

Joseph's experiences of adversity. On the contrary, we may feel sure that the lessons of his adversity were merely preparations for his subsequent experiences as Pharaoh's logos, or mouthpiece, throughout the kingdom.

We are reminded again of the lesson of a week ago—that Joseph's experiences were typical of those of Jesus and the church, his followers. The Bible assures us that the graces of humility and patience are both closely related to love and loyalty. St. Paul reminds us of this when he declares, "If ye be without chastisement, . . . then are ye . . . not sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" He reminds us that "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."—Hebrews 12:6-8.

It was so with Jesus, and with all the faithful apostles, and has been so with all the followers of Jesus during this Gospel age. It will undoubtedly continue to be true in the case of all the consecrated church. It is because the Lord Jesus loves these noble characters that he counts them worthy of trials and testings, disciplines, etc. These are necessary to qualify them for the positions of honor, glory, immortality and great responsibility, to which the Father has called Jesus and his brethren, the church.

THE VALUE OF ADVERSITY

Jacob's special love for his son Joseph manifested itself in favoritism—the princely coat, or robe, etc. Quite possibly he would have spoiled his son, had not divine providence interfered and taken him entirely out of this father's control. Many fathers, especially the rich, have made similar mistakes. Hence the sons of the rich are not always a credit to their fathers.

The great heavenly Father, however, makes no such mistakes. His people are assured that trials and difficulties are marks rather of their relationship to God and of his loving care over them. True, this providential care is restricted: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." His special dealings are with his consecrated people—those who have entered into a covenant with him, who have become his servants and his children. To these alone belongs the promise that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose."—Romans 8:28.

While this special call applies peculiarly to the church of this Gospel age, there is a sense in which it was applicable to the Hebrews, since the time of Abraham. Joseph belonged to this line which was in covenant relationship with God. This accounts for God's dealing with him rather than with young men of other families than Abraham's. Incidentally, it is worthy of notice that the Israelites passed through many trying experiences because of being God's people. Many of those experiences they might have escaped, had they not come into covenant relationship with God. But had they escaped the

trials and difficulties, they would have escaped certain privileges and blessings also. And the blessings which God gives always outweigh the adversities which prepare for them.

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN ELECTIONS

This reminds us that the Bible declares that the Jewish people, and subsequently the Christians, are God's elect—God's chosen people—the seed of Abraham, natural and spiritual. Both have offers of God's blessings not accorded to other peoples; and in both cases the trying experiences are to fit the elect ones for the future glories to which they have been invited.

Nevertheless, God has also a great blessing in store for the non-elect. During the thousand years of Messiah's reign, the elect church, the saintly only, will be Messiah's joint-heirs in the great kingdom of God, which will then take control of the earth. Then also the elect from the Hebrews will be used, in another part of the work, in conjunction with the Christian church, the one on the heavenly plane, the other on the earthly. Through these two Israels, God's blessings are to be poured out on all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues.

Although God has not specially supervised the affairs of any except these two elect classes, nevertheless we see that he has permitted, in a general way, great lessons of adversity to come to the whole human family. As the special trials and difficulties of the elect classes are intended to work for them special blessing and qualifications for their work as God's agencies, so the general tribulations of the world will give general lessons that will be helpful to all people by giving all experiences with sin and death—by teaching all thus the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

By the by, when Messiah's kingdom shall be established, when Satan shall be bound, when the reign of righteousness shall begin, when the curse shall be lifted, when the blessings shall flow instead—then the lessons of sorrow and tears and crying and dying will all prove valuable. Humanity will appreciate the great blessings of God in the future very largely by contrast with the evils and sorrows of the present time. When, by and by, they shall learn fully and conclusively that all these sorrows and tears are the results of violation of God's laws and disregard of his injunctions, the lesson undoubtedly will be one that will never be forgotten.

Wherever the plowshare of trouble has gone, it has served to break up the fallow ground and to make ready for the seed of divine truth and grace. The next age, under Messiah's beneficent rule, will be the time of sowing the seeds of knowledge of God and appreciation of his glorious character and plan. The results will undoubtedly be glorious, as the Scriptures declare. Eventually all will participate in these blessings everlastingly, except such as intelligently refuse them, choosing sin rather than righteousness, in that day when the knowledge of the truth will be given to all and when assistance to righteousness will be apparent.

AN INTERESTING LETTER

THE SECRETARY, THE I. B. S. A.,
DEAR SIR:

Can you let me have a copy of "The Divine Plan of the Ages," Helping Hand series? I saw a copy in a cell of the Kandy Gaol today. The prisoner said it had been a great help and blessing to him. He had spent a fortnight of great

darkness and doubt, but this book had cheered him up. Yours sincerely,

(Signed) ROBERT A. CLARKE,
Captain Salvation Army, Kandy, Ceylon.

The above is the result of a book placed in a prison library in India.

GOD'S SYMPATHY FOR HIS PEOPLE

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."—Isaiah 57:15.

Jehovah is the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity. Before the mountains were brought forth, or the hills, before the First-born was created, he is God. To Moses at the burning bush, he said, "I AM THAT I AM." (Exodus 3:14) Our God is very great, very wise, very high. Nevertheless, the Scriptures show us that he is also very sympathetic. He is a God of mercy and of love.

The passage from which our text is taken informs us that if God were to contend with humanity, the end of the strife would be that mankind would be blotted out of existence. But he remembers that we are dust, and has compassion upon us. In this respect he is different from the gods of the heathen, who are domineering, apparently bent on wreaking vengeance upon those in their power.

Besides being very great and lofty, our God is particularly sympathetic towards those who are of a broken and contrite

heart, whose spirit is humble, who realize that they are imperfect, who desire to be in accord with him, and to dwell in holiness. To such he is ever near—to revive the spirit of the humble, to give them strength. He will not trample them into the dust, as many an earthly potentate has done to his subjects, but will assist them in the right way, and revive the heart of the contrite. These are to know that our God is a God of sympathy, compassion and love, who takes pleasure in reviving their hearts and in bringing them back into harmony with him, if they are willing to be led.

DISCOURAGEMENT WITH SELF A FAVORABLE CONDITION

There is a difference between a broken and a contrite heart. A heart is broken when it is bowed down with grief and sorrow; a heart is contrite when it has a quiet, deep, continual sorrow for acts not in harmony with righteousness. A broken will is not necessarily the same; for there are those whose

wills are broken, but who are not submissive to the divine will.

To be repentant is to be thoroughly submissive to the divine will, and implies a change of mental attitude toward sin. This humble, discouraged condition becomes a very favorable one if the person will seek divine assistance, if he will become submissive to the Lord and ready to do the divine will. Such will surely receive the blessing of God; for the Lord is very nigh to every one who is broken-hearted. The way to full consecration would be very short to him.

If such as be of contrite heart will be submissive to the Lord, he will save them from their difficulties and bring them into a large place, as the Prophet David states. (Psalm 18:19) This does not necessarily mean that he will deliver them from financial troubles, but that he will give them peace and rest, which are better than money. If they have family troubles, they will find in him a superior friend, who is able and willing to administer superior consolation and refreshment.

Come, ye disconsolate! where'er ye languish,

Come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel;

Here bring your wounded hearts; here tell your anguish;

Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,

Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!

Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,

Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot cure.

THE LORD'S METHOD OF DELIVERANCE

The scriptures assure us that "There is none righteous, no, not one." There is relative righteousness, however, which God can approve. Those who are seeking to be in harmony with him to the best of their ability, who are walking in the ways of righteousness, and at the same time are trusting in the precious blood of our Redeemer—such are spoken of as righteous. Of these it is said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, after righteousness; for they shall be filled."—Matthew 5:6.

This class, however, shall have afflictions. The Scriptures tell us that all who will live godly lives shall suffer. (Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12; Romans 5:3-5) The reason why this is true is that the world is traveling in the opposite direction to righteousness—in the way of selfishness and gratification of the flesh. We read, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15) This is especially true of this Gospel age, when some are following in the footsteps of the Master. It was also true of the Jewish age, when some were seeking to walk in the way of righteousness. The Lord delivered them out of their afflictions, not in the sense of shielding them from trials, but in that of not permitting them to be overcome by their difficulties.

