

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Revelation 18:4.

The context of the above Scripture shows that our text refers to Babylon—not the literal city of Babylon, but to the symbolic city, described in the Book of Revelation. The term Babylon seems to signify a concentration of the various errors in apostate church systems, personified in Revelation as mother and daughters. "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots," is the name given by the Lord to the original system, thus intimating that the whole brood is illegitimate in every sense of the word. She neglected the heavenly Bridegroom, and mingled in her "cup" a stupefying potion that has intoxicated the world; even the Lord's saints were bewildered.—Revelation 17:1-6.

After the apostles "fell asleep," the people of God gradually drifted into error of doctrine and practise, which culminated in the dark ages. A great system developed, and led into confusion and darkness. We need not suppose that in all these centuries every one connected with this system was hypocritical. As the people of natural Israel were led captive into literal Babylon, so the people of spiritual Israel, among whom were some of the Lord's true saints, were led captive into Mystic Babylon. Some of these would have liked to get free, yet did not know what to do.

When we come down to the Reformation, we see that instead of getting entirely free from Babylon and her errors, the various systems then formed partook to a considerable extent of the spirit of the mother system from which they had separated. The same spirit of persecution that was manifested in the "mother" has also been manifested more or less in the "daughters." The enslaving power extended from medieval times to the Reformation; so that, looking out upon the so-called Christian world today, we see that there could not be a better word used to picture existing conditions than the word confusion.

Yet there are true people of God still in this Babylonian system. But the time of separation is here: those yet remaining in Babylon must hasten! The fact that some of God's children have been in Babylon all through the age shows us why God has had any respect at all for Babylon; His saints have been more or less enslaved there for centuries. This is the reason why God has dealt with Babylon in any sense or degree.

BABYLON CAST INTO THE SEA

Our text with its context is a prophecy that in the end of the present age a time would come when God would wholly reject Babylon. In the picture given us in Revelation of this time, the Lord's rejection of the apostate systems is declared in the words, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" She has been spewed out of his mouth, and the Almighty now calls upon his true people to "come out of her." The faithful ones are delivering themselves out of Babylon during this harvest time; the separating work is almost completed. Soon, as pictured in Scripture, the "sea" of anarchy will swallow up the false systems. Babylon is to be "cast as a great millstone into the sea." (Psalm 46:2; Jeremiah 51:62-64; Revelation 18:21) We believe these prophecies are to be fulfilled in the very near future.

The nominal church no longer stands in a peculiar position—above the world. Some of her ministers declare that they do not believe in Jesus as the Savior of the world—man is his own savior, they say. They believe in the social uplift of humanity, which, according to their view, is to come by putting the right men into the right places, by giving woman the franchise, and by other methods of social reform. What a sorry hope!

Some may ask: How may we recognize God's voice calling his people to come out of the churches now? In what manner shall we hear his voice? We answer that God bids his people to separate themselves from all sin and sinful conditions. Our forefathers did not hear this voice, did not see this condition of sin. The voice had not then spoken. Even in the time of the Reformation these entanglements of error were not clearly discerned. But now, in this harvest time, we can see very clearly that the teachings of the nominal churches have been grossly in error—have grossly misrepresented the divine purpose and the divine character. We now perceive that Babylon is full of error and corruption of doctrine, and filled with the spirit of the world.

KNOWLEDGE BRINGS RESPONSIBILITY

Furthermore, the times and seasons of God's plan are now made plain. We are shown that we are now living in the time foretold, when these systems of error are to be rejected by the

Lord. Should we not leave these systems when we see all this? This is God's voice to "come out of her." We hear this voice now speaking; we see that this prophecy of Revelation is now being fulfilled. If any remonstrate: But, Lord, we have many precious friends in Babylon, and we are loth to leave them. We have tried to show them what Babylon is, but they will not heed. It will be a great loss to us to leave them all and take a stand against them. Must we come out? Our friends will think us crazy! The Lord replies: "Come out of her," or "receive of her plagues."

You are not sharers of her sins until the time you see this. You were born in Babylon. The Lord is not holding you responsible for what you did not understand. But the better you understand, the more responsibility you have. If, when you see what the truth is and what the untruth is, you still remain in Babylon and support her with your influence and dollars, you will be very culpable. If you fail to come out of her when you hear the Lord's voice, it will imply that you are not thoroughly loyal to him. You may be his children, but if you fail to obey the Lord through fear of earthly loss, it will prove that these things are more precious to you than his favor, and he will treat you as he treats the hypocrites: you will have a share in their experiences.

If you are approving of the sins of the spewed-out systems by upholding them and giving them your influence, you will surely be partakers of Babylon's plagues. This is a fair warning. We understand that it is the duty of every Christian to break every tender tie, if necessary, and to be loyal to God, to stand free from the error and sins of Babylon. The time of her judgment has come.

The plagues coming upon Babylon are sore troubles, which will result in the complete overthrow of the present order of things—political, social, financial and religious. This order of things in its various phases, is one cause, under different uniforms; these interests are all united in one great policy. The princes and kings of the earth and their supporters are Babylon's great army, and pitted against it is another vast army, composed of the masses of the people. The conflict between these two great armies will ere long precipitate the present order of things of the world into anarchy.

THE VOICE OF PRESENT TRUTH

It becomes an important question then: Have all God's people heard this voice? We answer that we do not think all have yet heard; hence there must be some Christians still in Babylon, partakers of her sins, but confused because of ignorance, because of lack of knowledge. The question might be asked: Shall we go forth making this call a special message? We answer: This is not our thought. Our thought is that where this is made a special message the result is usually different from what is intended: it makes many angry. They say: By what authority do you call us Babylon, and by what authority do you tell us to "come out"?

Our thought is that it is the Lord who calls his people out of Babylon; the call is to be recognized especially as a voice from heaven. What is this voice from heaven? Apparently, the voice is present truth—a presentation of the doctrines of the Scriptures, with their times and seasons—a shining that while there has been confusion and error all the way down through the age, we are now in the harvest time, when truth is clearer than ever before. This voice of truth tells us whether or not we should support a system that is full of error, full of confusion.

In what way should we give God's message to come out of Babylon? We should show them the light, the truth; we should place before them the opportunity for investigation, and encourage them to prove these things for themselves. As they come to see the truth and the bondage in which they have been, they will be glad to stand free in Christ by breaking off these shackles. This will be the voice, then, that will show all the Lord's people who are in the right attitude of heart that they should stand free, that they should come out of sectarianism, that they should not misrepresent the Lord by claiming that they are of Babylon when they are not, but that they take their stand for God.

LOYALTY TO TRUTH THE TEST

This stand will mean the holding forth of the divine plan of the ages, the truth. If, after one has seen the real character of Babylon and has gotten his bearings in a general way, he then remains, it can be only by compromising the truth. By being worldly wise he might remain and continue for a time to have popularity, to have honor of men. But if

after seeing the truth, after understanding the truth, one were to continue in Babylon, he would of course be a greater sinner than one who had not been so enlightened.

It is not our thought that we should avoid doing our duty in the proclamation of the truth, but that we should avoid arousing unnecessary antagonism; for people in error are in no condition to have the error lightly spoken of. They must be in the right condition before one can even whisper to them, "Come out of her." Even if they make inquiry of us, we should not speak too positively; but we should say: Now, my dear brother [or sister], if you have heard the voice of God, if you realize that the various denominations are in error, then you will, apparently, see your duty. You once said you were of them; if now you see that you are not of them, you should tell them so. But when you shall see, and when you shall hear, is not for another to say. If, when you have heard and believe the truth, you remain in Babylon, you will be a partaker of her sins, and more guilty than the average one among them. When you are able to hear this voice yourself—this voice which will show you the right and the wrong, the truth and the error—no doubt you will have the fortitude to "come out."

