upon him as a test of the full measure of his loyalty and obedience.

The crucifixion must have been a terrible ordeal. The cross was laid upon the ground and the victim stretched upon it, while the nails were driven through the feet and hands; and if possible a still more trying moment came when the cross, lifted by sturdy men, was allowed to drop into the socket prepared for it in the rock. Very properly the evangelist did not stop to detail or comment upon the extreme suffering experienced by the Lord, and very properly we may similarly leave the matter. Nevertheless, our hearts can but ache still when we think of what this part of the redemption price paid for our sins cost the One who bought us with his precious blood. He who grasps the situation clearly will be the more willing to suffer something for the Lord's sake and for his cause' sake—thus to testify in return his love and his appreciation of the great things done for him by the Son of God. Indeed we should esteem it a deprivation if not permitted to "suffer with him," for otherwise we could not hope to "reign with him."

TWO PROPHECIES FULFILLED

It was the custom to count the personal property of an executed person the perquisites of the soldiers performing the execution, and in Jesus' case we read that, having divided his garments amongst them, his outer robe, his head dress, sandals and girdle—enough to give one piece to each—they assigned by lot "what each man should take." One piece remained; namely, his tunic or under garment, reaching from the neck to the feet, "woven throughout and seamless." This they could not divide advantageously, and hence "for his vesture they did cast lots." —Psa. 22:18; John 19:23, 24.

The crucifixion took place at the third hour, Jewish reckoning, or nine o'clock, our reckoning. Over his head was his accusation written in three languages—the Latin, the official or governmental language of Rome; in Greek, the classical language of that period; in Hebrew, the language of the Jews. The charge was that upon which the chief priests had laid special stress in their arraignment of Jesus, that he claimed to be the king of the Jews. Elsewhere we are informed that the prominent Jews objected to Pilate's inscription and endeavored to have it altered, but he refused, saying, "What I have written, I have written." The Jews would have written, "This is an im-

poster claiming to be the king of the Jews," but in the Lord's providences the true title was put above his head, "Jesus, the King of the Jews." Those of us who are not Jews have reason to rejoice that he is more than this—that by God's providence he is heir of the world and is surely to be the King of the world, and is already King of saints.

How it happened that two robbers were awaiting execution at the same time is not stated in the account. We may presume, however, that they had been in custody for some time under sentence, and that the chief priests may have suggested their execution at the same time. Their thought may have been to detract from the injustice of their own course and to throw a measure of justice into the proceedings as a whole, or their object may have been to demean Jesus in making him a companion of outlaws. But whatever the circumstances, the matter was foreseen by the Lord and foretold by the Prophet—"He was numbered with the transgressors."—Isa. 53:12.

"WE DID ESTEEM HIM STRICKEN, SMITTEN OF GOD"

Near the cross stood the Apostle John and Jesus' mother and others who loved him, and whose hearts were breaking with sympathy as they beheld his ignominy and suffering and were unable to fully appreciate the necessity for this, as we shall shortly see it. Some few idlers were standing by probably, while travelers were coming and going, because Golgotha was on a frequented route. Apparently many of these, who had heard much about Jesus and his miracles, were now satisfied that his claims were false, and that probably his miracles were deceptions wrought, as the Pharisees said, by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. These reasoned from analogy that if the Lord had done the works ascribed to him by the power of God, as he claimed, he would not need to be at the mercy of his enemies, for it never occurred to them that any one would voluntarily lay down his life for his friend—neither did they have the slightest conception of the necessity or object of the Lord's death.

A similar mistake is made by the world in respect to the Lord's followers. Those who have sorrows and trials and persecutions and poverty they esteem to be under divine disfavor. Thus it was prophesied of our Lord, but is true of his church, his body as a whole—"We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted," and we were ashamed of him. The world cannot discern, as we do, that God's favor toward the elect is manifested in letting them have those experiences necessary to their preparation for kingdom honors.

"NONE OF THE WICKED SHALL UNDERSTAND"

Our Lord's statement of a few days before was remembered by some, but either misunderstood or deliberately falsified in their railery. He had not spoken of destroying their Temple, but had said that if they destroyed the Temple it would be reared again within three days (antitypical). The Temple construction had required about forty years, and our Lord's declaration they considered bombastic, and said, It will be much easier for him to show his power by coming down from the cross. The fact that he did not do so was esteemed an evidence of the falsity of all that he had previously said and done. To a sensitive mind, like that of our Lord, we can readily suppose that such a charge of falsification and misrepresentation would be a severe burden upon his heart; yet he bore it patiently. Oh, we are so glad that Jesus did not come down from the cross, and thus leave us in our sins—the whole world unredeemed!

