

that such an experience would not have been at all impossible in a nervous, strained, mental agony. But we note the beautiful simplicity of the statement with which his prayer concluded—"Nevertheless, my Father, not my will, but thy will, be done."

How childlike and beautiful the faith and trust, even amidst strenuous agitation! St. Paul says that he was heard in the thing which he feared. How? God's answer came by angelic hands. An angel appeared and ministered to him—ministered to his necessity. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14) We are not informed in what words this heavenly ministry was expressed to the Master in his lowliness and sorrow, but we do know that it must have been with full assurance of the Heavenly Father's favor and sympathy and love. He was heard in respect to the things which he feared. He received the assurance that he was well-pleasing to the Father; that he had been faithful to his covenant, and that he would have the resurrection promised.

From that moment onward the Master was the calmest of all who had any association with the great events of that night and the following day. Officers, servants, Sanhedrin, priests, Herod and his men of war, Pilate and his soldiers, and the shouting rabble—all were excited, all were distressed. Jesus only was calm. This was because he had the Father's assurance that all was well between them. As this blessed assurance gave the Master courage, so his followers since have found that, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If we have the peace of God ruling in our hearts, it is beyond all human comprehension.

JUDAS THE UNGRATEFUL APOSTATE

The world is full of sadly disappointing characters. In many things we all fail. Selfishness, meanness, perversity,

pride, etc., mark the human family most woefully. But withal, can anyone find anything more reprehensible than the ingrate who would betray his best friend?

The world is of one opinion respecting such characters as that of Judas. And although he is a noted example he is by no means an exception; there are many. Some of them live today. But whoever can see the meanness of such a disposition with a reasonably good focus will surely be saved from manifesting such a character, however mean might be his disposition. The man who could sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver is justly in contempt with all humanity. Nor was it merely the thirty pieces that influenced the ingrate. Rather it was pride. He had thought to be associated with the Master in an earthly throne. He had set his faith upon this expectation. Now that same Master explained more fully that the throne was not yet in sight; that it belongs to an age to follow this, and is to be given only to those who prove themselves loyal and faithful unto death. In the mind of Judas the matter took not the wisest and best way. Holding the Great Teacher in contempt, the deceived one probably intended that the delivery should be merely a temporary one—a lesson to the Master not to talk that way, not to carry matters too far—an incentive to him, compelling him to exert his power for the resistance of those who sought his life and thus, in exalting himself, make good to his disciples the share in the Kingdom which he had promised, or, failing of this, to wreck the entire project. Alas, the love of money, the love of power puff up and make delirious some who become intoxicated with ambition. How necessary that all the Lord's followers remember the message, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased!" "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—Matt. 23:12; 1 Pet. 5:6.

NEARING THE GOAL

With eyes aflame, with panting breath, they come—
The runners—every nerve and muscle tense;
Urged forward by a thousand deafening cries.
On, on, they rush! When one, close to the goal,
For but one moment glances back in pride
To note how far he hath outrun the rest.
Alas! tripped by a pebble on the course,
He stumbles, falls, arises, but too late!
Another sweeps ahead with blood-flecked lips
And bursting heart! One final, awful strain,
With superhuman effort, grand, supreme,
He leaps into the air—and falls in death
Across the line—a victor, but at what
A fearful cost he gave his life, his all!

I ponder o'er this tragedy of days
When Greece was mistress of the world, and say,
Hast not thou, also, entered on a race,
My soul, in contest for "a Crown of Life"—
A prize thou canst not win except thine all
Thou givest! Then, be wise, and watch and pray.

Turn not thine eyes one instant from "the mark,"
For fear thou dash thy foot against some small,
Well-rounded truth, which in thy pride thou hast
O'erlooked, and thus thou stumble, fall; and though
Thou shouldst arise, 'twould be too late to win!

Ah, then, consider thy "forerunner," Christ;
Yea, call to mind the "cloud of witnesses"
Around—those noble, faithful ones of old—
And strip thyself, my soul, of every weight;
Gird up thy loins; make straight paths for thy feet;
Breathe deeply of the Spirit's conquering power;
And run with patient, meek, enduring zeal!
Almost thou hast attained, my soul! My soul—
Shall angels, principalities, or powers,
Or height, or depth, or other creature, draw
Thee from the goal so near? Ah, yes, so near,
The glory-light streams through the parting "vail!"
Have faith, press on! One effort, grand, supreme—
And thou hast won in death Love's blood-bought crown!
G. W. SEIBERT.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE SONS OF LEVI

"Who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."—Malachi 3:2, 3.

We understand this statement to apply to our Lord's manifestation at the first advent and throughout the Gospel age. He has been appearing, in the sense of making himself known to those in the right condition of heart, that he might assist them in walking in his steps. But he is particularly manifesting himself to them now. The Jews, at his first advent, had been expecting the greater Mediator than Moses, who was the Mediator of the old Law Covenant. Moses said to them, "A Prophet [a great Messiah] shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:22, 23) So they were expecting this great Messiah, the greater Mediator of the New Covenant.

Jehovah had said, "I will send my Messenger, . . . even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." You are expecting a greater than Moses; but it will mean a severer trial and testing when the greater shall come. The text above does not signify that he will refine literal silver and literal

gold, but that he will refine God's people. These will be relieved of the dross, that they may offer unto the Lord an acceptable sacrifice. These sons of Levi, in the antitypical sense, are the household of faith. And they have proposed that they will offer sacrifice to the Lord—will "present their bodies living sacrifices." Such as do thus fully present themselves will be the Priests, and the great Messiah will be the High Priest. They will offer unto the Lord an acceptable sacrifice in righteousness. This work has been in progress throughout this age. And because we are now in the end of the age, tests more crucial are being applied, and will continue to be applied until the Lord shall have completed the development of this spiritual house of Levi, the antitypical Priests and the antitypical great company.

The text having reference to the entire appearance of Messiah, beginning at Jordan, his appearance will culminate in his glorious revelation at his second advent. Messiah, the Head of this greater prophet than Moses, was raised up first. It requires the entire Gospel age to raise up the body of this greater Mediator and antitype of Moses.

HE WILL THOROUGHLY PURGE HIS PEOPLE

The statement, "Who shall stand when he appeareth?" should not be understood to imply that all would be standing at the time of his appearing. There would be some who would think that they were standing, but who would really not be in the Lord's favor at all. But the meaning of this text, to our mind, is, Who shall stand the test at the time of his appearing? As, for instance, at the first advent he came unto his own, the Jewish people; but, they rejected him and crucified him. There were only a few who stood the test. John the Baptist said, "He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner." (Matt. 3:12) We understand this text to be a reference to this work of purification; similarly, today, in this harvest time, more fully than throughout the Age, there is a testing and trying and proving of the Lord's people. Who will stand the test to prove who are the people of God? The Lord is now determining who are the consecrated class.

We see that at the first advent only a remnant of the Jewish nation accepted Jesus as the antitypical Mediator of the New Covenant, when he began to test the Levite class—to prove them. Similarly, today, we find the nominal church falling away, proving unworthy in many respects—not falling into everlasting torment, not into the second death, but rather manifesting that all are not worthy to be classed among either the Priests or the Levites. We are not to forget that the Gospel age is for the purpose of finding the priests and the Levites, to make them ready as ministers of the New Covenant, which is to be for all the people through them.

We understand that in this picture the Lord quite probably used the two metals (both precious, but one more precious than the other) to represent the Priests and the Levites—the "little flock" and the "great company." We understand also that the New Covenant has been in process of inauguration all through this Gospel age, but that this covenant will not benefit Israel and the world until the Millennial age. First, they must have a Mediator. This Mediator was, to begin with, the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest. Then, in God's arrangement, he was to add an under-priesthood, all these to be the antitypical Levites, ministers, servants of the New Covenant. The justified humanity of all these constitute the

"better sacrifices" that are being offered, at the completion of which, in the end of this Gospel age, everything will be ready—the Priesthood and the Levites, and the blood of the New Covenant—to apply to Justice, forthwith to bring the blessings of the Mediatorial kingdom to Israel, and, through Israel, to all people.

It may be asked, What is the "offering in righteousness" here mentioned? The offering now being made to God is the offering of the church—"Present your bodies a living sacrifice." (Rom. 12:1) The High Priest purifies these members of his body by giving them the necessary experiences day by day, that they may more and more learn the will of God—may more fully lay down earthly things and attain to the characterlikeness of our Lord Jesus. This purging does not come all at once and complete the offering; but, in our daily experiences the chastisements of the Lord are to the end that his will may be accomplished in us more perfectly. He is giving us these experiences day by day, so that, as we receive them, we may learn what is his will, that we may complete the offering in righteousness which has begun.

