

## DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD?

"He preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." (Acts 17:18.) "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked." (Acts 17:32.) "If there be no resurrection of the dead, . . . then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; . . . then is not Christ raised, and . . . ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."—1 Cor. 15:13-18.

When we remember that the word "resurrection" is used no less than thirty-seven times in the New Testament, besides various other words of similar import; and when we remember that all the prominent creeds of Christendom declare faith in a resurrection as an integral and essential part of Scriptural doctrine and of the hope of eternal life—in view of these facts, and of the strong language of the texts above quoted, whose inspiration is conceded by all Christians, it may seem strange that we should ask any Christian the question, Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead?

Nevertheless, we have serious reason to doubt that a belief in the resurrection of the dead prevails amongst Christians to any considerable extent; and it is because we believe the resurrection to be a very important doctrine in its connection with other doctrines of Scripture (throwing light upon other doctrines), that we desire to call general attention to this subject and to invite an examination of our question in the light of facts and of Scripture; our hope being that after a careful examination of the subject many more of God's people will come to believe—consistently, logically, Scripturally—in a resurrection.

## RESURRECTION RARELY CHOSEN NOW AS A SUBJECT FOR SERMONS

"Like priest, like people," is an old adage, which implies that the views of the teaching or clerical class on any subject may safely be considered an index to the views of their parishioners. It is not difficult to ascertain the views of the clergy of all denominations on the subject of the resurrection of the dead; for, although that topic is rarely chosen for discourse, except upon Easter Sunday, it is, nevertheless, indissolubly attached to every funeral service; and these numerous occasions, we believe, amply justify us in the statement that both the clergy of all denominations and their people have little or no faith in a resurrection of the dead.

True, it is customary on every funeral occasion to read the words of the Apostle Paul, in which he sets forth the resurrection as the Christian's hope (1 Cor. 15), but this seems to be a mere concession on the part of the officiating minister. He feels it to be his duty to read something on the subject, but his remarks following the reading prove most conclusively that, so far from believing that the person whose corpse is about to be buried is dead, he believes, and instructs his hearers that they should believe, that their friend and neighbor is "more alive than he ever was." Frequently, indeed, he plays directly into the hands of the "Spiritualists" and "Christian Scientists," by telling the audience that the spirit of their dead friend is with them in the room, hovering over them; and that if permitted to speak he would say to them, "Dry your tears; weep not for me; I am far better off in glory."

## TO MANY DEATH HAS BECOME A DELUSION AND NOT A REALITY

Indeed, it has come to be the general belief among Christian people that death is a delusion, and not a reality; that people merely seem to die, and do not die; that they merely experience a change to a higher form of being; that so-called "Christian Scientists" are quite correct in saying, "There is no death."

Whoever holds such views does not, cannot consistently believe in "the resurrection of the dead"; because if no one is dead, how can there be a resurrection of the dead? Wherein would be the sense in speaking of a resurrection of the dead to life, if they already have life more abundantly than they possessed it before they seemingly died?

But thousands of ministers would answer us, saying, "When speaking of the resurrection, we merely mean a resurrection of the body—the bodies which we bury are all to come forth again from the grave, and the spirits which parted from them in death are to be rehabilitated in those bodies in the resurrection. This is what we mean by resurrection."

## "CONSISTENCY, THOU ART A JEWEL"

Well, well! Who would have supposed such inconsistency on the part of so many learned and well-meaning men! Before taking up the Scriptural side of the question, to show that such expectations are at variance with the Scripture

teaching, let us examine the proposition of these ministers in the light of its own inconsistency.

(1) They tell us that the deceased is "far better off," in that he has gotten free from the "fetters of the flesh," and that now "his free spirit wings its flight to God, no longer hampered and hindered by the mortal dust." They go into ecstasies in describing the grandeur and liberty and blessedness of the one who has died, and who, by reason of getting rid of the body, has attained to life more abundant, knowledge a hundredfold, and blessings indescribable.

(2) In the same breath they quote the Scriptures referring to the resurrection and (wholly misconstruing those Scriptures) tell us that by and by, at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the same bodies of flesh that were buried will be reorganized (Dr. Talmage, in his famous resurrection sermon pictured the resurrection morning, and the entire sky darkened with the fragments of human bodies coming together from various parts of the earth, where a finger, a foot, or a hand had been lost by accident, disease or amputation); they tell us that then the spirit beings which, they say, left those bodies at death, will then return to them, as their everlasting habitations. Then, inasmuch as the resurrection is Scripturally set forth to be the grand and glorious result and consummation of our salvation, they feel compelled to go into ecstasies over their erroneous presentation of the resurrection, and to tell how glorious and grand will be the result.

They seem to overlook entirely the inconsistency of these two propositions; and they expect that their hearers will be similarly inconsistent and illogical (and apparently their expectations are fully justified, for the majority of their hearers swallow the inconsistency without difficulty); yea, many of them seem to think that the more inconsistent and unreasonable their belief may be, the more reason they have to congratulate themselves that they have a very strong faith. However, the real fact is that they have a very strong credulity. But they will have no reward for believing unreasonable things which God's Word has not taught, but has contradicted.

Who cannot see, if he will, that the man who dies fifty years old, if in dying he obtains life more abundant and knowledge a hundredfold, and a freedom to "wing his flight," etc., would be sadly disappointed by a resurrection—if it should mean to him re-imprisonment in a tenement of clay, with physical restrictions and human limitations? And then, if he had thus for centuries been a "free spirit," roaming at liberty throughout the universe, untrammelled by a body and bodily limitations, where would be the consistency on God's part of re-imprisoning such an one in a human body, whose powers and uses would be entirely forgotten during those centuries of liberty? And if to be without a body is "perfect bliss," as the funeral orators tell, how could there be anything added to perfect bliss by a resurrection of the body, and a re-incarceration therein?

## THE SCRIPTURES HOLD OUT THE ONLY HOPE, THE BLESSED HOPE, THE CONSISTENT HOPE

From the foregoing considerations, we feel that we are justified in our assumption that the vast majority of Christian people do not believe in a resurrection—neither the Scriptural kind ("a resurrection of the dead"), nor in the kind they themselves teach, namely, a resurrection of the body. With this preface to our subject, we go to the Scriptures to learn from them what is meant by "the resurrection of the dead," and in what manner and why the Scriptures speak of the resurrection as the hope, the only hope, the blessed hope, not only of the Lord's people, who are to have part in the "first resurrection," but of the world in general, who are to have an opportunity to share in the resurrection of judgment, improperly translated, "the resurrection of damnation."—John 5:29.

