

## THE MARK OF CRYSTALLIZATION OF CHARACTER

*"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the work for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*—Phil. 3:13, 14.

In the epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul expresses his full appreciation of his opportunity to gain a prize, something worthy of laying hold upon, of grasping fully, of getting possession of. What was that for which the great Apostle was striving and which he had not yet attained? He spoke of this thing as a prize, which he was pressing along to win.

We may view "the mark for the prize of the high calling" from two standpoints, both of which are correct. From one standpoint, this mark is that of heart-likeness to God's dear Son, of perfection of intention, of love for righteousness, for God, for the brethren of Christ, and for the world, even our enemies. This degree of character-development should be attained as early as possible in our Christian experience, and should be such that, were we to die at any time after its attainment, God would count us worthy of a share in the first resurrection.

From the other standpoint, this "mark for the prize of the high calling" is that of crystallization of character in the likeness of our Lord. After having attained a heart-likeness to Christ, we must hold it fast, and see that in all the testings which the Lord permits to come upon us, we are counted by him as overcomers, not in our own strength, but in that of our Redeemer. This mark of crystallized character is not attained so early in our Christian experience as is the mark of character-development. But by fighting the good fight until the end of our course, we crystallize our characters in love for the principles of righteousness, for God, for the brethren and even for our enemies. If thus faithful, we shall win the prize of glory, honor and immortality.

### PERFECTION, NOT CONSECRATION, THE MARK

There is no reason to think that our consecration is the mark; for our testing, our proving comes after our consecration, and not before it. No one would be at the mark merely because he is consecrated, but because he had endured the testing, thus proving that his consecration was from the heart and that he was sincere in the devotion of his every power to the service of God. We cannot suppose that the mark is reached the next moment after consecration. Some degree of character-development must be possessed; there must be some mark of character, in order that God may count that person worthy of everlasting life.

God's standard of character is perfection, which must be maintained by loyalty and obedience under whatever tests he permits to come to individuals upon any plane of life. No one will get the prize of everlasting life unless he successfully passes those tests. We realize that the church has been under trial throughout the Gospel age, as to her worthiness to obtain "glory, honor and immortality"—joint-heirship with her Lord.—Rom. 8:17.

From the Scriptures we learn that throughout the Messianic age the world will be tried by The Christ, and that even after passing that test they will not receive the reward of everlasting life until God shall have proved them at the end of Christ's reign by loosing Satan for a "little season." (1 Cor. 15:24; Rev. 20:7-10) The fact that the world is thus to be tried by both The Christ and God confirms the thought that God has a standard, or mark, of character to be attained by all those who are loyal and obedient to him—on any plane of existence.

While this mark of character to be attained by the world during Messiah's reign is not the one to which St. Paul refers in our text, nevertheless there is such a character-mark to be reached by mankind. Those who then attain the mark will have everlasting life on the human plane. But those who attain the mark to which the Apostle refers will be given eternal life on the divine plane.

### THE MARK OF CHARACTER-CRYSTALLIZATION

The Apostle was a noble example of one who had reached the mark. So far as we know, he was ready to die at any time; hence it was not this mark of character-development to which he had not attained. He had not yet attained to the prize itself, and could not do so until his change should come. He was constantly pressing along, trusting that God would give him all the things that are in reservation for "them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9) We could not think the Apostle to mean that he would reach this mark of character-development just at the moment before death. This would be an absurdity of thought.

Our Lord Jesus was at the mark of perfect character at the

time of his consecration; and he maintained himself at the mark. As a sacrifice he would have been acceptable at any time. It was his part to consecrate his life and not to hold it back. It was the Father's part so to arrange matters that the Jews might not take our Lord until the Father's hour for him had come. In everything that he did he submitted himself to the Father's will. Our Lord spoke of his "cup" as the one which the Father had prepared for him.—John 18:11.

If our Lord had determined for himself the time and the manner of his death, then he was pouring the cup. If the Jews had determined these points, then they were pouring the cup. But neither our Lord nor the Jews did so, for both time and manner were foretold by the prophets. Our Lord took the cup and accepted it as the Father's providence for him. If the Father's providence had led to his death a year sooner or two years sooner, if the Father's will had been expressed in our Lord's crucifixion at an earlier time, even then it would have been well with him. But he "learned obedience by the things which he suffered."—Heb. 5:8; 2:10.

At Jordan our Lord was shown to be perfect and to have made a perfect consecration, both by the descent of the holy Spirit and by the voice of Jehovah. (Matt. 3:16, 17) He had also a perfect body—though it was earthly—in which the new creature operated. But his obedience must be tested—his loyalty even unto death. Whatever the degree of testing to which our Lord might have been subjected, it was just the right amount, according to the Father's wisdom. Our Lord would have been just as much an overcomer had he died at any time after his consecration. But if he had died sooner than he did, it would merely have proved that the Father did not require as much evidence of our Lord's faithfulness and loyalty as he did require.

### OUR LORD AN OVERCOMER AT CONSECRATION

Here some one may ask, "Is it proper to say that our Lord was an overcomer as a new creature at the time when he made his consecration?"

Our answer is, Yes. An overcomer is a victor. The word does not imply that a man has completed the victory, however; for we sometimes say, He will lead them from victory to victory. So with our Lord. He continued faithful as an overcomer down unto death; but he was not counted as an overcomer until death. Between the Father and our Lord as a human being there was no Mediator, and as a new creature there was neither robe to cover nor advocate to represent in case of any deviation from the will of God; and the slightest defection therefrom would have meant the second death.

The Scriptures give us two pictures of our Lord as an overcomer at his consecration, where he gained the first great victory over his flesh. The first of these pictures (Lev. 16:11), the killing of the bullock on the Day of Atonement, represents the death of our Lord's humanity at the moment when he consecrated himself at Jordan. There he gained a victory and continued victorious until the end of his course.

The second picture is found in Rev. 5:2-7. Here our Lord is represented by a newly slain lamb. He was not this newly slain lamb at his death when he had finished his course, but at his consecration, when he began his course. The proclamation which the Revelator heard was, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" We read that John wept much. "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof . . . And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." Our Lord alone was worthy of the honor of receiving the divine plan into his care. We also read that John looked and saw the newly slain Lamb open the book.—Rev. 6.

After our Lord had entered upon his consecration he was the newly slain Lamb. Then the Father gave into his hand the scroll of the great divine plan of the ages—the scroll written on both inside and outside. The outside he was already able to read. But the inside, which contained information on spiritual things, remained sealed.

As soon as our Lord came up out of the water after his baptism, he was begotten of the holy Spirit and began to understand spiritual things. "The heavens [higher things] were opened unto him." The time when he began to be considered the slain Lamb, the time when the scroll was delivered to him, was the time of his consecration.