The ancient worthies fully appreciated the divine favor exercised in their behalf, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, in order that they might have the continuance of that favor and larger blessings by and by. God delivered them out of their trials and difficulties by not permitting these to overcome them. This was also true of our Lord, and is true of the church as well. The Lord delivers us out of our trials and difficulties, so that mentally we are not oppressed by them in the same way as are others. He will sustain and support us in our experiences and will eventually deliver us by giving us a share in the first resurrection.

The sons of God by adoption are, during this Gospel age, especially beset by trials and difficulties. If they should fall, however, the fact that they have stumbled will not make them feel like going back into sin, if their hearts are of the right stamp. On the contrary, they will feel like St. Peter, who, when others were stumbling, said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68) The true people of God have no desire to go to any one but him. If they stumble, they recover themselves, avail themselves of his arrangements for forgiveness and press on. By these stumblings they learn of their own weaknesses, and then fortify themselves so that they may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—Ephesians 6:10.

A just man will not fall into sin. The very most that could happen to him would be to stumble. There are various causes for stumbling. But if the heart is right, the man will rise again; for the Lord will show him that he has made a mistake and will point out the way to him by which he may recover himself. If he is a lover of righteousness, he will

desire to press on toward that which is right, just, approved of the Lord, even if he should stumble many times.—Psalm 37:23, 24; Prov. 24:16.

THE EVIDENCE OF FAVOR WITH GOD

So far as our humanity is concerned, we are undone by reason of the fall. It behooves us, then, to be very humble, to feel our own littleness, our own fallen condition. It becomes us to be very contrite, very much in opposition to sin, to feel that sin is the great blight upon the whole race, and that God will not be in harmony with anything except that which is righteous and holy.

All, therefore, who would be in harmony with God must be repentant in respect to their own shortcomings and must be appreciative of his lofty standards—his holy standards. He, in turn, informs these that they have his sympathy, and that they shall have his succor. He appreciates the attitude of mind in which they are; and therefore, as our text tells us, he is ready to revive the spirit of the humble and contrite ones. To such he will show his salvation; to others he will not.

Only the humble-minded can really appreciate their own condition. God not only will revive their spirit, but is willing to lift them up and to make them again sons of God, with all that this implies of blessing. He has this attitude toward the humble and contrite in the present time, and he has always had this spirit toward the humble and contrite ones. Throughout Christ's reign this humble class will have his favor and blessing. Only the humble and contrite ones have the opportunity of becoming joint-heirs with our Lord.

God resists the proud. To the humble he gives grace, and opens the eyes of their understanding. They become his children because they are in the attitude to receive his blessings and to be guided by his instruction. The text applies not only in the present time, but will have an application in the next age. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." (Isaiah 62:10) These words are all intended to indicate the preparations for the incoming age. There is no provision for the proud, none for the haughty, none for the self-conscious—but all for the humble-minded.

If God has these blessings in store for the humble only, and if the humble are few in number at the present time, what of the others of humanity? God is allowing now a humiliating influence to work with people, which should teach them humility and lead them to be contrite of heart. But much more will this be the case in the next age. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isaiah 26:9) All the blessings will be upon the contrite and humble. And this will be so markedly before the attention of the people that all will know a change has taken place.

Now the humble and contrite are trodden down in the street. Now the proud are happy. "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, even they that tempt God are delivered." (Malachi 3:15) But in the new kingdom every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and the humble shall be exalted. (Luke 14:11) God has provided a thousand years for the education of all. A thousand years may seem a short period for this work when we know that for six thousand years things have been going wrong. But we must recollect that during the six thousand years many of the people have lived but a short time—many dying in infancy.

In the new order of things this will be changed, and each will live longer. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." (Isaiah 65:20) "Judgment [justice] also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place."—Isaiah 28:17.

And then it will not be necessary for one to say to another, "Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 31:34) The high standard that God has for his people will be recognized. Then all who have humility and the right condition of heart will come into harmony with God. All who refuse to come into harmony with God will get the wages of sin—the second death.

"I know not the way that's before me,
The joys or the griefs it may bring;
What clouds are o'erhanging the future,
What flowers by the wayside may spring.

But there's One who will journey beside me,
Nor in weal nor in woe will forsake;
And this is my solace and comfort,
'He knoweth the way that I take.' "

PRIVILEGES OF THE SONS OF GOD

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of."—Matthew 6:8.

These words were not addressed to the world in general; for the whole world is lying in sin, altogether out of relationship with God. These words were not addressed even to the ordinary Jew; for the Jews are also members of the Adamic race, which is out of harmony with God, and their Covenant was not one of sonship, but of servants. Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house. (Hebrews 3:5) We never find Israelites referred to as sons of God. In the prophecies there are references made as to what God would do for them in the future. But there is no direct statement that he was their father, or that they were his children.

We all see that this was so. It would have been improper that this should be otherwise, for the sin-atonement has not yet been made for the world. Neither a Jew nor one of the world today has a right to call God his Father, nor to think of him as his Father. The only ones who have a right to call God "our Father," are those who have come into covenant relationship with him through Christ. Through this relationship, the Apostle John says, "Now are we the sons of God."

We are not yet in the kingdom, to be sons of God without imperfection; but in the future, in the moment of our "change," we shall be "sons of God without rebuke," and be like our Master and share his glory. But in the present time we are sons of God, and have this blessed privilege, this honor, of calling God our Father, because we have received his holy Spirit. We have this treasure of the holy spirit in earthen vessels, and walk by faith, not by sight. All those who have come into the body of Christ by full consecration are sons of God by faith, and are permitted to call themselves such, to realize him as their Father and to think of the testimony of the Scriptures as fully and completely referring to themselves.

SONS OF GOD BY FAITH

But the question is, Why did the Lord use these words to the early disciples before he appeared in the presence of God on their behalf and made an imputation of his merit for them? Were they not really under the Law Covenant still? We answer, Yes. They were still under the Law Covenant. Only by faith were they permitted to call God their Father. They had accepted Christ as the Way, and the Truth and the Life, had accepted Jesus as the Sent of God, the One who would ultimately accomplish all that he had come to do. They were to manifest their faith by calling God their Father, calling themselves the sons of God—although we find that they did not really speak of themselves as the sons of God.

It was some time after our Lord's death that their faith began to grasp this privilege. The Jews would have been afraid to call themselves sons of God, or to call him their Father. If they had spoken of themselves as sons of God, they would have thought that they were doing something reprehensible. When Jesus spoke of himself as the Son of God, they said that he was a blasphemer.—John 5:18; Luke 22:70, 71.

We find from the context that the Lord is advising us that we should not think of our petitions to the heavenly Father as being for his information. Our Lord said, practically, "You have not an ignorant Father. The heathen go through great supplications, as though their God was asleep, or indifferent, when they petition him. But you, as my disciples, know of God as your heavenly Father; and as a good earthly father loves his child and makes provision for it, so your heavenly Father knoweth the things you have need of before you ask him. It is not necessary for you to give him advice; for he knows your needs better than you do, and is aware that some of the things for which you ask would be injurious."

TRAINING FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE KINGDOM

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."—Matthew 6:28.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Master is teaching his disciples certain important lessons. He is not teaching the world, but those who had come to him, especially desiring to be taught, desiring to be his disciples. He points out to them that if they would be his disciples, thenceforth their main object in life would be to seek to become members of the kingdom of God. He himself is to be the great king; and an elect, choice number from the world are to be associated with him in that kingdom. When this election is completed, that kingdom will be established. Then the blessing of all the world will follow under that kingdom, in harmony with the promise made to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

These, then, who aspire to be members of the kingdom

THE DIVINE OBJECT IN ANSWERING PRAYER

Why then do we ask at all, since he is our Father, and, as a loving Father, makes all the provisions necessary and needful? We answer that our instruction to pray is intended to awake a further realization of the fact that all of our blessings come from the heavenly Father; otherwise we should fail to get a great spiritual blessing from contemplating his love and care. He would not have us get the blessing in the same way that trees take in moisture. He would have us to be intelligent, to consider that he is our Father. He knows our needs and has made provision for them. He wishes us to exercise faith in respect to his care and to all the things promised.