Whoever would believe the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection, must also believe the Scriptural doctrine respecting death—that death is death, the cessation of life. Then, and not until then, will he be able to understand the Apostle's words in our text, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, . . . then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Nor is this statement by the Apostle an exception to or different from the teaching of the Scriptures

elsewhere. Their unanimous testimony is that the dead are dead; that "in that very day their thoughts perish." (Psa. 146:4.) Of the dead the Scriptures further declare, "His sons come to honor and he knoweth it not; to dishonor, and he perceiveth it not of them"; "for there is neither wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave whither thou goest."—Job 14:21; Eccl. 9:10.

#### WHICH SHALL WE BELIEVE—GOD OR SATAN?

Here is a direct conflict between modern teachers and the inspired Word, the Scriptures claiming that the dead know not anything, the modern theologians claiming that they know everything. The Bible claims that the dead are really dead, and have really suffered according to the divine penalty for sin pronounced against our race—"Dying thou shalt die." The opposers take up with Satan's delusive statement to Mother Eve, "Ye shall not surely die," and attempt to prove that the dead are not dead; that God's penalty against sin did not go into effect, and that death, so far from being the sentence or curse upon our race, is a blessing, a step in a general process of evolution. The two theories are as far apart as the poles, and the two teachers of these two theories, as we have shown, are God, on the one hand, and Satan, "a liar from the beginning," on the other hand. Which shall we believe?

The entire plan of salvation is connected with this question. If death was not the penalty of sin, incurred through Adam, then "life and that more abundant" is not the reward and blessing of God secured through Christ by a resurrection. Satan's proposition, which has been so widely accepted by the Lord's people, and which exercises so blinding an influence upon their minds, is the reversal, in every sense of the word, of the divine proposition—that death is the curse or penalty of sin; that Christ died to release man from this sentence or curse, and that the release comes by the resurrection of the dead, who otherwise would never have future life, as says the Apostle in our text. Satan's theory declares death a blessing which brings the fullness of life and liberty and joy, and would make of the resurrection a curse, bringing imprisonment and difficulty and restriction and pain and trouble.

#### THE APOSTLE PREACHED JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION

No wonder that, blinded by this deception of the adversary, the majority of the great theologians of Christendom—and rapidly their many followers—are leaving the doctrine of the Atonement, which declares that "as by a man [Adam] came death, so also by a man [the man Christ Jesus] comes the resurrection of the dead; that as all in Adam died, even so all in Christ shall be made alive."—1 Cor. 15:21, 22.

If the reality of death is denied, it is no more difficult to deny the reality of sin. If it is claimed that Father Adam was not created in the image and likeness of God, but was created a very close image and likeness of the monkey, it follows that in that low condition of intelligence he was unfit for trial for eternal life; and it is only a further step to deny that he ever had a trial, and that he ever failed and fell from grace. And if the fall is denied, and, instead, the claim is put forward that man has really been advancing even to the present time—losing his likeness to the monkey and gaining in likeness to God, then it will be consistent also to take the next step, and declare that since man did not fall he did not need to be redeemed from the fall.

And hence, with all such reasoning upon false Scriptural basis, it appears logical to deny the oft-repeated declaration of God's Word, that our Lord Jesus is our Redeemer, and that "He is the propitiation for our sins [the church's sins], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," giving for us as our ransom or corresponding price, his own life, that he might buy back the forfeited life of Adam.

We thus see that the leading lights of Christendom today, repudiate both of the cardinal features of the Gospel, which the Apostle preached of old: "He preached Jesus and the resurrection"—Jesus as the Redeemer of mankind from sin and its curse—death—and the resurrection as the grand result of that redemptive work, by which the blessing secured by the Ransom-sacrifice will be made applicable to and available for whosoever wills to accept eternal life upon the terms of this age. We are reminded here of our Lord's own words respecting unbelief at the present time: he says, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth?"—Luke 18:8.

#### THE FIVE SENSES IN FULL ACCORD WITH THE SCRIPTURES

The Scripture declarations respecting death are in full accord with the testimony of the five senses given us as men by our Creator; and this is what we should expect, though we

should be ready to admit the possibility of our senses being in error if the divine revelation contradicted our senses. But when our senses are contradicted by a human theory, contrary to Scriptural statements, the theory should be rejected and the testimony of the senses held to be true; and when the Scriptures and our senses together unite in one testimony, it is certainly wrong to hold to a theory of human dissolution, which is contradicted by divine revelation and by our own senses as well. And whoever thus repudiates his God-given (though sin-impaired) senses and the divine testimony, need expect nothing else than to be led into darkness and stumbling. Today, as eighteen centuries ago, the blind are leading the blind into the ditch of unbelief and error.

#### "AS DIETH THE ONE, SO DIETH THE OTHER; THEY HAVE ALL ONE BREATH"

The testimony of our senses, like the testimony of God's Word, is that death means the loss of life, and not an increase of life. Watch the dying one, and note his weakening powers, mental and physical, until the spark of life becomes extinct. You have seen nothing go from him, you have heard nothing but the death-rattle; you have felt the gradual cessation of the pulse, and noted the gasping for breath; and all of your senses which you can exercise upon the subject tell you that your friend, your loved one, is dead—alive no longer. You look about you and study the subject and inquire of others, "What next?" The answer to your senses is, "The next thing is corruption; when the spark of life has gone, the corpse must be buried; 'dust to dust, ashes to ashes.'" You note the similarity between the death of your friend and loved one and the death of the brute beast, and your senses can discern no difference between them; and the Scriptures declare, "As dieth the one, so dieth the other; they have all one [spirit of life] breath."—Eccl. 3:19.

But with a longing for a future life, implanted in your nature by our Creator, you inquire, Is there no hope; hath a man no pre-eminence above a beast? The Scriptures answer your question, assuring us that, physically speaking man "hath no pre-eminence above a beast." But the Scriptures assure us that although mankind is not possessed of any power of life beyond that of the beast, the Creator has, nevertheless, made a provision for man that he did not make for the beast; and that provision is the very thing for which we long, namely, everlasting life. The Scriptures point out to us that this provision for man's everlasting life was made by the Lord in the beginning—not by implanting a deathless quality in the man's constitution, but by providing in the life-sustaining trees of the Garden of Eden, the means of continuing his life everlastingly; nevertheless this provision was conditional, dependent upon man's obedience to his Creator.

The Scriptures point out that man's disobedience brought upon him the sentence of death, and that the execution of that sentence was effected by driving him out of the Garden and away from the life-sustaining fruit of its trees. Thus driven out, the sentence, "Dying, thou shalt die," took effect upon Father Adam gradually, and he lived out nearly to the end of the first thousand-year day. His posterity, becoming weaker and weaker as generations rolled by, are today (notwithstanding the many advancements in science, and medicine and sanitary arrangements) reduced to an average of about thirty-five years—"and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow" and they are soon "cut off from the land of the living," to go into "the land of the enemy"—into the great prison-house of death, in which it is estimated that over twenty thousand millions of our race are already—"where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."—Job 3:17-19.