**SUBMISSION THE FIRST REQUISITE—PATIENT ENDURANCE  
THE SECOND**

A good illustration of the process of character-development and crystallization is afforded by the work of a potter. First, he must select the right kind of clay, for some clays would produce very coarse ware, others would crack or warp in the drying, and still others would not stand the intense heat. Having selected the proper clay the potter subjects it to very many processes of grinding, mixing and wetting until it comes from the mill a soft, plastic mass of the consistency of tough dough, ready for the potter's use. Then comes the moulding into the article desired. The dish is formed, or shaped, with care and dried. Next it is placed in the kiln and fired with an intense heat for two or three days and nights. Then it requires a long time to cool before it can be removed from the kiln. But even then it is only a porous, leaky vessel, altogether unfit for use until it has been dipped into a liquid glaze, or slip, which it readily absorbs.

Again it is subjected to the heat of the glaze kiln, which not only melts the glaze, but converts it into a perfectly transparent glaze all over the surface, making the article beautifully smooth and comely. But if the vessel is of very choice porcelain, to be made still more attractive to the eye by decorations, the ornamentation and gilding must be done at this stage, and the vessel must again be placed in the kiln for a third firing. Some vessels which have stood all the other tests, fail at this point and are cast into the waste heap. But if the vessel passes successfully the last test, it is ready for the service for which it was designed.

So in our Lord's case. Not only was he perfect as a man, but his own will was in complete subjection to the Father's will. When trials came, there was no swerving, no twisting, no bending. He was of the proper material. His heart (applying this word to the mind) was of the proper character. So must it be with us. Those who will be accepted and found worthy of the great reward will be of his character-likeness in this respect; they will be loyal to God's will. Not only will they endeavor both to ascertain and to do the Father's will, but they will be in heart submission to that will in every degree. The "cup" they will be required to drink is the same that our Lord drank—and "all of it!"

To follow in his steps, we must first reach this mark of character-development; and having done all, we must stand there. It is well to repeat the thought that it will not do for us to think that one reaches the mark of proper character-development just at the moment of death. Character should be attained as soon as possible. But having reached this character-development called the "mark," it is for us to stand faithful, and not be thrust away from it by the opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil. All such opposition must be endured before we can win the prize. Some of the noblest characters, who have been in an acceptable condition, and used of the Lord, did not get to the mark until they had passed through certain severe experiences.

**"WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST"**

The thought of the Apostle seems to be, Here is a certain line of conduct and character-development which God has marked out; and it is the same for all who are in the race. The life of Christ is the rule. If we would attain the mark, obtain the prize, we must follow this line, or rule, or mark.

The Apostle Paul had but one mind or will. "This one thing I do," he said. He was not a double-minded man, at one time thinking he would like to serve the Lord, at another time himself, and then again the adversary, etc. He had accepted the divine proposition to give all his talents to the service of the Lord. He had before his mind the great promise that God had made. For him there was but one thing in life.

The Scriptures tell us that during the Gospel age God has sent out a special call, or invitation, and that those who have accepted that call have "exceeding great and precious promises" of wonderful things to look forward to. All who accept the call should practically forget all the trifling things of life in order to win the prize—by manifesting to God faithfulness, obedience and loyalty. Character, not talent, makes us acceptable. God could give any one intellectual powers as good as ours or better. He will not grant any one a place in the kingdom on account of physical strength or endurance. He will not admit any one to the kingdom because of worldly prosperity or honor of men, or because of riches.

**CONDITIONS REQUIRED IN THE RACE**

What then is God seeking? To what has he called us? The Apostle Peter says that God has "called us to glory and virtue." (2 Peter 1:3) Certain conditions God requires of those who will run in the race. He requires that none be proud, but that they possess humility. And he will have no one in the kingdom of his elect who is weak, vacillating, so far

as his mind is concerned. He may not have a strong intellect; but he must manifest to God that he has a strong will and firm determination, and that he has cut off everything in life in order to win the prize. He must also demonstrate his loyalty to God. He must not merely seek glory, but he must recognize and appreciate his responsibilities to God.

Loyalty is one of the great tests of character—loyalty to God, to his Word, loyalty to principle. Whatever follows, the Christian must be submissive to God, trustful and faithful. To such alone could we expect God to give the great blessings promised to overcomers. Hence we see that the Apostle was quite right in giving up all that he might serve God, that he might please the Father, and thus attain to this glorious reward of joint-heirship with his Son.

**"EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH"**

Not necessarily all who make a consecration, but all whose consecration God accepts, all whom he begets of his holy Spirit to become new creatures, will have the opportunity of reaching this mark of crystallization of character before they die. These will have full testing—"Every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. 12:6) This promise guarantees that they shall have trials and difficulties to develop them in the proper character-likeness of our Lord; and that none of their experiences will be cut short of this attainment. God will see to it that they have the full opportunity to develop character-likeness to Christ. Those who turn to sin wilfully, deliberately, will fall into the second death. Others may fall from the priestly class into the great company. But even these must have sufficient time to manifest their loyalty to God.

At the time of his consecration, our Lord was at the mark by virtue of his perfection. We are not at the mark at the time of our consecration; for we are imperfect. But we wish to do the Lord's will; and we have given ourselves to ascertain what that will is in order that we may render intelligent obedience thereto. In our Lord's case he had no such imperfection to overcome as we have. At the time of his consecration he loved his neighbor as himself, and he loved God with all his heart.

When we consecrate ourselves, we agree to do this; but we do not know what it means; just as St. Peter "wist not" what he said at the time of the transfiguration in the Mount: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." (Matt. 17:4) Neither did the two Apostles know what they were asking when they requested Jesus that they might sit the one on his right and the other on his left hand in the kingdom. Our Lord said to them, "Ye know not what ye ask."—Matt. 20:22.

Since at the time of our consecration we do not fully understand what we do, therefore we do a great deal of running to reach the mark. This our Lord had no need to do; for he was perfect. At consecration he was at the mark of perfect character, so that had he died at any subsequent time he would have received the reward of the Father, who said, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) At his baptism our Lord was at that mark of character which merited the promised reward of the Father, and to which we must attain before we can secure everlasting life, either on the plane of glory or otherwise.

Stephen, who was martyred very soon after Pentecost, must have lived habitually near to the Lord; for he, like Nathaniel, was an "Israelite indeed" in whom was no guile. The fact that the truth of God came to such as these men means that so far as their heart attitude was concerned they had been very near to the Lord under the law as their schoolmaster (Greek, pedagogue), so that when brought to Christ they could quickly learn of him. So it appears to be with us now. The differences in our natural education in right and wrong, in truth and error, are such that we cannot tell just how long it will take for each to attain to the character-likeness of our Lord and thus to prove worthy of eternal life.

**"PUT YE ON THE LORD CHRIST"**

We have suggested that the Lord's people, at the time of their consecration and begetting of the holy Spirit, are not ready for the kingdom, but require development, which time alone can accomplish. Notwithstanding this suggestion, is there not a sense in which God's people are regarded perfect at the time of their consecration—at the moment of their acceptance? Our answer is, Yes; they are counted so, but are not so actually. The flesh is reckoned perfect so that God can accept their offering.

But at this time the new creature is merely a babe in Christ and has not yet attained to the stature of manhood. Therefore, the necessity exists for entering the school of Christ and for "putting on Christ," as the Apostle expresses it. We begin to put on Christ after consecration, and after our begetting of the

holy Spirit. The babe grows into a child, and the child into a man. (Eph. 4:14, 13) The work of growing up into Christ is necessary before the child of God would be fit for the kingdom. The difference between a babe in Christ and one fit for the kingdom is that the latter has been tried and tested and has proved himself to be an overcomer.