If it be asked how we could be members of the great Refiner and, at the same time, be of this Levite company whom he is refining, we answer that this is the picture uniformly set before us in the Scriptures—that Christ is the Head of the body, in the official sense; and we are counted in as members of his body, even before we have been fully and completely and finally accepted as such in the "first resurrection." The Head has passed into glory and we are to be with him. From the time of our acceptance and begetting of the holy Spirit we are counted in as members of his body in a prospective manner, on the supposition that we shall make our calling and election sure. Then again, in another sense of the word, the Lord uses these very ones whom he is refining as co-laborers with him and gives to them a part of the ministry of reconciliation; some of the refining work—amongst them being some who are instructors of the brethren—until, as the Apostle says, they all come to the full stature of a Man in Christ. (Eph. 4:13) So now the refining work, the increasing of the Body of Christ, goes on—the use of the different members of the body proceeds, all by reason of the fact that our Lord is the Head of the body.

HE SHALL GIRD HIMSELF AND SERVE THEM

Alas! how few realize what a dangerous thing is liberty; how carefully it must be used for our benefit, and how easily it might be misused to our eternal danger. Because God created us free agents; because this is part of his likeness, and because, additionally, ambition must be a part of every progressive individual, therefore this free agency and ambition in conjunction bring us all under tests of character. And the greater our abilities, the more our talents and the wider our influence, the stronger the power of ambition may become. Then comes the test. Will this laudable ambition be subject to the divine will—thoroughly consecrated to do the Lord's will even unto death?

If our devotion to the Lord be absolute, fully in control of our thoughts and words and doings, our liberty and largest ambition will be rightly directed and eventuate in blessings to ourselves and to others. But if the divine will be not first and absolutely in control of our wills, the more ambition and the more liberty we have the greater will be our danger. Where the Lord is not revered—obeyed with heart, mind, soul and strength—some one else has an influence in our hearts—husband or wife, parents or children, or, more than probably, self. We cannot be overcomers except as our hearts are absolutely loyal to the Lord, with self-will and every other will thoroughly subjected to the divine will. This is the lesson of life to those who would come off conquerors. How we rejoice, in every struggle, when finally, by God's grace, we recover balance!

It is not to be wondered at that the more prominent brethren have the more severe trials along this line. Of this condition of things the Apostle forewarns us, saying, Be not many of you teachers, knowing that he who is a teacher will experience the more severe trials. The deflection of some recognized as teachers will cause special trials to others not teachers, and will prove to what extent they have a personal relationship to the Lord through his Word and through an individual consecration to him and through his instructions by his Word and the prophecies—in the School of Christ. We fear that too many are in an attitude of leaning upon others whose fall might bring them disaster. It is because we have long recognized this principle that, in our writings, we have presented the Lord's message as his message, and not as our own, giving the chapter and verse for every doctrine.

PUTTING ON THE WHOLE ARMOR

If any are leaning on anything but the Lord's Word for guidance, to these we say that we have striven to bring all of the members of the Body into direct personal contact with the Head, and, while not ignoring the value of books and sermons, we have, nevertheless, urged upon all the necessity of proving, to the extent of their ability, every item of truth which they receive. Notwithstanding this we fear that many lean upon us and upon others. We fully know that we are in the evil day, and that the armor that the Lord provides is to be put on by each one of his faithful soldiers of the cross. We will use our shield, breastplate, helmet, and sword in the defense, as much as possible, of all the Lord's people; but each must see to it that he put on this armament for himself. The great King of the Universe has provided it, the great Captain of our salvation, Jesus, has invited us to put it on, and we, as corporal, merely call attention to the Captain's order. Whoever is negligent will surely rue it.

The time for adjusting this armor is very short. The battle is on. Many are falling at our side. What we do should be done energetically, systematically, thoroughly—at once. It is important that we help others to the extent of our ability, but still more important, according to the divine will, that we should take heed to ourselves and make our own calling and election sure. It has been our observation that some who have come into the truth quite recently are much more clear in it, and have the armor better adjusted, and are able to use the sword of the spirit better, than some who have been in the truth for five, ten, and even twenty years. Indeed, it is our observation that some who have been long in the truth are less skillful today in the use of the armor than they were years ago. Why is this? And what is the remedy? The answer is a simple one, manifest to all.

Divine providence has furnished the people of God at this time an outline of the divine plan and a detail of Bible doctrines such as God's people never before had in their possession. Without claiming any inspiration for these STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, we surely may claim a divine supervision in respect to the matter which they contain and the time of their presentation. Whoever admits that we are in the harvest time at all—that we have been in it since 1875—must acknowledge this also, that the Lord promised that at that time he would

cause his people to sit down to a bountiful repast of spiritual food and that he would be their servant and bring forth to them "things new and old." (Luke 12:37) All who recognize these things must recognize these STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES as being identified with the fulfillment of that promise.

RESPECTING "THINGS NEW AND OLD"

It would be giving too much honor to any man to suppose that the general elucidation of divine truth through these volumes should be merely one man's opinion. No one who understands these things can possibly believe that one man in our day could fabricate a theory which puts all other theories of this and every other day completely into the shadow, as a tallow dip in comparison to the most wonderful arc lights of our day. Neither is there reason or sense in the attempt of some to claim that these SCRIPTURE STUDIES are merely a rehash of what has been believed for centuries. True, they present the doctrines of Election, Free Grace, etc., but not as these subjects were presented nor as they are now presented by many. These books discuss the Bible texts and set them in order, as showing their relationship to each other. But while these presentations are harmonious, they are not accepted by Calvinism and Arminianism. Although they cannot refute them, they secretly oppose them—oppose the only presentation which shows the true significance of the Bible texts which they use in a private and isolated manner. We repeat, then, that STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES are either of the Lord's providence or else they are one of the greatest miracles.

The secret of the clearness and power of some who have come recently into the truth can be traced to the fact that they have been diligently using these divinely provided helps for Bible study. On the contrary, many of those who today are less clear in the truth than they were years ago owe their

loss of spiritual vigor and clear perception of the truth to the fact that they have neglected this divine provision for their needs. They have followed the worldly thought—that, having digested what some other man has thought, believed and taught, they should break fresh ground for themselves, in hope of bringing forth still brighter jewels from the Divine word. Some of these diggers have searched long and carefully, but have found nothing, brought forth nothing, that has specially sparkled as a gem of truth for the eyes of the Lord's people. Some of them have sought far and near for other fruits and viands for the table of the Lord's family, but have added little, if anything, to that which the great Provider has set before us of "things new and old." Some of these would-be new dishes, new viands, set before the church have proven to be unhealthful, indigestible, visionary, and calculated to give a fever, rather than real spiritual strength. Others, failing of their ambitions in these directions, have become destructive and have uttered what some of the friends have outlined a "Midnight Howl" against the food that the Lord has prepared, against his service of his people, etc.

All these things are tests. The sooner we realize this fact, the better for us. We have no fear but that the great Shepherd, now present with his sheep and gathering out of all the various pens of Christendom those who know his voice, will not suffer the wolves to stampede his flock, nor to devour them. Has he not said, "The Father who gave them to me is greater than all, and none can pluck them out of my Father's hand."

The lesson to us all is, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Be not heady, high-minded and worldly-wise, but humble, teachable and full of faith in the divine promises, which are so rapidly fulfilling and culminating in this day of his preparation.

ARRAIGNED AS A BLASPHEMER

MATTHEW 26:57-68.—NOVEMBER 27.

"Who when he was reviled, reviled not again."—1 Pet. 2:23.

We cannot do better at the opening of this study than quote the words of Mr. Chandler. He said: "Many remarkable trials have characterized the judicial history of mankind. The trial of Socrates, before the dikastery of Athens, charged with corrupting the Athenian youth, with blaspheming the Olympic gods and seeking to destroy the constitution of the Athenian Republic, is still a sublime and thrilling chapter in the history of a wonderful people.

"The trial of Alfred Dreyfus is still fresh in the memories of men. The French Republic is still rent by contending factions. His friends say that Dreyfus was a Prometheus who was chained to an ocean-girt rock while the vulture of exile preyed upon his heart. His enemies still assert that he was a Judas who betrayed, not God nor Christ, but France and the Fatherland. But these trials, one and all, were tame and commonplace compared with the trial and crucifixion of the Galilean peasant, Jesus of Nazareth."

It is not for us to say that the Jews were wholly excusable in their course of injuries toward Jesus, in causing his crucifixion by the Romans. On the other hand, it is proper for us to consider everything that could be thought of calculated to mitigate the severity of our judgment regarding the injustices there practised. And it is proper also that we should consider what, from their standpoint, would seem to be extenuating circumstances. This is everywhere recognized as just treatment. The attorney, defending a criminal who has pleaded guilty to the charges against him, is considered to do only his duty by his criminal client when he presents whatever in the circumstances of the case would tend to prove that the culprit had cause, or thought that he had reason, for his misdemeanor.