BABYLON'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TRUTH

But those who hear the voice of present truth, and who obey the call to come out of Babylon, are usually subjected to persecution. In our Lord's day, when the believers were from among the Jews, some were put out of the synagogues. We remember a particular instance during our Lord's ministry. A man who was born blind was asked how he had his sight restored; and when he confessed Jesus, the rulers put him out of the synagogue. (John 9:22, 34) That same spirit, that same condition, seemed to follow with the apostles.

All through the dark ages those who were faithful to the light were kept out of the churches. The church creeds and practises were conscience-barriers to keep light-bearers out; those faithful to the truth were ex-communicated or put to death as heretics. This condition continued to some extent even after the time of the Reformation. Servetus, a brother Christian, whose horrible death by burning at the stake was caused by Calvin, is a case in point. Jesus said, "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." The execution of Servetus was an instance of the literal fulfillment of our Lord's words.

Those who have ruled the synagogues have not always been bad people, but mistaken people. Thus it was with Saul of Tarsus, when he haled Christians to prison and approved the death of St. Stephen. And so with the churches of our day when any become enlightened and let their light shine. The same thing is true that has always been true; namely, "The darkness hateth the light." They say: If you stay with us you shall not present these matters. So those who are loyal to God are in this way forced out of the synagogues; indeed, the loyal ones are now called to "come out."

"YOUR BRETHREN THAT HATED YOU"

But our day has a peculiarity that other days have not had. The divine plan is now so beautiful that we can see that others are in darkness, and this impelling voice of the truth is the voice of God, the voice of conscience, the voice of enlightenment, calling us out of Babylon, which is misrepresenting God, his character, his plan and his Word. We do not know but that they may go to the extreme in our day—to kill socially, to kill ecclesiastically, perhaps to kill physically. Nearly all the persecutions that have come to God's people have come from professed Christians, fellow-believers. "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."—Isaiah 66:5.

We are glad that these shall one day, not far off, we believe, see their mistake. Instead of feeling like bringing vengeance upon our enemies, we should feel quite a sympathy—not with them, but for them. We should realize that it is with them very much as it was with the Jews in our Lord's day: those Jews and their rulers knew not what they did, or they would have been ashamed. And they will be ashamed when they come forth and realize what they did—just as Saul of Tarsus was ashamed when he realized what he had done. And so with these blinded ones of today: "Some shall come forth to shame and lasting contempt." This contempt will last until there has been a proper repentance for their share in the persecutions of the Lord and his faithful ones.

AMOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY

We surely appreciate very highly the value of knowledge, but we also remember the truthfulness of St. Paul's statement that "knowledge (alone) puffs up, but love builds up." Yet knowledge is necessary to growth in grace. Only as we perceive the beauty of the divine character can we appreciate

our God. Therefore, we rejoice that he is lifting the veil and revealing himself more and more to our eyes of understanding.

We can see that mental capacity is not the same in all. Some can receive a large measure of the truth, while others can assimilate only a little. No one needs more knowledge than he is capable of receiving. God is judging his people according to their character-likeness to his son, our Lord, not according to what they know. While knowledge is very important, very necessary, still no one has a monopoly of understanding—no one has perfect knowledge in the present life; and if our eternal destiny depended upon knowledge, each of us would come short. Nevertheless, we believe that all who are the Lord's will be brought into touch with present truth, and will be judged by it. Those who obtain the knowledge and then show a disposition to shirk the responsibility connected with it or to deny the truth or to live ungodly after seeing the light, thus demonstrate their unworthiness.

The Apostle, speaking to the faithful ones in Christ, says, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are children of the light." He seems to imply that the Lord's true people will come to a knowledge of the truth. This does not necessarily mean all the truth, but enough to sanctify. One with large intellectual power would require and could assimilate a large amount of knowledge; one with small mental capacity would need less.

There are certain basic principles that the Lord's people have at all times grasped; for instance, the fact that there is but one God. Even those who hold to the doctrine of the "Trinity" declare that there is one God. Thus they have a measure of the truth, although they contradict themselves. It is the same in regard to the penalty for sin. Our forefathers desired to be right when they thought eternal torment the punishment for sin; and they called it a just penalty, in their endeavor to be right. But with these basic principles is mixed a large proportion of error. The whole world of mankind has been under delusions; and we who are now waking up are really surprised to see how little we actually knew—how ignorant we were in regard to some of the precious messages which our God has given us.

"WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH"

But as we were children of God before we received full knowledge, so we believe that it is possible for others to be children of God without having full knowledge. We are living in the harvest of the Gospel age, when God is causing the knowledge of the truth to encircle the earth. At the same time the adversary is doing all that he can to hinder people from studying the divine message—raising a dust of calumny to blind the eyes of the unwary.

It is because we believe that there are children of God attempting to live on the husks and skimmed milk of human tradition—brethren in Christ starving for the pure food offered in the Word of God—that we are trying to reach and help them. Otherwise we would abandon all special efforts at propaganda; for we know that as soon as the Messianic kingdom shall have been set up, conditions will be favorable to all to come to a knowledge of the truth as it is contained in the Bible.

The days that are almost upon us will surely bring "weeping and gnashing of teeth" to many of the Lord's people; for whoever stands for error will be in opposition to God. They are about to go into a great time of trouble, and it will be their own fault. Some of us heard God's voice early in the harvest, and therefore we had the responsibility earlier; some heard later. Some are hearing now about the sins of Babylon—that these sins are about to be punished, and that they should come out and be on God's side, if they would have divine favor. It is the desire to further sound out this present message that has led us to the production of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION—that those who would not read might see. To whatever extent it helps each of God's children, still bound, to recognize his own responsibility, it represents the voice of God, telling them their present duty as Christians.

"When ye hear I am come, then can ye arise,
The joy of your heart springing up in your eyes?
Can ye come out to meet me, whate'er the cost be,
Though ye come on the waves of a storm-crested sea?"

"When I call, can ye turn and in gladness 'come out'
From the home of your childhood, the friends of your heart?
With naught but my promise on which to rely,
Afraid from their love—can ye lie down and die?"

"Yea, we'll take up the cross and in faith follow thee,
And bear thy reproach, thy disciples to be.
Blest Savior, for courage to thee we will fly;
Of grace thou hast promised abundant supply."

FERVENT IN PRAYER—WATCHING THEREUNTO

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.”—Ephesians 6:18.

Prayer is a wonderful privilege. It is a very great favor to be permitted to approach the Supreme Ruler of the universe with our petitions. We should come, therefore, in the spirit of deep appreciation, of earnestness and humility and reverence. The greater our earnestness, the more acceptable will be our prayers, and the more abundant blessings shall we receive.

There is a great deal of formal prayer. The Scriptures speak of this as drawing near unto God with the lips, while the heart is far from him. (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-9) It would be better not to approach the Lord at all than to do so in an improper manner. The man who merely utters words with his lips is not praying. A Christian should not say prayers, but should pray. We should not think of saying even one word that we do not mean and have not thought out. Many people have done themselves injury by praying in a formalistic manner.

When we come to the Father, let us draw nigh in spirit—with the heart, the understanding, the mind—whether the prayer be long or short. Let us come with true and earnest devotion, with supplication, that he may see our intense desire in the matter. As our Lord said, the Father seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth. Without the spirit of prayer our petitions amount to nothing.

No one may offer prayer to the Father except those who have accepted his terms, and have come into relationship with him as sons, through the great Advocate. Others are aliens and strangers. There is a difference between worship, or thanksgiving, and prayer. Any one may offer worship—adoration, homage. Any one may bow the knee and express thanks and appreciation. But the privilege of making requests of God is directly limited to those who have been accepted in Christ.

