

PRESENT TRUTH—RE ADVOCATE AND MEDIATOR

A gentleman who fancies himself commissioned to be the Advocate of the New Covenant, but who has not yet come to see that the New Covenant could not be the Old Covenant, takes us to task saying: "Four years ago it was present truth that the Editor of THE WATCH TOWER needed a Mediator between God and Himself. Three years ago it became present truth that he does not need a Mediator between God and himself. Did the Editor of THE WATCH TOWER leave the present truth?"

We reply, No, the Editor of THE WATCH TOWER did not leave the present truth. He kept all the truth that he then had and has added to it. The light has scattered some more of the darkness, so that, with the very same thought that he had four years ago, he now sees that he used the wrong word in expressing that thought. He now sees that he should have used the Scriptural term Advocate instead of the word Mediator. He now sees that himself and others in the past have used language too carelessly, because of the general confusion and mix-up handed down from the dark ages.

He now sees that the Scriptures nowhere say that the church has a Mediator or ever will have a Mediator, and that they nowhere say that the Covenant of sacrifice, under which the church is developed, has a Mediator. The Editor of THE WATCH TOWER is learning day by day more clearly to rightly divide the Word of Truth and to use Scriptural terms only. The Scriptures do say, "We have an Advocate with the Father." (1 John 2:1) They do not say anywhere, We have a Mediator between God and us. The Editor of THE WATCH TOWER is trying to assist God's people to think and speak correctly respecting the great work of Atonement for sin, the merit of which lies in the sacrifice of Jesus and the privilege to share in which is granted to the elect during this Gospel age.

The same critic innocently asks for any Bible text to show that the church, the bride of Christ, does not need a Mediator. How foolish! Does the Bible undertake to say all the things that are not so? One would think that no special ability would be necessary to discern that there is no need of a Mediator between friends. We never had this thought! When we used the word as respects the church we used it thoughtlessly, just as our opponents are using it now; we used it without noticing that the Bible nowhere intimates a Mediator between the Father and the church. It is because present truth is progressive that we have clearer light on the same facts than we had four years ago, even as we then had clearer light than we enjoyed years before that. The Editor of THE WATCH TOWER has believed in Jesus as his Redeemer from childhood. He did not understand the philosophy of the divine plan of the ages then, but nevertheless, his simple faith was a sufficient basis for a consecration of his all to the Lord, and a sufficient basis for the divine acceptance of the sacrifice and the begetting of the holy Spirit. Since then the light of this harvest time has been shining more and more clearly as the years go by. The light of present truth does not contradict the light of past truth, but confirms it and further clarifies our vision and increases our hope and our joy. And is not this true of all of God's people now walking in the narrow way? Those who are now "waking up" to a realization of the fact that for seventeen years they have been in darkness are acknowledging that they have not been walking for those seventeen years in the "path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." For the past seventeen years of their lives, the seventeen years of their best Christian experience, they believed that the Vine and the branches are one—that the Head and his Members are one; that the sufferings of The Christ are one—that the church fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ—that the death of Christ is one—that the church becomes dead with him sacrificially, after having been justified through faith in his blood, his sacrifice. For seventeen years they believed that the Prophet spake of the sufferings of Christ (Head and body) and the glory that shall follow; that to be dead with him signifies to be baptized into his sacrificial death as in contrast with Adam's penalty—death. And to drink of his cup signifies a share of his sufferings and that the hope before all such is, that "if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him"; and "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." For seventeen years these friends told us that they believed and rejoiced in St. Paul's sentiments of Phil. 3:9-11, the hope to be found in Christ (members of his body), not having their own righteousness, which is of the Law (Covenant), but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is

of God by faith (not by the New (Law) Covenant), that we might know him and the power of his resurrection (sharing his resurrection as his members) and the fellowship of his sufferings (being partakers of the sufferings of Christ), being made conformable unto his death (not a different death from his, but a similar one—not a death as a sinner, but a sacrificial one), if by any means I might attain unto The resurrection of The dead.

We are not murmuring nor complaining against these friends because of the great loss which they have sustained—the loss of spiritual sight into the deep things of God—into "the mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." We compassionate their loss and remember the Master's words, "If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness!" While not attempting to judge the hearts of any who have gone out from us, we may be confident that the Lord did not allow them to go out without a sufficient reason. We regard their loss of spiritual sight as a divine judgment upon them, just as truly as we regard the opening of the eyes of their understanding as a mark of divine favor. Remembering that the Lord is not dealing arbitrarily either in receiving his people into the light nor in casting some out of the light, we are bound to suppose that there were conditions of heart in these, our friends, with which the Lord was not well pleased. The lesson to us is that we must walk in the light and that we must put away from our hearts and, as far as possible from our flesh, everything contrary to the divine standards of meekness, gentleness, purity, justice, love, "if by any means we would attain unto The resurrection of The Dead."

Before dismissing this subject we must answer another foolish question, namely, What answer do we make to the following:—

A certain sister owning property in her own name found that her husband had taken possession of it, rents, monies, all, and that he ignored her entirely in the matter. Upon her request to have some of her own money and property given her by her father, the husband became angry and sought out some of our opponents. The latter, after the usual course, partially misrepresented our teachings respecting the atonement for sin. The husband replied, That's what my wife says. She says, "Jesus didn't die for you; he died for me—but not for you; I will die for you." What will we answer to this? We answer that we would not believe a man on oath who was trying to cheat his wife out of her own money. We do not believe that the wife said anything of the kind, nor that she has any such idea. We believe that the husband misrepresented his wife's statement, just as our opponents uniformly misrepresent THE WATCH TOWER statements. A half-truth may be an untruth, if it gives a misconception and is intended so to do. A truthful statement would not serve the purpose of our opponents, for the truth is logical as nothing else is. St. Paul remarked, "We be slanderously reported." The same is true today. The self-contradictions of our opponents are remarkable. In one breath they tell us that they have been deceived by us for seventeen years. In the next they say that we have changed within the last three years. In the next they affirm that they are in accord with everything in the SCRIPTURE STUDIES, and yet they are opposing them as best they are able. Oh, inconsistency, thou art not a jewel; nor dost thou reflect beauty or credit upon anybody!