When our Lord Jesus was at Jordan he was an overcomer. (Heb. 10:9) He was perfect and had correspondingly a larger appreciation of what he did than we have respecting our course when we consecrate. But he tells us, "Fear not, little flock," "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—Luke 12:32; John 16:33.

Yet even in our Lord's case, while he was an overcomer at the moment of his consecration, he really did not win the prize of the divine nature until the end of his race-course, until there had been demonstrated a sufficiency of worthiness for that high exaltation; and we know that the Father continued tests of obedience even unto the death on the cross. It was not until after this that our Lord was fully accepted as an overcomer, to whom it was granted to sit with the Father in his throne.

#### THE GREAT TEST IS TO REMAIN AT THE MARK

The possession of perfection necessarily means that one is at the mark, as in the case of Adam. The test is, not whether one can reach the mark, but whether one will remain at the mark—"having done all, to stand." (Eph. 6:13) When we reach the mark of character which God approves in every sense of the word, let us continue there. When our Lord came into the world he was perfect, loyal, at the mark—God's standard, perfection. Whether or not he would be moved away from the mark by the contradiction of sinners against himself, was to be proved. But none of these tests led him to abandon his determination to continue at the mark. So it should be with us—to the best of our ability.

The Spirit of God is the same whether manifested in himself or in angels or in men or in new creatures. We do not find the Spirit of God manifest in the majority of men, because of sin. We would find the Spirit of God manifest in angels. We should find the Spirit of God very manifest in the saints, who should carry with them into the new relationship all that they have naturally of the character-likeness to the Lord. The graces of spirit exhibited in the Lord's people are properly to be considered fruits of the holy Spirit; for their possessors have become new creatures, have entered into the race for the prize of the high calling. Some saints might be able by reason of natural qualities to make more rapid progress than would others in developing and perfecting these fruits and graces of the Spirit.

Sometimes the question arises, Should not the Lord's people perferably strive for character-likeness to Christ, with no particular desire as to what the Lord's reward will be? We answer, No. We should have "respect unto the recompense of the reward." In order to have the proper respect for the reward which God promises, it is necessary that we hold it up before us continually, and that we never lose sight of the prize.

Our Lord Jesus does not deprecate this looking at the prize. Listen to his words: "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:5) Thus he prayed to the Father for the reward which the manifestation of his obedience would bring. So it should be with us; not that we have a right to insist that our efforts be rewarded, but that we should think of the blessing which God has promised those who love him, as "exceeding great and precious." Many in the nominal church do not see these things.

Let us keep the goal distinctly before our eyes. Doubtless the Lord meant the knowledge of the prize to serve as a stimulus for our upbuilding and strengthening. We look for "glory, honor and immortality"; and it is right for us to seek for them. Any other attitude would be false modesty. If the thought that it is presumption for us to aspire to the high calling comes before our minds, let us remember that our Lord wants us to be so inspired by the "great and precious promises" that we will work for these things which he has set before us, and that it would be presumption for us to refuse what he offers to us.

#### FREE MORAL AGENCY A FACTOR IN CHARACTER-DEVELOPMENT

Character may be viewed from two different standpoints. When Adam was created, he was a man of great and good character—"crowned with glory and honor." He was perfect, the image of God. There is a difference, however, between a character thus given, and one that is developed and tested by the exercise of free will. Our Heavenly Father desires that his intelligent creatures exercise their wills. Therefore instead of giving Adam a part of his own character-likeness and eliminating that which we call moral choice, he chose to give Adam

his character-likeness, including free moral agency. So God created man in his own image." God foreknew the fall of man and all the circumstances connected with it. He knew that the permission of evil for a time would ultimately result in great blessings for all. He knew that the time would come when every creature in heaven and in earth would be obedient to him, not only because there was no opportunity of doing otherwise, but from choice.

Those who are appreciative of God's character should desire to have this character-likeness. Only such will merit everlasting life amongst either angels or men. God is testing along these lines the worthiness of those who are on trial for life eternal. Hence, "The Father seeketh such to worship him" as "worship him in spirit and in truth"—intelligently.—John 4:23, 24.

#### WE MUST "LOVE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATE INIQUITY"

In the formation of character, we see that the lessons which we learn in the school of Christ are very helpful to us. Originally, man was made in the image of God. Yet in us the image is blurred, indistinct. Those who learn the lessons now and appreciate them to the full will be given no further trial. Those who have not had a sufficiency of opportunity will have a full trial in the age to come. Under the discipline, the chastenings and the rewards of that time, they will learn how much better is righteousness than sin, truth than error. They will develop in the character-likeness of God, which Adam lost, and will see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. They will learn both to will and to do righteousness. All who fail to learn this lesson will be judged unworthy of eternal life.

We see that the angels willed of themselves whether they would be obedient, or be disobedient and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a reason. All the holy angels, who are now in favor with God, are such as have had their testing and have come off victors. Their example will prove more and more a lesson to us as we come to understand it. As a result of this knowledge, we see in God the noblest sentiment that could actuate our Creator and Father in dealing with his creatures; and we are glad that we have chosen to do his will concerning us.

Finally it is important that we should keep in mind the fact that since true love on our part will manifest itself in obedience, then disobedience is an evidence of a loss of love, as viewed from the Lord's standpoint, a defection from loyalty, a failure to endure the tests. We must agree that the Lord's standpoint of judgment is a reasonable one. Should one ask, How would it be if we should disobey through ignorance? The answer is, that the Lord has made provision against our ignorance; first, He has given us the Word of Truth, "that the man of God may be perfect [perfectly informed], thoroughly furnished unto all good works"; and second, He has promised to supply such helps to the spirit of holiness and the understanding of his Word, as will enable us to do what is pleasing in his sight.—2 Tim. 3:17; John 16:13, 14.

Love is the crown of all graces, "the fulfilling of the law." Without a fervent, glowing love, it will be impossible to render obedience or to stand the tests for development and crystallization of character arranged for by divine love. Our Lord tells us that he was beloved of the Father; and the Father himself declared, "This is my beloved Son." We can readily see why our Lord Jesus was greatly beloved, for he expressed and fully manifested the Father's love. But it astounds us to know that this same love is exercised by the Father toward us! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" "The Father himself loveth you!"—1 John 3:1; John 16:27.

#### LOVING OBEDIENCE BRINGS JOY AND PEACE

Let us, dearly beloved, be more than ever careful respecting the Word of the Lord; let us not by negligence give evidence of a decay of love. Our Lord points out that his continuance in the Father's love, as the well-beloved Son, with all which this implies, was because of his obedience to the Father's will; and that following the same line, he must require that we should be obedient to him if we would abide in his love and share his throne and glory.—John 15:10.