There is a difference, too, between prayer and supplication. The term prayer applies to any petition, great or small; whereas the term supplication means a special, agonizing desire for a thing—entreaty with intense yearning. But whether it is prayer in the ordinary sense, or intense prayer—supplication—we should always come in the spirit, with an appreciation of the fact that we are entering into the presence of the great Creator and that in thus doing we are enjoying a great privilege.

“WATCHING THEREUNTO”

St. Paul adds, “and watching thereunto.” Watching seems to be an attitude of mental alertness. If we really believe that the Lord has indicated that we should pray for the things we need, and that he will give us these things, then we should be on the alert to recognize when we receive them. We should take heed as to the things for which we ask, and be sure that we ask for the things promised, the things for which we are entitled to ask.

We should also watch for the Lord’s providential leadings. The person who, after having prayed, forgets what he prayed for, and who cannot tell whether or not he has received an answer to his petition, has certainly missed a great blessing which it is designed that he should have.

Prayer is not to be offered to be heard of man, but of God. It is intended to be a stimulation to our hearts and to quicken us to an expectancy of certain things; and it should be our earnest endeavor to keep our lives in harmony with our requests. When Jesus told his disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send more laborers into his harvest, he did not mean that they were to tell the heavenly Father his business; but that they should be solicitous that others come into the work, that God would send forth laborers into his harvest field; and that the disciples themselves should watch for opportunities of service, in harmony with their prayers.

The Lord frequently called attention to the fact that we should be persevering in prayer. Perseverance is an essential quality in the sight of God. It includes patience, carefulness and interest. In short, it is related to every fruit of the Spirit which the Lord’s people are to cultivate. Patience is good, but it needs perseverance. Love is good, but it needs perseverance.

Perseverance does not make the will. The will is already there. It is the will that God recognizes in the beginning. But by various experiences, trials, difficulties, tests of endurance, the Lord would prove us and develop us. He would have us become very positive characters in all these qualities which have his approval. So our praying should all be in the spirit, from the heart. We should watch thereunto with per-

severance day by day, until the Lord shall see that we have attained the character which he can honor with a share in the kingdom.

LESSONS LEARNED BY THE LORD’S DELAY

Perhaps one reason why our Lord does not answer our petitions quickly is that he desires us to learn to watch for the answer and thereby get the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to him, as we realize that he has given us our request. We should therefore pray with all perseverance, watching for the answer until it come—not watching merely for a few minutes, or for a day or a week. The Lord might see best to further defer the answer to our petition, either to test our faith or to increase our earnestness and get us into a better condition to receive the blessing. It requires time to become emptied of self and prepared to receive the mind of Christ; and with some, more time is required than with others.

We are sure that the Lord will pursue that course which is best for us, just as a teacher with his pupils, and a parent with his children. The parent exercises judgment as to what is best for the child. So our heavenly Father wishes to give us the good things. Sometimes he sees best that we wait a long time before getting the answer to our petitions; at other times he may give us a speedy answer to our prayer. Nevertheless, as the Apostle Paul declares, we know that all things are working together for our good, because we love God and have been called according to his purpose. And we must ever bear in mind the conditions which our Lord imposes: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”—John 15:7.

We must search the Scriptures to know what is the mind of the Lord, what he has promised and what he has not promised. The fully consecrated will not want anything which is not in fullest harmony with the will of him we so love and adore, and who is so worthy of our love and loyalty. We must remember, too, that while we are praying with persistence and faith, the Lord is preparing for us, not only the blessing and opportunity of service which we desire, but he is also preparing the circumstances and conditions which will bring this blessing or opportunity in the best form. This will require our waiting on the Lord, which should be in perfect trust and patience for his good time to grant the desire of our hearts. “The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.”—James 5:16.—R. V.

Family prayer is also very desirable in the homes of the Lord’s saints, wherever possible; and prayer amongst the children of God when they assemble together is eminently proper. Our Lord sanctioned this by praying with and for his disciples; and it was also commended by the apostles. We are to pray, not for ourselves only, but for all of the saints and for the interests of the Lord’s cause. The Scriptures commend both public and private prayer amongst the children of God. But secret prayer is absolutely essential to the life of a Christian.

PRAYERFUL ATTITUDE ALONE NOT SUFFICIENT

We have been surprised occasionally to hear some professed follower of Christ urging the impropriety of a form of prayer in words, and of assuming any particular posture in prayer, or of praying at any stated time, asserting that kneeling in prayer is unnecessary—that all of life should be a prayer. Such a proposition is astounding to us—the logic of it is incomprehensible. True, we are to pray always, to be always in the spirit of prayer, to be so devoted to the Lord that we shall ever manifest in our lives the beauty of holiness, that we shall be shining lights in the world. But we hold that no Christian can maintain this heart attitude, or glorify God in his life, without going to the Lord in a particular and formal manner, and preferably upon his knees, and if possible in solitude at certain times. “Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.”—Matthew 6:6.

Our dear Master’s constant attitude of prayer did not hinder his more particular devotions when he turned aside from the busy affairs of his life to converse with the Father in secret—sometimes briefly and sometimes spending the entire night in prayer in the mountain solitude. The very isolation of the Lord from all human help drew him the nearer and the oftener to the Father in prayer and communion. So it is, or should be, with all the true followers of the Master. As we grow in his character-likeness we will, like him, pray without ceasing, in everything giving thanks, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, recognizing him as the center of all our hopes and our joys.

OUR "SOLITARY WAY"

We all realize at times the inability of even our dearest ones to enter fully into and appreciate our sorrows and our needs. They are unable to sympathize with us fully in our struggles and our trials. This realization should send us, as it did our dear Lord, the more frequently to the throne of grace, where we are always sure of having the ear of One who understands us perfectly and can make all needful allowance for our frailty; who knows the limit of our ability to do and to be, in our imperfect flesh; and who can give us the perfect sympathy which none other can give. He never fails to hear and to heed the cry of his children, even though he may for a wise purpose in love defer for a time a visible answer to their pleas.

JACOB AN EXAMPLE

The prayer of Jacob at the time he was anticipating a meeting with Esau on his return from Padan-Aram may be considered one of the most excellent examples of earnest, persevering prayer to be found in the Lord's Word. It is full of confidence and trust in God. It recounts God's promise to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac and the renewal of this promise to himself. He mentions to the Lord his promise also to bring him again to his home land. His humility is shown in his words: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff [only] I passed over this Jordan [when fleeing from home], and now I have become two bands [great companies]."—Genesis 32:10.

He tells the Lord of his fear of Esau, yet shows that his fear is offset by his confidence in the Almighty. It was at this time, and doubtless in answer to this prayer, that the angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob, and so full of faith was he in the power of God and in his promise to protect him and make of him a great nation, that he laid physical hold upon the angel, declaring: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" The angel here appeared as a man; but Jacob had recognized him as the representative of the Lord, sent to meet him.

We cannot suppose that the angel was not sufficiently powerful to release himself from the grasp of Jacob, but rather that God was pleased to bless him, and that these circumstances were designed for the very purpose of drawing out Jacob's longing desire for this blessing of the Lord, to demonstrate the depth and intensity of his desire. When this was proven, when he had manifested his deep appreciation of the blessing which God alone could give, and this great longing to be in harmony with him, then the blessing came—Jacob's victory. God was pleased to reward such faith and energy and zeal.

LESSONS TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

Jacob was only a natural man, yet his prayer has in it a lesson that may be of much profit to new creatures in Christ; not that we should wrestle with God as did Jacob, for we are sons of God, and sons have a much closer relationship than servants, and have no need to wrestle with God to gain his favor. The late Bishop Phillips Brooks expressed the true thought very beautifully and succinctly when he said, "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance; it is laying hold upon God's willingness." We have his favor now; and he has promised us his choicest blessings. But Jacob's earnest zeal and faith and humility and his perseverance of mind are well worthy of our emulation and imitation. We should always pray and not faint, as our Lord reminded us. God wishes us to be persistent, and to have unwavering faith in his willingness to give us his best gifts.