The divine object, then, in answering prayer is that we may have a stimulation of faith in connection with our receiving daily blessings—both temporal and spiritual. The Lord knows the things that the world has need of, and he is making a general provision for the world. He has already arranged a way by which the world ultimately will return as sons on the human plane, and he is making all things to work together for good to them in a general and broad way. God has a great plan of redemption through Jesus, and a great plan of exalting the church to be with her Lord in the heavenly kingdom. Then that kingdom shall pour blessings upon the earth for the rolling away of the curse, and for the restitution of mankind to the original perfection of Adam in Eden.

To whatever extent any one has an ear to hear, it is proper to tell him about these good things. But only those who have the ear to hear are to be specially instructed at this present time. The knowledge of God's grace at this time has been especially for the called-out ones. The remainder of mankind has been allowed to remain in ignorance. It is quite proper that, as they begin to be awakened, they should hear a little and understand a little; but we are certain that the world cannot see the deep things of God. As the Apostle tells us, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Again he tells us that "The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—1 Corinthians 2:14, 10.

WHO MAY PRAY

The Lord is not dealing with the world; for they are not in covenant relationship with him and, therefore, they cannot please him now. His last dealing with the world was when they were condemned in Adam. They had no right to life. They were sinners and must die. He has not yet completed the arrangement for the healing of the breach. He has been getting ready for that New Covenant arrangement for the restoration of the world.

The only ones who are now in relationship with him are the members of the body of Christ. "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." If we go out of relationship to Christ, then we have no right to pray. But if we maintain this relationship, if his Word abides in us, if we are conforming our lives to his will, and if we are in harmony with his will and the spirit of his Word, we may ask what we will, and it shall be done.

Those who are abiding fully in Christ would not want anything except God's will to be done. And if they have his Word abiding in them richly, they will know what things they may properly ask for. But if they are ignorant of God's will in the matter, then they would surely say, "Not my will, but thine be done!" So whatever would be the petition, they would get it, because they desire God's will to be done.

class should make this the chief aim and object of life: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"; that is to say, the righteousness necessary to attain a place in that kingdom. And all things necessary are promised to be supplied to such aspirants and seekers. Our Lord did not promise rich clothing, fine houses, ease or luxury; nor could we suppose that these would be specially helpful.

Certain training is necessary for membership in the kingdom. God, the great Husbandman in one picture, the great Overseer in another, would supervise the affairs of each member; and all things would be made to work together for their good. If they needed experience in trials, difficulties and privations, he would see to it that they got those experiences. If they were proud, they would get experiences that

would humble them. If they were rude, they would have experiences that would make them polite. It is necessary for them to have these experiences; for if they did not learn at all, they would never get the inheritance to which they have become heirs.

LESSONS IN EVERY EXPERIENCE OF LIFE

The Master took note of the fact that the majority of people are full of the cares of this present life—what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed. He saw that many of the poor were distressed, not knowing, perhaps, whence the next meal would come. If such were the Lord's people, they should exercise faith. If the Father permitted his children to be in these difficulties, he saw that there was some good lesson for them to learn. They were to seek to learn that lesson, and not to fret about their condition.

This did not mean that his followers were to be negligent, to care nothing about their appearance or about what they should eat. This is not the way to do; but while appreciating the beauties of nature, of dress, etc., they were to have faith in their heavenly Father and to realize that the luxuries of life might not be the best for them. But they were to be content—knowing that all things would work out good to those who were rightly exercised.

This matter of taking anxious thought for food and clothing is not confined to the poor. Some of the middle class, as they rise to wealth, find themselves engrossed with the cares of this life, eating, drinking and dressing—saying to themselves, What shall I wear this time, or that time, etc? Eating and drinking and dressing seem to be the engrossing thoughts of both rich and poor.

The Lord's people are to be content with such things as they have. They are to seek to provide things honest and decent. But honest and decent things are not extravagant things. The Lord's people are not to be inclined to use money in self-gratification. As they look about and see others of the Lord's children, they see that they must not take too many of these blessings for themselves, but that they should use their money with economy. They should use their money as a part of their stewardship, and know that they are to give an account of it.

We are to seek first of all the interests of the kingdom. If the interests of the kingdom need money, we would feel guilty if we should use the Lord's consecrated money in self-gratification. Presumably this is the reason that the Lord has left the interests of the kingdom in a condition of semi-poverty—in order that his people may forward the interests of that kingdom. Our God is very rich. All the gold and silver are his, and the cattle on a thousand hills; and if it was for the interests of the Kingdom class, he would forward them money in abundance. Things are left as they are, then, that we may practice economy, may have an opportunity of denying ourselves present blessings for the interests of the kingdom.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE LILIES

In this connection, our text comes in, illustrating the thought by the lily of the field. Indigenous to the soil, it has those things provided which are necessary for its development. The Lord did not choose a hot-house plant, dependent upon the horticulturist, but he chose a flower from the field. That flower grows under those conditions because the great Protector has arranged for its interest.

This does not mean for the plant to be idle; for if it were idle, it would die. The bulb is continually sending up nourishment to its stalks. It is not idle by any means. But does the plant do this by worrying? No. It merely uses the opportunities that come to it. It merely exercises its functions by the laws of its nature.

God makes provision for the lily in its native soil; and as it grows in its beauty, "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." So is it to be with God's children. When the Father begets us as his children and we are placed under present conditions, we may be sure that he who so placed us made the necessary arrangements for us; that he is not unwise; that he has not put us in conditions that are unfavorable for us. They are all of divine arrangement.

If we move ourselves out of these conditions, we may be responsible in some degree, but as long as we exercise no will of our own to take ourselves out of his providential care, we may be sure that all things will be overruled to work for good to us. If we then seek to adorn ourselves with all the graces of the holy Spirit, and if we use the opportunities that are in our immediate grasp, we shall be using the means for our own development.

The lily has a right to use everything within its power for its own nourishment. So it is our right and our duty to use the means within our power for beautifying our characters and for our spiritual nourishment, knowing that he who began the good work in us is able to complete it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

DEVOUT CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER HELPFUL

Our Lord calls attention to how such simple things in nature should be studied, be considered. The lessons to be learned in connection with all the affairs of life will be helpful to such as approach the study from the right standpoint of faith in the Creator, and a realization that he is necessarily the embodiment and representative of the very highest and very noblest qualities of which the human mind could conceive—perfect in justice, perfect in wisdom, perfect in power, perfect in love.

The heart that thus considers, makes progress, grows in grace, in knowledge, in love. The heart that fails to consider the little things, is hindered from a proper consideration of God and from a proper appreciation of his plan, and thus from a proper appreciation of his character.

THE NEW CREATURE'S STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

"I keep my body under and bring it into subjection, . . . lest I myself should be a castaway."—1 Corinthians 9:27.

There is a duality in Christians that is not to be recognized in others. The natural man has no distinct entity aside from his body. The new creature is recognized as having a life and entity distinct from the body; and this new creature is temporarily being developed and nourished in the old body. The old body has its will, its desires. The new creature has its interests, its desires. Consequently there is a conflict between them.

In the first part of the text—"I keep my body under"—we may see the thought of mastery. The new creature should say, "I am the master—I will not allow my body to master me," as though there were fear lest the old creature should get the new creature down and strangle it. It is a battle to determine which will win, which will live and not be destroyed.

The first thing, then, is for the new creature to get the body under, and thus have the mastery. The new creature having gained the mastery should, as a secondary step, bring the old nature into subjection and not do its bidding. The old creature is continually trying to assert itself. Very frequently it argues as to how it should be treated and how it should not be treated. Sometimes through false sympathy it might be treated too well. We must remember that the life of the old creature means the death of the new creature. We must vanquish the flesh; and we shall not be the victor until the flesh is entirely destroyed. Our victories as new creatures will not be gained until we as old creatures die. So the bat-

tle is unto the death, and there should be no particular sympathy between the two natures.