A COVENANT BY SACRIFICE NOT THE NEW COVENANT

In all of our writings for the past thirty years we have pointed out the New Covenant as coming fully into operation at the close of this Gospel age. We have pointed out that it is the covenant under which restitution blessings are to come to the world of mankind. We pointed it out as the Keturah Covenant—separate and distinct from the Hagar Covenant, under which natural Israel was developed, typified by Ishmael and separate and distinct also from the original Abrahamic Covenant, typified by Sarah, whose seed Isaac typified The Christ, Head and body. We saw and pointed out to others, so that they saw, that the antitypical Isaac—The Christ, Head and body—is the Melchisedec priest, of which Jesus is the Head and the church his body—the great Priest under whom the New Covenant is to be made effective to Israel and to the world of mankind through Israel. We pointed out also that the elect church of this Gospel age, a "royal priesthood," must all offer sacrifice; as the Apostle declares, "Every priest is ordained of God to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin." We pointed out that our Lord Jesus is the great High Priest of our profession and that he offered himself in sacrifice and

that he required that all who would be with him in his throne must walk in his steps—after being justified through faith in his blood. We pointed out that this is what is referred to in the Scriptures as the covenant by sacrifice, "Gather my saints unto me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5) We associated this sacrificing of the earthly nature by all those who would be partakers of the divine nature with the Apostle's exhortation of Hebrews 9:23. We called attention to the fact that the word sacrifices is in the plural and refers not only to the most important sacrifice made by our Lord and Redeemer, but that it applies also to the sacrifices of all those whom he accepts as his members of the royal priesthood. These are the "better sacrifices," which were typified by the bulls and goats of the typical Atonement Day.

We saw and mentioned that the church as priests, while under the Covenant of Grace, the primary covenant, the Sarah Covenant, have a work to do in connection with the New Covenant. As the Apostle says, "We are able (or qualified) ministers (or servants) of the New Covenant." But we see more clearly now than we did ten years ago just how we serve the New Covenant—that as members of the body of the Mediator of that covenant, we are associated with him in making preparation for its inauguration. We are serving it in the sense that he served it, only in an inferior degree and not individually, but in him, as "members of the body," members of the "royal priesthood," to whom "old things have passed away and all things have become new." We see now more clearly than ever the meaning of our precious relationship to God in Christ as members of the antitypical Isaac, through whose mercy Israel and the world shall obtain mercy, under the provision of the New Covenant put into operation as soon as the royal priesthood shall have completed the appointed work of sacrifice.—Romans 11:27-30.

Our opponents can all agree that they disagree with THE WATCH TOWER, but they cannot agree amongst themselves on anything doctrinal. Nor do they see, seemingly, that fault-finding is not proof. Let them try to set forth the divine plan of the ages from their own standpoint. They cannot do it. Their theories are illogical and inconsistent. They take our logical presentation as a basis and make a few turns and

twists to suit themselves, failing to see that whatever they add or subtract is so much confusion. That is the reason why so many who leave the Truth take a few paces after the claimed "new light" and then drop out forever into the blackness of outer darkness of unbelief and uncertainty about everything.

Let such of our opponents as are honest sit down calmly and figure out the covenants and their mediators. Thus only will they see the weakness of their present attitude.

(1) Which was the original covenant to which the law was added four hundred and thirty years after.—(Gal. 3:17)?

(2) Would it be proper to speak of that original covenant as the same that God promised he would make "after those days" and which he styles the "New Covenant"?

(3) If so, of what use is language, except to mislead and confuse?

(4) It is admitted that St. Paul declares that the original covenant had no Mediator; that it was a *uni-lateral* or one-sided covenant which needed no Mediator.

(5) On the contrary, it is admitted that the Mosaic or Law Covenant was a type of the New Covenant—that it could not be a type of a covenant which preceded it.

It is conceded that the Law Covenant and its priests and their services typified the New Covenant with its higher or "royal priesthood" and antitypical Atonement Day and "better sacrifices," whose blood is brought into the antitypical Most Holy to make sin-atonement and whose bodies were burned outside the antitypical camp.—Heb. 13:11.

If a type cannot follow its antitype, surely, then, it could not be "added" to its antitype. Surely no great wisdom is necessary to see this. "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise"—the children of the original Sarah Covenant—barren for nearly two thousand years.

The Redeemer is our Advocate, through whose imputed merit we, with him, are admitted to membership in the Spiritual Seed under his "Covenant by sacrifice"—symbolized by the offering of Isaac. Sacrificing with him and accepted as his members we shall soon with him constitute the great antitypical Moses (Acts 3:22, 23), the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant—between God and men—through Israel after the flesh.

A QUESTION RE THE MEDIATOR

Can you quote any statement in the Scriptures to the effect that the Abrahamic Covenant did not have a Mediator?

We answer that there is no direct statement in those words, nor is it necessary. What is not stated is not to be understood. That is a rule of all reason and logic. It is what is stated that is to be taken into consideration. There was no mediator mentioned. It is for those who claim that the Abrahamic Covenant had a Mediator to prove it.

The Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews (6th chapter) tried to show the strength and power of the Abrahamic Covenant; but he does not tell us of or point to any Mediator as having had charge of it. On the other hand, he does point to God's Word and God's oath as the foundation of that covenant. He says that it was approved to us by two immutable things—that God could neither lie nor break his oath. The Apostle very particularly shows that the Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant and that, added 430 years afterward, it had a Mediator.

So St. Paul proceeds to explain that in the case of that original covenant, because there was but one party, there was no need of a Mediator. A Mediator stands between two parties to see that each does his part. Moses was the Mediator of the Law Covenant. He stood between God and Israel. (Deut. 5:5) On the one hand he represented God and on the other, Israel. But as respects the Abrahamic Covenant there was only one party. God is that One. Therefore there was no need of a Mediator. Why not? Because God did not make any condition with which the seed of Abraham would have to comply. He gave his oath to this covenant, instead of a Mediator. God said I will do it; therefore there was no place for a Mediator. And there was no Mediator. The original covenant did not say how many additional or subordinate covenants would be made.

As to the promised seed of Abraham, God did not explain how he would secure to Abraham such a wonderful Seed as would bless all the families of the earth. Abraham did not know how this was to be done. We know how God secures to Abraham this wonderful seed. He set before his Son the promise of a great reward. And he, for the sake of the glory set before him, humbled himself to become a man. When he

left the heavenly glory he was merely preparing to fulfil the Covenant. He was not yet the seed of Abraham. Jesus the babe was of Abraham's seed according to the flesh, but not the seed of Abraham mentioned in the covenant. Even when Jesus was thirty years of age he was not the seed of Abraham referred to in that covenant. It was not until he voluntarily offered himself in consecration at Jordan that he became the seed of Abraham. At that very moment the seed of Abraham began to be represented in him—when he received the begetting of the holy Spirit. He reached completion as the Head of that seed when on the third day he arose from the dead to the spirit condition. In other words, the seed of Abraham was not yet in existence when God made that promise or covenant to Abraham.

Then Jesus set before his followers that same joy; and when we consecrate similarly we enter into a covenant with God by sacrifice, as "members" of the Anointed One. We thus agree to present our bodies that God will raise us up as the body to the same exalted condition of heavenly glory to which he raised our Redeemer and Master. "If ye be Christ's (if ye comply with the conditions), then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29) In a certain sense we are already the seed of Abraham, but not until we share "his (Jesus') resurrection" will we be the seed in the complete sense. The first work which that seed will do will be to extend this great promise that God has made worldwide. Its utmost breadth will be attained by instituting a New Covenant with Israel by which Israel may attain eternal life on the human plane, and all nations through Israel.