If the blessing in answer to our prayer does not come in the moment of asking, we are to continue "instant in prayer," patiently waiting for the Lord's due time, in an attitude of entire, sweet submission to his will, assured that if the answer be delayed it is because our Father in his wisdom sees a reason for it and has our highest welfare at heart. He is never indifferent to his children nor unheeding of their needs and of their cry for help and for fellowship with him. But let us see to it that God's glory is our chiefest desire.

Alas, how many spiritual Israelites seem to have a much less keen appreciation of propriety in prayer than had Jacob! He asked for God's blessing, in whatever manner he might be pleased to give it. Jacob did not specify even the earthly

good things which God had promised him. He desired the Lord's glory in the fulfilling to him and his posterity of his great covenant. Many of God's children ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, that the answer may minister to the desires of their flesh. The Lord has promised to care for the temporal necessities of his children and will surely give them what is best, whether this be little or much.

How few seem to remember that as new creatures our desires and requests should be especially for the things that pertain to our spiritual interests; that it is this class of blessings that the Father desires us to have, and has promised to give us! He assures us that as earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, so our Father delights to give us his holy Spirit—his very best gift—the gift which comprises all blessing and glory, which will insure to us everything which is desirable, in the very highest sense. If the Lord's people who have consecrated their all to him, could be brought to the point where their one aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of a sound mind, what an unspeakable blessing it would mean!

ISRAEL—MIGHTY WITH GOD

Jacob got the blessing and with it a change of name. Thenceforth he was called Israel, which signifies, Mighty with God, or "A Prince with God." This new name therefore was always a source of encouragement to him, an incentive to fresh zeal and to trust in the Lord. All of Jacob's posterity adopted this name. We have in antitype Christ Jesus, our Lord, the true Israel, the One who through faith and obedience to the Father has prevailed, who has overcome the world, the flesh and the adversary, and has received the highest blessing of God as the result of his great struggle. He is now supremely exalted, and is declared to be the Prince of the kings of the earth. He has sat down with the Father in his throne.

We also, the followers of Jesus, bear the name of Israel. We, like him, if faithful as was he, shall be exalted by the Father. We shall share with our Lord and Head his throne. We shall be made higher than angels, principalities and powers, as our Master has been. How glorious this thought! How wonderful! Should not this great hope inspire us to the utmost diligence and carefulness that we may make our calling and election sure?

If we prove faithful unto death, the name Victor, or "Mighty with God," will be our name. It will apply to every one of the Lord's faithful ones as it applied to our Head. But only those who manifest his Spirit, only those who so love God that they will hold on to his promise and who will not let him go without the blessing, will receive the fulfilment of the promise and will reign with Christ in glory and share his throne.

Jacob had a method of marking the special manifestations of divine providence—as when he called the place in which he wrestled with the angel Peniel—"the face of God." This was a reminder to him that there he had been privileged to receive from the Lord a particular blessing, a marked answer to prayer. Similarly it is profitable to spiritual Israel that we should make note in some special manner of the Lord's mercies and providences to us. Many feel poor as respects the favor and blessing of the Lord, simply because they have failed to let these blessings make a proper impression upon their hearts at the time they were received. We are all leaky vessels, and unless special notation of these favors of the Lord is made upon the tablets of memory, or in some other way, their lesson and the encouragement and strength which they bring are largely lost to us.

Doubtless we should all have more "Bethels" and more "Peniels" did we but follow the course of setting up some kind of monuments of our Father's faithfulness in his answers to our prayers, and there entering into some covenant or vow with the Lord in return for these his mercies. As each watches for fresh evidence daily of the love and special watch-care of our God over us, we shall find that we have far more cause for encouragement and thanksgiving than we would be aware of without such notation and watchfulness. Let each of us, then, daily, weekly and yearly raise to God our "Eben-ezers," if we would increase our faith and joy and love.

FASHIONING OURSELVES AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."—1 Peter 1:14, 15.

The Apostle is not addressing the world, but those who have become children of God—those who have passed out from their position of condemnation with the world, and have been

justified by faith in the precious blood, who have been accepted of the great Advocate Jesus, and have been begotten of the holy Spirit. But it is not sufficient that we become

children of God; for these newly begotten children are only started in the narrow way, they are in an imperfect, undeveloped condition. They have this standing as children because they have put themselves into the hands of God and desire to do his will, loving righteousness and hating iniquity.

On the basis of this stand that we took—of enlisting under the banner of Jesus, to fight against sin and self and Satan—God purposes to prove how thoroughly in earnest we were when we espoused his cause. He wishes us to attain to that development of character which will fit us to be associates with Jesus in his great kingdom, which is to bless the world.

If we are obedient children, everything will work well. We shall get the proper tests, the proper chiseling and polishing, everything that will make us “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” But if we do not prove obedient, this will hinder us from ever getting into the elect company, although we may have a place in that company of children who have had to be chastised and finally brought to proper obedience.

By this we are not implying that any of God’s children are exempt from discipline; for we are told that every son receiveth chastisement. (Heb. 12:6-11) Those chastisements that came to our Lord Jesus were not deserved, but were experiences by which he proved his thorough loyalty and worthiness of exaltation. And so the chastisements that come to his followers are to fit them for future service and to demonstrate their worthiness of being counted in as members of his body.

The chastisements which are in the nature of punishments for sin should bring about a thoroughly loyal condition of heart in reasonable time, or the one chastised will lose his place in the body. If he prove ultimately disobedient, he will be counted unworthy of any of God’s favors, and will die the second death. The exhortation of our text, therefore, is to the highest attainment and the utmost loyalty to the Father.

HOW TO FASHION OUR MINDS

There is a fashioning of our minds in progress. It is not the fashioning of our will. The will is given up to begin with. But the will has to do with regulating the mind as well as the body—the will has to do with this fashioning. We will that our minds shall be educated along the lines of obedience, that we may be properly exercised by all the trials which God has purposed for us.

We as new creatures should learn to think as God would have us think, to develop habits of thought which upbuild the new creature. We should eat and drink according to his will, and our clothing should be regulated according to his will. We are to seek his guidance in our life in all things—because of the weaknesses of the flesh, the promptings of the adversary, and our environment. The Lord has made provision, and has given us definite instructions in the Scriptures, by which we may regulate our lives in harmony with his Word; and we should seek more and more to know the will of God and to profit by his providences in our lives, and to apply the knowledge gained, so that whether we eat, or drink, or sleep, or labor, we shall do all to the glory of God.

Our organism of flesh we receive by heredity. These bodies of ours have various weaknesses and inconsistencies—some in one direction, and some in another. But they are all, more or less, perversions of the true ideal which God originally gave. Centuries of sin have left their mark upon us, upon our minds and bodies; and this mark is seen in the theories which have come into our minds. These errors in the past had control of us.

Before we saw the Lord’s way, we thought it was right to follow after earthly pleasures and pursuits and to put self first. We naturally said, This is the proper course for us to take. We see that the prominent and the great are following this course, seeking first the affairs of this present life—praise of men, how finely they can be clothed and housed, how fine a carriage or automobile they can have. They seek—and are in large measure able to secure—the gratification of the taste for earthly things, whether it be for the satisfaction of the mind, as various kinds of literature, or for the body, as for certain kinds of foods or drinks, etc.

But when we become children of God, we ask, What is God’s will in respect to what we shall eat or drink or wear, as to the use of tobacco, as to the cut of our clothes, etc.? It is not for us to decide now whether we shall go to the theater or play cards or dance. All these matters should have been decided before we consecrated ourselves. Now, in harmony with the covenant we have entered into with Christ, we are to know strictly the Father’s will. As we learn to see things from God’s standpoint, we change our ideas as to what we

shall eat, and what we shall drink, etc. And this change going on in our minds is the “fashioning.”