That which would enliven, encourage, the flesh in any way is a foe, and must be banished from our hearts. This might lead in some cases to extremes of conduct, and we might be judged as extremists by the world. But the world is not our judge. The world has no "exceeding great and precious promises" before them. They are a different class from us altogether. We are not to take our instructions from them, nor to allow them to shape our view of the matter, but we are to use the spirit of a sound mind in all things.

DEATH OF THE FLESH ESSENTIAL

The Apostle says that we are to be dead with Christ, to suffer with him. The Master invites us to take up our cross and follow him. This means the complete subjection of the flesh—the death of the flesh. If we fail to gain the victory over the flesh, we shall fail to gain the great prize. The ones who are to gain the prize of the high calling are those who will crucify the flesh, who will put it to death. We are to be "more than conquerors."

This is what the Apostle means: But I keep my body under and bring it into subjection; lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. All the preaching to others will not get me into the kingdom. I must keep my body under and bring it into subjection, using all diligence. Whatever I would get out of it, my pamper-

ing it in any way would be to my disadvantage. I am to be on the lookout to accomplish the victory, lest I should be a castaway.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEW WILL CONDITIONAL

Elsewhere the Apostle has told us that the church is a new creation of God; and that to those begotten again of the holy Spirit old things pass away and all things become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Addressing the same class, he says, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds." We have put off the old man, the natural, fallen man, with his privileges as the successor of Adam, in the same sense that we put off the old will and have received a new mind, in Christ. Instead, therefore, of belonging to the human family, we have stepped into membership in the body of Christ—out of the old into the new.

The body of Christ is not human, but spiritual. We have made this transfer from one family, with its hopes and interests, into the other. The old man is in a fallen and dilapidated condition in every way; and we realize that its deeds were far from satisfactory to ourselves, and especially unsatisfactory in God's sight. We, therefore, by our wills, stepped out of this condition, under guidance from on high. We have made a full consecration of all the old rights and interests, which

we had in the old nature, in order that we may be in the new man, Christ.

As we have come into membership in the new man, Christ, of which Jesus is the Head, we have under this Head an increase of knowledge. "We are renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us." The new creature comes to a more and more clear knowledge of the new will in proportion as he seeks to put down the human will and to be directed by the holy Spirit.

It would seem, therefore, that we put off the old man, Adam, and the human nature in general, in order that we may put on Christ and be found in him, as members of his body, and may receive with him a share in the exceeding glory, and ultimately be accounted worthy of a place in the kingdom of God. In proportion as we grow in grace, in knowledge, our appreciation of the heavenly things increases. Thus our renewing progresses.

The new will recognized by God in the begetting of the holy Spirit is the new creature which thus puts off the old and puts on the new. Its existence depends on this transformation. Failure means second death. Barely to overcome would mean a lower place on the spirit plane—in the "great company." Only the "more than conquerors" will get joint-heirship with their Lord—with exceeding glory and the divine nature.

"WHAT SHALL I RENDER UNTO THE LORD?"

(Psalm 116:12-14)

What shall I render, Lord, to thee
For all thy benefits toward me?
For life and every earthly good,
For raiment, shelter, daily food;
For light and truth, for peace and love,
For heavenly wisdom from above?—
How great thy bounties unto me!
What have I that is not from thee?

For all these benefits toward me,
What shall I render, Lord, to thee?
The cup thy hand of love hath poured,
I'll humbly take, most gracious Lord,
And call upon thy holy name
To help me thy great plan proclaim;
I'll spend my days in ceaseless praise,
And tell abroad thy wondrous ways!

"Salvation's cup"—of suffering, too—
Of suffering with God's chosen few,
Dear Lord, I'll drink of this, Thy cup,
And smiling through my tears, look up—
A mingled cup of grief and joy,
Of blessedness without alloy,
Of love and fellowship divine,
A foretaste of the kingdom-wine!

That all, dear Lord, may know and see
Thy countless benefits toward me,
Before thy congregation, now,
I'll pay my consecration vow;
And in thy strength, supplied each day,
I'll strive to walk the narrow way
That leads to rest and God and thee,
And blissful immortality!

GERTRUDE W. SEIBERT.

CROSS-BEARING A PRIVILEGE

"And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon . . . and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus."—Luke 23:26.

This text brings before our minds the whole scene of our Master's shame, ignominy—his condemnation by the Roman governor at the solicitation of the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees—men of his own nation. Those who led him away were the centurion and soldiers appointed by Pilate—not willingly, but by reason of the stress laid on him by the Jewish nation. The chief priests had threatened to report him as unfaithful to the interests of the Roman empire, if he did not condemn Jesus. And then how would the emperor treat him who allowed this humble Nazarene to make the claim of being king in territory under Roman jurisdiction?

We remember that the Jewish Sanhedrin tried the Lord under a different charge altogether. Their charge against him was blasphemy, the penalty of which, under the law, would have been stoning to death. Possibly they were not allowed to do stoning at that time; or possibly they feared the people.

It was not divinely intended that our Lord should be stoned, but that he should be treated as a cursed one—hanged upon a tree. (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23) "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." (John 3:14, 15) So through fear of the multitude or from lack of authority from the Roman governor, the Jews failed to stone Jesus.

Since they could not bring the charge of blasphemy before a Roman court, they were obliged to bring a different charge—that, while they were loyal to the Roman emperor, Jesus was disloyal to the Roman interests. Pilate washed his hands of the affair. He wished to be free from any guilt. But under stress of the Jews, and willing to keep peace, he caused the charge to be made that our Lord was crucified because of claiming to be King of the Jews.

The narrative seems to imply that Jesus bore his own cross on the way to Calvary, and that he fell beneath its

weight. There might have been various reasons for this. He was weak from undergoing very rigorous physical and mental strain. He had suffered from the bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane, and had endured different trials—before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, and before Herod. After this he was flogged! We can imagine that a person who had undergone so much would be scarcely able to walk, let alone carry a burden.

THE PROBABLE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

When we think of our Lord as a perfect man, we would not think of him as being the strongest of men. The imperfections of our race have manifested themselves in various ways. We have no reason to suppose that the first specimen of our race, Adam, was of surpassing strength, which might denote coarseness. We see this principle illustrated in fruits and vegetables. When we find an overgrown apple, we learn that it is not so tender as one of average size. So with a man of great physical stature—a giant—he might be coarse. We are to think of our Lord, not as extremely rugged, nor as weak, but as of great delicacy, and of reasonable strength and fiber.

When we think of the cross, too, we believe that it was of no light weight. We know of no light woods in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The most common tree there is the olive, which is an extremely heavy wood and of remarkable density. If we should suppose the cross to have been three feet in the ground and of reasonable height, it must have been at least twelve to fourteen feet long, and the cross-beam must have been at least five feet. Allowing a reasonable thickness for strength and for keeping it from bending under its load, we would think that the cross must have weighed from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds. This gives us the thought it was no light weight.

LESSONS FROM THE INCIDENT

We have every reason to sympathize greatly with the tradition that the Lord fell under the weight of the cross. It was at this juncture that Simon, evidently a strong and rugged countryman who was passing by, was stopped by the centurion and his band, and compelled to assist Jesus in carrying the cross. Apparently, even then, its weight was on Jesus.

There are lessons for us in this incident. One is that the disciples of Jesus, the faithful eleven, missed an opportunity of cross-bearing. At first we might be inclined to censure them severely. We must reflect, however, that they feared for their lives. We may sympathize with them, and at the same time learn a lesson of greater courage in everything connected with the Master.

It is true that the multitude might have been as anxious to cry for the death of the disciples as for the Lord's. But one of them had said that he was ready to die for the Lord, and so said they all. How strange that in the moment of testing they did not display the courage! It is much easier to attest great loyalty, great faithfulness, than it is to manifest these traits when the test comes. With the opportune moment, come the difficulties, and the fearful sights and sounds, carrying terror with them.