Our Lord's instruction and commandments are not intended to terrify us, nor to deprive us of happiness. On the contrary, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy be in you, and that your joy might be filled full." (John 15:11) Those who give surest evidence of living nearest the Lord well know that obedience to the Lord's words, together with the privilege thus obtained of abiding in him and his love, is the greatest joy, a joy which wholly outweighs all the trifling pleasures which the world has to offer. It is the joy and peace which "passeth all understanding," which rules in the heart, and which brings with it the promise, the assurance, "not only of the life which now is, but also of that which is to come."

# THE WORLD CALLED TO REPENTANCE

*"God now commandeth men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."—Acts 17:30, 31.*

When God sentenced Father Adam to death he very properly said nothing about repentance, for he offered Adam no hope of a future life. If, then, no hope of a future life was known to Adam or revealed to him, why should God deal with him at all? Adam was sentenced to death, to destruction. There is no basis upon which to command a man to repent unless something is offered him as a reward for repentance.

God had put upon Adam the sentence of death, which could be removed only by the payment of a ransom-price. God fully intended that some day all mankind should have an opportunity of coming into harmony with him and of having another trial, or judgment, for life; but it was not his due time to explain his program. Therefore, Adam lived and died without any command whatever to repent. And so did his children.

The first intimation of what God might do was given by the Prophet Enoch. But the revelation made by Enoch was not a sufficient basis for offering hope to mankind nor for telling them to repent.—Jude 14, 15.

## A SUGGESTION OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD

So years passed by until the time of Abraham. Then God told Abraham that he would reveal a secret to him, because Abraham was his friend. That secret was not a message to be preached, but to be believed by himself and by those who would be heirs of that promise, which was not yet applicable to any outside of Abraham's descendants. The secret was, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:14) I intend to bless the world, Abraham. If you are obedient to my instructions, your seed will get the blessing and transmit it to the world in general. It was only by implication, therefore, that Abraham had any suggestion that a life of repentance would be rewarded.

In due time God called the children of Israel and dealt with them through Moses. Practically he said, "Do you wish to be my people? If so, come now, enter into a covenant with me; I will be your God and you shall be my people."—Lev. 26:12.

Israel was not commanded to repent, nor were any of the rest of the world. It was an invitation, not a command. God was ready to make a covenant with them. That covenant was that they were to obey the law, and that by their obedience to the Ten Commandments and the spirit of their covenant they would become God's people. But when they tried to keep the law they found that they could not do so, because of inherited weakness. Hence there was nothing more to be said to them along that line. They had had their opportunity and they had failed.

## THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

When Jesus came he kept the law, and inherited all the promises of the Law Covenant. Then he offered a share of the kingdom which God had promised to set up (Dan. 2:44), and blessing, honor and glory to as many of the Jews as would come into harmony with him, as many as would walk in his steps of self-sacrifice and thus have God's favor. (John 1:12) In substance he said, "This is the way. Trust in me and walk in my steps. Thus you shall be my disciples. You shall share in my sufferings now, and by and by in my glory and kingdom."

In due time, after a certain number had been gathered from the Jews, this message was extended to all the Gentiles who were in the right condition of heart. The Gentiles not having indicated their desire to come back into harmony with God as the Jewish nation had done, God then commanded them everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30) This he did through those who were the representatives of his teaching, the apostles and the church. In proportion as they understood the plan of God and were in harmony with it, they could tell their neighbors that a new condition had been established and that God would deal henceforth with the Gentiles.

## THE RANSOM THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD

Why should God deal with the Gentiles now, when he had refused to deal with them before? The explanation of this new condition is that Christ had died, and God's great plan had now matured enough to be made applicable to all men everywhere. God had appointed a day in which to judge the world in righteousness. (Acts 17:30, 31) That great day is the next age, the day of Christ, the day of Messiah's kingdom. God has made this provision for the redemption of all through the death of Christ. Mankind were all under the death sentence, and God could not deal with them until that sentence was lifted, or until provision was made for lifting it. He has not annulled the death sentence, but he has provided a ransom for all. —1 Tim. 2:6.

Whoever knows of this plan of redemption knows that God intends to give every individual of Adam's race an individual

trial for life. That trial will not be merely to determine whether mankind will try to do right and battle against all the evil influences of the world, but God will subdue sin and uplift all of Adam's race who are desirous of being uplifted.

God has declared that no member of Adam's race need die. Everyone who will may return to God through the great Atonement to be effected by the Redeemer. He has not completed this work yet, but to those who have an ear to hear, the word has gone out that there is to be a future trial, and that the manner of one's life now will have a bearing upon that trial. It is proper to tell this now, because the provision has been made through Christ's death.

## THE PRESENT MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Prior to the Gospel age it was of no use to tell the people to come into harmony with God. But now the whole world is to be brought into a trial to help them and not to condemn them—a trial to see whether they are worthy to have the everlasting life that God will provide for them and assist the willing to attain. Wherever people are willing to hear, the message is, Repent! repent! Cease from sin, and this reformation of character will have an influence upon your everlasting life.

If one is not of the church class he is not in trial for life or death. But it will be to his advantage to live uprightly, for there is a time of reckoning coming. God has provided for this day of trial in the death of Christ. Beforehand, however, the Lord is selecting a church class. The Lord is thus preparing a great class of missionaries who will do everything possible to assist men out of sin and degradation back to harmony with God.

In times past God acted as though he did not notice when sin was committed—unless it was a grievous sin. Then he merely took the lives of the sinners under unpleasant conditions—they went to sleep. The Prophet Ezekiel says that God took all of the Sodomites away as he saw good. (Ezek. 16:50) After the church's trial, or judgment, shall have been finished and the overcomers shall have been found worthy, then, in that time of the world's judgment, the Sodomites will have an opportunity as had the Jews who heard Jesus at the first advent. And it will be much more tolerable then for the people of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, etc.; for the latter had had opportunities of knowledge, against which they sinned; they therefore had more wilfulness in the matter than did the Sodomites.—See Matt. 11:21-24.

At that time God had sent no command to the Sodomites to repent. So God merely "winked at" (overlooked) the ignorance and sin of that time. (Acts 17:30) He neither threatened nor did anything else in the matter. He merely blotted the Sodomites out of existence. Their fate served as a foreshadowing, as the Apostle says, that God will not forever permit mankind to remain in sin, but that he will destroy the sinner. None shall be destroyed, however, until first he shall have had the opportunity for everlasting life, secured for every member of Adam's race, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## JESUS' RESURRECTION THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FAVOR

The Apostle recognizes the fact that the judgment had not begun in his day. He points forward to the day of Christ and declares that God's assurance now set before the world of mankind is that there will be a future time of judgment. Through Christ's sacrificial death the opportunity for everlasting life will come to all. Mankind have already been condemned in Adam. They could not have another trial until the condemnation of the first trial was lifted. Therefore, not until God had provided a Redeemer would he command any to repent. The Apostle says that God's assurance to mankind in this matter is based upon the fact that he had raised Christ from the dead.—Acts 17:31.

When God had raised Jesus from the dead it became a testimony that his was a sacrificial death, an acceptable offering. And Jesus' ascension was a still further demonstration that this One whom the Father had raised from the dead by his own power, was to be the great King to rule, the great Priest to succor, assist and instruct, and the great Judge to direct and order the affairs of the world and to give proper rewards in the great day of God.