THE FASHIONING A GRADUAL PROCESS

Although we discover some things quickly, we do not learn all things at once. Some things are less conspicuous before our minds than are others, and represent the finer shadings of what would be proper for a new creature. We gradually come to note these things more and more; and we ask, Which things shall we continue to choose? The knowledge of God’s will is a matter of education. We come to see that this is right and that is wrong. (The world sets such a style for evening dress, such a style for morning dress.) When we become Christians we have new standards, and it takes some time to get everything harmoniously adjusted therewith.

In line with this thought, the Apostle says, “Be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds”—not by the renewing of the new will. We already possess the new will. But we see that the body is regulated by the mind. Therefore the new will says, I must begin with the mind. I must get my mind to see things correctly, according to God’s will. I will use the Bible and all the providential indications that will give me a knowledge of God’s mind, and I will begin to conform my mind thereto. Thus our minds become gradually fashioned—transformed into the mind of the Lord. As we come to see more and more what is the will of God, our minds decide to do his will. Our reason plays an important part.

God wishes to appeal to our reason, because we are thus better developed than in any other way. We are all in the school of Christ—under the tutelage of our Lord. In this school we are learning to do his will. We have the teachings of our Lord Jesus and the writings of the apostles; and our Lord declared that whatsoever the apostles should bind on earth would be considered bound in heaven; and whatsoever they should loose on earth would be so considered in heaven. Our education progresses, until, at the end of this life, those who have thoroughly learned the lessons of this school will be those who have been obedient children. These will have been transformed by the renewing of their minds, that they might prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”—Romans 12:2.

OUR STANDARD—JEHOVAH’S RIGHTEOUSNESS

The new will is, in substance, a will to be like our Father in heaven. The Apostle Peter exhorts, “As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.” Holiness is the standard of perfection. Our will must be holy when we first make our covenant with God. Nothing less than a holy will is acceptable to him. If we had had an unholy will, a will not submissive to God, we would not have been accepted. So if our will be holy we shall, as far as we are able, do his will.

As he who has called us is holy, so we, as far as our will is concerned, will be holy. And we will so direct our mind, as to be holy in life so far as is possible. We will apply the principles of God’s holiness to every affair of life. We will observe the Golden Rule, that we should do to others as we would that others should do to us. Whoever neglects to apply these principles of holiness to his own life is not growing in the new life, not being transformed. We should seek to have our minds fully in accord with God’s mind, and our conduct as far as possible also in alignment.

If our mind is not running in the proper groove, we must see to it that we turn it into the proper groove. We want to render obedience to our highest conception of what is the Lord’s will, as far as we are able. Our will will be determined by God as loyal in proportion as it has been on the alert to watch the mind and the body, the tongue and everything pertaining to our conduct.

The Apostle enjoins upon us that we shall be “holy in all manner of conversation.” (1 Pet. 1:15) The word conversation here has its broad meaning. It relates to our intercourse with others—all of our conduct with respect to others—our manner of life. We are to be holy in everything that pertains to our lives—in our thoughts, words and deeds. This is a very high standard; and no wonder that the Lord has set a high standard! It is for us to learn what this standard is, and to help others to know what it is.

This is why we spend a few years this side of the veil after we have given our hearts to Jesus. We say that we have taken up our cross to follow Jesus, and the Lord wishes to demonstrate whether this is true. He is watching our course, and the foreordained number will be found for the bride class. Others will be given another position not so good; and those who manifest that they have not the true spirit of obedience will die the second death.

GREATNESS THE REWARD OF SERVICE

JULY 12.—Mark 10:32-45.

“The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”—Verse 45.

It was at the close of Jesus' ministry. For more than three years the Master had been calling his disciples and instructing them. They had come to recognize him as the Messiah, the heir of all God's promises, the one through whom the Messianic kingdom would be set up, which would bless all the world of mankind—the dead as well as the living.

The Master had particularly assured them that if faithful they should sit with him in his throne. However, he had not told them that his kingdom would be a spiritual one, and that they would need the change of the first resurrection before they could be sharers of it. He had not yet made clear to them the fact that a whole age would intervene before they would be sharers in the kingdom, and the kingdom itself be established amongst men. But he had hinted all this. He had said, “I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when the Spirit of truth is come, it will bring my words to your remembrance and show you respecting future things.”

Jesus did, however, begin to break to the disciples a part of the news necessary for them to know and appreciate, lest they should be entirely overwhelmed and discouraged. He told them that he was going up to Jerusalem, and that the result would be that he would be delivered to the Gentiles to be crucified. St. Peter, always courageous, this time brought upon himself a severe rebuke. He undertook to correct the Master, saying, “You are not telling us truth; these things shall not happen to you, and your saying them to us will only discourage us. You are, as I have confessed, the great Messiah. You are to reign; You are not to be crucified at all. Give up that thought, dear Master; and let us continue to think about the glorious things of the kingdom into which you will soon be ushered and in which we, as your faithful disciples, will soon have a share.

But Jesus rebuked St. Peter, saying, “Get thee behind me, adversary; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

And now in this lesson Jesus, in the same journey, again brought up the matter of the shame, ill-treatment and death which was to come upon him. This time he included the thought of his resurrection from the dead on the third day. However, the matter was incomprehensible to the disciples; and they merely said to themselves, This is another of those dark sayings of the Master which seem so mysterious. Remember how he said to us on one occasion, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” That was a dark saying, and we could not understand it. But we hung on, although we did not then, neither do we now, understand the meaning of these words. Here we have another similar statement: the Master is representing himself as receiving the treatment due to the vilest of criminals—crucifixion.

They could not comprehend the meaning of the Master's words; these thoughts seemed so different from what they had been expecting! How could they receive them? Not until after Pentecost did they get the full grasp of the situation and of what Jesus had told them. There the holy Spirit began to make plain the divine arrangement—that the sufferings of all the church must come first before the glories of the kingdom would be revealed and the blessings to the world begin.

ON RIGHT HAND AND LEFT

Another of the Gospels tells us that the mother of James and John came with them and voiced their plea for them. They believed that the time for distributing the honors of the kingdom was very near at hand. They wanted to speak for prominent places. We need not assume that these two dear disciples sought the positions closest to the Master merely for ambition's sake. Rather, let us suppose that they loved the Lord very dearly, and therefore thought that they could appreciate a nearness to him more than could some of the others. Indeed, they evidently appreciated being near to the Master in his hours of suffering and deepest experiences; and they were permitted to come nearer than the majority of the twelve. On several special occasions the Lord took with him the same James and John, and Peter. They were with him in the holy mount, and at the awakening of Jairus' daughter, and in Gethsemane's Garden. They were glorious characters, whom the Lord greatly loved.

Let us mark carefully the words of Jesus. He did not say, My dear disciples, there will be no throne to sit upon, but on the contrary he declared that while there would be a throne, and while there would be places of preference in that throne, they would not be distributed by himself, but by the Father.

The Father stands as the representative of absolute justice,

while Jesus stands as the representative of mercy, compassion, forgiveness. Places in the Millennial kingdom are not to be given on the score of mercy or favoritism, but absolutely on the score of quality. The Lord Jesus himself will have the highest place, because he is worthy. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” The Father will give these to him, as he has promised. Indeed, he has given our Lord honor and great glory, even though this kingdom glory still waits until the church, the body of Christ, shall have been completed by the change of the first resurrection.

