

the liberty, sir, to present you my warmest felicitations for the work you have undertaken, which consists in giving to our associates spiritual meat in harmony with their faith and belief. I would gladly reimburse the expenses you have made for the services rendered to my son, who is very well pleased with THE WATCH TOWER and MILLENNIAL DAWN. Our cor-

respondence with Switzerland not being allowed, I send this to my aforesaid son in Germany, who will transmit it to you.

Please believe, sir, in my deep gratitude and accept my Christian greetings.

JOSEPH SERVIAS.

President of the Temperance Society.—Belgium.

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SIGNS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE KING

"But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap."—Malachi 3:2.

The words of the Prophet given in our text refer to the close of the present Gospel age. It is the same day prophesied by the Apostle Paul when he declared, "The fire of that day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1 Corinthians 3:13) It is the day of which the Apostle Peter wrote so graphically when he said that in the great day of the Lord the heavens should be on fire and the elements should melt with fervent heat, and that the earth and all the works therein should be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10) It is the day of which the Prophet Zephaniah spoke when he said that in the great day of the Lord all the earth should be devoured with the fire of God's jealousy. (Zephaniah 3:8) Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many of the faithful prophets of God prophesied of this day. The Prophet Daniel was instructed by the angel of the Lord that in that day there should be a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Daniel 12:1) Our Lord Jesus himself verified this prophecy, and added that never afterwards should there be such a time.—Matthew 24:21, 22.

The Scriptures call this day "the day of the Lord," "the day of Jehovah," "the day of God," "the day of Christ," "the day of vengeance," "that great and notable day," etc. It is the day in which the old order is to perish and the glorious new order is to be ushered in. In foretelling this day, both the prophets and the apostles speak of the class which will stand in this day when all others shall fall. St. Paul says that everything which can be shaken down will be; and that only the kingdom which will then be set up, and which cannot be shaken, will remain. (Hebrews 12:25-29) The present order of society—the nominal church systems, financial institutions, political institutions—all—will go down.

During the Gospel age many who have not been Christians have associated themselves with the church. The civilized world of today call themselves "Christians," in contradistinction to the nations which they call "heathen," though from the Scriptural standpoint they are all heathen—Gentiles. Among all these various nations we find many religions, whose devotees claim that they have consecrated themselves to God. But the touch-stone by which these claims may be tested is the Word of God. See Galatians 1:6-9. To the true church of Christ alone will God give the Messianic kingdom. Some who really have Christ and his work of sacrifice as their foundation will be saved, but at the expense of all their works, their character-structure, which the "fire" of this day will consume. The tare class in the nominal churches will be bundled and "burned," not as individuals, but as professed Christians; that is to say, their professions will be seen to be without foundation. They will come to see how grossly in error they were—how far removed from the truth.

"SAVED AS THROUGH FIRE"

The ones who are upon the Rock Christ Jesus, the only true Foundation, are those who have accepted Jesus as their ransom-sacrifice, and have consecrated themselves wholly to God through him. All these have been "called in one hope of their calling." (Ephesians 4:4) Many of these will fail to make their calling and election sure and will suffer great loss. They did not build properly upon this Foundation, Christ, a structure of gold, silver and precious stones of truth and of whole-hearted loyalty to the Lord. They will suffer the loss of the kingdom, and through much tribulation will take a lower place, before the throne—not rulers, but honorable servants of the ruling class. All who have been begotten of the holy Spirit must, as we have shown elsewhere, either be born upon the spirit plane or lose life altogether. Those who prove wholly faithful will be born divine beings. Those not wholly faithful, and who miss the great "prize," though not denying the Lord that bought them, will be born spirit beings of a lower order.

The tribulations which characterize the end of this age will thoroughly awaken these careless ones. Certain special tribulations, we understand, have come to those who were of this class all through the age. But apparently a large number

of these are living now, at the close of the age; and these must go through "the great tribulation" and must wash their soiled robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:9-17) They will have a blessed portion after their purification, but far less glorious than that to which they were called.

The Apostle Paul in his writings lays special emphasis upon the fundamental importance of correct doctrinal teaching. It made no difference whether Paul or Apollos or even an angel from heaven taught anything, it must be in harmony with the foundation doctrines which had been given them by the Lord. (Galatians 1:6-12) He assured the church that what he had taught them was from God, and that even if an angel should bring them another Gospel, it would be a proof that such angel had deflected from loyalty to the Lord. That Jesus Christ died to secure the redemption-price for Adam and his race is the foundation doctrine of the church, which was received from Jesus himself and from his faithful mouth-piece and which was shown in the divinely given types of the law. Whoever taught this fundamental truth faithfully was a real help to the people of God. Yet even such a teacher might help them to build, even on this proper foundation, a faith and character structure which would not stand the tests of the great day of the Lord; for the fire of that day would surely prove the nature of this structure. Consequently, both teacher and pupil would suffer loss and be saved only "as through fire."