Viewing the Jewish people of nearly nineteen centuries ago from this standpoint, we get a more reasonable view of the situation than is otherwise possible. We hearken first to St. Peter's words respecting the transaction. He said, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Had they known, they would not have killed the Prince of life.—Acts 3:15-17.

The Jews did not for one moment suppose that the great Messiah, foretold to be their Prophet, Priest and King—like unto Moses, but greater; like unto David and Solomon, but greater; like unto Melchisedec, but greater—would appear as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Although those very words were written of him by the Prophet, they were hidden from their eyes of understanding by the glorious things related of him in other prophecies. They saw the glories. They saw not, understandingly, the sufferings. To this day they interpret the sufferings of their nation as being those which will ultimately inure to their advantage. The prophetic

descriptions are not concentrated nor collected, but scattered. "here a little and there a little," so written that they could not be understood at the time; nor were they understood even by the Lord's disciples until after his resurrection from the dead, when he explained them, and, subsequently, by the holy Spirit, enabled them still more fully to understand that thus it was written in the prophets, and thus it behooved the Son of Man to suffer before entering into his glory—before he began to bless Israel and all the world.

Yea, today many Christians are as deeply confused on this matter as are the Jews. Many have rejected entirely the thought of Messiah's glorious kingdom reign for the general blessing and uplifting of Israel and all humanity. From their standpoint, if "the sufferings of Christ" were intended to prepare the way and usher in his kingdom of glory, then the programme must have failed, or else his kingdom of glory is to be a heavenly kingdom and completely in accord with the prayer taught by our Lord, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth." The trouble is that they will not realize that where the sufferings of Christ, the Head, ended, the sufferings of the "body of Christ" began—the sufferings of the church, which is his body"—filling up the measure of the afflictions of Christ, which are behind. (Col. 1:24) As soon as the "church, the body of Christ," shall have finished the bearing of the cross, after him, following in his steps to the end of the journey, then the kingdom glories will be ushered in. Israel's blindness will be turned away, and the blessing of the Lord will begin to fill the whole earth.

The Jews, who caused the crucifixion of Jesus, certainly did so in much the same spirit which led St. Paul—then Saul of Tarsus—to cause the stoning of St. Stephen. As Saul was forgiven, so Israel is to be forgiven; as the Scriptures declare, "The Lord will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication," and then they will see, with the eyes of their understanding, "him whom they pierced, and they will mourn for him" (Zech. 12:10), and their mourning will be turned into joy; for, as Joseph forgave his brethren, so will this great anti-typical Joseph of the throne of earth freely forgive those who caused his crucifixion.

POLITICS AND SELFISHNESS AS RELIGION

The Jews are not so different from other people now, nor were they then. History indicates that some of their highest offices were held by irreligionists for their political influence; thus the chief-priest, at the first advent of our Lord, was a Sadducee, who wholly disbelieved in the promises of God to Israel, including a disbelief in the resurrection of the dead. Similarly today there are high-priests, both amongst Jews and Christians, who disbelieve, and yet hold high positions.

Amongst Christians there are D.D.'s who are unbelievers; and many of the most notable rabbis amongst the Jews also declare themselves thorough unbelievers. We are not claiming that such unbelieving Christian and Jewish ministers would lightly espouse and support an unjust procedure against an innocent man. We do not know about this. It has yet to be tested, perhaps. We do know, however, that when faith in a divine revelation and in a divine supervision of human affairs is lost the natural effect is that the losers of the faith become more and more policy-men and consider policy the extreme of human wisdom, particularly in the guidance of affairs of church and state.

Taking history for it, that the leaders of Judaism at the time of our Lord were Higher Critical unbelievers (Saducees), we can readily see that their policy was to curry favor with the Roman Emperor and to seek to hold the common people in subjection to themselves. To these, then, it must have seemed almost a calamity that a poor man, although of noble birth, of the family of David and the Tribe of Judah, should gather about him a handful of nondescript fishermen, tax-gatherers, etc.; that he should pronounce himself a king and declare the setting up of his kingdom to be near, and that by the exercise of some supernatural power for the healing of their diseases he should attract the "common people" to his standard, but not the learned. We can well imagine their reasoning that, if this thing, the popularity of Jesus, continued to increase, it would shortly reach the ears of the Roman Emperor, and then all their claims for imperial favors would be discounted, and they would be rated as a nation of rebels.

The riding of Jesus into Jerusalem, just before the Passover, on an ass, after the manner of the kings of Israel and surrounded by a multitude shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David who cometh in the name of the Lord," capped the climax, so to speak, and convinced these unbelieving Jews, politicians, occupying religious offices, that it would be far better that one innocent man should die than that the whole nation should be turned into turmoil and wrecked by the Romans in consequence. How many American preachers, judges, officials, etc., would, in this enlightened day, be inclined similarly to decide such a matter! And is not this the policy which always prevails in monarchies? Fancy such a commotion in the capital of Germany, Italy, France, Austria, Russia, Great Britain, the United States. Fancy that after such a parade, mimic though it might appear, the adored one should go to the temple and execute a long-neglected law, and, in thus exercising his religious rights, suppose that he should drive out the money-changers and merchants from the outer precincts of their religious cathedral! What would be done to such a person today? Do we not know that in the most civilized lands he would be arrested and imprisoned, and in the more savage lands he would be beaten or executed? When, therefore, we view the situation from this standpoint we lose any spirit of antagonism which might have been ours; it turns to sympathy—that a religious nation should allow itself to get into the hands of politicians to such an extent.

BROUGHT BEFORE CAIAPHAS

It was very courageous on the part of St. Peter that, after having smitten off the ear of the High Priest's servant (though the wound was healed by Jesus), he followed his Master into the Court of that high-priest to see what would be done. The arraignment was at night, although it was contrary to Jewish Law to try a prisoner at night for any serious offense. But there was an excuse. This was a special case; haste was necessary, because whatever should be done must be done quickly; the very next day the unbelieving officials perceived that Jesus had great influence with the common people. They believed him to be a brilliant but harmless fraud. He had committed no crime, but he was a disturber of the peace, and they felt fully justified in taking his life. The Feast of Passover was at hand and would last a week, and it would be contrary to their law that any execution should take place during that week. Besides, they feared the amount of influence which Jesus might exercise during the week, when there would be from one to two millions of people in and around Jerusalem from all over Palestine. They had already determined that their action must be short, sharp and decisive. This was decided before the arrest was made. They were ready and waiting at that midnight hour to carry out their murderous designs, for the good of their nation, as they thought.

The examination was merely a preliminary one to get together such evidence as could be rushed through rapidly at a prearranged session the following morning.

HE WAS CHARGED WITH BLASPHEMY

They had difficulty in finding a charge; for what had Jesus ever done except acts of kindness and the uttering of words of wisdom and correction and hope? Blasphemy was a serious charge under the Jewish code. They would charge him with that as being the easiest to prove. He had said, when near the temple, "Destroy this temple, and I will rear it up in three days." "But he spake of the temple of his body." Some of those who heard him understood him to speak of the literal temple. This they charged was blasphemy, because it took years to build the temple, and for Jesus to rebuild it in three days would mean a claim on his part of divine power. But the charge did not seem sufficiently strong, even for those who had premeditated his murder. They wanted something to give a color of justice, at least, to their findings. So the chief-priest thought to get Jesus to commit himself in their presence and said, I adjure thee by the Living God to tell us whether thou be The Christ, the Son of God. Jesus replied that this was true, and that they would yet see him in heavenly glory and power at the right hand of divine favor. This, the high priest declared, was sufficient proof of blasphemy. "Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy, What reply ye?" And the council answered that he was worthy of death. The rabble in the Court, hearing the commotion, felt at liberty to abuse the prisoner, as they had done others. They showed their contempt of him by spitting upon him. They derided him by smiting him and saying, Prophecy, tell who smote thee. "He was reviled, yet reviled not again."

SELF-CONFIDENCE IS WEAKNESS

MATTHEW 26:31-35, 69-75.—DECEMBER 4.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—1 Cor. 10:12.

St. Peter has proven to be one of the most helpful of Christ's twelve Apostles, and the secret of his assistance lies in the Scriptural revelation of his human nature, its strength and its weaknesses. He was the first of the twelve Apostles to acknowledge the Master as the Messiah, the Sent of God; he was the first of the twelve to deny him. He was the only one of the twelve who drew his sword in the Master's defense and the only one who, later, swore that he never knew him. By divine arrangement, to him were given the keys with which to open the door to the high calling—to the kingdom. At Pentecost he used one of the keys of power and boldly proclaimed to the Jews the opening of the way to glory, honor and immortality. A little later, at the appointed time, he opened the door to the same high calling for the Gentiles when, by his preaching, Cornelius, the first Gentile acceptable to God, was received and begotten of the holy Spirit, this fact giving evidence that the middle-wall of partition, previously separating Jew and Gentile, had been broken down. Yet, after all this knowledge and special opportunity, this great man subsequently dissembled to the extent of ignoring God's grace to the Gentiles as being sufficient, discriminating between Jews and Gentiles and their equality before the Lord.