WHAT KINGDOM IS MEANT

For many centuries confusion has prevailed amongst Christian people respecting the kingdom of Messiah, so frequently mentioned by Jesus and the apostles, and the basis of this lesson. There was no confusion at first, nor for nearly two hundred years after Jesus' day. The early church understood very well the promise that Messiah would come a second time, would receive the church to glory with himself and establish the kingdom of divine power for the rule of the world and the subjugation of all things to the will of God; and that this Messianic kingdom would require a thousand years to fulfil its mission. But by and by a theory sprang up to the effect that the church was to be organized as Messiah's kingdom and was to conquer the world before Jesus' second advent.

This unscriptural view changed the whole course of church history. Instead of longer preaching the Gospel merely with a view to calling out and perfecting the saintly few who would have a hearing ear and an appreciative heart, to make these ready for kingdom honor and glory, the course changed. Thereafter the endeavor was to grasp civil power. Intrigues were begun, false claims were asserted, and the endeavor was made to obtain control of kings and nations along the lines of superstition. Additionally, persecutions were used; and as much as possible civil rulers were cajoled, threatened, induced, to become the tools of ecclesiasticism, for the purpose of establishing a world-wide dominion of the church.

For a time—through inquisitions, etc., etc.—these things flourished; but ever since 1799 all thought of ecclesiastical dominion of the earth has given way. In their confusion many have lost all faith in the Messianic kingdom, and few are looking for it at Christ's second coming. Many in perplexity discuss a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of believers. Others believe that Christ's kingdom is now represented in the great governments of the world, and yet are abashed and confused when asked whether certain portions of Messiah's kingdom are building dreadnaughts to destroy other portions of the same kingdom.

By the majority of Christian people, the teaching of the Bible seems to be regarded as not consistent nor logical; otherwise, they would see that St. James, St. John and the other Apostles could not sit upon twelve thrones without there being a ruling kingdom. They would also see that the kingdom must be future, in harmony with the Lord's prayer, “Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as in heaven.” What we need is to cease handling the Word of God deceitfully. We must learn to read our Bible reverently and to understand it by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Bible students who do so are receiving great blessings, and are perceiving that Messiah's kingdom is not only future, but apparently nigh—even at the door.

“ARE YE ABLE?”—“MY CUP, MY BAPTISM?”

To the two dear disciples who requested places of special nearness to the Master in the kingdom, Jesus made known the fact that any position whatever in the kingdom would require the fulfilment of certain conditions. It was not enough that they had been called to discipleship. It was not enough that they had surrendered all to follow the Lord; that they had been with him, had heard his teachings and had assented to them so far as they could understand them. There must be something more; else they might not get into the kingdom at all.

These conditions the Master declared, saying, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” What did he mean? Did he mean, Would they be able or willing to eat the Passover supper, and there partake of the unleavened bread and drink of the memorial cup which he would institute? They had already been baptizing many. Did Jesus mean that they should be baptized again in water? What was the purport of the words, my cup, my baptism?

We reply that Jesus' “cup” was the one to which he

elsewhere referred, saying, "The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" In the divine plan God had already marked out that whoever will be of the great Messiah, and entrusted with the Messianic kingdom glory, honor and power for the blessing of the world, must demonstrate worthiness of that honor and glory. In the case of Jesus himself the cup meant all those experiences of ignominy and shame, including crucifixion, which he experienced during the three and one-half years of his earthly ministry and which he fully accomplished at Calvary when he cried, "It is finished."

Of that cup the Master said to his disciples, "Drink ye all of it." In other words, whoever will be successful as a disciple of Christ in attaining to joint-heirship with the Master in his kingdom glory, honor and power, must first of all demonstrate a loyalty and faithfulness in respect to suffering with the Master, must prove his love, loyalty and faithfulness unto death—walking in the foot-steps of Jesus.

The Master made no reference to water baptism, but to his baptism into death, of which he spoke a few days later, saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The Master's baptism in the beginning of his ministry was merely a symbol, or picture, of the real baptism. His going down into the water, his burial in it and rising up from it symbolically represented his going down into death and his resurrection therefrom. His real baptism into death progressed for three and a half years, from Jordan to Calvary; and when he cried on the cross, "It is finished," He meant that his baptism into death was completed. He was raised up out of that death-baptism on the third day by the Father's power, to the Father's right hand, which position he will always occupy.

This was the Master's baptism. It meant the full renunciation of all earthly rights. And now he asked those dear disciples whether or not they were ready, able or willing to follow him to this extent—to be sharers of his cup of ignominy and his baptism into death. Only by faithfully following him thus might they hope for any share in his kingdom. The same principle must apply to all the followers of Jesus. It is for each of us to decide whether we will drink of his cup or not; whether we will share in his baptism into death or not. Only the lowly, self-sacrificing, will be able or willing to endure such an experience.

Let us now apply these thoughts to the incorrect views of the kingdom so frequently held. How could these sentiments be applied to any kingdom of God in the heart, or how could they apply to the various kingdoms of earth? Is it necessary for the kings of the earth to partake of Christ's ignominy and sacrifice unto death, by consecration, before they can reign? Or, applying the matter to the church systems at the present time, as some do, is it through great difficulty

that any attain membership in the earthly institutions called the church of Christ? Does it require self-denial to get into these? Are all who are in them buried with Christ in baptism—into his death? Do they all partake of the cup of his sufferings? Surely not! Only a right view of the kingdom dovetails into these various statements. We must see that the kingdom is the pearl of great price, to obtain which all else must be sacrificed.—Matthew 13:46.

"WE ARE ABLE"—"YE SHALL INDEED"

In the other account of this incident the disciples answered that they were able, that is, willing, to undertake to share the Master's cup and his baptism. Of course they did not know clearly what all this meant; but they were able, or willing, ready, to do anything that the Master would command. So it must be with all who, like those faithful apostles, shall come off conquerors and share with the Redeemer in the glory, honor and immortality promised to his kingdom class, the bride class.

In that account, Jesus is represented as replying, "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with my baptism." That is to say, willingness on the part of all is as much as the Lord could reasonably require of his disciples. We have not the power that he possessed: we are sinners by nature. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." We can merely, therefore, will to do right; and the Lord must needs take us under his care and into his school of affliction and experience, giving us the lessons necessary to prove our loyalty and faithfulness even unto death. How gracious, how Godlike, that because of our weakness as members of the fallen race we could not do all ourselves, God has provided for us in the Savior whom he has appointed! Our imperfections are accounted as imputed to the Redeemer, while his perfections are accounted as imputed to us. Thus through him only may we hope to gain the kingdom and glory and honor and immortality.

CHIEF SERVANT—MOST HONORED

The other apostles were indignant that St. James and St. John should have made such a request. However, the incident afforded Jesus opportunity for laying down the rules which must govern in respect to greatness in the Messianic kingdom. Whichever one will serve the others most will thereby be demonstrating to God a greater fitness for a higher place. This is different, as Jesus says, from the ordinary course of affairs, where a lordship is exercised according to some arbitrary rule.

The rule of the kingdom will be that the one who serves most will have the highest honor. Thus Jesus himself is pre-eminently servant of all. His position is the highest in the kingdom by divine appointment, and others will range next to him in proportion as they have his spirit of love, service, obedience and loyalty.

WHAT BLIND BARTIMAEUS SAW

JULY 19.—Mark 10:46-52.

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

It was the Passover season, and many were journeying in the same direction with Jesus—toward Jerusalem. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, sat by the wayside, hoping to receive charity from the passersby. An unusual commotion was created as Jesus passed, and Bartimaeus inquired the cause. The answer was that Jesus the Nazarene had just passed by.

Bartimaeus had heard that Jesus was the reputed Messiah who, according to the Scriptures, would eventually bless the whole world and do away with sin, sorrow and pain. He had heard that already Jesus was performing cures, healing the sick, casting out demons and opening the eyes of the blind. Oh, he thought, Why did not some one tell me while he was passing! He has healed others, might I not be one of the favored ones?