We, of course, have no opportunity of doing anything of this kind for the Master himself. But we realize that he

is still with us in the brethren. What a precious privilege this affords us of still helping to bear the Master's cross! How advantageous to know that he still recognizes that whatsoever is done unto the least of these his brethren is done unto him!

CROSS-BEARING PRECEDES CROWNING

Another thought that we have in this connection is that Simon, under the necessity of cross-bearing, would receive the burden either willingly or unwillingly. We have no record of what his experiences were. There is a tradition which declares that he afterwards became one of the Master's disciples. So in the Lord's providence, sometimes there is responsibility laid upon us. And if the Lord lays a cross upon us, will it be borne with gladness or with murmuring? If the former, we shall have a blessing, even though we had not sought the cross, even if it had been forced upon us.

When trials and difficulties come, and crosses are forced upon us, happy are we if we appreciate the opportunity of cross-bearing, recognizing that this is closely connected with the crowning. Simon represented in this case all of the Lord's faithful ones who help to bear the cross, following his example, walking in his steps. The cross will not be too heavy for us. The Lord will bear the heavy end of it; and our experiences will be only such as will be for our good and will work out for our blessing.

RE CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

"Christ . . . being put to death indeed in flesh, but made alive in spirit."—1 Peter 3:18. Rotherham.

For forty days after his resurrection our Lord was with his disciples before his ascension. Yet he revealed himself to them, according to the records, not more than eleven times in all—and some of these instances are probably duplications. His interviews with the disciples lasted only a few minutes each, except on the walk to Emmaus. These manifestations were attended by circumstances and conditions which spoke in thunder tones of a great change which had occurred to him. Evidently he was no longer the same being, although he had the same loving interest in them as before. He was still their Lord and Master, the same Jesus, though no longer Jesus in the flesh. He was now "the Lord, that Spirit," "a quickening Spirit."

There is no Scriptural statement to the effect that Jesus arose in the flesh. We have noted the Scriptures very carefully, and find none of them to say that Jesus arose in the flesh. On the contrary, we find, as the Apostle declares, "Now the Lord is that Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:17) St. Paul in telling us how he saw the Lord Jesus, says that he saw the Lord, not in the flesh, but shining "above the brightness of the sun" "at noonday."—Acts 26:13-15.

The Apostle tells us that the church is to be a spirit body: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:42-44) He tells us that our experiences in the resurrection must be similar to those of our Lord. In our Lord's case there was a sowing in dishonor and raising in glory; a sowing an animal body and a raising a spirit body. St. Peter calls attention to this fact when he says, "Christ . . . being put to death indeed in flesh, but made alive in spirit."—1 Peter 3:18. Rotherham.

The question, then, arises, How could the Lord be raised a spirit body? We can merely give you the Word of the Lord for it. He was raised so. The new nature began when our Lord was begotten of the holy Spirit at the time of his baptism, and was completed when he was perfected as a spirit being at his resurrection.

The various Scriptures which are cited about Jesus' appearance in bodies of flesh do not prove that Jesus had a body of flesh; for angels have appeared among mankind in fleshly bodies. And when Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared, or materialized, in the same way that he had appeared to Abraham in olden times. (Genesis 18:1, 2; 15:4, 5) One of his manifestations after his resurrection was when he took a walk with two of his disciples to Emmaus and sat down with them to supper. When he broke bread, he became known to them and vanished out of their sight!—Luke 24:30, 31.

A MATERIALIZED BODY

In the case when he appeared to his disciples, it is stated that he came into the room where they were, "when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews." We read further along, that eight days later he again appeared in the same room, in the same manner, "the doors being shut." (John 20:19, 26) These things were

evidently to show the disciples that he was no longer a flesh being, but a spirit being. During the forty days after his resurrection he appeared, probably, not more than three hours in all. He remained with them to establish their faith, so that they might be able to receive the holy Spirit at the proper time.

In answer to a question about Philip's vanishing from the sight of the eunuch, and being found at Azotus, we reply that God was able to take him away. But there was nothing said about his being made a spirit being. Philip will, no doubt, in due time share with the Lord the change of nature in the first resurrection—"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."—1 Corinthians 15:52, 50.

When Jesus appeared in Jerusalem in the midst of his disciples and they were affrighted, he said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39) He was there impressing upon them that they were not seeing a spirit being, a spirit body. They saw a materialized body. The Lord was a Spirit all the time, however, and the flesh and bones were merely agents of appearance. So our Lord appeared in flesh and bones, and he also appeared in clothing.

BODY AND CLOTHING CREATED FOR THE OCCASION

Where did the flesh and bones come from? The same place that the clothing came from. The human body of flesh and bones, etc., and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, did not go out of the door, but simply disappeared, or dissolved, into the same elements from which he had created them a few moments before. "He vanished [Greek, *ginomai aphantos*, became non-manifest, i. e., invisible. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*.] out of their sight" (Luke 24:31), and was no longer seen of them when the flesh and bones and clothing in which he manifested himself were dissolved, though doubtless he was still with them—invisibly present; so also much of the time during those forty days.

The power manifested by our Lord, to create and dissolve the clothing in which he appeared, was just as superhuman as the creating and dissolving of his assumed human body; and the body was no more his glorious spirit body than were the clothes he wore. It will be remembered that the seamless robe and other clothing which our Redeemer wore before his crucifixion had been divided among the Roman soldiers, and that the grave clothes were left folded away in the sepulcher (John 19:23, 24, 40; 20:5-7), so that the clothing in which he appeared on the different occasions mentioned must have been specially created.

Our thought is that our Lord was perfect in the flesh when he was a man, and that he gave himself an offering, as a ransom-price for Adam. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." "A body hast thou prepared me." (Hebrews 2:9; 10:5) That earthly, human body of flesh

suffered death; and God would not again make out Lord flesh, but raised him from the dead a new creature of the divine nature. After his resurrection our Lord said to his apostles, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—Matthew 28:18.

All this indicates to us the great change that came to our Lord at the time of his resurrection. If he is now merely a man, he is still "lower than the angels." And to think of our Lord as a man and lower than the angels is contrary to the

Lord's Word that he is exalted far above angels to the divine nature. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Philippians 2:8-11.

CROSS-BEARING THE WAY OF GROWTH

"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."—Luke 14:27.

A disciple is a pupil, one who follows a teacher or leader. The Lord has promised his disciples certain great blessings. If they are obedient, they shall be greatly blessed with everlasting life, shall sit with him in his throne, and be with him where he is.

It becomes, therefore, an important question as to what is involved in discipleship. Is it an easy or a difficult matter? How can we enter the school of Christ? The Lord here and elsewhere tells us the terms. In another text he says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."—Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:27.

There is, therefore, evidently a process in the matter. First of all, one must see what discipleship is and what the cross is. Some may perceive more or less distinctly than others. To some it might be a very severe ordeal to take up the cross. Some people judge the weight of a thing through perception; others through experience.

Our Lord said that it would be better not to take up the cross unless we have the determination to go on unto the end. He illustrates this in saying, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—Luke 9:62.

The Lord very distinctly told what the cross would imply to those who become his disciples. He said that whosoever would be his disciple would suffer persecution. He warned us that carrying the cross would be a serious matter. If, therefore, you determine that you would like to be his disciple, sit down and count the cost. If you take up the cross, it is to be not merely lifted, but carried faithfully unto death.

WHAT CONSTITUTES CROSS-BEARING?

The taking up of the cross, then, is done after we come to a knowledge of the truth. The world are not bearing the cross at all; neither are those who are having their own wills crossed continually. Many a man will say, "Since I married, I have my cross with my wife"; and many a wife will say that she has her cross with her husband. But neither of these is the cross of Christ—the difficulty is that there was misjudgment in the marriage. The couples are mismatched.

Nevertheless such a thing might become cross-bearing. If, for instance, the opposition of husband or wife were engendered by faithfulness to the Lord, the bearing of this would be cross-bearing, because of being endured for Christ's sake, for the truth's sake. Endurance of opposition by business competitors because of our faithfulness to Christ would be part of the cross-bearing. Probably it is good for us that we do not see all the time what the cross means.