INVULNERABILITY OF THE TRUTH

This prophecy of our text is still in process of fulfilment. The "refiner's fire" is even now doing its work, and thousands and tens of thousands are falling all about us. The Prophet's query is very pertinent at this time. We see that the false teachings which have come down during these many centuries since the apostles fell asleep have made humanity incapable of reasoning correctly on religious subjects. In the past we have had our own experiences along this line. Whenever anything religious was mentioned we seemed to lose our common sense. Now we have lost our fear of the dread penalty of using our reason. We have come back to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, and we find them grand and beautiful.

Those who have been teaching errors will soon be ashamed (Isaiah 66:5), while the fire of this day will only manifest the truth to all. Now power, no tongue, no pen, can successfully contradict the truth, the great divine plan of the ages. It is strong before its enemies and before all who make assaults upon it, and ere long the folly of its foes shall be made known to the whole world. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENCE OF THE KING

The coming of the King to possess his kingdom will mean a personal as well as a national and a church examination, judgment and treatment. It will mean, when the kingdom is fully inaugurated, the suppression of vice in a manner and to a degree never attempted by any earthly reformer. There will be no license to do evil in any form. The only liberty granted will be liberty to do right. It is no wonder that so few experience joy at the proclamation of the return of earth's rightful King to reign. To many it will mean the loss of their present advantage over their fellowmen. To many it will mean the prohibition and cutting off of sins now indulged in and enjoyed.

Nevertheless, both the King and the kingdom are not only coming, but are here; and the present troubles and shakings in church and state, and the general awakening of the people are the results of influences emanating from that King and kingdom. Though men know it not, it is the smiting of the kingdom of God that is even now preparing for the wreck of all the kingdoms of the earth, that the way may be opened for the establishment of righteousness in the world, that men's hearts may be humbled and prepared for the righteous government which is to take control of earth. Worldly men cannot

realize this; for this kingdom cometh not with outward observation—with outward show and display. Therefore they cannot say, "Lo, here," or "Lo, there."

In spite of the awful war now raging, growing fiercer and more deadly every day, these continue to hope for peace, trying to convince themselves and others that the trouble must soon be brought to an end, and that matters will then go on as formerly. They blind themselves to the true conditions and refuse to believe that God has determined to permit this trouble to spread and involve the entire world and to bring about the utter overthrow of the present order of things. Selfishness, pride and love of money have closed their eyes. We give here an extract from a poem written some years ago by a Christian minister, which forcefully describes present conditions and the judgment of God which is now to be visited upon the world for their lasting good:

"Woe to the Age when gold is god, and law a solemn jest,
That helps the boldly vile to crush the noblest and the best!

When Mammon o'er cheap millions flings his gilded harness strong,

And drives them tame beneath his lash down broad high-ways of wrong;

While Truth's shrill clarion down the sky peals faintly o'er the rout,

And dust and fumes of earth and sin shut Heaven's blest sunlight out!

Then look for lightning!—God's red bolts must cleave the stifling gloom,

In righteous wrath to purge the world in Sodom's fearful doom!"

But we are thankful that while the judgments of a righteous God against sin must come at this time, yet the ultimate results will be glorious, when the world will come forth chastened, subdued, purified by the awful baptism of fire and blood; when they shall come to see that sin, selfishness, and corruption have wrought their legitimate outcome. Then mankind will be ready to cry to the Lord and to long for his deliverance, and he will be entreated of them and will lift them up and bless them.

But the coming of the King means much trouble and the general overturning of the kingdoms of this world which, while professing to be kingdoms of God, are really under the control of the "prince of this world," Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (John 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:2) It means the shaking of society in a manner and to an extent never before known, and as thoroughly that another shaking will never be necessary. (Hebrews 12:26, 27) It means the breaking in pieces of the empires and governments of the world as a potter's vessel. It means the passing away of the present ecclesiastical "heavens," and the fall of many of its

bright "stars." At present the sunlight of the true Gospel, and the moonlight of the law with its types and shadows, are obscured by the thick clouds of worldly wisdom. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood."—Joel 2:30, 31.