His faith and hope flamed up; and he shouted, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Be quiet! Make less noise! Do not interrupt the Great Teacher; He is talking with others, said the passersby. But Bartimaeus felt that it was now or never with him; he lifted his voice above that of the multitude, and shouted more loudly than ever, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus heard the voice, and ever ready to be gracious to those who call for mercy, he bade the blind man come to him. It would show his faith: it would thus be a more important lesson to the multitude. Helped by others, Bartimaeus finally found himself in the presence of Jesus; and the Master said, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Prompt-

ly the answer came, "O Lord, that I might receive my sight!" Jesus said unto him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." And immediately he received his sight, and became one of the followers in the concourse, praising the divine power and acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah.

"JESUS, THOU SON OF DAVID"

The blind man's words, "Jesus, thou Son of David," had special significance to him and to the Jews of his day, which is lost so far as the multitudes of today are concerned. The Jews knew that Messiah as the great High Priest was in a measure prefigured by Aaron; and as the great Lawgiver, was prefigured, or typified, by Moses; and as the great King was prefigured, or typified, by Solomon, David's wise, rich, influential son, his successor in the kingdom. The uniting of all these lines of prophecy is found pictorially represented in Melchizedek, who was a priest upon his throne; that is to say, he was a priest of God at the same time that he was a prince or ruler—he had a double office.

St. Paul calls our attention to this fact that Jesus is not ultimately to be a priest after the order of Aaron—merely a sacrificing priest, without any reigning power; but that he is to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. St. Paul cites the divine declaration to this effect in the Psalms of David: "I have sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4) St. Paul bases highly important arguments upon this prophetic statement. He shows the divine foreintention in respect to

Jesus and the Messianic kingdom, and the character of the same.

The committee arranging the order of these International Bible Studies evidently had in mind the fact that the miracles of Jesus at his first advent were the merest foreshadows of the greater miracles and works which he will accomplish at his second advent. In line with this thought, they have given us as the Golden Text for today's lesson Isaiah's prophecy respecting Messiah's kingdom. This agrees with the general trend of the Apostolic teaching to the effect that all the miracles which Jesus performed were foreshadows, or illustrations, of the greater work which is to be accomplished by the establishment of his Millennial kingdom, in due time. We read, "These things did Jesus and manifested forth his glory"; that is, showed in advance his kingdom glory and power.

We are not for a moment to think that Jesus and his disciples attempted to heal all the sick of Palestine. On the contrary, while many were healed, they were the exceptions amongst the multitudes that were sick—such as manifested special faith. In the present instance, Bartimaeus was only one of many blind beggars by the wayside, we may be sure; for Palestine, Syria and Egypt are the lands of blind beggars. The Lord had already passed Bartimaeus by, not heeding him, not offering to heal him. He had his eyesight restored because of his faith, because he cried out, because he would not listen to those who sought to still his voice and turn aside his faith.

THE WORST OF BLINDNESS

A similar case, we remember, was at the Pool of Bethesda. Multitudes were lying there, waiting for the movement of the waters, in order to step into the pool for healing. Jesus addressed himself to only one of these, saying, "Take up thy bed and walk." It is when we come to understand that the miracles of Jesus pictured forth coming blessings during his Messianic kingdom that we get the proper view of matters, and may rejoice accordingly that a good, glad day is coming for the blind, all the lame, all the deaf, as indicated by Isaiah's prophecy.—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

"Eyes have they, but they see not; ears, but they hear not." The whole world is referred to in the Bible as being blind and deaf to the things that are most interesting, most profitable. Only an occasional one here and there, like Bartimaeus of old, grasps the possibility of relief from his blindness and deafness, and takes the proper steps to secure relief. St. Paul tells us of this blind condition, saying, "The god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them that believe not."—2 Corinthians 4:4.

Six thousand years ago, Satan started this work of blinding human understanding to the goodness of God and to those things which would make for their highest welfare. He still continues it. He began by contradicting the Almighty when he told Mother Eve that the penalty for sin, "Dying, thou shalt die," was a deception on God's part. Satan declared, "Ye shall not surely die"; and he persuaded her that this threat was merely an attempt on God's part to keep her from great blessings of knowledge, and that the true welfare of herself and her husband would be promoted by disobedience.

The question naturally arises, What motive did Satan have in misrepresenting matters to our first parents? Why should he be interested in their disobedience and alienation from God? The answer is that thus only could he make them effectually his own slaves of sin. So long as they recognized God as their wise, loving parent and had confidence in him, they would remain loyal to him, and correspondingly would not be the servants of sin.

Satan has continued this work of misrepresenting God's divine character and plan for now six thousand years. St. Paul says that he puts light for darkness, and darkness for light, and that "we are not ignorant of his devices." After telling us that the god of this world has blinded the minds of all unbelievers, St. Paul adds the explanation that this is done lest the light of the knowledge of the glory of God should shine into their hearts—lest they should see the real goodness of God. He explains that this light of God's goodness is reflected, to those who see it, from the face of Jesus Christ our Lord.

In this beautiful, poetic form the Apostle presents a wonderful truth which Bible students are more and more coming to appreciate. God is love; and all the stories that we have heard to the contrary are intended to blind our minds and prejudice us against our best Friend. Hence it is that Satan has persistently propagated, not only amongst the heathen, but also amongst Christians, various doctrines which are the reverse of the truth. St. Paul styles these "doctrines of demons."—1 Timothy 4:1.

During the dark ages the adversary worked these into our Christian creeds, had them painted upon the walls of Christian churches, and had them acted out in theatricals of a darker day. These all picture God as the worst imaginable devil. They all represent him as knowing what he was doing when he created our race and purposed from the beginning that nearly every member of the race should suffer an eternity of torture. No wonder that during the dark ages the world was not drawn to God by these horrible misrepresentations! No wonder that even when the Bible came back to the reverence of the people, these doctrines of devils adhered to it, and have since hindered the world from loving it!

Now we are learning that we were all more or less blinded by the adversary; and as we get free from his blinding influence, our hearts rejoice in the favor of him who has brought us out of darkness into marvelous light.

ONLY THE FEW YET SEE

Writing to the church of Ephesus, the Apostle intimates that while they had seen something, there was still much for them to see. We quote: "Making mention of you in my prayers, that . . . the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." And again: "I bow my knees unto the Father . . . that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." We still need to offer this prayer on behalf of ourselves and of all the church.

As for the world, it still lies in darkness, in the wicked one, as the Apostle declares, under the bondage of the superstitions which Satan has prospered. Only the few now get their eyes open, as did Bartimaeus. They are people of special character, who see special opportunities and who so greatly long for the light of the knowledge of God that they are willing to ignore the general sentiment of those who bid them be quiet and continue in ignorance—blindness. It is those who hunger and thirst after righteousness that have the promise of being filled, and those who are longing for sight that may hope to have it, in the present time.

But, thank God, a glorious change is promised! Satan, the prince of darkness, is to give place to the glorious Prince of Light, the same one who healed Bartimaeus in a typical way more than eighteen centuries ago. He is to take the kingdom. Divine power is back of the program by which Satan is to be bound for a thousand years and all his works of darkness to be undone. Instead of misrepresentation of God's true character and loving plans, the reverse will be given to mankind. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep—until no one shall need to say to his neighbor, Know thou the Lord; for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest.—Isaiah 11:9; Jeremiah 31:34.

"ALL THE BLIND EYES SHALL BE OPENED"

Whoever in reading this prophecy thinks merely of the natural sight, and of the fact that all natural blindness will be done away in Messiah's kingdom, sees only a small portion of the glorious work to be accomplished. The blindness of ignorance and superstition with which Satan has afflicted the race is far worse than the physical blindness. And the assurance is given us by the Lord that all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped. The Scriptural declaration, "Every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him," has undoubtedly special reference to the eyes of understanding. Jesus declared to his disciples, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye shall see me." Yea, the Apostle John says, "We shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is."