A covenant between two parties, both contracting, requires a Mediator. As, for instance, in the ordinary affairs of life, the general law of the State steps in and serves as mediator between all contracting parties. And so in contracts between God and men, it is necessary to have a Mediator. But suppose you said to me, I intend to give you tomorrow this diamond ring. Should I ask, Where is the Mediator? Who will guarantee to me that you will give me the ring? You would probably answer, There is no need of a Mediator; it is a voluntary gift. And so in our covenant of sacrifice. It is a voluntary act. God has made a certain provision: "Blessed

are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." We agree to enter into our sacrifice voluntarily and our Advocate agrees to help us. If we do these things that we have agreed to do, we get the reward—glory, honor and immortality.

THE OATH AS INSTEAD OF A MEDIATOR

In the Abrahamic Covenant God's oath, attesting his Word, served to ratify the covenant, to make it binding, to hold it sure. It thus took the place which might have been occupied by a Mediator, had there been conditions mutually binding upon the Almighty and upon some of his people. There was

no Mediator, because, as already stated, the promise was an unconditional one: God proffered to do certain things—to provide through Abraham's posterity a seed capable of blessing the world. Hence no Mediator was necessary.

But notice that St. Paul, in speaking of this Abrahamic Covenant (Heb. 6:17), declares that God "confirmed it by an oath." The word here rendered confirmed is defined by Strong's lexicon, *to interpose* (as, arbiter). Young defines the Greek word *mesiteuo*, rendered *confirmed* in our text, "to be or act as a Mediator."

THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES IN BRIEF

God proposed in himself before the foundation of the world the great plan re redemption, because he foreknew man's fall and the death penalty he would put upon it. For the first 1656 years up to the flood God permitted the holy angels to demonstrate their inability to recover the sinner to righteousness. On the contrary, the contagion of sin spread to some of the holy angels. As the Scriptures declare, "The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took unto them wives of such as they would. And there were born unto them children, which were giants and men of renown." (Gen. 6) And the earth was filled with violence and sin—to such an extent that God declared that the imagination of the human heart had become only evil and that continually. Foreknowing this God had already arranged that one of the aqueous "rings," still suspended above the earth, should descend, causing the flood, which wiped out that order of things, destroying every human being, except righteous Noah and his family, of whom it is written, "Now Noah was perfect in his generation (there was no admixture of angelic seed)."—Genesis 6:9.

Thus the angels were tested by contact with sin for centuries—so that all of those who desired had opportunity to transgress the divine laws. The disobedient ones are referred to in the New Testament as those angels who kept not their first estate or spirit condition, but who preferred to live on the earthly, animal plane. These were restrained in chains of darkness until the great Millennial morning—cut off from fellowship with God and the holy angels and no longer permitted to materialize and thus to commingle with humanity.—2 Peter 2:4.

When God's due time came he called Abraham to make of him a type of himself, and to give him a son, Isaac, to be a type of Christ, and to call for Isaac a bride, Rebecca, who would be a type of the elect church of this Gospel age. And as with Rebecca came maids, so with the elect church comes the "great company" class. As Abraham offered Isaac on the altar in a figure and he was recovered from death in a figure, so God really offered his Son in death and recovered him out of death actually by resurrection from the dead. As all that Abraham had he gave to Isaac, so it is that all the blessings that God has to give to all others of the human family who will become his people will come through the antitypical Isaac. And when Rebecca became Isaac's bride and joint-heir, she became sharer with him in all the joys and privileges which were his. Thus was represented the future glory of the church with Christ in blessing all the families of the earth.

Moreover a double figure is used to represent The Christ, namely, Jesus the Head and the church his body. In the fulfilling of this figure the Apostle tells us that all of the consecrated overcomers are members of the Isaac class, saying, "Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." The church as the bride is pictured in St. Paul's statement, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise"—the promise that through us the world shall be blessed.—Gal. 3:29.

ABRAHAM'S WIVES TYPICAL

While the foregoing is a brief synoptical picture of the whole, the details of Abraham's life represents the details of the divine plan of the ages. As Abraham had the promise that he should be the Father of many nations, it implies that, eventually, many peoples of the world will become God's children—but only through Isaac and through the promise made respecting Isaac's work. Furthermore, the seed of Abraham, it was foretold, would be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore. The stars of heaven represent the spiritual seed of Abraham. The sand of the seashore represent the multitudinous earthly seed, the human family brought back to life during the Millennium, the result of the redemptive plan.

St. Paul gives us the key to the entire situation in the suggestion that Abraham's wives were typical of Covenants and this explains to us the seemingly harsh treatment of

Hagar. Abraham was obeying divine instructions, and the divine instructions were so shaped as to constitute the matter in type a picture and lesson for our instruction. Abraham's first wife was Sarah. St. Paul explains that Sarah typified a fundamental promise, and her name, Sarah, signifies princess or chief one. This princess covenant, the one upon which all the others depended for their fulfillment, is the one which fulfills its mission or purpose in the development of the spiritual seed—Isaac—"We as Isaac was are children of the promise." This covenant has nothing whatever to do with the development of any other children of God except through the Isaac class, the Mediator class, the great Prophet, Priest and King class, through which all of God's blessings are to descend to humanity.

Because Sarah was to serve as a type of spiritual things she was barren for long years, to teach that God's primary covenant with Abraham would be barren (unfruitful) for long centuries. Meantime, in order to make another type, Sarah's bondmaid, Hagar, was given to Abraham for a wife, Sarah seeking to appropriate the child of Hagar as the seed of promise—as her own. Hagar represented the Law Covenant made with Israel at Sinai, as St. Paul explains. The child or offspring of that covenant was the Jewish nation, Israel in the flesh. The fact that Sarah sought to recognize Ishmael as her son and held Hagar in her arms at the time of his birth, implied that the Law Covenant with Moses as its Mediator would, for a time, seem to constitute Israel the heir of the original covenant—which included the blessing of all the families of the earth. But this was not the divine will.

APOSTOLIC EXPLANATION OF COVENANT TYPES

And so, in God's due time, Sarah brought forth Isaac, who typed the true heir of the covenant or promise. This birth of Isaac was represented primarily by the begetting of our Lord Jesus Christ by the holy Spirit to the spirit nature; and, later on, by his resurrection to the perfection of spirit nature; and in a larger sense, as St. Paul explains (Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise), the birth of Isaac represented the begetting by the holy Spirit of the entire church, which is the body of Christ. Then came the persecution, the mocking of Isaac by Ishmael and the subsequent casting out from divine favor of the Hagar or Law Covenant and her child, the Jewish people. They have been outcast for centuries and were about to die—about to lose their national identity, about to be absorbed by other nations, just as Hagar and Ishmael, after being cast out, wandered through the desert until they had eaten their loaf and had drank the water they had with them and Ishmael was ready to die. Then the angel of the Lord drew their attention to a spring of water in the desert and, after their refreshment, counseled their return and submission to the divine arrangement—their recognition of the Sarah Covenant and spiritual Israel. We have come close to this very point of time now. The poor Jews, losing hope, were about ready to die, to give up all faith in the promises. But, behold, at the opportune time, a well-spring of hope revives them and the message to them is that there is a spiritual Israel and also a natural Israel and that their blessings are along natural lines and must come to them through the recognition of the glorified Mediator of a New (Law) Covenant.