But in all these experiences St. Peter displayed the fact that his heart, at its core, was loyal to God, to truth, to

righteousness, and that the weaknesses, the faults, the blemishes of his character were of his flesh and not of his real heart intention. For his denial of the Master he wept bitterly. And for his failure to recognize the Gentiles he made full reparation most humbly. The same exhibition of human nature which makes St. Peter attractive is that which made David, the Prophet and king of Israel, attractive. He was not so saintly that he could not make a mistake. He was not so far above the remainder of humanity that they could not realize in him a fellow-creature. Yet withal he was not so debased as to make him abhorrent. His weaknesses were fully offset by the abundant evidence of his heart-loyalty to God and to righteousness. His very experiences in stumbling and recovery have so saturated his Psalms that they touch a responsive chord in nearly every heart which is loyal to God and which has had any degree of experience with sin and weakness—its own and those of others.

HOW OTHERS SAW ST. PETER

Peter remains even today the most fascinating of that band of men who surrounded our Lord in the days of his earthly pilgrimage. G. C. Morgan said of Peter: "Now I am convinced that in Peter we have the greatest human revealed in the New Testament. I do not say the greatest man in his achievement or in one particular capacity of his being, but

the most wonderful revelation of human nature. This man of intelligence was perpetually making blunders. This man of emotions was guilty of such impulse that he worked harm in the very cause he desired to help."

Of St. Peter Southouse says: "Peter was an average man, and for this reason he comes nearer to us than some of his colleagues do. But average men have their splendid moments, such as when St. Peter tried to walk on the water, for in this action he tried to do a thing for which he seemed to have no abilities. He set out to do some thing of which he had no experience. A swift glance amongst the men and women whom we know will be enough to prove that it is never safe to prophesy the achievements of which they are capable, for extraordinary things have been done by the last man in the world."

Dr. Davis said about St. Peter: "Peter was intellectual. He asked Jesus more questions than any other of the apostles. The capacity for asking questions is a revelation of the intellectual. It may also be a revelation of ignorance; but the man who never asks a question is certainly deficient in his intellectuality. . . . Peter was a man of heart, sobbing and impetuous. His virtues and his faults had their common root in his enthusiastic disposition. It is to his praise that, along with the weed of rash haste, there grew more strongly into his life the fair plant of burning love and ready reception of Truth."

"TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES"

One of the great lessons which the Master taught his followers, and which all in the School of Christ must learn, is that, with burning love and zeal for God and for righteousness, we should also have moderation—exercising the spirit of a sound mind. Christ's followers are exhorted to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Their wisdom is not to be merely the selfish kind, which would look out for its own interests, but of the generous kind which looks out for the interests of all, and particularly for the interests of the Lord's cause and for any share therein which he may entrust to us.

In the course of his instructions, Jesus had said to his disciples, in advance of the trying hour of his betrayal—"All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written (in the prophets), I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee."—Matt. 26:31, 32.

Then spoke the impulsive Peter, "Though all shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." (V. 33) Alas! how little did this courageous man understand the nature of the trials and difficulties immediately before him, or realize the weak points of his own impulsive nature. Yet if we are grieved with his denial of the Master, we must rejoice to note his faith and love and zeal, as manifested in his acknowledgement of Jesus as the Messiah and his later declaration that nothing should ever shake his loyalty.

However, it is the specially loyal and ardent that the adversary seeks most persistently to entrap. Thus Jesus, on

this very occasion, explained to St. Peter, "Satan hath desired to have thee that he might sift thee" (Luke 22:31); that he might separate you from your loyalty to Christ and discourage you from discipleship, overwhelming you with fear and with your own weaknesses. The Master added, "But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." We may well understand that the same loving Master still assists all of his true, warm-hearted followers, whatever their weaknesses of heredity. We may well understand, too, that he is able to develop all such into strong characters, if they abide in his love, continuing in their zeal. He is able to make all things work together for their good—even the weaknesses of heredity may work out for the faithful that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which the Lord has promised.

"BEFORE THE COCK CROW"

The Master discerned the danger of his loving but impetuous follower, and uttered a warning word, that before cock-crowing he would deny his Master. How improbable this seemed to St. Peter! How he courageously declared, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." And so said all of the eleven. Their hearts were good. And the Lord looketh upon the heart. Our study now passes to verse 69. The Master had been arrested. The scattered disciples had fled. St. John, because of an acquaintance with the high priest's family, penetrated further into the palace than St. Peter, who stood in the court-yard. A maid of the palace recognized St. Peter as one of Jesus' disciples and so declared publicly. Fearful that he might share the fate of the Master, St. Peter denied his identity, declaring that he knew nothing about the matter. A little later another declared the same. St. Peter emphasized his denial with an oath, declaring that he knew not Jesus. Later the word spread throughout the court-yard and many took it up, declaring that they believed what the maid said and that St. Peter had the Galilean dialect, anyway. To emphasize the denial St. Peter began to curse, and to swear that he knew not the man. Directly after, cock-crowing began. Then St. Peter remembered the words of his Master, "Before cock-crowing thou shalt deny me thrice."

Alas! he had been too sure of his own stability, too confident of his loyalty. He was entrapped by the adversary along the very line of his boasting. Another account says that Jesus turned and looked at Peter! That look was sufficient. It spoke volumes to St. Peter's loyal heart. It was not a look of disdain, nor one of anger, we may be sure. It was a look of loving sympathy. It melted St. Peter's heart. He went out and wept bitterly. The followers of the Master today, beset by weaknesses and frailties and temptations of the adversary, have the lesson of St. Peter's experience as a warning to be confident in the Lord and to look to him for assistance, rather than to be self-confident. And those who fail today have St. Peter's experience as a lesson of the Lord's sympathy and pity. They, too, should weep bitterly for transgressions and repent and profit by their experiences.

THE PRINCE OF LIFE CRUCIFIED

MATTHEW 27:33-50.—DECEMBER 11.

"He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities."—Isa. 53:5.

The trial of Jesus really took place shortly after his arrest, but, on account of the law requiring a death sentence to be passed in daylight, a morning meeting of the Sanhedrin was appointed, which, in a perfunctory manner, confirmed the high priest's decision of the night before, that Jesus had blasphemed the Creator when he claimed that he had come into the world in accord with the Creator's long-promised plan that he should redeem Israel and the world from the death sentence, that in God's due time he might establish the Messianic kingdom for the blessing of Israel and all the families of the earth. The matter was rushed through lest the gathered multitudes, who had shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David," when Jesus rode upon the ass five days before, should undertake again to proclaim him king. No execution could take place during the Passover week. And if Jesus were held a prisoner they knew not what might happen to him or to them. They had, therefore, but a few hours in which to carry out the plan which they believed would rid their country of a man whom they considered a deceiver and one likely to get them into trouble with the Government at Rome.

The Sanhedrin had authority to judge the people along the lines of their religion, but was prohibited from executing the death penalty. Hence it was necessary after the condemnation of the Sanhedrin, to take the case before Pilate, the Roman Governor. Realizing that Pilate would not recognize blasphemy as a cause for death, the charge against Jesus,

before Pilate, was a totally different one, namely, that Jesus was a seditionist and raiser of disturbance; that he claimed to be a king and that his freedom was inimical to the interests of the Roman Empire. The foolishness and the hypocrisy of such a charge were too transparent to need assertion. Pilate perceived that for envy they were delivering him—because he and his teachings were having more influence with the common people than could be exercised by the chief priests and scribes. Pilate relieved himself of responsibility by declaring that since the home of Jesus was in Galilee, King Herod, the Governor of Galilee, should have the jurisdiction of the case, which he was glad to get rid of.

JESUS BEFORE KING HEROD

This was an unexpected difficulty, but Herod's palace was not far distant. He was glad of the opportunity to see Jesus, of whose miracles he had heard much. As he looked at the Master's noble features and beheld in him purity and gentle dignity, it must have seemed ridiculous that such a person should be arraigned as a seditionist and a man dangerous to the interests of the peace of the country. After a few taunting words and jests, the palace guards took a hand with the one whom their master treated flippantly. They put upon him a purple robe and a crown of thorns and mocked at his unkingly appearance. Then Herod declined to act in the case and sent the prisoner back to Pilate, perhaps feeling that he had had a sufficiency of trouble in connection with the behead-

ing of John the Baptist a year or so before. The matter was a joke between Herod and Pilate—dealing with the case of a man claimed to be so dangerous that he must die thus, when he manifestly was so pure and innocent that the weakest would be safe with him.