"We know not what awaits us,
God kindly veils our eyes,
And o'er each step of our onward way
He makes new scenes to rise."

We cannot take up the cross until we have seen what the cross is, and have engaged to take up that cross and become Christ's disciple. After we have taken up that cross, it has to be borne, our Lord tells us. Bearing it does not mean our running away from it, or getting alarmed at it. Bearing the cross means enduring it. We are to follow our instructions along this line.

Our Lord says, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." Whosoever is faithful will suffer persecution. Therefore, to be without opposition is proof, not that we are being favored of God, but that he is not dealing with us as sons. Only those whom he deals with as sons will become of the royal priesthood and participate in his glorious kingdom. Whoever thinks to run away from the difficulties that come, makes a mistake.

THE PURPOSE ACCOMPLISHED BY TRIALS

What, then, would be the basis on which we could relieve ourselves from trials? We should not seek to release ourselves unless we realize that by endurance we are accomplishing no service for the truth. Then we might seek to see whether the Lord would open some other door. If, for instance, one finds himself where he is simply suffering and doing no good, let him look about and ask the Lord in prayer to show him what to do. Perhaps the Lord may open a way of escape. We shall not get rid of our trials and imperfections, however, until we get rid of the mortal flesh; for the course of the world is out of line with righteousness. The whole world is out of the way through ignorance, superstition, blindness; and amidst them we are to strive to show forth the praises of him who called us from darkness into marvelous light.

So, then, the following after the Lord is apparently the thing that is especially emphasized in our text. The bearing of the cross is the way of growth in character for the consecrated child of God. If no trials or difficulties come to us, if our appetites or desires are never interfered with in our service to the Lord and the truth, we may be sure that we are making some mistake. We have not become his disciples.

But if we should have these trials, the Apostle says that we are to consider them only as light afflictions and but for a moment; and that these are working out "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We are looking at the present time, not for the things that are seen—the earthly applause and glory—but for the heavenly glory—for the things that the Lord has promised to those that love him.—2 Corinthians 4:17, 18.

THE GIFTS OF WHITSUNTIDE

MAY 11.—1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."—Verse 4.

Whitsuntide, or Pentecost, marks a very special period in God's great program respecting mankind. It stands next in importance to the great events connected with our Lord Jesus; viz., his baptism at Jordan and the anointing of the holy Spirit there, his finishing of his vow of consecration at Calvary, his resurrection from the dead on the third day—his glorious spirit-birth, as partaker of the divine nature.

All that Jesus did necessarily preceded the acceptance of any members of the human family to joint-heirship with him, or to any recognition of God as his children. God acknowledged Adam as his son on the human plane, "a little lower than the angels," so long as he remained obedient and loyal; but when he disobeyed and came under the divine sentence of death, he broke the covenant between God and himself. (Hosea 6:7, margin) From that time onward, God had no

sons amongst men until Jesus' time, because all were imperfect, sharing in father Adam's imperfection by laws of heredity.

Then God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, with a life uncontaminated, a life that was not derived from father Adam and was therefore not involved in his sentence. This One, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," God recognized as his Son. When he made consecration of his life at Jordan and symbolized it in his water baptism, God accepted the sacrifice and bestowed upon him the holy Spirit.

Thenceforth he was the Son of God in two senses—first, according to the flesh; and second, according to the spirit. But in God's order the spirit-begotten One was to triumph by fully offering up the fleshly one. This work of Jesus was accomplished at Calvary, where he laid down his life on behalf of the sins of the whole world.

But still God could not recognize the world. They were all sinners, and continued so to be until Jesus ascended on high, appeared in the Father's presence, and made satisfaction for sins. Be it noted, however, that he did not make satisfaction for all sins then, but merely for the sins of the church—for the sins of those who would be called of the Father, and who would accept the call and walk in the footsteps of Jesus. As for the world, their sins are still on them.

The only way to obtain forgiveness of sins during this age, therefore, is to become a disciple of Jesus. Thus, as the Apostle says, we, Jesus' followers, have escaped the condemnation that is still on the world. The Scriptures show us that God has a different way for dealing with the world, and a different time. He will deal with the world through Christ's Millennial kingdom, for a thousand years, to scatter their darkness, to forgive their sins and lift them up to human perfection. Meantime, God deals with the church only; and it is the church class that the Apostle discusses in today's lesson.

This church class began its existence at Pentecost—Whitsuntide. Hence, we say that this marks a most important era in the affairs of the church. It is true that Jesus called his disciples and told them various things during his ministry; but when he left them, he instructed them to tarry and not to begin their work at all until they should be duly authorized by the Father, duly anointed with the holy Spirit. This anointing which they would receive would be their authority, and would give them the necessary qualifications to be the mouthpieces and ambassadors of the Father and of the Son.

The Father could not recognize them sooner than Pentecost; for until Christ's presentation of his merit on their behalf, they were like the remainder of the world—still sinners, still condemned. When the Pentecostal blessing came, it manifested the fact that Jesus had ascended to the Father's presence; and that the Father had graciously received him, had appreciated his great work of sacrifice, and had accepted it as satisfactory for the sins of the church—the household of faith. It was on the basis of this forgiveness of sins, as well as on the basis of the consecration of the disciples to God and his service, that the spirit-begetting of Pentecost came upon them.

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

We are to distinguish between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits of the holy Spirit are developments of the heart and character, which come more or less slowly, according to the personality and the environment of each of the spirit-begotten ones. These fruits of the Spirit, the Apostle tells us, can be seen; they are manifest—"Meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love."

These fruits must be developed in our hearts; and this will mean more or less of a manifestation of them in our words and deeds, as well as in our thoughts. The ripener the Christian, the ripener these fruits; and if no fruits, then no Christian; for as the Apostle says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." But this Spirit of Christ, these fruits of the Spirit, may be more or less overshadowed by weaknesses of the flesh; and all may not be able to see to what extent the brother who is weak in the flesh is really fighting a good fight against the spirit of the world, the spirit of the adversary, and the mind of his own flesh.

God alone knoweth the heart; therefore, we are to judge nothing as respects the degree of faithfulness. We may, however, and should judge as to whether or not we see good fruits or bad fruits in ourselves, or in others who profess to be followers of Jesus. The Master said, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Surely not! The thorns and the thistles are bad fruits, belonging to the evil nature, and not fruits of the Spirit of the Lord, appertaining to the new creature.

But when Pentecost came, those disciples who had already accepted Jesus were not prepared to manifest immediately rich, ripe fruitage of the holy Spirit. It requires days, weeks, months, years, for such development. Up to this time they were natural men. Only a few days before Jesus had said to them, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom." He perceived that there was strife amongst themselves as to which should be greatest; and that this was entirely contrary to the proper spirit which they must have if they would finally be accounted worthy of participation in his kingdom. We see then why the brethren waiting at Pentecost in the upper room could not have a manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit at that time. But it was very necessary to them and to us that they should have some manifestation of God's favor; that there should be some way in which God would show that Jesus had accomplished the Father's work, and that his sacrifice had been acceptable

to the Father on our behalf. God manifested this acceptance by the bestowment of certain gifts, which were not fruits of the Spirit, in any sense of the word.

Those gifts were widely distributed in the early church, and were miraculous. Some who had received the gift of the Spirit spoke one language and some another, of which they had previously no knowledge; some had the gift of interpreting the foreign languages which the others spoke; some received the gift of healing; and some had power to work other miracles.

These gifts served a three-fold purpose: (1) They proved God's favor, and that it had come through Christ, and therefore proved that he had ascended, and that his entire work of redemption had been satisfactory to the Father. (2) They were proofs to the public that God was with these people. This would lead lovers of God to investigate the message they bore. (3) They were an assurance to the disciples themselves that they were following in the right way, and that God was blessing them and leading them.

All these experiences, indispensable for the establishment of the early church, came at a time when such manifestation was most necessary. The early church could not walk by faith as we do. They needed the assistance of sight, to the extent that was there granted; for they had no Bibles. They had no instruction from God except such as came through these channels.