The Apostolic explanation of this wonderful system of types stops here. And we would be inclined to stop here also, were it not that other Scriptures clearly point out that later on, after the death of the Hagar Covenant and after the principal Covenant shall have accomplished its purposes in the bringing forth of spiritual Israel, the antitypical Isaac, a New Covenant is due to be introduced "after those days"—after the interim of this Gospel age specially set apart for the development of the antitypical Isaac. That New Covenant is referred to by St. Paul. When discussing this very subject he says respecting natural Israel's restoration to divine favor, "This is my covenant with them when I shall take away their sins; as concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your

sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. . . . for as ye in times past have not believed God, but have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."—Rom. 11:26-32

The same great covenant, future for Israel, is referred to by the Prophet Jeremiah. (31:31) Israel is there told that after certain days God will make a New Covenant with them, not the Sinaitic Covenant—not the Hagar Covenant—and just as surely not the Sarah Covenant, which gives birth only to a spiritual Israel. The prophecies respecting that New Covenant are earthly, restitutionary. Under it, "after those days," God will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh—he will make them tender-hearted human beings, loving, kind, etc. But he will not make of them spirit beings or new creatures.

The Mediator of that New Covenant, Israel understood, will be a greater Mediator than Moses, though like unto him in the sense that Moses was the type or small fore-finger of him. Even so the Mt. Sinai Covenant, with Israel as the Ishmael class gendered thereunder, were typical of the greater blessings and upliftings to be accomplished by the New (Law) Covenant. For these reasons the Lord did not confuse the types by reinstating Hagar as Abraham's wife after the death of Sarah, as representing a renewal of divine favor toward Israel and the use of natural Israel as the earthly channel of divine favor and blessing to all the families of the earth. Instead, God permitted Hagar to cease as a type after showing her subserviency to Sarah and the recovery of her child, the Jew, from perishing. When Abraham, after the death of Sarah, took another wife, Keturah, we have every reason to believe that she, also, was a type and represented a third covenant. And her many children represented typically the many people, kindreds and tongues of the world which will ultimately become, under the New Covenant arrangement, children of the Highest.

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SARAH COVENANT

Nevertheless it should be continually borne in mind that in this series of types the Lord everywhere showed the

superiority of the Sarah Covenant. In one sense of the word Sarah was Abraham's only wife, because Hagar and Keturah are mentioned merely as concubines. Thus the divine plan all centered in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Nevertheless the Jew and his Law Covenant have been used of the Lord as a supplementary means of blessing and instruction to the church and to the world. Likewise in the future the blessings that will go to Israel and through Israel to the world under the New Covenant will all depend upon the first Covenant, the Sarah Covenant, the spiritual one and its spiritual seed—The Christ, Head and body. The New Covenant can go into effect as a better Covenant than the Mosaic one only by reason of having a better Mediator than Moses, "The Mediator of the New Covenant"—The Christ. And he will become the Mediator of that covenant and put it into effect for the blessing of all through or by means of his "better sacrifices." First, the sacrifice of Jesus, the foundation of all reconciliation with the Father—"and we through him." Secondly, the Father's acceptance of the church as members of the body of Christ, upon the condition mentioned by St. Paul, "I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God." These are the better sacrifices which the great Mediator presents to Justice, all founded upon the merit of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. His merit will be shared in, through God's arrangement, by the "little flock," the royal priesthood, who not only by faith accept the Redeemer's merit, but who, by grace, also lay down their lives. They become dead with him, that they may also live with him and share his glory, honor, immortality, Kingship, Priesthood, Mediatorship, etc.

"Ah, these are of a royal line,
All children of a King.
Heirs of immortal crowns divine,
And lo, for joy they sing!

"Why do they, then appear so mean?
And why so much despised?
Because of their rich robes unseen
The world is not apprised."

WHEN WILL OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE CEASE?

The question has frequently been asked, If after the door of opportunity to enter the "narrow way" shall have closed and one should then find himself still in heart accord with the Lord and his Plan, but cut off from all opportunity of service, should he believe that he has made his calling and election sure?

We answer that we would not think that this fact would constitute a ground or warrant for concluding that such had made his calling and election sure. It might be considered, rather, as an indication to the contrary, yet we think we should not, under such circumstances, be discouraged, but conclude that if our hearts had continued loyal to the Lord we were now merely enduring a test of faith and that the proper course would be to stand firm in the faith, in the spirit of the words of Job. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It seems that the Lord desires his people to abide in his love continually and has made the arrangement that our standing in him, our peace of heart, shall depend upon our faithfulness to conscience and to duty, or rather our faithfulness to duty, according to our conscience.

Evidently the condition which the Lord desires most is that we shall day by day keep close to him; that we shall see that no day passes by in which we have not striven to do the Lord's will, and that if we have failed to do the Divine will, according to our conception of that will, we should at once take the matter to the Throne of Grace in prayer and supplication until we have the realization of divine forgiveness and reconciliation. Thus living day by day we may feel sure that we are abiding in the love of God and may feel each day that so far as that day is concerned we had made "our calling and election sure"; that we are abiding in that condition which would make sure to us the "prize" at the end of the way.

MADE SUPPLICATION TO HIM WHO WAS ABLE TO SAVE HIM OUT OF DEATH

But if in any degree we should seem to be separated in a measure from the Lord and his love and lack the realization of his favor we should not conclude that we are not in the right condition of full acceptance with him, because we know that our Lord, as he neared the end, had considerable fear of this kind. He had a fear that he had not fully complied with all the conditions, and "with strong crying and tears" he

made supplication "to him who was able to save him out of death, and was heard in respect to the thing which he feared." He feared that he had been unfaithful; he feared that in some way, unintentionally, he had failed to conform to the divine requirements.

Again, we remember that in his dying hour, it was the Father's will that he should experience a full cutting off and hiding of the Father's face, so that he cried out in his anguish, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" What have I done that I should be denied fellowship with thee? And so, if this was true of him, it might be true of any of his disciples; our conscience, therefore, might not always be a safe guide as to what would constitute an acceptable condition with the Lord. So the Apostle Paul, after referring to the fact that others might misjudge us and that it was a small thing that he should be judged of his brethren or of any man, continued, "Yea, I judge not mine own self." I realize that I am not competent to judge even my own case. There is One that judgeth me, even God.