PILATE'S PERPLEXITY INCREASED

Pilate was disappointed when Jesus was brought back to his court. The case was an unpleasant one to settle. The prisoner manifestly was innocent of any crime, yet his accusers were the most prominent men in the nation and city over which he had charge. Their good will must be preserved, if possible, and they were evidently bent on the murder of their innocent captive under the form of legality. What a pity it is that religion has been so often misrepresented by her votaries in every age of the world! A lesson which we all should learn is to search the motives and intentions of our own hearts, that we be not led into the error of the wicked—into violating the rights of others and thus fighting against God.

Pilate heard the accusations, realized that there was no truth in them, and then gave his decision: I find no fault in Jesus, but, seeing that such a commotion has been created, I consider it necessary in the interests of peace to satisfy the unrighteous demands of the clamoring multitude. I will therefore have the prisoner whipped, although I acknowledge he is not deserving of punishment. The whipping will be in his own interest, as well as in the interests of the peace of the city, for by satisfying the clamor of the multitude the life of Jesus will be spared. As political decisions go, this was a very fair decree. Magistrates recognize that absolute justice is not always possible in dealing with imperfect conditions.

But the rulers would not be satisfied with anything short of Jesus' death. The rabble was exhorted to shout, Crucify him! Crucify him! It seemed impossible for Pilate to appreciate that such a frenzy could be aroused against so innocent a person. So he inquired, What evil hath he done? But the answer was, Crucify him! Alas, how human passion can ignore every principle of righteousness! To add to Pilate's perplexity, his wife now sent him word, Have nothing to do with this just person, for I have had a horrible dream which connects itself with him.

As a last resort Pilate caused Jesus to be brought to a prominent place where the multitude could all see him and then he cried out to them, "Behold the Man!" See the character of the man you are willing to crucify. Note that he has most kingly features, such as none of your race possess—nor others. Would you crucify the very best sample of your race? Consider; be reasonable. Behold the Man! It has for years been a custom with you that the Government at this season release a prisoner. So, then, consider that Jesus has been condemned and that your conception of justice has been satisfied and that now I release him to you. But the multitude cried out so much the more, Crucify him! Release unto us Barabbas (a robber and dangerous character).

Who will explain this strange perversity of fallen human

nature—that a villain should be preferred to a saint? Thus, a few years ago, in the City of Vienna, a man who had just been released from serving a term in prison made a speech in which he declared that all Jews should be put to death. A frenzy seemed to seize the people. The bad man became the leader of sentiment. He was applauded and, as a mayoralty was impending, he was elected mayor of the city on the strength of his bravado. Oh, shame! How can we claim that the world is ready for liberty while such conditions stare us in the face and mark the pages of history? They prove, on the contrary, that the world needs just such a strong, imperial government as God purposes to give it—the kingdom of God's dear Son, strong for the suppression of every wrong and strong for the uplifting of every right.

THOU ART NOT CAESAR'S FRIEND

The Jewish leaders were shrewd. They knew that treason to Rome was one of the most serious offenses and in the fact that Jesus had spoken of himself as a king they had the lever wherewith to compel his crucifixion. They used it, assuring Pilate that if he let the prisoner go they would report him to the Emperor. Pilate knew that he would have difficulty in explaining such a case and that the Roman Government would agree with the decision of Caiaphas that one man should die rather than have any commotion in their dominion. Thus compelled, Pilate finally acceded and wrote the papers of execution, but before doing so he took a pitcher of water and in the sight of the people washed his hands, saying, "I am guiltless of the blood of this just person."

The execution proceeded. The soldiers already had two thieves to crucify and merely added another cross and the procession started for Golgotha, a hillside near where the face of the rock much resembles a skull—Golgotha signifying the place of a skull. It is just to the north of the city, outside the wall. New buildings and a wall recently erected hinder visitors at the present time from getting the skull effect as formerly. The crime of each culprit was, by law, inscribed over his head. Above the Master's head was his crime—"Jesus, King of the Jews."

Satan and his deluded dupes evidently thought that they had finally disposed of Jesus. The priests and elders mocked his declaration that he was the Son of God and demanded that, if he were such, he should demonstrate it by leaving the cross. They realized not the truth, that it was necessary for him to die for man's sin, in order that, by and by, he might have rightful authority, in his glorious kingdom, to restore all mankind to full perfection and life under the terms of the New Covenant, of which he will be the Mediator. (Jer. 31:31) At the sixth hour, noon, darkness settled down for three hours and then Jesus died, saying, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In order that he might fully experience the weight of divine justice which belonged to the sinner, it was necessary that the Father should hide himself from him, as though he had been the sinner. This temporary separation from the Father was evidently the severest blow in all of the Master's experience.

"NOW IS CHRIST RISEN"

MATTHEW 28:1-20.—DECEMBER 18.

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (age)."—Matt. 28:20.

The Scriptures give very particular details respecting the death of Jesus and his burial in Joseph's new tomb, wherein none had previously been buried and respecting the sealing of the tomb and the setting of a guard lest the body should be stolen at night. But while these matters are interesting to us, they probably do not now have the same importance that they had when they were written. From this distance we feel inclined to ask about the general character of Jesus' disciples who declared his resurrection, rather than to inquire particularly respecting all the details which they enumerated. In broad terms we say, If the characters of the Apostles prove themselves satisfactory to us, we are ready to take their word respecting the resurrection of Jesus and his subsequent appearances to them. On the other hand, if they were bad men or otherwise unworthy to be believed, no amount of details respecting the tomb, the watch, the seals, etc., would be satisfactory to us, because cunning and designing men could make up the story to suit their desires.

But it was not so at the time of our Lord's death and resurrection. It was then very necessary that every little detail should be explicitly specified. The parts of three days and nights, for instance, were unimportant to them because of Jesus' words, which they remembered. He likened his period in death to the period in which Jonah was in the whale's belly. There are some today disposed to quibble over the matter and

to claim that Jesus died on Thursday and not on Friday. Surely, however, all can concede that it matters nothing to us on which day of the week he died, nor the number of hours he was in the tomb, whether seventy-two hours to the minute or a less exact time. With us the important question is, Did he die? Did he arise from the dead? Was there a value in his sacrificial death, from the divine standpoint, and how is that value or merit made applicable to mankind, and have we obtained our interest herein according to the divine terms?

"HE ROSE AGAIN ON THE THIRD DAY"

With the majority of Christians for these many centuries we agree that Jesus was in the tomb parts of three days and nights; that he died on Friday afternoon, and that he arose from the dead early on Sunday morning. But we are not contentious. Let who likes believe that he died on Thursday or Wednesday or Tuesday or another day; this is a matter of no importance. The all-important matter is, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Rom. 8:34) The stone at the mouth of the sepulchre was not a large boulder, as many suppose, but was shaped like a wheel—like a large grindstone. It rolled in a groove, but, being heavy, would be cumbersome and difficult for the women, as suggested.

The sorrowing friends of Jesus did not realize at the time what he had taught them respecting his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection. Hence they were surprised with every

incident of their experience on that eventful Sunday morning. The angel appeared in dazzling brightness, that he might not be mistaken for a man. He told the women who brought spices for the embalming of the Lord's body that their Master was risen from the dead—that he was no longer dead; that they would see him Galilee; and to so tell his disciples. On the way Jesus met them and revealed himself to them. Another account tells us that Mary, separated from the others, met Jesus alone and, mistaking him for the gardener, asked whither the corpse had been removed. Then Jesus revealed himself to her. Recognizing her Master she clasped him by the feet as though afraid that he would leave her; but, different from his previous course, he declared, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God." Instead of delaying to commune with me, hasten at once to tell Peter and the others of my resurrection. How careful was the Master that Peter should be mentioned by name, lest he should feel that he was forever rejected because of having denied him!

For forty days Jesus was with his disciples and during that time he appeared some seven or eight times, according to all the different accounts. Once he appeared as a gardener. Once he appeared as a traveler to two of the disciples going to Emmaus. Again he appeared on the shore of the Sea of Galilee to some of the disciples who were returning to the fishing business. They knew it was Jesus, yet he was different from formerly. But we read that they did not dare ask him respecting the matter. He appeared again to above five hundred believers in the mountains of Galilee, and finally, by appointment, he met the eleven at the top of the Mount of Olives and ascended out of their sight—a cloud receiving him. Only on two occasions are we informed that he appeared with nail-prints in his hands and the spear wound in his side. And on these two occasions we are distinctly told that he appeared in their midst, the doors being shut, and that he vanished again from their sight.