By the miraculous change of the first resurrection the church class shall be made spirit beings like unto the angels, and will then see the Master face to face, because spirit beings like him. But the world will never see him in this manner. They will see him with the eyes of their understanding opened, just as believers now see the Father and see Jesus by the eyes of faith and the eyes of understanding; just as we see the things which "eye hath not seen, neither have entered into the heart of man"—the things which God has in reservation for them that love him, the things which God has revealed unto us by his spirit, the things which we see with our spiritual vision.

Similarly, during the Millennial period, all blinded eyes will be opened to the goodness, the greatness, the love, the power of God. Thus the world will come to know God, being helped to that knowledge through the Messianic kingdom; and all who avail themselves of the privileges then extended may attain to that glorious degree of knowledge mentioned by Jesus when he said: "This is life eternal, that they might

know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

HELPERS, NOT HINDERERS

In the type, the people first of all bade Bartimaeus keep quiet; but when Jesus called him, they joined in giving words of encouragement and in helping the blind man to the Savior. The latter action should represent the course of all who are the Lord's people. They should encourage the blind, the superstitious—all who are out of the way—to come to the Savior, to realize that he is indeed gracious and willing to save them from their blindness.

We might extend these observations to various affairs of life, and say that many are blind as respects the beauties of the Bible, and that all who have gotten their eyes of understanding opened to see the beauties of its real teachings should be on the alert to assist others to the same blessing. We might extend the lesson to the use of the natural sight. Some are so deeply engrossed in business or in pleasure-seeking that they never lift their eyes to the glorious beauties of nature. The shining stars are telling of a divine wisdom and of an omnipotent Creator, yet the blinded ones

fail to get a blessing from the message, because they fail to see. "Eyes have they, but they see not."

All nature is speaking of a great, eternal God, and telling us that humanity is his chief earthly handiwork, and that our highest aim should be to seek to know him and to serve him. But how many are born blind and deaf to the lessons of the stars, of which the Prophet declares, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard"! There are some so blind mentally that they see not that the unhappiness which they feel is largely the result of their own selfishness. They see not that their homes might be more beautiful, might be places of comfort and happiness, instead of places of selfish grasping, upbraidings, discontent.

All who realize these conditions to be prevailing in themselves or others should be crying out, "O Lord, that I might receive my sight!" and should be rejoicing also to the extent that they are learning that the time is coming, yea, is near at hand, when Messiah's kingdom will grant the blessing of the opening of the eyes of understanding to all of Adam's race.

MIND AND WILL

In THE WATCH TOWER for April 15th there occurs a statement which seems to call for an explanation. On Page 117, lines 11 and 12, we read: "The will of the body was reckoned entirely dead before the individual could be counted a new creature." While it is true that the words mind and will are often used interchangeably, nevertheless, it has been our custom to differentiate between these; but in the above sentence this was neglected.

The will of the flesh dies actually; and we receive a new will, a holy will, the will of God, instead of our own will. If that will should ever cease to be holy, and turn again to be a fleshly will, that would be what the Apostle terms, "drawing back unto perdition." St. Peter says that such a change of will would correspond to a sow returning to her wallowing in the mire, after she had been washed. Those who turn wilfully and deliberately back to the will of the flesh are described as "twice dead and plucked up by the roots." In other words: This would mean that, the fleshly will having revived, the spirit-begotten new will had died.

But with the mind it is different. The mind is a part of the body. The body has its fleshly appetites, preferences, propensities, and is continually clamoring for the earthly rights against the decision of the new will. The fleshly mind, therefore, is not dead; else it could not clamor and war against the spirit of the new will, the new creature in Christ Jesus.—Galatians 5:17.

Such clear-cut distinctions are to be found only in the Bible, and probably will not be appreciated by any but close Bible students. What we would better, therefore, have said is, "The mind of the flesh is reckoned dead, before the individual can be counted a new creature."

This is in line with the Apostle's statement, "Reckon ye yourselves dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God." Again we read, "Mortify [dead] your members which are on the earth"—your fleshly mind. This mortifying, or deadening, of the fleshly mind means a continuous struggle on the part of the new will against the old creature reckoned dead, but not actually dead.

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

A MATURING OBLIGATION

Dear Brother in Christ:—

Accept love and greetings from one who has been greatly blessed by your faithful service. For several years I have recognized THE WATCH TOWER publications as the means of grace provided for the "feet-members" of The Christ—the Anointed.

The information herein desired I feel sure has already been given, had I a mind sufficient to have grasped and retained it. But I hope you will bear with my feebleness and, if you think proper, serve me a morsel of advice.

I have a wife and three children for whom I am able to earn but a bare living. As a colporteur I have been able to provide as well for my family as by other employment. For some months I have suffered from a peculiar physical weakness, causing a nervous strain which, in turn, affected my mind. My salvation has been in concentrating my attention upon the study of God's great plan, so that, by his grace, what seemed about to wreck me was turned into a great blessing. I have found, in secret prayer and study, peace of mind which enabled me to bear my disordered condition, although I grew physically weaker.

Having taken up the colporteur work I find joy and peace in keeping actively engaged in the service, but I can barely make expenses. I am owing a note at bank which will be due October 1st. I have a life-policy for \$1,000, and I have an undimmed faith in the correctness of our chronology. In spite of the deadly attacks of Satan I have hope that I shall, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom.

My question is, Shall I be accounted faithful if I go on in the colporteur work and leave it to the Lord's providence to provide the \$100 to pay the note on October 1st? I have given instructions that in case of my death the note be paid from the policy, as it now appears that the insurance companies may hold up longer than the church militant.

I wish to express my deep appreciation of the "meat in due season" provided by our Lord through you, as a "chosen vessel," and that to me, also, the article, "The Peace of God," in the August 1st TOWER was a master-piece and one of the weapons of resisting Satan's attacks upon me. I have

learned that there is life in activity, mentally, physically and spiritually.

Pardon my obtruding upon your valuable time. Please do as you see fit in this matter, but I shall be glad to be remembered in your prayers—that I may be given strength to serve acceptably. It is a delight to remember you and all the dear ones at Brooklyn Bethel and everywhere.

Your brother in love, service and hope,

* * *

[We advise that you pay the interest in full, immediately, apologizing for delay, stating your excuse and promising to be punctual as possible in the future. Thus the matter may stand for some time, until you can conveniently pay the debt according to the evident original intent of the lender. But if, at any time, payment be demanded, you should cash your insurance to pay, or borrow on it.—Editor.]

GRATEFUL FOR THE TRUTH

My Dear Pastor:—

It is nearly twelve months since I wrote, thanking you for the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. In that letter I said that if nothing happened apparently to fulfil our expectations, that 1914 marks the end of Gentile favor and the setting up of Christ's kingdom, I should be as prepared as ever to accept with gratitude and joy your explanations of the Scriptures.

Oh, what blessings I have received from THE STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, THE WATCH TOWER, the tracts, TABERNACLE SHADOWS, etc.; I have feasted royally on "present truth." I grow hungrier after each meal! I feel I must thank you, and tell you also what a blessing the vow has been to me.

I came into the truth in a remarkable way. Having been a professing Christian for thirty years, and taking part in all kinds of religious work, yet I was most unhappy, with a hungering for something I never received. One day I said, I will read nothing but the Bible; I will know, if possible, what is God's will and do it with his help.

After this for weeks I was seeking books to throw light on the Bible. A man brought some Swedenborgian literature to the village, and loaned me one of their books. One night I took this up, as I thought, and found I had THE DIVINE