#### "JESUS DIED, THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST"

The Scriptures answer our inquiries respecting the dead. While assuring us of the justice of the divine sentence of death, they nevertheless declare that our Creator is a God of mercy and of pity, and that when there was no eye to pity and no arm to deliver us, his Arm brought salvation to us. The Scriptures, moreover, point out to us the Lord Jesus Christ as the Arm of Jehovah, stretched down for our relief from sin and sickness and pain and trouble and for our deliverance from the prison-house of death, and for our restoration to the liberties and privileges of sons of God.

It was in harmony with this divine sympathy that, in due time, God sent his only begotten Son into the world for our redemption—to give for us the ransom-price, and ultimately to recover all who will accept of divine mercy, from all the consequences of the fall by a resurrection from the dead. But divine love could not make void divine justice; it was necessary that God should be just, if he would be the justifier of them that believe in Jesus; hence the demands of justice—the

penalty for sin—must be paid by our Redeemer, before the work of release and restitution could begin. And here we have the best of evidence respecting what is the penalty of sin, and what is not; because, since our Lord Jesus pays for us the just penalty of sin, what he laid down for us will prove what was the penalty against us. What did he do for us? The Scriptures answer: He laid down his life for us; “He died for our sins”; “He died, the Just for the unjust”; “He poured out his soul unto death”; he “made his soul an offering for [our] sin,” and “by his stripes we are healed.”—Isa. 53:4-6, 10, 12.

Nothing is more evident than that our Lord Jesus did not suffer an eternity of torment as the price of our redemption; and hence, if the matter needed proof we have here the proof that eternal torment was not the penalty for our sins. On the contrary, the fact that our Lord Jesus died for our sins, and that the Heavenly Father accepted of that sacrifice of his life on our behalf, proves that it was our lives that were forfeited by sin; that the full penalty of the divine law against us as a race was the deprivation of life. The whole race, under sentence of death, has gone down to the great prison-house of death—the grave, *sheol*, *hades*. And so our dear Redeemer, when he gave up his life for us, went also to *sheol*, *hades*, the grave. He took our place, and suffered for us the penalty for our sins.

But as Jesus' death ransoms man from the sentence of death, so his resurrection from death became the assurance of the justification of all who accept and obey him. The Heavenly Father gave evidence that the ransom-price was entirely satisfactory; and our Lord, who was thus obedient to the Father, was raised from the dead, and, as the Father's Agent and Representative, will soon begin the work of blessing the entire world redeemed by his precious blood.

#### THE PRISON-HOUSE OF DEATH TO BE OPENED AND THE PRISONERS SET FREE

The blessing of the world means the breaking open of the prison-house and the setting at liberty of the captives, who for six thousand years have been going into the prison-house of death. For this reason our Lord is called the Life-giver, because his great work will be to give back life to the world of mankind, who lost life in Adam. And since the restoration of life to mankind will mean the removal of pains and sicknesses and troubles, which are a part of the dying process, our Redeemer is styled the Great Physician.

The prophecy which mentions the breaking open of the prison-house of death, and the setting at liberty of its captives (Isa. 42:7), was applied, and unquestionably correctly, by our Lord to himself; but he did not break open the prison-house of death, and set all the captives free by resurrection immediately upon his own resurrection. He tells us when this work will be done, saying (John 5:25-29), “The hour cometh in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth”; “and they that hear [obey his voice then, Acts 3:22] shall live.”

Our Lord thus passed over the interim of the Gospel age, and pointed to the grand consummation of his work in the incoming age, because such was the Father's prearranged plan. The Father sent the Son, and the Son willingly undertook the work of redemption, at a time sufficiently in advance of the “times of restitution,” or resurrection, and the general blessing of the world during the reign of Messiah, to leave the interim of this Gospel age for another work, namely, for selecting from the world a “little flock,” a “royal priesthood,” a “peculiar people,” a “holy nation,” to be joint-heirs with Christ Jesus their Lord in the honors of the Mediatorial kingdom. These shall be associated with the Redeemer in the grand and glorious work of destroying the prince of darkness and breaking open the prison-house of death, and setting at liberty the captives of sin and ignorance and superstition; and in fulfilling generally all the provisions of the gracious promises of God made to Father Abraham, that in his seed (Christ, and his elect body, the church), “all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”—Gal. 3:8, 16, 29.

#### “BLESSED AND HOLY ARE THEY WHO HAVE PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION”

This brings us to the Scriptural proposition, that there is a first, a chief or special resurrection, and a general one later. The first or superior resurrection includes the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the entire elect “church which is his body”—no more, no less. “Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be kings and priests unto God and shall reign on the earth”—the Messianic kingdom class. Those who will share in this first resurrection will experience an instantaneous “change” from the human nature to the divine nature—the highest of the spirit natures; not

human, not flesh and blood, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”\* Their trial and perfecting of heart takes place beforehand, and only the “overcomers” will receive this blessing. Some of the characteristics of their change are indicated by the Apostle as a change from weakness to power, from dishonor to glory, from corruption to incorruption, from a natural [human] body to a spirit body.

The time for this best, or chief resurrection, is everywhere in Scripture indicated to be at the close of the Gospel age, at a time when the entire Gospel church will be completed. This includes the living members, whose “change” to spirit nature will be instantaneous, so that the moment of their dying as human beings will be the moment of their “change” to perfect spirit beings. Meantime, the Scriptures declare that the Lord's people who have died, like the rest of mankind, are really dead, as human beings, and know not anything; but inasmuch as God has provided for their resurrection, and inasmuch as they have been informed respecting it, and have hopes therein, therefore they are spoken of as being merely asleep—resting from their labors; waiting for “the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only,” as the Apostle declares.

And, likewise the world of mankind, even though they know not of the Lord as yet, are spoken of as being “asleep in Jesus,” because, as the whole world was under condemnation of death through Adam, and that without knowledge or volition on their part, at the time of the sentence, for they were then in the loins of their father, Adam, so now, since Jesus laid down his life a ransom for all, and because they all shall be awakened from death, therefore it is proper for all those who are aware of the divine provision for the awakening, by faith to speak of the interim figuratively as a sleep. Thus the Apostle exhorts us to trust and hope in the resurrection as respects all our dear friends who go down into the prison-house of death, and not merely as respects those who were sanctified in Christ Jesus, which would include, as a rule, only a small proportion of those for whom we would be inclined to sorrow. He says, “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [all our sleeping friends], that ye sorrow not even as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died [a ransom for all] and rose again [that he might be Lord and life-giver to all] even so [let us believe as truly that] those also which sleep in Jesus [all whom he purchases with his precious blood] will God bring by him [from the prison-house of death].”