Thus did Jesus demonstrate to his disciples the fact that he was no longer dead, but alive, and additionally, the other fact equally important, namely, that he was no longer alive as a man, but as a spirit being. As St. Paul declares, "He was put to death in flesh, but made alive in spirit." But every precaution was taken to permit their natural powers of observation to comprehend the spiritual truths revealed to them respecting Jesus' resurrection and ascension. It was ten days after his ascension, on the fiftieth day from his resurrection, that the holy Spirit came, and thus demonstrated at once that the Redeemer lived and that he had appeared in the presence of God on the spirit plane and that his sacrifice had been presented and was acceptable to God; and, on the basis of his sacrifice and the imputation of his merit to the disciples, the sacrifices which they had presented in his name were accepted, and they were begotten of the holy Spirit, that they might also become new creatures and share in his kingdom and glory.

HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION NEEDFUL

It is needless that we seek to dispute as to which was the more important event—the death of Jesus or his resurrection

from the dead. Both were equally important. Had he not died there would be no basis for a reconciliation of Adam and his race condemned to death. Had he not risen there would have been no one to apply the merit of his sacrifice. Had he not risen there would have been no call of the church during this Gospel age to be the bride of Christ. Neither would there have been use for the promised Mediatorial kingdom to be established at his Second Coming for the blessing of Israel and the world.

Thus Jesus explained to the two with whom he walked to Emmaus on the day of his resurrection, saying, O slow of heart to believe all that God hath spoken in the Law and in the Prophets! Was it not necessary that Messiah should die and should rise from the dead, that in his name repentance and remission of sins might be proclaimed? How could any be invited to come to God until a way had been opened, until the redemption price had been provided? Whoever can hear this message and accept it may properly be invited to repent of sin and to reform and to live contrary to the tendencies of his fallen nature, because, in so doing, through the Redeemer, he may attain unto eternal life. And if he ask, How about the things that are past, the answer would be the same. God's provision is for the remission of sins through the merit of the sacrifice of his only begotten Son.

The eleven Apostles were commissioned, "Go ye, disciple all nations." (V. 19) This did not signify, as some suppose, a command to convert the world. It meant that they should make disciples out of people of all nationalities—and not any longer, as formerly, of the Jews only. And the Master's injunction has been fulfilled. Disciples, followers of him, have been found in all nations. But, as Jesus did not say, Convert all nations, neither has the Gospel message done this. Those accepting discipleship were to be baptized with Christ's baptism in the name or authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In all, these have been but "a little flock." (Luke 12:32) But theirs is the "high calling" to joint-heirship in his kingdom, which is soon to bless the world.

But even this permission to disciple people of all nations could not, and did not, begin at once. For three and a half years after the cross, in fulfillment of divine prophecy, the Gospel message was kept from the Gentiles, until the door for them into this high calling was opened by St. Peter—Cornelius being the first to enter it.

All disciples of Jesus were instructed to follow him, to take him as their pattern and example. Any instructions contrary to these are contrary to the words of the Great Teacher. And the Master said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." He has been with his faithful followers to bless them, to comfort them, to strengthen them, to fellowship them, to safeguard their highest interests, though often at the expense of their temporal interests. And this promise of his Word, of providential guidance, was to continue until the end of the age—then he would come again in a personal and official sense to exalt his church, to establish his kingdom, to bless Israel with the New Covenant arrangements, and thus to bless the world of mankind.

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST"

DECEMBER 25.

"For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:11.

God's promise that the Seed of Abraham should ultimately bless all nations has influenced thought the world over, but particularly amongst those nations living contiguous to Abraham's home and northward and westward from there, in the directions in which the message of divine favor has gone. At first the Jews thought of this promise as being fulfilled in them as a nation—that, without assistance from on high, they could approve themselves to God through obedience to the Law Covenant, and that then, as instructors of the world, they would teach all nations to keep that divine law, and thus bring the world to the blessed state of perfection, divine favor and life everlasting. This hope was crushed out as they found themselves unable to keep the law, going down into death, instead of attaining to perfection of life. Even Moses, the special servant of God, could not, and did not, attain the blessing of the Law.

Then God made them the promise of some better thing—of a greater Mediator and of a more successful Covenant through that Mediator. The Mediator of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) was to be greater than Moses; as he himself declared, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren like unto me (but greater)—him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto

you. And it shall come to pass that the soul that will not obey that Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people." (Acts 3:22, 23) Thenceforth their hearts and hopes looked down through the stream of time to when the glorious things hoped for through this great Prophet should be accomplished.

"THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS"

As surrounding nations and those afar off heard of Israel's hopes—that to them would come a great Savior, Deliverer, who would bless them and exalt them in the world and through them bless all peoples, the beauty of the thought took root in every direction. Messiah was more or less looked for under various names, and the glories of his kingdom were pictured by heathen poets as the Golden Age.

Thus it happened that when our Lord was born, when he was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, "All men were in expectation of him"—not of Jesus, but of the promised Messiah, whom Jesus was. Thus it was that wise men in the East were attracted to see and to worship him that was born King of the Jews. Thus it was also that during Jesus' ministry certain Greeks came to the disciples saying, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." They had heard of him and recognized that in some respects his magic power implied a relationship

with the long-expected Messiah. And so it was with the multitudes of Palestine. They heard; they listened. They said, Is this he? The rulers said, No, this is not the Messiah. Then the people asked, When Messiah cometh can he do greater works than this man? Never man spake like this man!

Nevertheless, there were few ready to receive him, even amongst his own—only "Israelites indeed," to whom, because of worthiness of heart, God specially revealed his Son. This was in harmony with the prophecy of old, "The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him and he will show them his covenant." (Psa. 25:14) As again it is written, "I will give him for a Covenant of the people." (Isa. 49:8) Neither Jews nor Greeks nor Persian wise men knew to expect that Messiah would first appear to offer himself, through obedience to the Truth, a living sacrifice for sinners. None of them knew that a long period must elapse from the time when Messiah would be the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, of whom the people would be ashamed, until he would appear in power and great glory to establish his Empire under the whole heavens, in fulfillment of the prophetic picture of Daniel 2:34; 7:13, 14-27.

Few understand God's great secret or "mystery" hidden during past ages and dispensations (Col. 1:26), that, during this long period of the Gospel age a saintly "little flock" would be selected from amongst men to be Messiah's bride, and joint-heir with him in his Messianic reign. Few see that this "little flock" has been selected during these nineteen centuries from every nation, people, kindred and tongue, and that they are all saints, in the spirit of their minds, at least, and follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Few understand that, as soon as these joint-sacrificers with the Master shall have filled up the measure of afflictions appointed, then the kingdom of glory will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together and all shall be blessed by it, the Jew, Abraham's natural seed, first, and also the Gentile—all the families of the earth.

A SAVIOR—CHRIST THE LORD

It was prophetically, of course, that the babe of Bethlehem was called a Savior—he was to be a Savior, The Christ, the Lord. But as the babe he was none of these. He became The Christ before becoming the Savior and Lord. The word Christ signifies anointed. In the divine purpose it was arranged that Messiah should be anointed High Priest of Israel on a higher plane than Aaron—after the order of Melchisedec. (Psalm 110:4) And every priest must be anointed to his office before he could fill it. Similarly, it was prophesied that Christ would be the great King, greater than David and Solomon, who were his types and foreshadows.

The anointing of Jesus was not with literal oil, but with that which the oil upon the head of the kings and priests of Israel typified—the holy Spirit. He received this holy Spirit at the time of his baptism, the Spirit falling upon him and abiding with him, anointing him for his great work of anti-

typical Priest and antitypical King of Israel, who, as the Messiah long-promised, would bless them, and through them, the world. But every priest was ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, and in this also they typified Jesus, who, under the divine arrangement, must first offer up himself as a sacrifice acceptable to God for the sin of mankind—in order that he might be the Savior or Deliverer of men from the curse of sin and death—that he might restore them and their earthly home to the glorious condition of perfection represented in Adam and his Eden home. Hence it was necessary that Jesus should not only consecrate his life to the divine service and be anointed with the holy Spirit, but that, sacrificially, he should lay down his life, even unto death—even the death of the cross. As a part of his reward he was raised to glory, honor and immortality, on the third day thereafter.

As the glorified One he was now fully commissioned and empowered to establish the long-promised, Messianic kingdom, but has been waiting while a "little flock" have walked in his footsteps—until the elect number shall be completed and shall share his glory. Then his kingdom will take the control of earth. Satan shall be bound for a thousand years and all the wonderful blessings promised in the law and the prophets and Gospels and epistles shall be fulfilled.

"A SAVIOR AND A GREAT ONE"

We have seen how the Son of God attained his Priestly Office, for the sacrifice of himself; how he was anointed thereto, and also anointed to be the great King, and how he has been merely waiting for the due time for his kingdom to begin. Now we inquire as to the force and significance of the word Savior, and how he saves his people from their sins!