So it is in our experiences. We have found some with very sensitive consciences who are continually inclined to reprove themselves as always failing, as always doing something wrong. It seems to be their normal condition to feel so. Such persons might easily make a mistake respecting the diagnosis of their case. Others, the very reverse of this, continually feel well satisfied with themselves, even though they are not in full harmony with the Lord. So those who are overly conscientious and those who are lacking in conscientiousness in their judgment of themselves, should seek to make up these deficiencies of their own conscience so that they can arrive at a right judgment, can be in harmony with the divine judgment.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH NECESSARY

At the same time we are to remember that all that we can do that will constitute us acceptable in coming to the Lord will be the exercise and cultivation of faith. Our faith should not be in ourselves, because such faith is merely self-confidence. We are to realize that we have nothing that would commend us to God. We are to realize that we come short continually; that it is not possible for any one to come up to the perfect standard; therefore we are to be continually in the attitude

represented in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses," feeling sure that we have trespassed, and seeking meanwhile to minimize these trespasses, to be so faithful that these will become less and less daily in the Lord's sight.

But from our own experience we would consider the proper thought to be, "Have I lived today as best I knew how, and are the accounts right with the Lord, and is there anything that I can do better tomorrow than today, in the light of the experiences of today? Can I be wiser, can I be stronger, can I be more self-sacrificing?" When we are doing the best we can do, we are to know that the Lord does not expect more than that of us.

We remember a remark made by a brother at one of the conventions. He said, "I am doing the very best that I can, and I am trusting in the Lord." We remember our reply that we thought that a very wonderful testimony—for any one to be able to say, conscientiously, that he was doing the very best that was possible for him to do. Personally, we never know when we have done the very best possible. We always try the next day to see if we can do better; but if any one has reached the place where he has done the very best possible, he has surely done well. We feel at times that we have done the very best, yet we very rarely close a day in which we come to the conclusion that we have done the very best we could possibly do in every particular, in every item of the day; and so we try to mark those points in which we might have done better, that we may have the benefit of those experiences on the morrow.

But if our hearts have been loyal to the Lord and we have been serving him to the best of our ability, striving to bring every word and every action and every thought into full subjection to the will of God—if this has been our endeavor, then we may feel satisfied that God is pleased with us; that we are in the condition that he has declared is acceptable with him; that we are in the way to gain the great "Prize" he has to give. But we are not guaranteed this for the morrow, but only for that moment; and so the Lord wishes us to live moment by moment and to realize his blessing moment by moment, and not to think that our case is decided and ended. Our question, then, should not be, "Will we feel satisfied at some future time?" but rather, "What is my experience now, this moment?" Sufficient unto each day are its trials and difficulties.

"THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION YE SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM"

The question is also asked, Should we assume that none will remain on this side of the vail long after the harvest work is fully closed?

Our thought is that there will be privileges of service down quite close to the time of trouble; that there will not be a long period of waiting in which we would have no opportunities of service. Of course, this is purely conjecture; nothing that we think of in the Scriptures states so positively, but there are so many ways of service that we can hardly imagine

that all opportunities of service would be cut off. If we were cut off from public service, there would still be a great deal of service, or opportunity for service, in a private way. We can hardly imagine such a condition arising in the world as would cut us off from all service, public and private, until the time of trouble would be so thoroughly upon the world as to stop business and all else. It is our expectation that nearly all the saints will be gone by the time the trouble is so intense that there will be no opportunity for service of any kind.

Suppose, however, for illustration, that for some reason the mails would close, or some other situation should arise that would practically separate us from the world in general, we would still have opportunities of serving one another, and many of the Lord's people have found that their severest trials come in the rendering of service to those closest to them. We have known of cases where husbands found it very much easier to render service to others than to their own families, their wives and children. We have known of instances in which it was the same with the wife, and with the children. Sometimes our severest trials, therefore, may lie very close at home, and our very best opportunities for service consequently may be very close at hand. So we think that when the time comes when all opportunities of service shall be cut off it will mean that the end is close and that the time of trouble is here; and if any of us were here under these conditions, we should fear that we were going to be of the "great company" and have our share in the "time of trouble."

But, on the other hand, we do not know to what extent this trouble that will prevail upon the "great company" may be in some measure also upon the "little flock." Many of the "little flock" may go into a great deal of trouble. We do not know that all the church, the "little flock" and the "great company" will suffer great tribulation. The Scriptures say of the "little flock," "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom," and it will be through much tribulation that the "great company," though failing to get a place in the kingdom class, will be fitted for their position; so there will be "much tribulation" for both classes. Perhaps this will be the outward tribulation. We are not competent to say at this time; we do not see clearly what the Lord meant when he said, "Watch, ye, therefore, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape those things coming upon the world and to stand before the Son of Man." We do not know whether he meant that we should be accounted worthy to escape all this outward trouble coming upon the world in general and to literally stand before the Son of Man, in the sense of being translated, perfected new creatures beyond the vail, or whether, on the other hand, he may have meant, "Watch," in your course of life, and be so faithful to the Lord that you may be accounted worthy to stand and not fall in the day of the presence of the Son of Man, escaping those things which are coming upon the world in the sense of not having the anguish of mind that will be upon the world while being in some of the tribulation with them.

IS THE READING OF "SCRIPTURE STUDIES" BIBLE STUDY?

The plan of reading twelve pages of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES each day, tried by so many, results in more Bible study than any other way that we know of. We believe that it is not so much the time that is given to Bible study, but the amount of study done and the amount of information gained, that counts. We all know people who have spent days and weeks and years in study of the Bible and have learned little or nothing. We think the idea that Bible study is merely the time spent in handling a Bible and reading over some verses is a mistaken idea.

It is a great deal like hunting or fishing. Some people go hunting every year, and though they do a lot of hunting, it is no sure indication of how much they get. Some do a lot of fishing, but do not get many fish. Bible study is very much the same. It is not the amount of time we spend in poring over a passage, but the amount of information we secure from the Bible.

The six volumes of SCRIPTURE STUDIES are not intended to supplant the Bible. There are various methods to be pursued in the study of the Bible and these aids to Bible study are in such form that they, of themselves, contain the important elements of the Bible as well as the comments or elucidations of those Bible statements, on exactly the same principle that our Lord and the Apostles quoted from the Old Testament, and then gave elucidations of those Old Testament passages. Many of the elucidations were such that if we had not had them, had not had specific interpretations, we might never have been able to discern the proper application of them.

THE HARVEST THE DUE TIME FOR A CLEAR UNFOLDING OF THE TRUTH

The applications of the SCRIPTURE STUDIES are, of course, based upon those of the Lord and the Apostles. We do not feel that it would be in our province to give any interpretation except that which would be either already given by our Lord and the Apostles or such as would so fit and dovetail with their interpretations as to leave, in our judgment, no doubt as to the proper application of the Scriptures referred to and explained.

Those parts of the Bible which once we thought we understood well, we find that we did not understand at all. Some of the very things relative to the ransom, relative to salvation, we did not understand. Looking back over our experiences, we fully believed that there was a God and that he would reward those who diligently sought him, and that he had sent Jesus his Son, but how and why, we did not comprehend. We had wrong ideas as to what was the penalty for sin; wrong ideas as to why a Savior should come; entirely wrong ideas as to what the Savior did; wrong ideas as to what he was to do in the future, and as to what would be our relationship to the Father and the Savior. We knew, in some sense of the word, that we were called to be a son, but how to become a son and what was meant by the begetting of the holy Spirit, and kindred terms, we did not comprehend; and in our experience we have found none who ever did comprehend these things.