#### THE GENERAL RESURRECTION TO BE A RAISING UP BY JUDGMENT

But as the first resurrection is the resurrection of the blessed and holy, of the sanctified in Christ Jesus, his Body, so the general resurrection, which is for the world, is designated as “a resurrection of judgment,” mistranslated in our common version “resurrection of damnation.” It is styled a “resurrection of judgment” because, while all the preparation has been made, so far as God is concerned, for granting to the world of mankind a full resurrection or restitution back to all that was first given to Adam, and lost by his disobedience, to be recovered by our Savior's precious blood, yet there are certain conditions attached to this blessing upon which it depends, namely, the conditions of the New Covenant.

God does not propose to give eternal life through Christ to any others than those who earnestly desire it, and who are in heart sympathy with the principles of righteousness which must always be the law of the divine government. Hence, when the world is awakened from the sleep of death, it will not signify resurrection, but much less; for resurrection, in its full, complete, Scriptural sense, signifies a complete raising up, out of sin and out of death, to perfection of being, perfection of life.

The first work of Christ and the church in the world, for those who have gone down into death, the prison, will be their awakening to physical conditions similar to those in which they died. The surrounding conditions of society will then be greatly improved; knowledge will have taken the place of ignorance, and the reign of righteousness and the law of love will at that time have superseded the rule of sin under the law of selfishness; and Satan will be bound, that he shall deceive the nations no more for the thousand years. Under the favorable conditions of that Mediatorial kingdom, all mankind will be required to make progress in the knowledge of

\* Some are confused by this expression, “flesh and blood”; they fail to see that it signifies human nature; we therefore invite such to examine the use of the same phrase elsewhere, by the same New Testament writers. In so doing they will be convinced that our definition, human nature, is the correct one, the Scriptural one. See the following uses of the phrase: Matt. 16:17; John 3:5, 6; 1 Cor. 15:50.

the Lord and in the bringing of their own hearts and lives into accord with his law of love. Whosoever then will make no effort in the right direction will be cut off from life, in the second death, after one hundred years of trial (Isa. 65:20), although he would then, under the changed conditions, be properly reckoned as only a lad.

But while judgment will thus pass against one who fails to make progress, and will cut short his further opportunity, the same judgment, by the same Judge, will operate favorably to all who will seek righteousness, and make progress in harmony with the laws of the kingdom; so that year by year they will be growing mentally, physically and morally stronger—approximating gradually the full, complete standard of perfect manhood, the image and likeness of the Creator, as first represented in father Adam. Thus the resurrection, so far as the world is concerned, will be a gradual work; its first step an awakening from the sleep of unconsciousness and nonentity; its succeeding steps will be along the lines of judgment, the conduct of those who are on trial being either approved or disapproved; and culminating either in their sentence to the second death, incorrigible, and unworthy of the gift of God, eternal life—or in their perfection, and their final adjudgment of worthiness to have and enjoy the great boon of Life Eternal, under the blessed conditions which are then promised to prevail—when there shall be no more sighing, no more dying, no more crying, because there will be no more sin and none of the penalties for sin, for all the former things shall have passed away.—Rev. 21:4.

#### THE CONDITION OF THE DEAD SPOKEN OF AS A SLEEP

The condition of all the dead, up to the time when the resurrection work begins, is one of total unconsciousness: "There is neither wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave whither thou goest"; "His sons come to honor and he knoweth it not, to dishonor, and he perceiveth it not of them." Of each of the Patriarchs of the past it is written, "He slept with his fathers"; "He fell asleep." And so also in the New Testament we have a similar record: "Stephen fell asleep." The Apostle Paul speaks of those who saw the Lord after his resurrection and says, "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to this present time, but some are fallen asleep." Again he speaks of some which are "fallen asleep in Christ," here distinguishing between the church, who are in Christ,\* as members of his body, and the world of mankind in general, who "sleep in Jesus."—Eecl. 9:10; Job 14:21; 1 Kings 2:10; 11:43; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:6, 18; 1 Thess. 4:14.

The Apostle shows that this sleep-condition will prevail, even as respects the church, until the time of the second coming of Christ, assuring us that the living members of the church at the time of the Lord's second advent will not be blessed prior to those that have fallen asleep, but contrariwise, the living "shall not prevent [hinder] them that are asleep," for the dead in Christ shall arise first; then we who are alive and remain will be blessed, and ultimately experience our "change."

\* Christ is the title of our Lord as the new creature, and of his office; while Jesus is the name for the Redeemer, through whose sacrifice comes to all men an opportunity to share in a resurrection of the dead.

### "A THORN IN THE FLESH"

[This article was a reprint of that published in issue of December 15, 1894, which please see.]

### THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD

MAY 21.—Isaiah 5:1-12.

"Let me sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard."

To this lesson, as to the last, we have a divinely-inspired key, for the words were quoted by the great teacher and applied by him to the Jewish nation, as indeed the Prophet himself explains. What the Prophet styles a song we might properly term a parable or story. God is represented as having planted the nation of Israel as his own vineyard. He gathered out the stones, or removed the difficulties, and planted in it the choicest vine, the richest promises—promises of the Messianic kingdom and the blessing of Israel and all the families of the earth. He provided a watch tower for it in the Prophecies and a hedge about it in the law and the prophets and in all the arrangements made for that holy nation. It was proper that he should look for choice fruitage from so favorably-situated a vineyard, but the results were unsatisfactory. The fruitage was not in harmony with the promises he had planted, but wild grapes, sour, small.

#### "THOU SOWEST NOT THAT BODY WHICH SHALL BE"

The moment of re-awakening will seem to the awakened ones to be the next moment after their death—"for there is neither wisdom, knowledge nor device in the grave." The bodies in which the world will be awakened will be practically the same as those which died, though not the same atoms of matter; for in the hands of our Creator one atom of dust is as good as another in this great work. Thus the Apostle says, "Thou sowest not that body which shall be." The bodies of the world, as they shall be when awakened, will be really new bodies, in the sense that they will be different atoms of matter; but they will be old bodies, in the sense that they will be duplicates of those which died and went to dust. We cannot wonder that the worldly mind, which knows not God and knows not of his power, cavils at the thought of resurrection. It will be a most stupendous work, more wonderful by far than man's original creation; it will thus be to the world of mankind, and to the angels of heaven also, the grandest exhibition ever given of Divine Omnipotence.

He who formed man in the beginning, in his own image, has the power not only to form him again of the dust of the ground, and to re-ignite the spark of life, but yet more than in these will he exhibit both his omnipotence and his Infinite wisdom in the restoration to each being of a brain like his present one, having recorded therein the events and circumstances which have transpired in the present life—just as the wax cylinder of a phonograph bears in itself the recorded words of the speaker, which can be reproduced at another time and place. None but an Infinite Being could claim the power thus to reproduce the very thoughts of the billions of mankind. He of whom it is said that he knows the very hairs of our heads and their number, and that not a sparrow can fail to the ground without his notice—only he could do so great and wonderful a thing; and only as we have learned to have confidence in him through the revelation of his Word could we exercise faith in such a stupendous miracle as he has promised shall be performed.