St. Paul explains the matter in today's lesson. When they came together, one would speak in an unknown tongue. Another would arise in another part of the audience, and with a power not his own give an interpretation of the foreign language used by the speaker with "tongues." This drew the brethren together every day, especially on the first day of the week. They wanted to have fellowship and instruction; and in this way they obtained it, God guiding in respect to the messages delivered in unknown tongues and to the interpretations.

Thus God taught them in almost the only way they could have received instruction at that time, but very differently from the way in which he now instructs his people, or has ever instructed them since the Apostles' day. Such instruction is no longer necessary, and is therefore no longer given. Instead, we have something much better. We have the Gospels, recording our Lord's words, parables, dark sayings, etc.; we have the Epistles of the New Testament, comments of the inspired apostles on the Old Testament writings; and we have the prophecies of the Old Testament, to which St. Peter declares, "We do well to take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn."—2 Peter 1:19.

OURS A BETTER EXPERIENCE

With these divinely provided helps, the man of God, as St. Paul declares, "may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work." Through these channels the holy Spirit is instructing the church. But the gifts of the Spirit were necessary at Pentecost. Instead of those gifts, we now have the fruits of the Spirit, as testifying God's favor, and our own progress in the good way. With our further enlightenment the Lord requires of us more than was required of the early church—that we walk by faith and not by sight.

St. Paul points out that all these variations in the manifestations of the Spirit meant, not different spirits, but the one Spirit, working in the entire church, with the one purpose of building them all up as various members in the one body of Christ. He says, "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge; to another, faith; to another, gifts of healing; to another, miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, diversity of tongues and interpretations."

"YE ARE ALL ONE BODY"

The oneness of the church with each other and with their Lord, and Head, St. Paul repeatedly sets forth, and particularly in today's lesson. He shows that the different gifts enabled the different members of the body to co-operate for their mutual welfare, edification and upbuilding, in preparation for the glories of service in the coming kingdom. He says that as the human body is one, but has many members, all under the control of the head, so also is the body of Christ. The church is one body, but composed of many members, all under the control of the head, Jesus, operating through the Spirit of truth, by the Word of truth and by divine providences.

The object of the organization of the church is not the conversion of the world, but it is the upbuilding of herself and preparation for a future service. That future service is to be the blessing of the world. But before that service for the world can be properly begun, the church herself must

be developed, proven, approved of God, and glorified by a share in the first resurrection.

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

St. Paul, further on in the chapter, tells how the various members of the body should co-operate with each other, offsetting each other's imperfections, compensating for each other's shortcomings and weaknesses, and seeking only the welfare of the body as a whole. There should be no schisms, no division, no sectarianism in the body of Christ, the church, and all the members should have the same love one for another. Sectarian love and sectarian pride should be unknown. Likewise, if any of the members suffer, all should feel a sympathy. He points out that God set the different members in this body: first, the Apostles; and secondarily, prophets, or orators; and thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles, gifts, helps, diversities of tongues. All have not the same office given them of the Lord, but each should seek faithfully to use the

talents which he possesses; and while using these gifts they should seek the best they are capable of exercising.

Then the Apostle adds, "Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way," still better than any of these gifts. Following along (chapter 13), he declares that one might have these gifts, and yet make shipwreck entirely; and that it was necessary, even with the gifts, to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit. For though we should have the gift of prophecy, understanding all mysteries and knowledge, and have all faith, but have not love—the great fruit of the Spirit—we would be nothing. Moreover, he declares that the gifts would vanish away, but that the fruits would last eternally.

It is important, then, in our consideration of Whitsuntide blessings, that we remember that without the fruits of the Spirit we would be nothing, and would have no share in the glorious Messianic kingdom, for which we are waiting and praying, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as in heaven."

THE SOWING AND THE REAPING

MAY 18.—Genesis 42.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Galatians 6:7.

The story of Joseph and his brethren continues. Today's lesson illustrates how the remembrance of their cruelty toward their brother Joseph, inspired by envy, continued to harass the evil-doers many long years after. Our Golden Text seems to lay down a general principle, applicable not only to the consecrated people of God, but to mankind in general. Whatsoever anybody sows wilfully, intelligently, will bring a harvest, a reaping, of similarly good or evil kind.

The famine was general throughout that region of the world. It included Palestine as well as Egypt. The word spread that there was no lack of food in Egypt, that there was corn there, sold at moderate prices, and that it belonged to the old stock. Jacob directed his sons, who were men of families themselves, to go down to Egypt and make purchases of wheat.

As strangers, they were directed to Joseph, who doubtless was on the lookout for them. He spoke to them through an interpreter, asking if they were not spies, coming to see how much wheat was in Egypt, that they might bring an army to steal it. They explained their situation truthfully. Joseph then inquired about his father and his younger brother Benjamin. Finally he put one of them into prison, and sent all the others home with corn, with the understanding that they would need more corn and might have plenty of it, as long as the famine lasted, provided that they should prove that they were not spies by bringing their youngest brother along with them. Meantime, Simeon would be held as hostage.

The guilty consciences of the brethren began to connect up these various experiences with their own wrong course in the past. They said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, when we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us." They knew not that Joseph understood them, but he withdrew and wept. His heart was not hard. He was merely giving them a lesson that would be profitable for them in coming years.

The Scriptures represent that when the Messianic kingdom will begin to shed its blessings abroad, the antitypical Joseph, Messiah, will likewise speak roughly to the people in a time of trouble, and cause them great vexation and worry as to what the outcome will be. But all the while the Lord's heart will be full of love and sympathy for the poor groaning creation, for whom he already has died, and in whose interest his kingdom will be established. The time of trouble upon the world in the beginning of Messiah's reign will evidently be for the very purpose of preparing the hearts of mankind for the blessings which the Lord is so willing to bestow.

MANY STRIPES AND FEW STRIPES

When Jacob's ten sons arrived with their wheat, they told the whole story of their experience to their father. They explained why Simeon was not with them—that he was kept as a hostage. Moreover, they were perplexed to find that no money had been charged them for the wheat. The money they had paid for it was returned in each sack. Everything seemed strange to them, and the minds of the brethren continually adverted to the crime of years ago, in connection with their brother Joseph. Many times during those intervening years they had reaped crops of sorrow and fearful surmisings respecting what the providence of a just God might ultimately exact from them in the nature of trouble, similar to that which they had brought upon their brother.

How advantageous it would be to the whole world if this principle were generally recognized—if all realized the truth-

fulness of God's Word that every trespass must receive a just recompense of reward! We have lost such an appreciation of justice, and such a looking for a righteous retribution, in the fog of a very false doctrine, which has become prevalent. That false doctrine ascribes only the one punishment for every sin, and that an unthinkable one; viz., everlasting torture. In the first place, how few there are that really believe that doctrine or are really influenced by it! Its monstrosity makes it unbelievable, and turns the mind away from the proper view of the real punishment which God has foretold.

Added to this first inconsistency and its evil effect, we mention another, which associates itself thus: Our Catholic friends claim that by membership in the church they will escape eternal torment and get some lesser torment. And that theory seems so much more logical than the Protestant one that many accept it as the lesser evil of the two. Then comes our Protestant theory that a man or a woman, the moment before death, may say, "God forgive me!" and immediately pass into Paradise, and escape all punishment for sins. These theories, we claim, are all injurious, as well as inconsistent. The Scriptural theory, we are sure, would be found the more effective, if it were preached, if it were believed.

That Scriptural theory is expressed in our Golden Text: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If he sows a desire for cruelty, words of deceit, injustice, selfishness, evil speaking, slander, he will surely have a reaping time, and will gather rewards in harmony with his desire.

It is impossible for humanity to improve upon the divine arrangement. Hence all Christian people should begin afresh to tell the world both of the justice and the love of God—that God's just penalty against sin is death, but that he has made provision through Christ for a release from that penalty, during Christ's Messianic reign of a thousand years. Then every member of Adam's race will be granted a full opportunity of reconciliation with God and of restoration to the image and likeness of God, lost for all by father Adam's sin.