Whoever therefore hears about Jesus' death and resurrection should understand that this was God's redemption arrangement. They should also be informed that mankind are all sinners and that death is the penalty of sin. If any should ask, How does Jesus' death affect humanity? we show that God has highly exalted him to be a Savior. In God's due time, as soon as the elect class shall have been completed and the reign of

six thousand years of sin and evil shall have ended, then he will grant redemption from sin to all—to the Jew first and afterwards to the Gentiles.

As many as hear now should repent; but as many as do not hear in the present time are not commanded by God to repent. St. Paul's thought seems to me, Repent now and thus influence your future conditions, even if you do not wish to become a member of the body of Christ. Thousands of millions of mankind have gone down into death. When they are awakened during the period of Messiah's reign, this will be the great message—"God has opened up a fountain for cleansing from sin and uncleanness. Whosoever will may partake of the blessing and reconciliation with God and thereby attain everlasting life."—See Zech. 13:1; Rev. 22:17.

At present the god of this world hath blinded the world's eyes of understanding (2 Cor. 4:4), but soon their eyes will be opened. The time is coming when all shall see and hear, and when none, from the least to the greatest, will need to say, Know ye the Lord, for all shall know him. Then when they know, each will be responsible. At the end of the Millennial age when they shall have received their full blessing through the Mediator they will be required to do God's will on earth even as it is done in heaven.—Jer. 31:33, 34.

#### FUTURE LIFE INFLUENCED BY PRESENT CONDUCT

It is a very important feature of our work to let our light so shine that men may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven—not their Father, but our Father. (1 Pet. 2:12) The present time is not the world's, but the church's visitation. God is seeking the people who are in a voluntary condition of righteousness. This is not the time for dealing with the world, but for God's people, as burning and

shining lights, to reprove all sin. In proportion as the light shines out it will reprove darkness.

If we speak at all about a future age it is a special part of our duty to make clear to our hearers that the conduct of life at the present time will have a bearing on the future life. To say that there are two chances—a chance now and a chance by and by—is wholly wrong. We say to them that during this Gospel age there is only one chance, and the only way to get that chance is to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

But for those who are by and by to be under the Mediatorial kingdom it is proper to tell them that a life of obedience to God in harmony with the principles of righteousness will be a blessing to themselves in the present, and also in the future. There are a great many people who are living upright and honorable lives and who are doing a great deal of good in this present time. If they thought they were not doing good, they would be discouraged. An incentive to a high standard of life would be taken from them; for they believe that righteous living now has a bearing on the future. In this they are right. But their standard is not so high as that set forth in the Scriptures for the church. That standard is necessarily high; for saints, and saints alone, are to be joint-heirs with Christ and members of the bride class.

A great mistake was made in the past when Brother Calvin declared that the non-elect were to be roasted to all eternity. On the contrary, we find the teaching of God's Word to be that the non-elect are to be blessed by the elect with an opportunity for reconciliation to God—blessed with an opportunity for life on the earthly plane. God will use the elect class for the purpose of blessing the world of mankind. God has a loving, sympathetic plan for all of his creatures, which will be revealed to them in his own due time.

## MENTAL SUGGESTION A MEANS OF TEMPTATION

*"Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*—Matt. 4:10.

Shortly after our Lord's baptism, he was led of his own spirit, illuminated by the holy Spirit received at baptism, to go apart to the wilderness of Judea for a season of quiet study. It was at the close of this period of Bible study and prayer, when our Lord was weak from his forty-day fast, that the adversary assaulted him with subtle temptations.

We are not told how Jesus recognized Satan, but we are inclined to think that the adversary was not visible to our Lord's natural sight, but to his mental vision—his eyes of understanding; for Satan, like the other fallen angels, has been under restraint of darkness until the judgment of the great day. It is our thought that Satan was permitted to bring mental suggestions before our Lord's mind. Evidently our Lord recognized the source of these presentations as evil, in whatever way they came to him.

The popular conception of Satan as a monstrosity with hoofs, horns, etc., is a superstition belonging to the dark ages. Really in his own personality he is a very glorious being, who has not been impaired by the six thousand years of alienation from God, although his countenance may have lost some of its Godlikeness.

#### SPIRITUAL POWER NOT TO BE USED SELFISHLY

In approaching our Lord, Satan did not attempt to lie outright, nor to distort facts, but rather to put a false color on them. He may have approached Jesus as a friend, who had known him in his pre-existent state and who was deeply interested in his welfare. Satan's intrusion was, first of all, to give our Lord some kindly advice, by suggesting that since Jesus had been fasting for a long time, he was doing himself injury; and that if he really knew what power he possessed he would command those stones to be made bread.

Thus approached by one who was of a higher order of being than himself, one who had not taken upon himself a bondman's form, it was natural that Jesus did not repulse Satan, but answered in a kind manner. Our Lord said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4) I have made a full consecration of myself to God, and am seeking to know his will, in order that I may do it, whatever difficulties may be involved therein. Therefore, since my life is consecrated, I will not use this holy power which I possess, to do anything for my own comfort or benefit in any manner.

#### SPIRITUAL POWER NOT TO BE USED FOOLISHLY

Foiled in his first attempt, the adversary quickly changed the subject, not even dissenting from our Lord's decision. He then presented a second subtle temptation to use the divine power given our Lord. We do not understand that Satan took our Lord bodily to the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem, but that he suggested a plan by which our Lord

could bring himself into prominence before the people and at the same time demonstrate that the power of the Most High God was upon him.

Our Lord's quick mind detected the error, and he promptly answered: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (Matt. 4:7) Again changing his method of attack, Satan endeavored to give the impression that he himself was tired of the condition of rebellion against God in the world, and that he was ready to join our Lord in a great social uplift. Jesus probably knew that Satan was the prince of this world and that his influence was everywhere felt.

#### SPIRITUAL POWER NOT TO BE USED CONTRARY TO GOD'S WILL

As in the second temptation, we do not think that our Lord was taken out of the wilderness, but that mental suggestion was used to influence him to disobedience to the Father. In all the world there is no mountain from which all the kingdoms of the world can be seen. We understand the "mountain" to be a symbol of Satan's empire, which is world-wide. Satan doubtless brought before the Lord's mind all that he knew of the great Roman Empire, and the wonderful influence which he as a perfect man could exert if he occupied a prominent position therein.

We can imagine Satan as saying, "Messiah is to be king over all the earth. I can easily and quickly help you into that position. Let us co-operate. I will make you chief ruler of the earth on the sole condition that you recognize me. I do not ask that you shall not recognize Jehovah; but that you shall be under my supervision. I can give you all this dominion without any trouble. Never mind the future; let me show you how to make progress now. I will get you into a good position, without removing anyone else. You will not be required to do anything very bad."