In the Arabic, Savior signifies life-giver. The Redeemer, glorified as the antitypical Melchisedec, "a priest upon his throne," is to be the Savior or life-giver of the race, for whose sin and because of whose condemnation he died—"the Just for the unjust, to bring us back to God," some during this age and some during the period of his Messianic reign. Gradually he, with his saintly bride class, will uplift humanity from sin and death to righteousness and life eternal and will destroy all who refuse the blessing in the second death, from which there will be no hope of recovery.

But the Christ, the Savior of Glory, bride and Bridegroom, will, unitedly, be the world's Savior. The glorified Redeemer saves his church first—by a special salvation and high calling. These are the "elect," called to suffer with him and, if faithful, to reign with him on the Heavenly plane. These are dealt with now on the basis of faith: they pass from death unto life, by the exercise of faith and their entering into a Covenant with God, of sacrifice, through the merit of the Redeemer. Their salvation will be made actual when they shall share in his resurrection, the "first resurrection," and become kings and priests unto God, to reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 20:6.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CONCERNING MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

Question.—Please give briefly your understanding of the expression, Messiah's kingdom, and the work of that kingdom.

Answer.—Our understanding is that Messiah's kingdom will be a spiritual one, invisible to mortals, yet all-powerful, for the accomplishment of the great things promised in the law and in the prophets. The empire which he will establish, invisible to men, will take the place of the empire of Satan, likewise invisible. The King of glory will replace the prince of darkness. Principal amongst Messiah's earthly agents and representatives will be Abraham, Isaac and all the prophets, resurrected in full human perfection. Instead of their being, as heretofore, the fathers, they shall be the children of Messiah, whom he will make princes in all the earth. (Psalm 45:16) With this kingdom the nation of Israel will speedily unite, and eventually every nation will come into harmony with Messiah, and all people will be privileged to come in under Israel's New Covenant, then established by the great "Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in."—Jeremiah 31:31-34; Malachi 3:1-3.

The glorious Messiah, whom the Jews identify with "Michael, the great Prince, which standeth for the children of thy people" (Dan. 12:1), the Mohammedans also expect and identify with Mahomet of the past. The Free Masons also expect the same glorious personage and, in their traditions, identify him with Hiram Abiff, the great Master-Mason. This same great Messiah, Michael, the archangel, the antitypical Melchisedec, Priest as well as King, we identify as "the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) But when the

great King shall appear in his glory and establish his kingdom with Israel he will be, as promised by the Prophets, "the desire of all nations." (Hag. 2:7) Then all the blinded eyes will be opened and all the deaf ears will be unstopped. Then who he is and how he should be identified with—Abraham's seed and David's line—will be clearly known to all, in heaven and in earth. Not now, but when the King shall reign in righteousness, all shall fully understand the significance of Zechariah's prophecy (12:7-10) and Psalm 22:16. Content that Messiah shall show the Truth in his day of revelation, we are glad to point Jews, Mohammedans, Christians, all, to the glorious Messiah and the great work of blessing for all the nations which he will accomplish through the seed of Abraham, according to God's covenant and his oath.

HOW TO GAIN THE GREAT PRIZE

Question.—Is it the spirit of obedience to the Lord's commands that will gain the great prize?

Answer.—What the Lord is looking for at the present time is the spirit of sacrifice or self-denial—not merely the spirit of obedience to commands. Few, of course, would resist a divine command, if thundered from heaven. Our test is more crucial than that. It is a test of obedience to what we understand to be the will of God or the privilege of service in his cause. Those who delight to do his will, those who delight to serve his cause, even at the cost of sacrifice to earthly interests, are the very ones he is now seeking. "He seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth!" "Now is the acceptable time"; now is the time for those to come forward who desire to offer themselves unreservedly, and who

desire that the Lord shall accept their offering, which they know is not of great value. The more the sacrifice costs you, the more we may be sure it will be appreciated of the Lord. For any to give the Lord a thing which has no value in their own estimation would be in the nature of an insult, instead of sacrifice.

Our experiences in life should draw us closer to the Lord, not only in the form of prayer; but moment by moment, in every little emergency of life, we should learn to expect heavenly guidance.

Every accepted sacrificer who fails to carry out his sacrifice will surely miss the "high calling," and, if our expectations are correct, will share with the "great company" in the "destruction of the flesh," which, after consecration, they were unwilling to devote day by day.

RE PHILOSOPHY OF COVENANTS AND RANSOM

Question.—Is it possible to be both justified and sanctified without knowing the philosophy respecting the covenants and the ransom?

Answer.—It is true that one might be both justified and sanctified through faith in the blood before learning anything about the covenants or the philosophy of the ransom. And one might retain equally justification and sanctification through faith in that blood, irrespective of philosophies respecting the divine methods of the applications of Christ's merit. This was true in our own case. Subsequently, having obtained grace from the Lord and some knowledge of his plan—the philosophies of the Atonement, etc.—we served it out to others in his name. He advised us through his Word that these things were "meat in due season," and that the path of the just would shine more and more. In harmony with these promises, we have clearer light, increasingly, which is ours to dispense to whomsoever has "an ear to hear."

The Old Law Covenant was to the natural seed of Abraham, and similarly the New Law Covenant will be instituted with them, as taking the place of the old one and bringing them a blessing, which they failed to get under the one of which Moses was the mediator. Ours is the faith covenant, the original covenant, to which the old one was added, and to which the new one will be added in due time."

SHOULD WE SELL ALL THAT WE HAVE?

Question.—Please explain the following text: "Go and sell all that thou hast, and come and take up thy cross and follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Should we go and do as the Master advised?

Answer.—If that young man had assented to our Lord's proposition, and had made further inquiry as to the particulars, it is our opinion that the Lord would have modified his statement to the extent of suggesting that the selling and giving to the poor be not done all at once, but gradually, as the necessities might seem to open up. In the language of the Apostle, "Let your moderation be manifest to all." We are to use earthly things and earthly opportunities and temporalities with great moderation, self-denial, as the case may seem to make necessary.

We are to have bowels of mercy, compassion, sympathy, love. Did not our Lord allow Mary to anoint his head and also his feet and were not these caresses and manifestations of love of an earthly sort? There are various items to intimate the Lord's special love for Lazarus, Martha and Mary, James and John, and for his mother. And this would seem to give us ground for a similar course. But as Jesus did not allow those earthly loves to hinder him from the Father's service, so we, also, must be on the alert about the Father's business.

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

MY BELOVED BROTHER AND PASTOR:—

Herein please find my check to be used in the Lord's service. We regret that we are not in a position to send more. Any and all service we could render is in nowise commensurate with the rich blessings we have been enjoying for the past ten years. Present truth has done more for my wife and myself than I can ever tell you. It is wonderful, marvelous, beautiful, how God's Word (which our parents, Sunday-school teachers and preachers so frequently told us was never meant to be understood) is now so plain, and has been opened up so clearly to our heads and hearts by the only key—THE WATCH TOWER publications and STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES.

These books, dear Brother, are the real Keys to Holy Writ. What could we do without them in the present blinding mist and maze of human sophistries? If not others could be had, a million dollars could not buy mine. Thank God! we have been delivered from the nightmare of Satanic teachings, such as were inculcated in our minds by the creeds of Christendom, and the labyrinth of mere conjectures concerning God's Word; and by his grace, through your publications, we now stand in the blazing sunlight of a clarified understanding of his Word and his loving character, which we now see to be the embodiment of love and mercy.

And as we rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory because of the one hope of our high calling, we also rejoice to know that in "The times of restitution of all things" there will be a universal opportunity for salvation for the whole world of mankind—Nero included.

May God continue to bless you and to use you as an instrument in his hands. W. B. SUTTON.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Just one year ago I came into the truth. I was exceedingly rejoiced with the many wonderful truths entirely new to me, though I had been educated for the ministry, and preached for three years; and had passed normal school examinations and taught school for several years.

My temporal surroundings, as well as my newly acquired desire to penetrate the new and unknown fields of the now unsealed Book, led me to long for a further unfolding of these new and surprising truths. I could wish that there were one hundred volumes of such studies, instead of six; and instead of contenting myself with a careful assimilation and application of that already learned, I sought rather for new conquests.

I began with the help of Strong's concordance to delve into the meanings of words. I sought to make pictures and draw types from nearly every chapter in the Bible. I tried

to fit the meaning of every proper name to some one, and usually concluded that it referred to Brother Russell. My faculty for seeing pictures and types became so developed that my eye would skim over a chapter, jumping at a chance picture here and there, and missing nearly all the original meaning and proper application of the text.