Nor need we expect that the world of mankind will all be awakened simultaneously, but rather that the first work of the Messianic kingdom will begin with those who have not gone down to the tomb, but who are nevertheless in death, in the sense that they are not alive in the complete, full measure of freedom from the power of death. When the work of restitution shall have progressed to some extent with these, we may expect that some of those who have previously fallen asleep in death will be awakened, and share in the blessings of that glorious day. Later, others, and still others, will arise, until eventually it will be true that, in that day, the day of Christ, "all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man"—shall obey the mandate, "Come forth"—and shall be brought to a knowledge of the goodness and love and mercy of God; and, if they will, ultimately to the full perfection of human nature—the earth, meanwhile, being fitted and prepared as a Paradise of God for his restored human family.

Meantime, the exhortation to all the "called" in the present age is that we should seek to make our "calling and election sure" to a place in the kingdom class, to a change of nature, from human to divine, and thus have a right, under the divine arrangement, to have a part in the "first resurrection"—the chief resurrection, the resurrection to the perfection of the divine nature with its glory, honor and immortality.

This condition prevailed until the time of Jesus. Although troubles upon the nation were from time to time permitted by the Lord, the breaches were always healed and the nation was preserved. Its walls of divine protection and guidance were maintained and its watch tower. John the Baptist was the last of the Prophets. Since his day the Lord has fulfilled to natural Israel the things mentioned in this prophecy. The hedges have been broken down. It has been laid waste. No care has been taken of it. The beasts of the field, the Gentile nations, have ravaged this vineyard and, by divine intention, no rain of divine blessing, comfort, encouragement and fructification have come upon the Jewish people in all these more than eighteen centuries.

#### THE PROPER KIND OF FRUIT

What was the proper fruitage which the Lord had a right to expect from this vineyard and why did he not find it? He

tells us in this very prophecy: "For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: God looked for judgment, justice, but behold oppression! He looked for righteousness, but instead, heard the cry of the oppressed." In other words, God's Covenant with Israel was that they should have the blessed privilege of being his people, and the having of his divine favor was dependent upon their faithful observance of the divine law. He knew that they would not be able to keep the law perfectly. He knew that he would not get perfect grapes, but he had a right to expect much better than he found—to expect heart endeavors, even if there were fleshly imperfections.

The demands of the law were supreme love for the Almighty, governing every thought and word and act, and a love for the neighbor as for oneself—an unselfish love. The observance of this law, in its spirit at least, to the extent of the ability of the flesh, was the requirement. Had there been such fruitage in Israel at the time that Jesus presented himself to them eighteen centuries ago, they would have been ready to constitute the spiritual kingdom, which would then and there have been established, according to divine promise. But their unreadiness led to the breaking down of their entire system. They did not have love enough toward God, nor love enough toward their fellows.

We are not to understand from this that Israel was more degenerate than the remainder of the world. The contrary of this, we believe, is true. But then the other nations had not been specially planted and specially hedged about and specially watered and specially guarded. Where more was given more was required. And when more was not found the faithful few were gathered out and the vineyard temporarily abandoned. We are glad, indeed, to note from the Scriptures that the time is coming when that same vineyard shall be restored under still more favorable conditions, during the Messianic reign of glory and heavenly power. But it is still in disorder.

The succeeding verses of the lesson complain of the disposition of the Israelites to take advantage of each other; and the result of this was great riches on the one hand and great poverty on the other. This Prophecy reminds us of the Great Teacher's words when he said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, for ye devour widows' houses"—you take possession of the property of the poor, perhaps, sometimes, in a technical, legal way. You are not filled with that love for your neighbor as yourself which would lead you to assist the poor, the widow and the fatherless and to be generous toward all. The sin of selfishness, avarice, indicates a lack of the Spirit of the Lord and good will toward all. The majority of the Jews of our Lord Jesus' day were tinctured with such selfishness and hence were not in a condition of mind acceptable to

the Lord for constituting the spiritual, the bride class—except the few, "the remnant," mentioned by the Prophet.

The Lord indicated how he would punish the selfish. Ruin would come upon the great estates and the earth would not yield returns for the labor. Thus selfishness would have its reproof and penalty along temporal lines, as well as costing the loss of spiritual privileges.

#### APPLICATION TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

God's dealings with fleshly Israel not only represent the principles of divine government and requirements, but also the requirements of natural Israel's service, as the Scriptures show, and they typify spiritual Israel. As natural Israel failed to be ready to accept Jesus at his first advent—except "the remnant"—so spiritual Israel, called "Christendom," will fail to be ready to receive him as the great Messiah at the establishment of his kingdom. Note the care with which the Lord planted his church, gathering out all the difficulties at the time of its establishment. Note the heavenly, spiritual promises, exceeding great, with which he surrounded the church, as his vineyard. Note that it is of the Father's right-hand planting. Note the watch tower of grace and truth established by the Apostles. Note the blessing of the holy Spirit.

In the end of this age comes a harvest time for spiritual Israel, as in the end of the Jewish age there was a harvest time for natural Israel. Here, as there, only "a remnant" will be found worthy of the kingdom—the great, nominal mass will be found unworthy. And why? Because the spirit of worldliness and selfishness is the prevalent one, instead of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of meekness, gentleness, love. Only with the few is God first. Only with the few is there a spirit of full consecration to do the divine will. Only with the few is there love of the brethren and a willingness to lay down life one for another. (John 15:13.) Only with the few is there even business honesty, justice. Today selfishness is heaping up treasure and the results, we may be sure, will be unsatisfactory—"a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1.

Moreover, as the Prophet proceeds to show, the accumulation of wealth has generally an injurious effect upon the rich—idleness, music and wine and disregard of things divine. The "remnant" now will be a sufficient number to complete the "elect." The kingdom of glory will be established and all the families of the earth will, shortly after the time of trouble, begin to recognize the long-promised blessing. Indeed, the "time of trouble" will be used of the Lord to humble the world—to prepare mankind to receive properly the blessings of the kingdom.

## THE KINGDOM OF PEACE

MAY 28.—Micah 4:1-8.

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The whole world has for a long time been boasting that civilization and Christianity have won the day, that the world has become God's Empire and that the blessings of the Millennium are ours to enjoy. Aid Conferences and Peace Councils and Peace Commissions have flared up for the moment, only to die down. The cry of "Peace, peace," has brought no peace. We are beginning to see that we have been deceiving ourselves into thinking that the nations of the earth are kingdoms of God. We are beginning to see that the Bible styles them "kingdoms of this world," kingdoms of the Gentiles, and that it tells us that "the Prince of this world, who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience," is Satan, the usurper, "a liar from the beginning and abode not in the truth."