The chief priests and scribes pursued their victim to the cross—neglecting, doubtless, important matters in their eagerness to make sure that he did not escape them. They were more blameworthy than the common people, yet they sought to justify their course in the same manner. Strangely enough, they admitted that "he saved others;" and the fact that he did not save himself out of their grasp seems to have been to them conclusive evidence of the falsity of all of his claims as respected relationship to Jehovah God. They were satisfied that his blood should be upon them and upon their children. Poor men! they thought themselves wise, yet as the Apostle Peter pointed out a few days subsequently, the whole matter was done in ignorance. Peter's words are, "I wot, brethren, that ye did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers." It is fortunate for these—yea, for the great majority of mankind—that the Lord our God is not the resentful One he is represented to be; that on the contrary he is "long suffering and of plenteous mercy." In full accord with this is the glorious prophecy that eventually those who crucified the Lord shall look upon him whom they pierced and mourn because of him, and that "the Lord will pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication and they shall mourn for him."

WHEN REVILED HE REVILED NOT IN RETURN

The Apostle points out our Lord's patience under this reviling as an example to us. When he was reviled he reviled not in return. How many cutting things our Lord might truthfully have thrown back at his persecutors. The secret of his patience

was expressed in his words to Pilate: "Thou couldst have no power over me at all except it were given thee of my Father." The same thought is expressed in the words: "The cup that my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" Likewise our ability to take reviling and persecution patiently and unresentfully will be in proportion as our consecration to the Lord is full and complete, and in proportion as we realize that "All the steps of the righteous are ordered of the Lord."

One of those crucified with Jesus reviled him also—perhaps both, but probably only one—the other for a time keeping silent, but afterward speaking in defence of Jesus, as is related in another Gospel. The morning, which had opened very bright, became very cloudy, and the darkness from the sixth hour (12 o'clock noon) until the ninth hour (3 o'clock), when Jesus died, was quite noticeable.

It was at the close of his experiences, at 3 P. M., that Jesus cried aloud with a strong voice, indicating considerable vitality still. His cry was, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Throughout the entire experience of the night and the morning, from the time he had the assurance, in the Garden of Gethsemane, that he was pleasing to the Father, our Lord was most cool and tranquil of mind. Why was it, then, that at the very close of his experiences he should have so dark a cloud, a shadow, between his heart and the Father? Why should the Father permit any cloud to come between on an occasion when his dear Son, well beloved, so much needed more than any other time the comfort and strength and sustenance of a clear appreciation of his love and favor? This we must answer later, when considering why our Lord was crucified.

It was at this time that our Lord had said, "I thirst," and that a sponge fastened to a hyssop stock and saturated with sour wine (Jno. 19:29) was lifted to his lips. From it he sucked some refreshing moisture, for by this time under such conditions his wounds must have developed a raging fever in his blood. Then Jesus cried aloud again. What he said is not recorded in Mark's account, but Luke gives it as, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit"—my life. This indicated that his faith in the Lord was absolute and that the thing he chiefly thought of was life. He was laying down his life most loyally, most nobly, in accord with the Father's arrangement. The Father had promised him as a reward to raise him up from the dead: he trusted in this promise, and now in his dying breath he expressed his faith.

"IT IS FINISHED"

Various things are recorded as taking place at the moment of our Lord's death—an earthquake shook the ground in the neighborhood of the cross, and in the Temple at Jerusalem the great vail which separated between the Holy and Most Holy was torn, not from the bottom toward the top, as would be the expectation if it were the result of wear, but from the top to the bottom, as indicating that it was a manifestation of divine power. The vail or curtain is described as being sixty feet long and thirty feet wide, and its thickness about four inches. Josephus describes it as "of Babylonish texture, a wonderful stretch of white, scarlet and purple." The rending of this curtain represented symbolically the opening of the way between heaven itself and the heavenly condition of those in the world. Christ has opened to us a new and living way through the vail—that is to say, through the sacrifice of his flesh. True believers are represented as being now associated with Jesus as priests in the Holy, or outer apartment of the two. Here we have fellowship with God through the light of the golden candlestick, through the bread of the golden table, and through the incense that we are permitted to offer on the golden altar, and from this standpoint we can now by faith see beyond the vail—catch glimpses at least of the heavenly estate which God hath in reservation for them who love him, for the called ones according to his purpose, for the Christ, head and body.