So we believe that the thought for us to take in this connection is that it is because we are living in this particular

time, in the ending of this age, that we are favored with such a clear unfolding of spiritual things. It is also our thought that present blessings of a temporal kind, such as the electric light, are due for similar reasons. We believe that any other explanation would confer too great honor upon the individual connected with the production. The very ablest minds in the world have examined these subjects, but now, by God's grace, we have come to the place where the veil is taken away and where we can see the real meaning of God's Word—not merely one person can see it, but hundreds, thousands, see it.

We think that we get the right conception to thus view it rather than to think that we had some great power which enabled us to put together a great system of theology, more wonderful than all other systems of theology put together—a thousand times more wonderful. Therefore, the simplest way to explain the matter is to acknowledge that the Lord's due time has come and that he has guided to the right understanding.

If, then, the Lord has provided us with something in our day that other days than those of the Apostles knew nothing about, no matter how good nor how wise they were—for us to ignore the line of teaching which has been thus developed would be, in our judgment, to ignore the Lord's providences. It is for each one to think for himself, however, and to guide his conduct in every way accordingly.

If the six volumes of *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* are practically the Bible topically arranged, with Bible proof-texts given, we might not improperly name the volumes—the Bible in an arranged form. That is to say, they are not merely comments on the Bible, but they are practically the Bible itself, since there is no desire to build any doctrine or thought on any individual preference or on any individual wisdom, but to present the entire matter on the lines of the Word of God. We therefore think it safe to follow this kind of reading, this kind of instruction, this kind of Bible study.

Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years—if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures.

Our thought, therefore, is that these *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* are a great assistance, a very valuable help, in the understanding of God's Word. If these books are to be of any value to us it must be because we see in them loyalty to the Word of God, and as far as our judgment goes, see them to be in full harmony with the Word and not antagonistic to it. Therefore, in reading them the first time, and perhaps the second time, and before we would accept anything as being our own personal faith and conviction, we should say, "I will not take it because these studies say so; I wish to see what the Bible says." And so we would study the Scriptures in the light of these *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*; we would prove every point, or disprove it, as the case might be. We would be satisfied with nothing less than a thorough investigation of the Bible from this standpoint.

If, after doing that, we should find the books to be in accord with the Bible, then we would think we were logical in saying, "I will not need to go through that process now every time that I read the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, for I have looked up those texts of Scripture and know certainly that the New Testament proves all those points." If, at the same time, in any future reading, we should come to a place where something did not seem clear to us and we thought of some Scripture which seemed not as harmonious with it as we had previously thought, we would think it our duty to refer at once to the Scriptures, because the Scriptures are the standard, and in that reference to the Scripture it would be with a view to discerning whether or not we had been mistaken in our previous examinations.

"THEY SHALL BE ALL TAUGHT OF GOD"

We would conclude, practically, that we could not understand anything about the Bible except as it was revealed. We would, therefore, not waste a great deal of time doing what we know some people do, reading chapter after chapter, to no profit. We would not think of doing it. We would not think we were studying the Scriptures at all. We would think we were following the course that had been anything but profitable to ourselves and many others in the past—merely reading over the Scriptures. We would say that the same Heavenly

Father who had guided us to this truth, to this understanding of the Scriptures as his children, if he had some further information for us he would bring it to our attention in some manner; and therefore we would not see the necessity of reading the New Testament every day or every year; we would not consider that necessary. We would consider that the Scripture which says, "They shall be all taught of God," would imply that in his own appointed way God would bring to our attention whatever feature of divine truth would be "meat in due season for the household of faith."

Further, we would say that now, having satisfied ourselves respecting what the Divine Plan is, we would understand that we had reached the place that the Apostle speaks of as being a qualified ambassador of God, a qualified minister of the New Covenant, and that, as a servant or minister of the New Covenant, we now had a responsibility in making known these things that we had learned; that we were not put here primarily to read the Bible, but primarily to serve the Lord and his Truth. It was quite proper, however, that before we came to a knowledge of the Truth, and when we were in measurable discontent of mind as to what was the Truth, that we should refrain from telling anybody else.

We remember very well in our own personal experience that after we had tried some street preaching, etc., we came to the conclusion that there was something wrong; that we did not understand what we were trying to tell to others; that we did not understand with sufficient clearness to properly present it and make sure that we were representing the Lord and his message aright, and we said to ourself, "I will stop any endeavor to teach others until I know what I believe."

We think that should be the attitude of every one of us. Why should we attempt to preach or teach anything that we do not understand? So, after God favors us in this time with an understanding of Present Truth, he has given us a knowledge of more truth than we could have gained in a thousand years if we had read and studied unaided; and now we can attempt to present it to others. Why has he given us a knowledge of this Truth? He wishes us to be "thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work." Therefore, we should study that we may be able to speak the word of the Lord freely and know that we are not misrepresenting the divine purpose and plan and character; and we ought therefore to give the more earnest heed to the opportunities for service and consider that the information which has been given us has been given for the very purpose that we may impart it to others—to those brethren and sisters of the Lord's family, some of whom are in Babylon yet, honest at heart, perhaps, and very desirous of knowing the truth, though perhaps very much blinded as we once were.

"SCRIPTURE STUDIES" NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE BIBLE

This is not, therefore, putting the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* as a substitute for the Bible, because so far as substituting for the Bible, the *STUDIES*, on the contrary, continually refer to the Bible; and if one has any doubt as to a reference or if one's recollection should lapse in any degree, one should refresh his memory, and, in fact, should see that his every thought is in harmony with the Bible—not merely in accord with the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, but in accord with the Bible.

We might remark that quite a number of the friends in the Truth are making it a rule to read twelve pages of the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* a day, and that we do not know one who has been following this course and making use of the various means of grace the Lord has provided (Dawn and testimony meetings and Sunday meetings and Pilgrim meetings and the Berean lessons, Manna text, etc.), who has gone out of the truth. We know a great many who, on the contrary, have been of the opinion that they knew these things long ago, while in fact they do not know half of what they did know—they have forgotten more than half of what they read and they are those who are now stumbling—going into outer darkness.

We are not wishing in this to say anything against one's poring over chapters that he does not understand and others do not understand, hoping that he might light on some truth. We have no objection to this. He has a perfect right to do so if he wishes. He has a right to spend weeks and years in this way if he chooses, but the chances even then are that when he does light on something he will have it all wrong.

Furthermore, we would suggest that merely reading twelve pages of the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* would not be studying in the proper sense of the word—neither studying the Bible nor studying the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*. A proper study would be to think of the meaning of every word and every sentence. The thought is, it is not to see how much one can read, but to make sure that one goes no further than he comprehends or understands, whether that means one page or twenty pages. We should not

consider it a Scripture study in any sense of the word unless our thought has grasped the matter from the standpoint of seeking to know what the Scriptures teach and seeking to call to mind these Scriptures that are being explained and to call to mind other texts, perhaps, that are not cited, or of which only a small portion is cited.