But meantime, each individual has a responsibility in respect to his every word and act and thought. To whatever extent he sins against light, knowledge and the Golden Rule, to the same extent he degrades his character, and thus makes his opportunity for return to the image and likeness of God the more difficult. He whose conscience becomes the most degraded will find the way for retracing his course the most difficult and steep.

According to this divine rule, the Millennium may find heathen people more ready to go up on the highway of holiness than people of so-called Christian lands. The latter, having had more light, more privilege, more opportunity and sinning against greater knowledge, have seared their consciences more deeply. Of some such Jesus exclaimed, "How can ye escape the condemnation of Gehenna!"—the second death.

JACOB'S GRAY HAIRS FOR SHEOL

When poor old Jacob heard that Benjamin would be required to go on the next expedition for wheat, he demurred and declared that it must never be. Joseph was gone, and if now he should lose his youngest son, Benjamin, the grief would bring down his gray hairs quickly to sheol—the tomb—the state of death.

In our common version English Bible this word sheol is repeatedly translated hell, pit, and grave. In olden times,

these three English words were synonymous in meaning. As for instance, a man, speaking of burying so many bushels of potatoes in a pit, would call it helling the potatoes. And when this term was used in respect to humanity, sometimes the word grave was used. Altogether, the word sheol occurs sixty-six times, and more than one-half of these times it is translated pit and grave.

When the Revised Version was in preparation, the learned men charged with that work refused any longer to translate the word sheol by the word hell, because in the intervening centuries that word had gradually lost its original meaning and had come to have the significance of a place of fire and of torture. Since no such meaning attaches to the word sheol in the Hebrew, these scholars refused to so translate it into English. To these facts they all agreed, but then came a dispute as to how it should be translated. Some would not agree to translate sheol uniformly by the English word grave, or tomb, fearing that this would appear very radical to some Christian people.

Finally, as a compromise to settle the question, it was concluded that in all places where sheol and the corresponding Greek word hades had been translated hell in our Common Version, the Hebrew word sheol or the Greek word hades should be substituted, and left without translation. If any of the people found out their meaning, it would be all right. If they did not find out, they might remain in ignorance, and still think of hades and sheol as signifying a place of torture. Our Baptist friends have recently met with a similar difficulty and have given the translation of sheol and hades as "the underworld." Of course the grave, the tomb, the state of death, may be thus indicated, and no one can find fault.

It is needless to say that when Jacob spoke of his gray hairs as going down to sheol, he did not mean his sons to understand that he expected to go to eternal torment. What he did mean is evident. He meant, "My sons, I am now old and gray-headed, and to lose this youngest son would hasten my death"—"bring down my gray hairs to sheol, to the tomb." No one need question where Jacob's gray hairs would go. They did go to sheol eventually, but not because of grief. Jacob's old age was made very happy by the fellowship of his sons, and by the realization that God had highly exalted Joseph to the rulership of Egypt.

OUR GOLDEN TEXT LESSON

Although St. Paul, as we have seen, made a general observation to the effect that whatsoever any man sows, that shall he also reap, nevertheless, he evidently used these words with particular reference to the experiences of the church. The context makes such an application. The context applies these words directly to the consecrated people of God, assuring them that a consecration to be dead with Christ is not sufficient. On the contrary, God cannot be mocked, cannot be deceived, cannot be trifled with. If God has entered into a covenant with us, nothing else than our agreement will stand.

Then the Apostle recites the agreement which Christians covenant with the Lord. They covenant to sacrifice all earthly interests, aims, hopes, that thereby they may be pleasing and acceptable to God, and become heirs with Jesus of the in-

corruptible things to be attained on the other side the veil, as spirit beings, as new creatures in Christ. He says, "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." By this he means that if any Christian who has entered into this covenant with God to become dead to the will of the flesh and alive to the will of God, shall live after the flesh—according to its desires, its promptings, its leadings, its appetites—the end of that man's way will be death—the second death, symbolized by the Gehenna fire, which destroyed the offal outside the city of Jerusalem.

On the other hand, if any man sow to the spirit, if he live according to the new creature, by living in harmony with his covenant of consecration—not merely making a start in the right direction—this would decide the matter in his favor. Some of the best people who have ever lived have made more or less serious blunders, under the temptations of the flesh. But stumbling into sin would not be living after the flesh—it would merely be a start to so live. The soul, rightly exercised by his sin, by the weakness, may recover itself, and come back to the throne of heavenly grace, and in the name of Jesus obtain mercy and find grace to help for further time of need. But if these opportunities and privileges were not used, and if the course of living after the flesh were pursued, the result would be death.

So, on the other hand, to make a start to live a righteous, self-sacrificing life would not be sufficient; and to return to a righteous course, after having been overtaken in a fault and shedding some tears of penitence, would not be sufficient to recover him. But if we live after the Spirit, if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, then we shall gain the eternal life on the spirit plane which God has promised to all the faithful. But this matter of living after the Spirit is a great contract, and one that needs continual watchfulness and prayer, lest we be overtaken in a fault—lest we let these precious things of God's promise slip from us—lest we become overcharged with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches—lest our faith become weak and we faint by the way.

We need to have this thought definitely before our minds: While each act and word and thought has its bearing upon the ultimate results in every Christian's life, nevertheless no one thought, no one word, and no one deed carries the deciding weight, either for good or for evil. The more loyal we are, the more faithful we are, the fewer slips we shall make, the more like our Redeemer we shall be, and the brighter will be our reward, for as the Apostle declares, "As star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead."

Those, then, who are of the world may know that every good and every evil act of theirs will have a weight and influence in respect to their trial for life or death under the Messianic kingdom arrangements. And every Christian who has entered into a covenant to become dead with Christ that he may also live with him, to suffer with Christ that he may also reign with him—all such should know that every word, every thought, every act, has a bearing upon the great results. Hence, as the Apostle says, all such should walk through life circumspectly, wisely, seeking to know and to do the things pleasing to God, and to attain the highest reward.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT AND THE NEW COVENANT

The Abrahamic Covenant is not the New Covenant, even as it is not the Law Covenant. The New Covenant is the name of that arrangement which God will make with Israel and all mankind who, during the period of Messiah's reign, desire to become "Israelites indeed." That New Covenant will be inaugurated as a measure for carrying out the blessings purposed in the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Abrahamic Covenant relates especially to the seed of Abraham, which is to be made glorious and powerful, with a view to the blessing of the world. The New Covenant relates to the arrangement by which the antitypical seed of Abraham, when glorified, will accomplish the honorable work assigned to it in the Abrahamic Covenant.

The fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant began in the person of our Lord Jesus, not when he left the heavenly glory, nor when he was born a babe at Bethlehem, but when God accepted his consecration and begat him to a new nature at the time of his baptism, perfecting him in the new nature at his resurrection. The man Jesus, before being begotten of the holy Spirit, was not the seed of Abraham according to promise, capable of blessing mankind; for so long as Jesus was in the flesh, even though perfect, the blessing of the world through him was impossible. The world lay under a death sentence and could not be blessed until provision should be made for the lifting of that death sentence.

The provision of the ransom, therefore, was necessary for the world. Jesus in the flesh, in providing the ransom-price, would have had no life for himself that he might become the King of Glory and Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:10) unless God had begotten and quickened and raised him to the higher, spirit nature. Hence, although Jesus, through his mother, was of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, he did not inherit this Abrahamic Covenant according to the flesh, but as the new creature.

In order, therefore, to attain this higher nature, in order to be the spiritual seed of Abraham and bless all the families of the earth, it was necessary for Jesus to enter into a special covenant of sacrifice. The church, members of his body, must share all his experiences and lay down the earthly life also; for whether Jews or Gentiles it would still be true that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom. Hence the privilege of the church is to enter into the covenant of sacrifice with Jesus. Thus we read, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."—Psa. 50:5.

It has required the entire Gospel age for the gathering of these saints and the making of their sacrifices. Those sacrifices must be accomplished before they can attain to the heavenly nature—before they can be members of the spiritual seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise. Thus