WHY JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED

One of the most puzzling matters connected with Christianity in all minds, including the hypercritical of the Lord's professed followers, is why the sufferings and death of our Lord at Calvary were necessary. We answer that they were necessary because God made them necessary—because he so arranged his plan that they would be indispensable. That he could have devised another plan of salvation is beyond question, for the whole matter was in his hands, but that he did choose the best plan is equally indisputable. Whoever attempts to solve this question in his own mind or with the human philosophies of the natural mind will be sure to err. The only safe, proper course is to give heed to the wisdom that cometh from above respecting this matter.

Harkening to the voice of the Lord, we perceive that he knew the end from the beginning, and that his plan is designed to be a lesson respecting his attributes of justice, wisdom, love and power, not only to men but to angels, not only to the unholy,

but to the holy. When the divine plan shall have been fully accomplished, all shall see the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of wisdom and love and justice and power exemplified in the divine arrangement. At the present time, however, only a few may see: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; he has covenanted to show it unto them."—Psalm 25:14.

With full knowledge that he could not retract his own sentence, God pronounced death to be the penalty for sin—knowing at the time that Adam would sin and that he and his entire family would come under the death sentence. To Adam and to all who understood the matter the case must have appeared hopeless, since, first, God could not revoke his sentence; and, second, the sentence deprived man of everything in depriving him of his life. It would not occur to man that God might have in his purpose a substitute: and even if it had occurred to him, looking about amongst his fellow men he could have found no one capable of serving as a substitute for Adam, because all were sinners through their inherited share in the results of the fall. It surely never would have occurred to man that God, looking down upon the fallen race of Adam, would have such pity for the transgressors of the law as to provide for them a way of escape from the penalty at such cost as was entailed. For God to provide a substitute for Adam meant the creation of another man, his equal in every particular, or the transfer of some holy being to a condition in nature similar to that of Adam before he fell. It would not have been supposable to man that Almighty God would be so considerate of the interests of his human creatures. Furthermore, they might have reasoned that for God to have created a man similar to Adam would have been merely to have duplicated the transgression; while for him to have transferred some glorious spirit being to human conditions would have appeared but a violation of justice—a punishment of a holy and obedient creature in the interest of unholy and sinful ones.

But behold the wisdom of God, as well as his love and justice, manifested in the course arranged for. He would provide a ransom for Adam and thus for his race; he would provide a perfect man to be the Redeemer of the fallen one and those who lost life in him, yet he would do no injustice to any. Rather he would so arrange the plan that the one who should become man's redemption would himself be greatly advantaged by the sufferings and deprivations incidental to the work. No doubt had God offered the proposition in a general way to all of the heavenly hosts there would have been many ready and willing to render joyful obedience and to trust for whatever reward and blessing the Father might think best to give them; but he did not make the offer general—it was made to but one.

"LO, I COME—TO DO THY WILL, O MY GOD"

Amongst the heavenly hosts was the only begotten of the Father, he who in the beginning was called the Word and who was with the Father, and who himself was a god or a mighty one, and who had been used of the Father as his instrument in the creation of all the angelic and human beings. To this one, highest of all, the Father would first make the proposition of the great sacrifice, the great test of faith in the Father's love and the Father's power—that he would restore him again when the work was finished, and that with added glory. True, the Only Begotten might have declined, and, so far as we know, without prejudice, in which event the offer or opportunity would have been given probably to the one next in honor and glory and power amongst the angels. But the Only Begotten did not decline, but joyfully accepted the offer of being a co-laborer with the Father on behalf of mankind. He carried out the project; he left the heavenly courts, laid aside the heavenly conditions, spirit body, etc., was transferred to the womb of Mary, and in due time was born a man amongst men, "the man Christ Jesus."

At thirty years, the proper period under the law, he made his full consecration unto death and symbolized it in baptism. For three and a half years the death was being accomplished by him, until at Calvary he cried, "It is finished." Thus his first great humbling of himself in becoming a man was a preparatory step, while his giving of himself as a sacrifice, as a substitute for Adam, covered a period of three and a half years, ending in his death on the cross. He finished there the work which the Father had given him to do so far as redeeming the world was concerned. His life was the ransom price for Adam's; and since the world had lost life through Adam, because inheriting his weaknesses, his imperfections, therefore justly, legally, actually, Christ's death not only redeemed Adam, but redeemed the world of mankind. It was because Adam as a sinner was cut off from fellowship with God that our dear Redeemer, as his substitute, was obliged to have a similar experience for a little season before he died. It was his hardest moment and called forth the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

In due time the Father's promise toward him was fulfilled