While many would rejoice to see society relieved of many of its selfish, life-sapping ulcers, they seem to realize that so just and impartial a Judge as the Lord himself might cut off certain long-cherished sins to which they desire to cling; they fear to have their personal selfishness touched. And their fears are well-founded. He will bring to light all the hidden things of darkness, and correct and suppress private as well as public sin and selfishness. He will expose depths of corruption never before realized. He will make "Justice the line and righteousness the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." (R. V.) He will "bring down them that dwell on high, the lofty city [Babylon] he layeth low, . . . even to the dust." He will bring down them who have "made lies their refuge."—Isaiah 28:15, 17, 18; 26:5, 6.

LIFT UP TRUTH'S GLORIOUS BANNER!

It is written that the day of the Lord would come as a thief and a snare upon the whole world, and that only God's fully consecrated church would be in the light and not be taken unawares. Many of the consecrated have been deceived by looking for the heavenly King to come again in the flesh. They forgot that the only reason for his coming in the flesh at his first advent was "for the suffering of death" as man's corresponding-price; and that now he is highly exalted, a glorious spirit Being. "He was put to death in flesh, but made alive in spirit." (1 Peter 3:18) They forgot that the Apostle Paul also said, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him [so] no more." (2 Corinthians 5:16) The true children of God are coming more and more to see how the Master comes at his second advent, and are not expecting to see him in the flesh and with their natural eyes.

We who know that the King of Glory and his blessed kingdom are the only remedy for the wrongs and woes of man should be pointing the groaning creation to this kingdom, rather than to the poultices of their own contriving which can do no real good. Tell them the meaning of present world-wide conditions, and how, beyond the troubles now overspreading the world, will come the glorious times of restitution foretold by all the holy prophets since the world began. Tell them that the death of Jesus was the redemption-price for the entire race of Adam, and that his return is for the purpose not only of delivering his church, but to bind Satan and set free all his captives, including all who are in the graves, giving all who will an opportunity to come into the liberty of sons of God, under the terms of the New Covenant, soon to be established.

SEEKING MEMBERSHIP IN GOD'S KINGDOM

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."—Matthew 6:33.

At the beginning of our Lord's earthly ministry the Jewish nation were invited to become the kingdom of God. The offer of God's chief blessing was "to the Jew first." For many centuries they had been God's special people. They had been called to be unto God "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation"—a peculiar treasure unto God, composed of a priestly class and a chosen, holy people. (Exodus 19:5, 6) We do not understand that all Israel from the time of the giving of the law could have been of the heavenly kingdom, however faithful they have been. None could be of this kingdom class before Jesus came to earth; for he was the Forerunner of this class. The offer was made to the Jews of his day. But those of the nation who lived previously, and who had been faithful to God, true to their covenant, shall be greatly blessed of the Lord on the human plane. They shall be used to bless all nations under spiritual Israel—the kingdom of God now being set up.

God's special favor to the people of natural Israel in choosing them above any other nation was especially because they were the seed of his faithful friend, Abraham. God had promised Abraham that because of his faith and obedience his seed should be blessed. It was not because they were of themselves holier or better than other peoples. (See Exodus 32:9-13; Deuteronomy 9:4-8) But for their fathers' sakes God chose them to be his people.

At our Lord's first advent the time had come for the offer of membership in the kingdom, for the testing of the whole nation of Israel, to prove whether they were ready for this choice blessing. Jesus was the One to offer this kingdom; for

he had consecrated himself a sacrifice for sin, which would constitute a basis for the establishment of the kingdom on earth.

TRUE AND FALSE IDEAS OF THE KINGDOM

The sermon on the Mount, from which our text is taken, points out the earnestness and singleness of heart necessary in those who would become members of the kingdom class. The Master intimates that not all of this favored nation who heard his message would be ready to accept it. Many were absorbed in the things of this life—in what they would eat, what they would drink, what they would wear. But in order to be ready to receive the proffered blessing, in order to be acceptable to God, they must make the kingdom, their first interest. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," enjoined the Savior, not the earthly things. If the kingdom was made first, all their earthly needs would be supplied; "All these things shall be added unto you," was his promise.

Not many of the Jews were ready for so drastic a Teacher. They had their own plans—business plans, political plans, social functions. Hence this invitation of Jesus to leave all to obtain a kingdom of which they knew nothing and which seemed so intangible did not find a very ready response. The twelve apostles were among the first to accept his offer. At the time of Jesus' death, something over five hundred had joined themselves to him as his disciples. Of these we are told that one hundred and twenty were gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, where they received the begetting of the holy Spirit. After Pentecost some thousands

of Jews came to the point of decision to make the kingdom of God their first business. These, however, were but a small minority of the nation of Israel.