During the forty days in the wilderness our Lord had come to see that the dominion of earth could be attained only through great suffering. He was weak from his long fast, and all the details of prophecy were before his mind. He saw himself as a lamb dumb before its shearers; as the serpent lifted up in the wilderness. Satan's suggestion was a temptation. But after consideration he saw that Satan was asking him to violate his covenant—to go contrary to God's will. Immediately he answered, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Then the devil left the Lord, finding nothing to work upon—so loyal was Jesus to the very Word of Jehovah. Afterwards the angels came and ministered to him.

#### EVEN FALLEN ANGELS EXCEL IN STRENGTH

The fact that Jesus discussed matters with the adversary does not furnish us with an excuse to try our ability in this



direction. For any of us, with our imperfect reasoning faculties, to get into a discussion with Satan or any of the fallen angels would be very unwise. There are doubtless reasons why our Lord conversed with Satan; but it would be very unsafe for us to do so. If we are sure that we have had a communication from fallen angels, let us remember that we are commissioned to preach to men, not to angels.

Some of the Lord's people have gotten into difficulty by not using the spirit of a sound mind along this line. Evil spirits have a way of drawing the unsuspecting on, little by little. They are "seducing spirits," as St. Paul tells us. (11 Tim. 4:1) A brother in the truth once told us of his experience with them. Strange to say he was in the truth when he had communication with the spirits. He did not say how he first got into communication with them, but he explained the divine plan of the ages to them and told them what would happen to the fallen angels. For several days they manifested interest, coming frequently to hear him. After a while they began to dispute among themselves and finally to curse one another.

The brother had so cultivated the clairaudient power that he could hear them. In disgust he tried to get rid of them. Not only would they not go, but they made matters intolerable for him. Finally he wrote us in distress, asking what method to use to get rid of them. We advised him to go to the Lord in prayer, confessing that he had done wrong, and asking the Lord's forgiveness; then, in the name of the Lord, to command them to leave him. Afterward he wrote us that he had followed our advice, and after a tedious time had finally gotten rid of his unwelcome visitors.

#### POWERS OF EVIL INCREASING

As the time of trouble draws near, we can readily suppose that our adversary will have increased power. Satan and his fallen angels will have a very baneful influence upon humanity.

Some peculiar occurrences have been brought to our attention. One was an account of a picture manifestation. A pic-

ture had been taken of a piece of property. When the photograph was developed it showed the likeness of a man who was recognized as a former owner who had been dead for some time. It seems evident, then, that evil spirits are able to exert some influence even upon a camera.

Another case was that of a person who declares that he actually saw certain things which could not possibly have taken place. How this could be we do not know. We do not know what powers evil spirits may possess. We have all heard of cases of mesmerism, hypnotism, etc., where the person under control of evil spirits was able to describe accurately things taking place at a distance. We cannot tell how these things are done. We assume that it is the fallen angels who have power so to impress the brain of the medium that she would seem to see what was being done in another city. In our dreams we see people walk and hear them speak. If we can have such mental pictures naturally, we may easily suppose that evil spirits may have power in this direction.

#### RESIST EVERYTHING AKIN TO OCCULTISM

The facts, however, do not make us understand the philosophy of the matter. Nor do we know to what extent these things will be used in the future. We have no doubt that some very startling events will occur. Even to those who have the knowledge of the divine plan the things permitted will be strange. We should be prepared for almost anything that may be told.

We have great confidence in the power of these evil spirits who claim to do wonderful deeds. In fact, we can see that while materialization would be possible to them, yet a representation to the mind would be much easier. To impress a picture upon the brain would also be easy. Suppose such power were to be exercised, and the Lord's people misrepresented by the adversary as doing some desperate act. Be prepared for all such things. It is too near the end of the race to think or turning back!

## MY CONFIDENCE

"You ask me do I fear?

Should that child fear

Whose Father owns earth's store of precious things;

Whose Will carves destinies, whose Wish sways kings;

Whose Love surpasses fondest mother-love,

And whose unsleeping eye guards from above?

\* \* \*

"My Father is the Lord; I am His child.

His storehouse groans beneath a golden weight,

And I shall never want, though sore my strait.

When danger threatens and the way seems drear,

My Father's guiding hand is ever near;

His kindly counsel will my way attend

And bring me safely to my journey's end." —UNKNOWN.

## THE SACRIFICE OF THE CHRIST

At Jordan our Lord made a consecration of himself, even unto death. That is to say, he was baptized, immersed. He said, "Henceforth, I shall have no will of my own. Whatever is your will, Father, shall be my will. I shall do anything that you will have me do; not merely those things required in obedience to the divine law—failure to do which would be sin—but all the things written in the Book. I have given up my life. Direct me through your providences and through your words that I may see your will and do it." This was not a giving away of life in the sense of giving it to the world; for he was giving himself to God. When he made his consecration unto God, he was prepared to face even death itself and to give up his existence if such should be the Father's will.—Psa. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7.

Following his consecration he began his ministry. As he advanced in the service of fulfilling the Father's will, he submitted himself to everything that was written in the Book. The language of his heart was, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7), and in his submission of himself he gave out his power, strength, to such an extent that it is stated that great multitudes of people out of all Palestine and beyond, "came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went virtue [vitality] out of him and healed them all." (Luke 6:17-19) He kept back nothing for the purpose of recuperating his vigor, but was daily yielding his life in obedience to what he understood to be the Father's will; He was, therefore, doing the things pleasing to God—everything that God wished to have him do, as well as the things written in the law.

#### "IT IS FINISHED!"

When on the cross our Lord cried, "It is finished!" He had "poured out his soul unto death"; He had "made his soul an offering for sin" (John 19:30; Isa. 53:12, 10); he had permitted his life to be taken from him in obedience to the Father's arrangement. These things had all been prefigured in the type.

On such a day and in such a month the passover lamb must be slain. Our Lord recognized everything particularized in the law—whether by direct command or in type—as God's will. He declared that men did not take his life from him, in the sense of doing something that he was unwilling to have them do. He had truly said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is within [in the midst of] my heart" (Psa. 40:8), and he permitted them to put him to death, because he was submitting to God's will.

Our Lord realized that his life was taken away fraudulently. He did not resist, but allowed this to be done. He had agreed that he would not resist, that he would do whatever the Father sent him to do. After he had once made a consecration could he have withdrawn? No; for he had covenanted to submit to whatever divine providence might indicate to be the Father's will. He had entered into a positive contract under which he had obligated himself to be faithful to God's will, and God had bound himself that he would give our Lord the exceeding great reward of exaltation to the divine nature because of that faithful obedience. God had given him the holy Spirit as a bond of that contract.

#### HUMAN LIFE-RIGHTS BELONG TO OUR LORD

There is a wide difference between making an exchange and bestowing a reward. To exchange is to part with something in return for something else regarded as an equivalent. To reward is to give something in acknowledgment of merit. This word conveys no idea of obligation. Whoever gives a reward acts altogether of his own free will.

The arrangement made between the Father and our Lord did not, therefore, involve our Lord's right to earthly life; for the Father did not contract to give him life on the highest plane of existence in exchange for his life as a human being. Had this been the case our Lord would have had nothing to give to any of the human race—either to the church or to the world of mankind.