If one will do all this it will not be merely a reading but a study; and from this standpoint, whoever reads two pages of SCRIPTURE STUDIES each day with the suggested passages con-

nected with those two pages, would do more Scripture studying in that time than he could do by any other method. Whenever he reads these pages and calls the corresponding or connecting Scriptures to mind he is drawing from the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, with practically every page he reads. Now is it possible to find any other Bible study that would accomplish so much for us in the same time as this would do? If there is we ought to take it. If there is not, then we have our opinion.

WAS JACOB'S COURSE WITH ESAU DISHONORABLE?

The question has been asked, Why did Jacob take from his brother Esau the birthright and blessing? Why did he not give him the pottage when he was hungry, instead of selling it to him? We think it fair to infer that both Esau and Jacob were hungry. The proof that Jacob was hungry was that he had prepared the pottage. We also have proof that Esau was hungry; but we have no evidence as to which was the more hungry. We will suppose that they were about alike hungry and that there was not enough for two to get a meal. Esau made it known that he wanted something to eat and Jacob thought this a proper time for him to secure something which Esau had, but which Esau did not really want.

It is also reasonable to suppose that the whole life of Esau was careless of religious matters and interests. He married into families of surrounding heathen people, entirely in disregard of the promise made to Abraham, getting several worthless wives, according to his mother's statement. This being true, it seems quite likely that he and Jacob had many talks about God's promise to their grandfather Abraham, and how the fulfillment of the promise would come about, and that Esau had all along been an unbeliever; and now, when the opportune time came and they were both hungry and the food was there, Jacob said, "You don't care for your birthright, Esau, and you do not appreciate this promise made to Abraham; it does not count for anything to you; I will tell you what we will do. You may have the supper and I the birthright. Is it a bargain?" Esau said, "It is a bargain, for I am more desirous of the supper than the birthright."

It was a fair transaction. If one buys a house at a bargain and both buyer and seller are satisfied with the transaction, we would not say that it was cheating or robbery; and so with Jacob. The Abrahamic promise, so far as Esau's expectation was concerned, was not worth anything. He had no confidence in the promise. The Apostle Paul calls our attention to the matter and says that Esau was profane; that is, he did not count the promise of God as worth anything; he was willing to sell it for a mess of pottage, as though he was getting the better of the bargain, probably saying to himself, "That poor brother of mine does not know what life is; if he would only take a few lessons from me he would begin to live. Here he is believing something that God said to grandfather Abraham, and he thinks he will get something wonderful out of it some day. I do not think it worth considering." And so Esau doubtless thought he was the gainer over Jacob in getting the supper.

ESAU CARED ONLY FOR THE EARTHLY PART OF THE BIRTHRIGHT

It has also been asked, "Why did Jacob attempt to deceive his father?" Jacob was trying to obtain that which he had bought and which he saw the seller would not deliver. Jacob knew his brother was a dishonest man to start with. All the arrangements were made for Esau to receive the blessing that he had sold, and now he was about to steal it. Jacob must have reasoned, "I will try to prevent his stealing it; I have bought the birthright; I have a right to represent Esau in this matter; I shall merely try to have justice done, to get my father to do that which is right and proper, that which I know is God's will, because God told our mother about the matter at the time of our birth—that the blessing was to come to me; and here in God's providence it has come to me in a legitimate way by my brother's not caring for it and my caring a great deal for it. Now it is only a question as to how I shall get it. As a matter of fact, Esau does not value the birthright except from the earthly standpoint. I know he

does not care a whit for the promise made to father; he has no confidence in it. All he thinks about is the property that will go to me if I am recognized as the elder son."

Jacob knew that he would be in trouble if he would try to get the blessing, and yet he was so in love with the promise that a great blessing would come out of it, that he was willing to forego everything. He was willing to become an outcast from his home if he might only have the spiritual part of the promise, and so he left his home with the distinct understanding that he was losing his father's earthly possessions and getting only the spiritual blessing which Esau did not desire. He did not attempt to take from Esau the portion that Esau wanted.

Some one might query, If Jacob knew that the Lord promised him this blessing through his mother, was it not a lack of faith for him not to recognize that the Lord would give it to him without any deceit or misrepresentation? We suppose that if Jacob had lived in our day and had all the advantages that we have, the instructions of the Old and New Testaments and the begetting of the holy Spirit, he might have learned to exercise his faith, which was already a strong faith as respects God's promise; he might have learned to wait on the Lord. We have many advantages over him in all these respects. He had very few examples before him respecting the waiting on the Lord or anything of that kind, and he did at least show his zeal and energy and confidence in God in the course that he took; and for a person not begotten of the holy Spirit we think he did wonderfully well.

JACOB WAS NOT REPROVED OF THE LORD

We think it well for us to remember in this connection that we should measure all of our ideas according to the divine standard, and if we do not do so we make a mistake. The divine standard rules. Now, according to the record, there was not a word said by the Lord against Jacob in this whole procedure, and if God had nothing to say against him, who are we that we should have?

When Jacob fled to Padan-aram for fear of his brother, forsaking his home and all the property that was his according to his purchase, willing to let it remain permanently in the hands of Esau, as he had intended to do anyway—when he fled from home and had nothing but a stone for his pillow, that very night the Lord appeared to him in a dream; a vision or picture was given him of the blessing that was his. This indicated that God's favor was with him. Now to think that God could and would conspire with an evil person is not our way of reasoning on the matter. We do not object to others reasoning differently. We will reason according to the standard the Lord raised, and say, "Thus it is written."

It may be that there was something not written in the record that might give a different view of the matter, one more easy to comprehend. The Apostle Paul commends Jacob's faith, but counts Esau's selling his birthright as reprehensible, and tells us that we should not be like the "profane person who sold his birthright." (Heb. 12:16) In this Paul seems to intimate that there may be some who wish to sell their birthright and others who may wish to buy the birthright.

The Jews in our Lord's day who failed to accept the invitation of the Lord and who were not Israelites indeed, these sold, for the "mess of pottage" of earthly blessings and earthly favor, their heavenly, their spiritual rights; and we who are Gentiles and to whom this right did not appertain by nature, have been invited in to see if we will appreciate the privileges and win the prize—and we will win the prize; we will get the birthright of Esau and the Esau class will not get it.

THREE TEMPTING QUESTIONS

MATTHEW 22:15-22; 34:46.—SEPTEMBER 18.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

The Pharisees and Sadducees of our Lord's day were the leaders of religion. They had rarely made an attack upon each other, although their doctrines were directly opposed. The Pharisees acknowledged God and the prophets and the Law, and

believed in a future life by a resurrection from the dead, and believed in a coming Messiah to exalt their nation and through it to bless the world. The Sadducees believed nothing of the kind—they were agnostics, Higher Critics. They were making

the best of the present life, doubting any future existence. The Pharisees opposed Jesus because he did not acknowledge them, but criticised them, and showed the hypocrisies of their claims to be perfect and holy in the keeping of the law, and reproved them for their lack of sympathy with the poor and less pretentious.