We see it all. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, for which the Master taught us to pray, has not yet come. We are glad, however, that the divine promise assures us that it will come and explains to us that the All-Wise Creator is now, first of all, preparing for his kingdom by gathering from amongst mankind a worthy, saintly few, to be associates of their King and Redeemer in that kingdom of glory, by which the world is to be blessed.

But all are not yet convinced of these Bible truths. Some point to the coins of the various kingdoms, which declare that "In God we trust," and that the several emperors and kings of earth are reigning "by the grace of God" and claiming that they are of divine appointment; while the Pope also makes the still greater claim that he is the personal representative of Messiah and his kingdom and the only one authorized to reign over and to govern the kings of the earth.

To convince the more prejudiced nothing further should

be necessary along these lines than to point out the difference between present conditions and those which the Scriptures declare will prevail when he who redeemed the world by the sacrifice of himself will take his great power and reign as Messiah, the King of glory, to put down sin in its every form and death in its every form and to release and uplift all the willing and obedient of the families of the earth—including those who have gone down into the great prison-house of death—the grave, *sheol*, *hades*.

#### IN OUR FAVORED LAND

The United States of America does not lead the world in the size of its standing army and in great battleships. She has no need to do so, having no threatening Christian (?) nations to menace her. Yet even this nation, walled about by thousands of miles of ocean, is making enormous expenditures on account of war.

One of the most modern of the battleships of the United States Navy is named the North Dakota, after one of the States. She cost \$10,000,000.

The *Minneapolis Journal* shows what the money expended for this battleship would have accomplished in the State for which she is named. It would have provided a \$25,000 agricultural school and experimental farm in its every county, with an endowment fund of \$175,000 for each school, the interest on which would have provided \$10,500 annually for the maintenance of each school. Additionally, it would have left \$1,000,000 of an endowment for the State Agricultural College.

The situation in Europe is still worse. Does not this preparation of the so-called Christian nations of the world to destroy one another prove to us that there is a mistake—that



the term Christian has been misapplied to them? Nor can we say that there is no danger, for only fear could lead to such costly preparations for war.

#### PRAY FOR MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

The hope for humanity is the Messianic kingdom described in this lesson. The "mountain of the Lord's house" signifies the kingdom of God's house, his church. It will be established in the top of, or above the kingdoms of the world. It will be exalted amongst the nations and all peoples will flow to it. There will be an attraction in it for all peoples. It will lead them to climb upward. The attraction which will thus draw mankind will be the blessings of health and restitution, which the kingdom will be prepared to grant to all peoples as they shall come into harmony with its requirements.—Acts 3:19-23.

That kingdom will be closely identified with the Zionist movement and the Holy Land. The kingdom itself will be spiritual, invisible to men, but its earthly agents will be visible and they will be Jewish—"Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom," etc. (Matt. 8:11.) The Jews, already impelled toward the Land of Promise, will go thither in increasing numbers, and all of the faithful of them will go in sympathy and representatively, through financial assistance. The Israelitish hopes and promises will attract that number strongly first. And gradually all the nations, learning of the grace of God, and the blessings

of restitution to be bestowed, will say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us (as well as the Jews) of his ways and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."—Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2.

#### THE PEACE OF GOD ESTABLISHED

Verse 3 tells of how Messiah's judgments will be manifested, favoring most the nations which are most righteous and rebuking all unrighteousness. The effect will be that wars will cease. The metal previously used in weapons of destruction will be used in plowshares and pruning hooks. The earth shall no longer be soaked with human blood, but be tilled for the blessing of the race, with none to molest nor make afraid. The Lord's people, at the beginning of that time, are represented as saying, Let each follow his own conception of God, but Israel must follow Jehovah. And at that time he will assemble her and gather her back into her own land—"a remnant." Then the Lord shall reign over them in Mt. Zion.

The original dominion was given to Adam, but lost through sin. Jesus, by his obedience even unto death, has become the strong Tower, the Fortress, the Protection, to all of God's people. "To him will come the first dominion" and for a thousand years he shall reign for the blessing and uplifting of all the willing and obedient.

## GOD WORKS—WE WORK

"Beloved, . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—Phil. 2:12, 13.

The gospel church has been called with a "high calling." The fact that we accept the "call" signifies that we appreciate it and consider it something very desirable. The condition upon which it is offered is the giving up of everything that we have. By our acceptance of these terms we demonstrate our appreciation of the great opportunity thus granted us. If, therefore, we recognize the call that has come to us, we may know that God is willing for us to accept that call. It is important, therefore, that we understand the conditions in order that we may make our "election sure."

The suggestion of the text is that to accomplish this end we must do some kind of work. Our salvation must be worked out. God does not purpose to take us to glory regardless of our own endeavors. True, these endeavors would not take us there; but, on the other hand, we shall not get the glorious things unless we strive for them. Hence, the exhortation is to "work," to "labor," to "strive" for the prize. But whatever may be our endeavors to keep the divine law, we are assured that success is not brought about merely by our own aspirations and best endeavors; but that he who called us has himself begun a good work in us which he is both able and willing to accomplish.

We are not alone, therefore, in working out our salvation. God is working in us and has already worked in us; and his promises confirm this fact with enlivening power. He works in us not only to "will," as when we made our consecration, but, the Apostle says, he works in us to "do." That is to say, it is not sufficient for us to have good intentions, but these must be brought into practical relationship with our lives and must serve for development of our characters. Thus God works in us. Thus we are co-laborers with God in the work of this present time, of building up the church and in making our "calling and election sure."

#### LET US FEAR LEST WE SHOULD COME SHORT

The Apostle admonishes us to work out our own salvation with "fear." The Scriptures declare that "The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov. 9:10.) Our first thought of the Almighty is, very properly, an apprehension of his greatness and our own insignificance. But as we come to know of his arrangement and plan, this kind of fear gives place to respect and love, for he is very gracious toward all who are inclined to be in harmony with his beneficent arrangements and purposes. We find that he has made glorious plans, which are working out day by day, and that we have a share in them. Hence, this kind of fear casts out dread.

There are Christian people, however, who have not progressed far along the Christian way, but who are bound up in false doctrines. Of these the Scriptures say, "Their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men." (Isa. 29:13.) Greater knowledge of God and of his character will dispel this kind of fear.

The "fear" of our text seems to be a fear of nonattainment of the glorious promises; of failure to become partakers

of the divine nature. The Apostle counsels us, "Let us, therefore, fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."—Heb. 4:1.

"Let us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" as we recognize how great and blessed are the things in reservation for us if we are faithful, and yet how we may miss this wonderful opportunity of glory, honor and immortality. Whatever is of sufficient value for us to greatly desire, is worthy of great care in respect to our attitude toward it. While the fear in this case may not indicate a literal trembling, yet it implies alarm lest we, having had the courage to undertake to run the race for the prize, should allow anything to impede our progress or, possibly, lead us to abandon the race. This course would effect our ruin. Recognizing the great prize, we should fear and tremble lest we should let it slip from us and so lose it.