On the contrary, the Father was to reward our Lord by exalting him far above angels, principalities and powers as an

acknowledgment of the Son's obedience even unto death. The earthly life-rights are still our Lord's. The fact that he is to give human life to mankind is evidence that he has the right to that earthly life.

We do not understand that our Lord Jesus agreed with the Father merely to lay down his life. So great was his love for and his confidence in Jehovah, that he was eager to carry out the Father's plan for the blessing of mankind, whatever the cost might be to himself. The Scriptures set forth his position at consecration, in the words, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." How much of God's will did this assertion involve? "In the volume [the roll] of the Book it is written of me," I come prepared to do everything that is written in the Book. Not only had he come with God's law written in his heart, but he had offered to do everything written in the scroll of the Book.

How could Jesus know what was written in the Book? There is every reason to believe that he did not, at the time of his consecration, know all that was therein written. The things written in the Book, written in the types and shadows of the Old Testament, were understood by none of the Jews. Many of them, doubtless, our Lord did not fully understand before his baptism. God's will is expressed in the types of the Law Covenant. Our Lord had said, "Everything written in the Book." But who will say that at that time he knew how much was involved? As a matter of fact, he did not know until after his baptism, when the higher things were opened to him and made known to him; and following this enlightenment he went into the wilderness to study and meditate upon them.

#### DEAD TO EVERYTHING BUT THE WILL OF GOD

Although prior to his consecration, Jesus did not know everything written in the Book about himself, yet his consecration was complete. He had pledged his whole life to the doing of God's will. His own will was dead to all else. Later, he realized that his covenant meant also actual death as a malefactor.

The question has been asked, Did Jesus after his resurrection have human life-rights by reason of the fact that they were not relinquished in death, or by virtue of the fact that he had been appointed "heir of all things"?—Heb. 1:2.

This, like many other subjects, is capable of various shades of thought and expression. Our Lord possessed a right to human life and to all earthly things. This right to life and all its blessings Adam had forfeited by disobedience, but Jesus had secured it by obedience and held it absolutely free from risk of loss. Then, if some one, contrary to law, cut him off from his reign, this cutting off did not cause him to forfeit any of them.

In other words, we cannot see how anyone could deprive our Lord of his life-rights in a judicial way. To our understanding, Jesus was cut off from his life and from all the rights that pertained to it by a fanatical company of fallen men; but their action could not destroy any right which God's law had given to him. So, then, when God raised him from the dead and rewarded him with a higher nature and certain wonderful blessings connected therewith, this exaltation could not interfere with the RIGHT which God's LAW had given and which He had neither given away nor forfeited. He had merely allowed men to take his life from him, thus separating him from His RIGHTS, which remained his.

#### HOW OUR LORD BECOMES FATHER OF MANKIND

Since our Lord therefore had neither forfeited those rights nor given them away, then when God highly exalted him because of his obedience unto death, this right to human life was amongst the things that he possessed. This right was his irrespective of anything which the Father gave him. It is because he holds this right to human life as an asset—his legally and not as a gift—that he is said to be the LIFE-GIVER.

During the Millennial age, in fulfilment of the divine promise, our Lord will give mankind restitution to perfect human nature. In doing this he will not be giving something that the Father has given him, but he will be acting in a special sense in his own name. If he did not have this right to everlasting life to give, then he could not be spoken of as the LIFE-GIVER. But since he possesses this right to human life, it is his to bestow during the thousand years of his reign.

At the end of the thousand years our Lord will no longer be the Life-Giver. He cannot be the Life-Giver to angels nor to any other than mankind, for his right appertained merely to himself as a perfect human being. What he will give away to humanity in general, is what he now imputes, or loans, to the church, to permit us to share with him in sacrificial work and in his glorious work of the future.

#### RIGHT TO HUMAN LIFE OUR LORD'S PERSONAL GIFT TO MANKIND

We do not see how as "Heir of all things" our Lord could gain any additional control of his earthly nature and earthly life-rights which were his by obedience to the law. As heir of all things he will be the representative of the Father to all eternity. He takes the position at the right hand of authority on high. In due time, every knee shall bow to him, and even the angels shall be subjected unto him.

All these things came to our Lord as a part of the reward which the Father promised. But this one particular feature, the restitution of all things lost by Adam, is a special privilege coming as his own gift to humanity—that which he purchased at his own cost; that is to say, the laying down of his earthly life is the basis upon which he obtained the new nature and the right to control that earthly life, which shall be applied in restitution in behalf of the world.

If he had already applied that life and had actually given it up, then we do not see how he could accomplish anything special for mankind. But since he has this asset of earthly rights and privileges to give away, the process of bestowing it will continue during the Millennial reign; and what he will give is what he has by reason of his obedience to the law.—Lev. 18:5.

#### SCRIPTURAL USAGE OF THE TERM "SACRIFICE"

The word "sacrifice" may be used from different standpoints. If an animal were killed for some benevolent reason or purpose, it might be spoken of as a sacrifice, particularly if it were something done in harmony with the divine arrangement. But the mere killing of an animal would not be sacrifice. A dog might be killed without being sacrificed. But if the dog's life were surrendered for the purpose of scientific experiment, we might say that it was given in sacrifice to science. From this standpoint we should view the matter of sacrifice. The lives of God's consecrated people are surrendered for a purpose.

At our consecration we present our bodies as living sacrifices. We give up to the Lord our life, our human bodies and everything that we possess. It does not follow, however, that God accepts this sacrifice to be put to death in some special manner. Some may spend their lives in serving the Lord's truth, and may be said to be sacrificed as truly as though they had died at the stake. We may say to the Lord, "All my life is in your hands; do with it as you please. If it means joy or pain, sacrifice or pleasure, we surrender our own will in the matter and become like unto Jesus, who said, 'I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.'"—John 6:38.

#### WHAT DO WE SACRIFICE?

The sacrifice of Jesus was made at Jordan, but it was finished at Calvary. His consecration was absolute. The killing of the bullock is symbolical of what Jesus did when he surrendered his will. And so with us. Following in his footsteps we become dead in the sense that we sacrifice our wills. But in what manner the Lord may accept that sacrificed will is his affair. We give it freely, that the mind of Christ may dwell in us richly.

We part forever with the right to our wills, but we do not sacrifice our lives, although we know that the giving up of our wills ultimately leads to the giving up of our lives. But we have nothing to do with the parting with our rights. When Jesus becomes our Advocate, he takes us in charge. From the time we give up our wills, our bodies are counted as his body. We merely give up our wills in the matter and leave everything for him to dispose of. He attends to the sacrificing; for he is the High Priest; we are not.

Similarly, the great outcome is in the Lord's hands. During the Gospel age he imputes of his merit to the church. When he has finished the work of sacrificing he will apply the merit of this great sacrifice, which he calls his own, for sealing the New Covenant for the world. But we have nothing to do with the sacrificing. We leave it all to our Attorney, or Advocate.

The new creature is certainly the owner, or controller, of the body and is made so by the Lord. We as new creatures have a work to perform with our body. When our Lord accepts us as his servants, we are to use all our talents as his stewards. In that sense of the word, the body will be under the control of the new creature until death.