The Bible I loved was thus becoming quite barren to me in respect to its intended use. Instead of using it to supply my much-needed armor, I was enjoying it more as one would enjoy a picture book or "Grimm's Fairy Tales."

Since my speculations were unwarranted, they naturally contradicted each other. One picture would bring me to one conclusion, and another would seem to contradict it. It became quite confusing.

Finally I came to the point where it became quite difficult for me to distinguish between truth and error; and I was in danger of losing my appreciation of the truth and devoting myself to the fanciful. Nor did I realize the great danger I was in until, a short time ago, the Lord used our dear Brother Saphore to point out to me my mistake. I cannot express to you what a blow it was to me to see that most of my Bible study for a whole year was not only of no account, but of a negative influence not only to myself, but to those I may have thus influenced.

I deeply regret my mistake, and have vowed to my Lord that henceforth, trusting in his grace to help, I will to the best of my ability more zealously appreciate and pursue the study of the TRUTH, and cease all speculation and typemaking.

I am endeavoring, dear Brother, to retrace my steps; to learn again to discern between fact and theory, and to make no positive statement except that which I know, and can prove by the Bible to be truth—fully warranted and established.—Isaiah 8:20.

The article in the Sept. 15 TOWER, page 297, entitled, "Is the reading of the SCRIPTURE STUDIES Bible Study?" has been of great help to me; and I am now reading at least twelve pages every day and seeking to keep all my Bible study within the bounds of that which is known, and given to us by the Lord as meat in due season.

Now, brother, I fear that many are making a similar mistake of rash speculation to the end that perhaps many will stumble. I pray for such that they may see their mistake and the great danger thus impending over those who thus build upon speculation, and are sure to see their speculations fall. Oh! that our faith may be built upon nothing unstable as a part of its foundation, for "This is the victory that overcometh the world—even your faith."

R. G. JOLLY.

TO OUR BELOVED BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Greetings in the name of our blessed Savior! We are writing to tell you of some of the joys and strength received from "the vow" and from the glorious light on the covenants and the sin-offering.

Before "the vow" came out I had an intense hunger for knowledge and was just beginning to realize that the world's literature is full of the wisdom of "the god of this world"—Satan. When "the vow" came, I realized my need of it. Now I can remain in a room full of books and not read one, but read only the Bible and the Keys which our present Lord and Master has provided.

Sometimes I think of Ezekiel 3:21 as a fitting description of how the Lord has used the Vow "to warn the righteous." Certainly it was a warning to me.

When thirteen years ago I came to a knowledge of "present truth," the fact that The Christ is composed of many members was the key to many mysteries; for instance, the delay of restitution blessings, etc. Daily the doctrines grow more precious to me. My heart is inspired to greater zeal and faithfulness, now when I need this very inspiration; and I feel more than ever willing to yield to the three burnings, just as our Master set the example. Oh, how thankful we are to our blessed Master for this wonderful truth on the sin-offering! The truth on the covenants has been such a help also. How I enjoy saying to the Jews whom I meet, "Have you ever thought of the blessings of the New Covenant? These are for your people."

Now, dear Brother, I come to the object of this letter, which is to let you know of our Christian love and how glad we are that, like our Master, you have humility enough to do the Father's will by proclaiming these truths even though you know that you will be misunderstood by many. Would that, like John and Mary, we could be a comfort to you in the hour of trial.

At present I am enjoying the colporteur work more than ever before, due principally to the strength gained from "present truth." I voice the sentiment of every member of our class here when I say, God bless you, Brother Russell; for those who keep their consecration vow grow more precious to each other.

Your sister in the "one Body,"

MRS. A. D. MILLER.—Ind.

MY DEAR BROTHER AND PASTOR:—

With the sincere hope of encouraging you and holding up your hands in this severe hour of trial and determined effort of the enemy to hinder the Lord's harvest work I have been, I trust, directed by our Heavenly Master to write you a few lines. I may tell you that I am utterly overwhelmed with admiration and thanks to our Heavenly Father for favoring me—one, as I feel, so utterly undeserving and being favored with an insight into his great scheme for the uplifting of the human race and, above all, for calling me to run in the good race of the high calling.

Dear Brother, how especially honored you must be to be made God's instrument in presenting these wonderful truths to the Church! How I bless God for opening my eyes to see them and my heart to receive them, and how I bless him for his great love in preserving me from falling back, as some have done. Surely there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth with those who try to obstruct and hinder the Master's work. I am satisfied that they might as well try to keep back the waters of the Amazon. I rejoice exceedingly also in being favored so highly as to be permitted to do something in the way of presenting the message to others. I am happily in a position to do a lot of colporturing and tract distributing, and I trust the Lord of the harvest will give me grace sufficient to make the most of the few short remaining years of the harvest.

Again assuring you, beloved Brother, of my loyalty to the glorious cause of Christ and to the blessed harvest truths as presented to us through THE TOWER, the STUDIES, etc., and which I would not exchange or give up for all else besides, believe me, my dear Brother, to remain

Faithfully your co-worker and Brother,

S. D. COLEMAN.—Australia.

"MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE IN ALL"

OUR BELOVED PASTOR IN THE LORD:—

At this late date what do you think about marriage by those who claim to be fully consecrated? I think a timely piece in THE WATCH TOWER treating the propriety of marriage would do much good. It seems that many do not understand their privilege in sacrificing their little all.

I have certainly enjoyed THE WATCH TOWER, especially of

late. The expositions of the great company and what is meant by a full consecration have caused me to make some careful self-examinations and more earnest prayers, inquiring of the Lord whether or not I have made a full consecration of my little all, and am I being faithful in my stewardship.

Yours in the Lord,

IN REPLY

We quite agree with your sentiments, dear Brother, that the time is short; that all the consecrated need every talent and every moment for the service of the King, to demonstrate to him their love and loyalty. We quite agree that many marriages have proved disadvantageous spiritually. We do not know that all have done so.

Anyway, we have no option in the matter. The Lord's Word clearly declares that marriage is honorable in all. It is not, therefore, the province of anybody to forbid marriage, directly or indirectly. The most we are privileged to do is to call attention to the words of St. Paul, a divinely inspired instructor for the church, whose admonitions have brought blessing to us all many times. He says, "He that marrieth doeth well. He that marrieth not doeth better."

For our part, therefore, we leave the matter in the hands of the dear friends, content to point out the Apostle's advice, not forgetting that there might be instances in which this general rule might not apply. It is for each of the Lord's people to decide this matter in harmony with his or her own judgment and convictions. "Let us not judge one another, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way."—Rom. 14:13.

VALUE OF BEREAN SCRIPTURE STUDIES

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

You might be interested in the result of some observations made concerning the relative development of members of Bible classes that I have been privileged to visit. The degree of progress seems to be largely influenced by the character of meetings and the method of study adopted.

Some of the classes closely adhere to the Berean Studies, as set forth in THE WATCH TOWER. Other meetings are devoted to DAWN Studies, each member of the class taking part therein; and at least one meeting per week to prayer, praise and testimonies, with an occasional discourse. All such appear to be making progress in the development of knowledge and the graces of the Spirit.

Other classes do not have Berean studies; do not use the DAWNS at the class meetings, seldom have a prayer, praise and testimony meeting, but instead largely depend upon the leader of the class, who prepares a lesson on some chapter in the Bible and at the meeting states his conclusions, and then calls upon the class for expressions of opinion. Such classes, it is quite evident, make little progress.

Since all who have come to a knowledge of "present truth" concerning God's Plan, obtained it by the use of the six volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and other WATCH TOWER publications, it would appear to be a serious mistake, in the class studies, to ignore these God-given helps. No member of the class can grow without an individual exercise of his faculties, and where the leader is depended upon to prepare a lesson and recite it at the meeting of the class, the benefit resulting to the class is reduced to the minimum.

The Society now publishes, in pamphlet form, the Berean questions on TABERNACLE SHADOWS and on Vol. V., STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, besides the current Berean questions on Vol. VI, appearing in THE TOWER. No better material can be had for three meetings each week. The majority of the friends are so situated that they can have four meetings per week. Some of the classes thus situated, and which have not used the Berean studies from their inception, are now having for one meeting the Berean questions on TABERNACLE SHADOWS, for another, Berean questions on Vol. V., and for another, the current Berean study on Vol. VI. In this manner the new members, as well as others of the class, get the benefits of all back lessons, at the same time keeping abreast with THE TOWER lessons. The fourth meeting of the week is devoted to praise, prayer and testimonies recounting the experiences and blessings of the week. The result shows it would be profitable for others to pursue a similar course.

If you are in harmony with the thoughts herein expressed, you may be pleased to find some way of calling the attention of the friends thereto.

In the love and service of our King,

J. F. RUTHERFORD.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I know that you will rejoice with me when I tell you that after about two years waiting, the dear, loving heavenly