#### OUR LORD WAS HEARD IN RESPECT TO THAT WHICH HE FEARED

The same sort of care which always attaches to fear is indicated in our Lord's case where we read that "he offered up strong crying and tears" and, as the Apostle says, "He was heard in [respect to the thing] that he feared." (Heb. 5:7.) He feared lest in some particular he had failed to carry out the will of God; lest he might have failed to do the Father's will so perfectly as to attain to glory, honor and immortality; lest his death might be the second death. But he was heard in respect to that which he feared, and an angel was sent to give him assurance of his acceptability. As he never feared the Father in the sense of experiencing dread or terror, so should it be with all those who love him.

While our text says that we should "work out our own salvation," another Scripture states that the reward which we seek is, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:9.) These two texts, however, are not out of harmony. No Scripture implies that we can be independent of our Lord in the matter of working out our own salvation. The perfect work of Christ is the basis of our own work. Unless he had redeemed us we could have no basis for hope of eternal life.

Hence, our attainment of the prize of our "heavenly calling," based upon certain conditions which we are striving to meet, is not dependent upon our own perfection or anything that we could do. The basis of it is the knowledge of our own imperfection and our acceptance by the Father because of the merit of our great Advocate imputed to us.

It was God who provided for the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; and it is God who has drawn us to himself and who gives us grace to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in the way of self-sacrifice. While with fear and trembling or, as we have shown, with great carefulness, we work out our salvation, we realize the promised grace in every time of need; and we may be confident that our best efforts toward righteousness are acceptable to God only when presented through the merit of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us by faith.—Heb. 4:16; Eph. 2:8.

## BLAMELESS AND HARMLESS, WITHOUT REBUKE

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life."—Phil. 2:15, 16.

To be blameless is to be devoid of any disposition to do evil; not controlled by anger, malice, hatred, strife; but, on the contrary, to be disposed to do all the good possible to all with whom we have contact. We should be harmless, not merely so far as God would see, or so far as the brethren would see, but, so far as possible, harmless in the sight of the world, before whom we are to shine.

Blamelessness does not necessarily mean perfection. One might be blameless and yet imperfect on account of natural weaknesses. To be blameless in the sight of God is to live so that he may see one's intentions always to be just, loving, kind. The world will speak evil of us even as they spoke evil of our Lord, and will hate us; for the darkness always hates the light. If we have the friendship of the world, we are not in accord with God. The Apostle James asks, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.) But if we are friends of God, the world will seek to do us injury as evil-doers—"as deceivers, and yet true." While not "friends of the world," we must endeavor to be at peace with them, so far as lies in us.

We cannot, however, expect to please everybody. We are to be blameless in the sight of those of mankind who are recognized as having the best judgment amongst the people. Thus it was with our Lord. While the world blamed him, yet in their private councils they recognized the fact that he was

harmless. Pilate, who put him to death, was honest enough to state, "What evil hath he done? I find no cause of death in this man"; "I am innocent of the blood of this just person."—Luke 23:22; Matt. 27:24.

In the text under consideration the thought of the Apostle is that whatever charges may be made against us, our course of conduct before the world should be such that only the perverse of mind will think wrongly of us; that the better minds would think justly and note that the lives of the Lord's people are indeed blameless, not blameworthy.

The disciples were dwelling in the midst of a perverse generation, their own Jewish nation, among whom they were so to conduct themselves that their lives would be a light to their fellowmen. Perverseness implies unwillingness to be guided by the Lord; crookedness seems to apply to their course of life, not always a way of open wickedness, but a crookedness, doing both right and wrong. On the one hand was an evil heart of unbelief; on the other were forms and ceremonies.

For more than eighteen hundred years these conditions have followed the Lord's people. Everywhere there is a great deal of crookedness and self-will. Many things are done which are known to be contrary to the will of the Lord. Amidst these conditions the Lord's people are to shine as lights; they are to seek to walk in the Lord's ways, that they may "show forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light."

## GIANTS IN THE EARTH

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man."—Luke 17:26.

In considering our Lord's statement—that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at his coming [*parousia*, presence] in the end of this age—it should be noted that the Lord's presence will be unknown to the world; for this particular statement follows, that "As in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, . . . and knew not, . . . so shall also the coming [*parousia*, presence] of the Son of Man be."—Matt. 24:37-39.

This statement, however, does not imply that there is anything wrong in eating and drinking, etc., but rather that there will be little in an outward way to disturb man, in the crisis at the end of the age. At the time of the flood, at the end of the first dispensation, there was apparently nothing to indicate that anything unusual was about to happen. Evidently the Lord meant us to draw conclusions from this fact, that as calamity was inevitable then, so it will be inevitable now.

The end of the first dispensation and that of this present dispensation are wonderfully similar. Previous to the end of the first dispensation a superhuman influence had entered into the world. Power from an angelic source had produced very undesirable conditions, to the extent of bringing into unauthorized existence a race who were "men of renown" and "giants" in strength. (Gen. 6:1-4.) Today

we find a similar condition. Whatever portion of the spirit of the truth has entered into an evilly disposed human mind evil conditions on a gigantic scale have often been produced. Where else in the whole world can we find more intellectual power than in those who have come in contact with the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of the truth? But when this spirit of knowledge enters into an evil heart, evil will result.

This spirit has produced men of renown, men of mental acumen, men who are able to do wonderful things. The remarkable achievements of our time, the wonderful inventions of all kinds, would not have been possible except for the fact that the Spirit of the Lord is abroad in the earth. But the general tendency of this combination—the spirit of knowledge in an evil heart—has been to produce giants, who "walk up and down" the land and are known as the Sugar Trust, the Coal Trust, etc. As the giants were in control in the days of Noah, so the giants are getting more and more control of the situation now. Just as it was then, so today the giants are liable to capture the whole world. As the flood destroyed those giants, so at this time the great cataclysm of trouble will drown all trusts and other commercial agencies which oppress mankind. We read that they will be utterly destroyed; that there will be no hope of resuscitation.

## INTERESTING QUESTIONS

Question.—Since Adam was a wilful and intelligent sinner, and was individually sentenced, and since the sentence has been executed upon him and he is now under that sentence, and now has nothing and is nothing, how much of the merit of Christ will be necessary for his release from his condemned condition?

Answer.—We understand that Adam, having been tried and found guilty and sentenced to death, and having gone down into death under that sentence, has done nothing to liquidate his obligations in any sense of the word; and that it will require the full satisfaction of a ransom-price to set him free and permit him to have another trial. In a general way, this is, of course, true of the entire human family. As Adam's children, we are dealt with as a race, instead of as individuals except in the case of the church and of the Jewish Nation under their law.