#### LIFE-RIGHTS MERELY IMPUTED TO THE CHURCH

Our position is somewhat different from that of our Lord. We had no earthly life-rights to begin with; and we had, therefore, none to give away. They were forfeited by Adam's sin. But if we become the Lord's disciples, if we surrender all to him and accept the merit that he is willing to impute to us, our great Advocate will count us as members of his body and permit us to share in his sufferings. When he imputed his merit to us all rights passed to him. He gave his members whatever right

they have and whatever privilege of earthly right comes to them.

When it shall be necessary for our Lord to use these rights in the future for the world, he will be quite competent and privileged to do so. Having never violated the divine law he will have the full right to use, command and direct in respect to all of his earthly rights, which he did not forfeit, but which he laid down with the understanding that he should use them again in giving life to the world, so that he would be called the Father of mankind, in respect to their future life.

## FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

MARK 6:30-44.—SEPT. 22.

TEXT:—"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life."—John 6:35.

When the twelve apostles returned to Jesus they exclaimed, "Even the demons were subject to us in thy Name." But he said unto them, Rejoice not specially because of this, let your special rejoicing be that your names are written in heaven. They explained to Jesus the instance of their tour and what they had taught; and he called them away to a desert place to rest awhile, because of the crowd and because they had not even time to take nourishment. So they went privately to such a place by ship. But the news went also and the crowd went on foot from various cities.

Jesus would have no time to himself. His entire life was devoted and being rendered up a living sacrifice to the divine service, in feeding the sheep of Jehovah's flock, and, of course, his own sheep also, because all that were the Father's were his. As he looked upon the multitude, he felt a yearning compassion for them. He saw their needs: "They were like sheep without a shepherd"; and he continued to teach them.

But, says one, did they not have synagogues, and regular reading of the Scriptures? Did they not have scribes, Pharisees, priests and Levites? How could they be without shepherding? Ah, well, they had a soul-hunger, which the forms, ceremonies, rituals and burdens bound upon them could not satisfy. They were really wanting the "Bread of Life" which Jesus had—which Jesus was, for he personified the truth. Why then did they not receive it? What was their defense? They were bound by superstition, prejudice, the fear of man, traditions of the ancients, and the opposition of the great and the learned of their time.

Did they not frequently inquire, "Have any of the scribes and Pharisees believed on him?" Again, "Do our rulers indeed know that this is the very Christ?" The common people always referred to the learned. The learned therefore have the greater responsibility. Jesus declared of them, "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge"; you will neither enter into the favor of God yourselves, nor will you permit others to enter in who so desire.—Luke 11:52.

And is not this in a large measure true today also? The learned of the colleges and principal pulpits are telling the people that the Bible is not the divine message which Jesus and the Apostles declared it to be. They are telling the people that Moses and the prophets did not write the books accredited to them; and thus indirectly they are telling the people that Jesus and the apostles were deceived when Jesus said, "Moses wrote of me," and the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah said thus and so. Thus the people are becoming more and more unbelievers in respect to the Bible.

But what will the great and learned teachers of today give to the masses as a soul satisfying portion instead of the Bible? Oh, they tell us, "This is the good tidings, the Gospel: Your forefathers were apes; a law of Evolution prevails. As a result we have come as far as we are. We need no Savior, because we had no fall. We have no Redeemer, because if we were restored to our original condition it would make monkeys of us. God has allowed the law of Evolution to operate in you and in your children. You thus live in your children, and by and by will reach a very high plane of existence—not that you yourself will have any knowledge of that, for you will be dead, but your children will have that joy instead."

What is there in this to satisfy soul-hunger? Ah, nothing! No wonder the lament is going up all over Christendom that the public no longer care to go to church; that they can scarcely

Nowhere in the Scriptures is the statement made that Christ came to sacrifice himself. What the Scriptures say is that he came to do the Father's will. He did not refuse to drink the "cup" which the Father prepared for him, but drank it to the dregs. And for his obedience to this will, even unto death—no matter how long or how short a time the Father should be pleased to have that life continue—he received the reward. He gave over all into the Father's hands. This was a sacrifice; for he had a right to use his life. But his obedience to his Father's will led to the sacrifice for which he obtained the reward.

be bribed to go, even with the attractions of talented essays and choirs rendering operatic music, nor even be attracted by vaudeville and worldly trash. Alas! what we need is that all of God's people should unite their hearts and voices in proclaiming the Gospel which Jesus and the apostles taught—the Gospel of the kingdom—Messiah's kingdom—and the glorious work it will accomplish for men, and the glorious privilege it will be to obtain a share in that kingdom. Surely then church attendance will be better and without any of the attractions and gewgaws now thought necessary. Let us with one heart and with one mind return to the Gospel message of the New Testament.

### THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS

The multitudes in their enthusiasm went a long journey from home without making proper provisions for food. The disciples urged that the meeting break up and that the people be sent home. Jesus suggested, "Give ye them to eat." But they declared they had nothing wherewith to feed so many, and that if even they should go to purchase it would cost much for even one satisfying portion.

Finally they found five loaves and two fishes. By Jesus' direction they seated the multitudes in companies on the grass, and the five loaves and two fishes, under heavenly blessing, were divided and divided, again and again and again, until all had portions and ate to their satisfaction; and the fragments amounted to twelve baskets, while those who had partaken were 5,000.

This wonderful miracle not only attests our Lord's sympathy, but it also spoke volumes to the people of the divine power that was in the Great Teacher; but there is still another lesson which it teaches us. Like all of the miracles which Jesus performed it was merely another foretelling, or illustration, of his coming glory and of the coming blessings. He who provided the nourishment for the 5,000 is shortly to be the Great King of Glory, whose kingdom will extend from shore to shore, and bring blessing and refreshment to all mankind.

This miracle speaks to us of the power that our Lord will then have for providing for the necessities of the whole world. True, we do not expect that during the reign of Christ the world will be miraculously fed, but rather in accordance with the Scriptural promise, "The earth shall yield her increase"; and again, "I will call for the wheat, and will increase it," etc., etc. But specially the feeding of the multitude reminds us of the fact testified in our text that Jesus is "The Bread of Life"—the divine provision for the necessities of the whole world.

### "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE"

As the church now partake of the merit of Christ's sacrifice, and become members of his body, the one loaf, and thus are made partakers of the eternal life through him, so in God's due time the bread from heaven is to feed the multitudes of earth. During the thousand years of his reign, the bread of life will be freely distributed amongst all mankind. That bread of life is the truth—particularly the truth related to and connected with the great redeeming work of Jesus. He is to be the Bread of Life to the world, because he bought the world with the sacrifice of his own life. The Bread that came down from Heaven they may all freely partake of and live.

The church, however, in this present time, has another privilege which the world in the future will not share, and that is represented in the Lord's "cup." His "cup" to us represents our privilege of suffering with him and becoming his joint-heirs in the kingdom.

## TEACHING BY PARABLES ONLY

MATT. 13:34, 35, 55.—SEPT. 29.

TEXT:—"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."—John 6:63.

Today's lesson declares, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the

Prophet, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

Bible students and Bible scholars have generally expressed