Throughout this Gospel age there have been a few who have heard the call and accepted the conditions, who have determined to make the kingdom of God the first consideration of their lives. Satan has tried to make many of these think that papacy is that kingdom, or that Great Britain or Russia or some one of the other kingdoms of earth is that kingdom. To others he brought a misinterpretation of the words of the Apostle, "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the holy Spirit," and endeavored to make them think that all there was of the kingdom of God was merely righteousness and holiness of life, having a godly life through the power of the Lord's spirit. How far all this is from the teaching of the Scriptures regarding the kingdom can be readily seen by a study of the subject of the kingdom of God as presented by the holy prophets, the apostles and our Lord Jesus himself. Truly we have a wily adversary!

HOW CHRISTIANS MAY KEEP GOD'S LAW

By these false ideas the true thought of the kingdom was obscured—the thought that God was selecting the members of the kingdom class, the thought that we not only make a full consecration of our little all to the Lord according to his terms, but that we should continually put this vow of consecration into practice, counting all other things as loss and dross that we might win a membership in this glorious company of which Jesus is the Head. This obscuration of mind still continues with the majority of those who have professed the name of Christ; but the full complement of body members of Christ is being secured, despite Satan's vigorous efforts to prevent it. Now the number is almost full; indeed the few now coming in, we believe, are merely taking the places vacated by some who by unfaithfulness have but the crown laid up for them; for we understand that the full number had accepted the offer and been begotten of the spirit when the general call ceased, in the fall of 1881. See *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Vol. III., Chap. 6—"The Work of the Harvest."

In seeking the kingdom of God we as Gentiles are to realize that the Lord has not changed from his original position when he made the proposition to Israel that in order to obtain everlasting life they must keep the law. There is no other way. God will not exalt to kingdom honors any who are violators of his law. The question then comes in, How can we keep the law? If the Jews could not keep it in all those sixteen hundred years, how could we keep it? And does not the Lord say through the Apostle that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight? To understand this is to understand some of the deep things of God; namely, that "God is in Christ reconciling the world [those from the world who now accept the Gospel call] unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."—2 Corinthians 5:19.

"YOUR BODIES MEMBERS OF CHRIST"

Christ kept the law and satisfied divine Justice for all who become his during the Gospel age; and his merit is imputed to those who keep the law in their heart and are hindered from keeping it absolutely by the weaknesses of their fallen flesh which they are unable to control. And so St. Paul says that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. First of all, through the imputation of his merit to their mortal bodies, their flesh, our Redeemer covers, their natural imperfections. Second, because that body so devoted, so justified, is sacrificed, he reckons them dead as human beings. They are then begotten to

a new, a spirit nature. Thenceforth their mortal body is counted as the body of the new creature, no longer as a human body; for this was sacrificed. Actually, however, it is quickened to be the servant of the new creature. Being still actually human, it must be given a robe of righteousness to wear until the end of the present life. This is furnished by our Savior.

The Apostle Paul, in speaking of our human bodies from the standpoint of our new relationship in Christ Jesus says, "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 6:15) God no longer counts our fleshly body as the body of a human being. It is a member of Christ, the property of the spiritual new creature. This new creature keeps the law of God. Wherein there is failure, it is not the new creature that fails, but the imperfect flesh, which is covered by the pure, white robe of Christ's righteousness. God looks upon it as the spotless body of this new creature. Thus we stand perfect before God's law; thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who are walking, not according to the flesh, but in the footsteps of Jesus.

LIBERTY IN CHRIST NOT THAT OF MEAT AND DRINK

Our text enjoins that we seek God's righteousness. This seems to imply that for those he is now calling God has provided a righteousness. This righteousness is in Christ, and it must be accepted by every one who comes to God; otherwise, not having the righteousness of God and the assistance that goes with it, he will not be able to attain unto the kingdom.

The new creature is so in accord with the Lord that he will seek to bring his mortal body fully under the control of the law of love. He will seek to be altogether just toward his fellowmen, toward the brethren, and kind and merciful toward all. His entire life will be given up to attaining membership in the heavenly kingdom. This will lead him to serve the cause of God's righteousness. Wherever God's plans are set aside, he would be called upon to defend them in every reasonable way. He will be on the side of righteousness and truth. All who truly seek the kingdom have this disposition.