During the Millennial age there will be no imputation of Christ's merit to anybody, as it is now imputed to the church. It is imputed to us for a special purpose—to enable us to offer acceptable sacrifices. In the Millennial age no one will need the righteousness of another to make him acceptable. On the contrary, the whole world, counted in as one, will be dealt with from that standpoint; and Christ,

as the great Mediator, Prophet and King, will make satisfaction to justice for Adam and all his children, dealing with them as one. After making satisfaction to Justice, and thus purchasing the whole world of mankind, the great Mediator of the New Covenant will put it into effect, and under that New Covenant the blessing will begin with Israel; but every member of the human race will have an opportunity of coming to perfection, as heretofore shown.

To get at the real gist of the question, we will put the matter in another form and say: If Adam had been living during the Gospel age, to our understanding, he would not have been eligible to the offer of this Gospel age—that it would not have been consistent with the divine arrangement to have dealt with Adam as the Lord is dealing with the church, because he, as personally condemned, would have had nothing that he could present as a sacrifice. We, on the contrary, have something to present—"Present your bodies living sacrifices." While our bodies are blemished, we have, nevertheless, some powers, and these we are invited to present. We have bodies which we are willing to coerce into submission. This is our hope—that we may be permitted to suffer with Christ, that we may be sharers in his glory.

The Apostle says, "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor. 6:20.) This seems to imply that we had something. Having recognized Christ as the center of God's plan and as our Redeemer, we are called upon to renounce sin—glorifying God by consecrating our lives, our bodies, to his service. But if we had been the original sinner, and had been originally sentenced, we see nothing that we should have had that we could call our own that we could have given.

Question.—Should Sisters teach Sunday School classes?  
Answer.—Usually sisters are better teachers of the young

than are brethren. Nothing in the Scriptures forbids their teaching such classes. The Apostle's words are: "I suffer not a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man." His words apply specially to the church.

As for the advisability of having Sunday Schools! We have not changed our judgment from what we have written in *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, Vol. VI.

We still believe that God holds the Christian parents responsible for the spiritual education of their children, and that they get a special blessing in fulfilling his requirement. If Sunday Schools are ever advisable, we believe they would be only for orphans or worldlings, or for children already taught at home.

## INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brother Russell:—

I feel it my duty to write you a few lines to say how thankful I am that, through the instrumentality of *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, I have been led to abandon a life of sin and disgrace. I have found that which I needed to give me peace and joy, and, thank God, I know I shall never give it up. For several years I was separated from my family and leading a reckless life, but through his mercy I am again with my family and we are happy and contented.

I had about given up all hope of ever being anything in this life but a drunkard, when I came across *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, also other of your literature, which gave me the light I so much needed. God's Plan is surely a marvelous one, and it is so plain to those who really seek the Truth.

My prayer will ever be that God's blessing may rest upon you and your co-laborers in the "harvest work," and especially upon the colporteurs in their work of spreading the truth. No one knows what good may result from placing the *STUDIES* even in homes where there is no interest. I believe my first reading of volume one was in the home of a family who had never read a page of it, but were talked into buying it by one of the colporteurs. I was very much interested in it, at the time, and tried to find out where the lady got it, thinking to get more literature along the same lines; but, after leaving there, I thought no more of it until God led me into the home of a Sister where I got more of the truth, both by reading and from her explanations of points I did not understand. I am intensely interested in this glorious work, and my desire is to live nearer to God, who has done so much for me.

Yours in the Blessed Hope, JOHN HOOPER.—Canada.

Dear Brother:—

Enclosed please find five dollars, for which please send to me by mail one of your *WATCH TOWER* Bibles, and *THE WATCH TOWER* for one year.

I have all your volumes and have read them over and over and over. This is the greatest satisfaction of my life in my old days. I am now seventy-seven years old.

I remain your brother in the Lord,

N. SHEPHERD.—Can.

Dear Brother Russell:—

Owing to much literature being circulated by the opposition within our ranks some time ago, I concluded it wise to discontinue the distribution of the "Questions Answering Questions" booklet. Since then I have received many orders for these booklets from friends who are not advised of their discontinuance, and some do not understand why they are refused.

I would thank you for the publication of this letter in *THE WATCH TOWER*, notifying the friends of their discontinuance and of my reason for this.

Prayerful meditation upon Mark 9:38-40, leads me to the conclusion that we can be workers in the harvest, and yet not followers of the Lord. To be followers of the Lord, we must not only be workers in the harvest, but must also be workers according to his will. The fact that the majority of the Lord's "little ones" now disapprove of the circulation all literature other than that published by the Society, and

my belief that the expression of the majority in such matters is the expression of the will of the Lord, are other reasons for its discontinuance.

Feeling sure that all of the Lord's faithful ones will agree with me in oneness of the work, as well as oneness of hope, faith, and baptism, and trusting that all may receive a greater blessing by the discontinuance, than by the circulation of the booklet, I remain,

Yours in the Master's service, A. B. DABNEY.—Va.

Dear Brother:—

Does it not seem strange that so many of the dear friends worry about the Time of Trouble? How can an event arrive before it comes? What do we know about it? Nothing, by sight, would you not say? If by sight, then when did we quit walking by faith?

How can Gentile nations continue after their lease expires? If they existed before the formal confirmation of the "lease" they were "tenants by sufferance," it would seem.

You have taught clearly enough that they will resist ejection proceeding, and this dispossession will be "the time of trouble" and the daily papers will probably not record the event!

Would it not be well for the dear friends to re-read volumes two, three and four—as I am doing with much profit?

With much Christian love, and gratitude and best wishes,  
A. M. MERRELL.—Okla.

Dear Friends:—

I have received your kind letter and the second volume of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. Thank you. I have begun the careful study of the volumes, and find them so good! They help me to understand parts of the Scriptures that I was not able to understand. When I asked questions of those who are teachers of the Bible, they told me, "We are not expected to understand it all."

I feel that God has answered my prayer for Truth by putting your little paper into my hands by one of his servants. Some one put a paper into my buggy one day while I was in Lawrence. I had only partly read it when it disappeared, and I did not know where to get another. So I asked my heavenly Father to let me get another, and after waiting a couple of weeks, behold! another was put into my buggy. I took better care of this one.

My husband is a Lutheran. I was reared a Quaker, and all my people belonged to the Friends, but I joined the Lutheran church with my husband. Many times have I come home from listening to a sermon on eternal torment, crying because the minister made God out such a cruel God. Now, I thank his name that I know him as a God of Love, who is able to help us and who will soon open all the blind eyes.

I am sending your books, as fast as I can read them, to my brother. He held up his hands in warning to me when I told him of them. He reminded me of what the Scriptures say about following after false prophets. He, like many others, is afraid to investigate anything for fear of being led away from the doctrine he grew up with.

MRS. VIOLA J. S. SHIRAR.

## "UNTIL THE LORD COME" \*

\*[This article was a reprint of that which appeared in issue of February 1, 1892, which please see].