The Sadducees opposed Jesus because, from their standpoint of unbelief, he was a fraud. But even as a fraud they would not have bothered themselves to oppose him, only that they perceived that he was gaining an influence with the people—an influence which they feared might, sooner or later, lead to some disturbance of the peace and unfavorably influence the conduct of the Roman Empire towards the Jews. So while the Sadducees and Pharisees both opposed Jesus, their opposition was for different reasons.

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and the crying of the multitude, "Hosanna to the Son of David," the Messiah! awakened envy in the minds of the Pharisees. But in the Sadducees it produced a fear that the common people should be come so aroused as to involve their nation in some strife with the Empire. The Pharisees strove to turn away the sympathy of the people from the Great Teacher, and, to this end, sought to catch him in his words by putting the question,

"IS IT LAWFUL TO GIVE TRIBUTE?"

They reasoned that if Jesus would say, It is not lawful, they would have little difficulty in having him arrested as a leader of sedition and thus compel Pilate to put him to death. They reasoned further that if Jesus should answer that it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar he would thereby alienate the sympathy of the multitude, which cried "Hosanna!" after him; for the Jews held, almost superstitiously, the idea that they, as God's kingdom, must not pay tithes to any earthly kingdom—that it would be irreverent to do so, excepting under compulsion. We notice how artfully they endeavored to ensnare the Master by complimenting him upon his truthfulness, saying, "Master, we know that thou art true!" Not only so, but they sought to impress upon him their appreciation of him as a Teacher—that he would teach the light, the truth, at any cost. And so they said, "Thou teachest the way of God in truth!" And further, they fortified their position by saying, "We know that thou regardest not the person of men!"

These treacherous compliments were intended to ensnare him, but he promptly answered, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Why do you veil your base designs under guise of speaking for the truth? "Show me the tribute money." This was, literally, the census coin in which the tax was to be paid. They handed him a denarius, the usual wage for the day laborer, corresponding in value to about seventeen of our cents. Jesus asked, "Whose is this image and superscription?" They answered "Caesar's." Jesus replied, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." No wonder the wily Pharisees were troubled to know how to catch him in his words! On the contrary, they were caught; for all of their complimentary remarks stood to his credit in the minds of the common people.

WHOSE WIFE SHALL SHE BE?

Next, the Sadducees, the agnostics, tried to entrap the Great Teacher by asking one of their stock questions. Seven different brothers in turn married the same woman and all died before she did. To which of them will she be wife in the resurrection? They did not ask, To which will she be wife in heaven or Purgatory or eternal torture, for neither Jesus nor the Jews held any such teaching. The Pharisees and Jesus taught the resurrection of the dead, and it was against this teaching that the Sadducees aimed their sarcastic question.

Note the majesty of the Master's answer: "Ye do err, not

knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God!" You do not understand the Scripture teaching respecting such questions, and you are ignoring in your question the great divine power which, at that resurrection time, will be exercised and will straighten out all the difficulties of the situation. Then the Great Teacher proceeded to inform them that such as would (gradually) attain to the resurrection, such as would get a complete raising up out of sin and death conditions, would "neither marry nor be given in marriage," but would be sexless, as are the angels. Thus the supposed great and unanswerable question of the Sadducees fell flat and their ignorance was exposed.

WHICH IS THE GREAT COMMANDMENT?

Next, one of the Doctors of the Law endeavored to entrap the Lord on a question of the relative importance of the divine commandments, asking which Jesus considered the great one of all. The Great Teacher promptly divided the ten commandments into two, according to the law (Deut. 6:5), and answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This is the first great (chief) commandment. And the second is like unto it—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." What could the Lawyer say to such a summarization of the law? He had nothing left to say. He was answered as never before.

THEN JESUS TURNED QUESTIONER

The Great Teacher asked the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Messiah? Whose Son is he?" They answered, "The Son of David." The Teacher then queried, "How then doth David in spirit (prophetically) call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his Son?"

Of course the question was too deep for the Pharisees. The Great Teacher could answer all of their questions, but they could not answer his. How beautifully clear we see it to be that the Messiah, according to the flesh, was born of the lineage of David, but that God's purposes were not fully accomplished in Messiah of the flesh—that he lay down his flesh, sacrificially, and was raised from the dead to the plane of glory, honor and immortality, "far above angels, principalities and powers." We perceive that in the days of his flesh he was the Son of David, but that in his glorification he is David's Lord in that David will receive through him, in due time, not only resurrection from the dead, but also the blessings of participation in the Messianic kingdom. The father of Messiah in the flesh will thus become the son of the Messiah of glory, whose earthly life is to be the restitution price for the whole world, including David. Thus it is written, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes, (rulers) in all the earth."—Psa. 45:16.

AN ILLUSTRATION IN AN EARTHLY PRINCE

At a German function in Berlin the story goes that a Colonel met a young officer unknown to him whose only decoration was a large medallion set in brilliants. The Colonel inquired, "Lieutenant, what is that you have on?" The young man replied modestly, "An order, Colonel." The Colonel replied, "Not a Prussian Order; I know of none such." "An English Order, Colonel," said the young man. "And who in the world gave it to you?" asked the Colonel. The reply was, "My grandmother." The old Colonel began to think that the young man was making game of him and inquired, "And who may your grandmother be?" To his utter astonishment and dismay the answer was, "Queen Victoria, of England." Here was a Prince in disguise. And so Jesus was the great King of Glory in disguise. "He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."—John 1:10.

SUCH SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD

GALATIANS 5:15-26.—SEPTEMBER 25.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

St. Paul was a practical man, not merely a theorist; he brought his teaching down to a practical level which his readers could comprehend. Today's Study is one of these. Like all of St. Paul's epistles and entreaties, it is addressed to the church, to those who have turned aside from the broad road of selfishness and worldliness, to walk the narrow way, in the footsteps of Jesus, and thereby to become joint-heirs with Jesus in his Messianic kingdom, which is shortly to bless the world. Nevertheless, many who are not saints, many who are not wholly consecrated to God, may draw valuable lessons from the Apostle's words in this lesson, as well as in others. Many lessons of life specially applicable to those who have made a consecration to

be the Lord's followers are valuable also to the remainder of mankind.

The Christian has, so to speak, stepped out of his old self and become a new creature, a Spirit being, which merely resides in the flesh and has interests that are distinctly separate and often antagonistic thereto. The Apostle urges these to walk in the spirit; that is to say, to let their daily course of life be in accord with their new nature. So doing, they will resist and not fulfil the desires of the flesh. Why? Because they will realize that there is an antagonism of interests as between the desires of the flesh and their desires as new creatures. The two are at warfare, the one desiring against the other. There may