When the Apostle Paul says that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the holy Spirit, we are to understand him to mean, as shown in the context, that the privileges of those who are of this kingdom class do not consist merely in liberty to eat and drink things forbidden to those under the law or to those in bondage to heathen superstitions, but our liberty is far superior to this. Those Jews who became followers of Christ were informed that they were now free from the regulations of the law which restricted their food, etc. As to whether they would now eat pork or something else was thereafter to be regulated by conditions and circumstances. They had liberty in Christ that they had not, as Jews, previously enjoyed.

But St. Paul points out that this is not the chief liberty—to be able to eat oysters, pork and other things forbidden by the law. This permission would not be much of a blessing. The chief element of their freedom in Christ was that true righteousness and holiness which is the blessing and comfort of all those who are the sons of God. Nor was it the Apostle's thought that righteousness, peace and joy constitute the kingdom, but that these are the blessed results of membership in the kingdom class. They are blessings which are the heritage of those who are heirs of the kingdom, even while they are still under age, as it were, still being tutored and prepared for kingdom service beyond the veil. All of the Lord's people are now to rejoice in true righteousness, the righteousness of God, and to seek it above all else.

ST. PAUL AT ATHENS

[This article was a reprint of that entitled, "Worshiping the Unknown God," published in issue of June 1, 1909, which please see.]

GOOD, BETTER, BEST IN BIBLE STUDY

Every influence which makes for respect for the Bible as the Word of God is commendable. The Bible study practised in Great Britain and Ireland fifty to a hundred years ago; namely, the committing to memory of verses and chapters and the use of the Book as a reader in the Schools, had its advantages. Those who thus became familiar with the text of the Bible had a valuable store of information, if later they became Christians and sought the meaning of God's messages.

Other Bible study attempts were made in various denominations in so-called Bible study classes. These, however, were hampered by the denominational creeds. Occasionally able teachers informed their classes respecting the historical set-

ting, discussed the writer of the epistle, the journeying experiences, etc. Sometimes he ventured off into doctrine; but on such occasions, unless he was very discreet and held down the class, the result of the lesson was somewhat of a dispute and a general tangle, which left the class more confused than before.

Another style of Bible study which for a time found favor, consisted of a number of Christian people reading a chapter, verse about. Each, after reading his verse, would make such comment as he pleased. If there were forty verses in the chapter there were as many little comments. When the meeting closed there was a feeling of a measure of refreshment in having handled the Bible, having read some interesting

verses, and having communed with each other; but very little knowledge of God or his plan of the ages was gained by such Bible study.

It is only of late—within the past ten years practically—that the Bible has been studied after the manner we mention as Berean Studies—searching the Scriptures. Now all over the world Berean Classes are in operation. Great blessing and great enlightenment are resulting. For this kind of Bible study, a textbook is used and also a question-book. The textbooks are the various volumes of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. In these volumes the teachings of the Bible have been collated and brought into an assimilable form. For instance, if the lesson appertains to the holy Spirit, the study on the subject brings together the teachings of the Bible from every part and sets these in orderly array before the class. If the subject be “The Man Christ Jesus,” it is similarly treated. If the subject be “The Logos,” it is treated in like manner. If the subject be “Justification,” “Sanctification,” “The Glorification of the Saints,” each subject is treated systematically—brought to the minds of the class and laid open for discussion, with references to various parts of the Bible in which these things are stated.

It does not surprise us, therefore, that those of God's people who have learned the value of this method of Bible study

and who follow it have a clearer understanding of the Word of God than others. While, therefore, we commend any kind of Bible study, we especially commend this form which the Lord has blessed above all others for the enlightenment of his people in this harvest time. This method is for the advantage of the entire class. An able leader is not so indispensable. One danger with able leaders with any other method of Bible study is that their ability sometimes goes in a wrong direction and misleads.

These Berean Studies, however, place the entire class in a position of advanced scholarship in the Word of God, because they have the entire subject under discussion open before them. Nevertheless, even in a Berean Study and when the questions are used, a skilful leader, who is humble-minded, will prove a great assistance to the brethren. And this is the case in nearly every class the world around. We want the dear readers of *THE WATCH TOWER* to know just why we so earnestly recommend to them this Berean form of Bible study. Nor should we wonder if the adversary would work against a method which has been so blessed of the Lord. We urge upon all a comparison between the results in their minds, their hearts, their lives, as between Berean Bible Studies and all other kinds of which they may have knowledge or have tried in the past.

ST. PAUL AT CORINTH

[The first three paragraphs of this article were reprinted from article entitled, “Paul at Corinth,” published in issue of February 1, 1903. The remainder was reprinted from article entitled, “I Have Much People in This City,” published in issue of June 15, 1909. Please see the articles named.]

GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST

JULY 30.—1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-2:2.

“Far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Galatians 6:14.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST NO LONGER PREACHED—REDEMPTION FALLING BEFORE EVOLUTION THEORY—THESE TWO THEORIES ANTAGONISTIC—FEW UNDER THE BANNER OF THE CROSS WITH JESUS AND THE APOSTLES.

None can dispute that the preaching of the cross of Christ is dying out. Those who still preach it give the impression that at the most it means renouncement of sin and the incidental self-denials. Rare indeed would it be to find a minister in our day preaching the necessity for the cross of Christ—the necessity for Jesus' death as the redemption-price for the sins of the world.—1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Matthew 20:28.

Why is this? Some would answer that they have become Christian Scientists, and no longer believe that there is such a thing as sin, and no longer believe that there is such a thing as death; and that hence they could not believe that Jesus died for sin. Others would answer that they have gotten too wise to believe any longer that in the divine plan the death of Jesus was necessary that in the redemption and reconciliation to the Father. Their view is that the apostles and Jesus, in setting forth the cross, were laboring under the delusion of the darker time, which present day education shatters under a brighter light. Still others would say that they have become Evolutionists and Higher Critics, that they no longer believe the Bible at all, and that they adopt the opposite theory to that of the Bible—namely, the Evolution theory.

From the standpoint of Evolution there could be no justice, no propriety of any kind, in a ransom-sacrifice by a Redeemer. Why? Because, according to the Evolution theory, man is surely developing, and is not yet perfect and not yet ready for trial along perfect lines; he is merely merging from a brute to an intelligent creature. Evolutionists would claim that without any redemption or any interference whatever upon God's part the process of Evolution will continue until by and by there will be a family of mankind that will reach an aristocracy of wisdom, efficiency and power which will enable them to live everlastingly by their own wits.

Small comfort is there in this for Evolutionists of today or of the past. If they boast of their children of the future and of the everlasting life to which those children will be gradually evolved, they admit that personally they have nothing beyond the truth—that any future life on their part will be representatively in their children. And as for their parentage, they have nothing to boast of there, although some of them seem to boast of their ancestry, after all—that their forefathers were monkeys, frogs and, earliest of all, simply protoplasm.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CROSS

These theories are the products of human wisdom, and indicate a misunderstanding and neglect of God's Word. How beautiful is the Gospel of the cross as compared with any other! It assures us that God made man in his own image

and likeness; and that man's fall from that perfection to his present condition of demoralization came as a result of disobedience to divine law and of the enforcement of the divine penalty—“Dying, thou shalt die.” (Genesis 2:17, margin) For six thousand years our race has been dying, not only physically, but also mentally, which includes the moral qualities. With all the experiences of the past and with all the education of the present, nobody has hope that our race can be lifted up out of its present unsatisfactory condition back to perfection. All that we can do is to combat the evil in ourselves, combat disease and death, and help others along the same lines.

But meantime, God had from the very beginning planned the blessings of the cross—planned that in due time he would send forth his Son, who would die for human sin, “The Just for the unjust,” and thus open up the way for man's return to divine favor and everlasting life. Thus it is written: “As by a man came death, by a man comes also the resurrection of the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive—every man in his own order.”—1 Corinthians 15:21-23.

For four thousand years the world waited for the redemption accomplished at Calvary. For nearly two thousand years the results of that redemption have been confined to a special class of humanity, under a special call, or invitation, to be the bride of Christ—“the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.” (Hebrews 12:23) The Scriptures assure us that this selected company is to be associated with Jesus in the great kingdom of God, which the Bible everywhere shows is to roll away the curse and, instead, bring back favor.

The kingdom cannot come until the royal family is ready to take the throne. Jesus, indeed, has long been ready; but in harmony with the Father's plan he has waited and has been doing a work in the preparation of the church, his brethren, who are to be his joint-heirs in the kingdom—otherwise styled “the bride, the Lamb's wife.” (Romans 8:17; Revelation 21:9, 10) Then for a thousand years the restitution privileges will be open to the whole world of mankind. It will no longer be necessary to preach; for all will know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest, and unto him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. (Jeremiah 31:34; Philippians 2:9-11) All this is to come as a result of the cross.

EARTHLY VS. HEAVENLY WISDOM

No wonder the Apostle makes the cross of Christ the center of his preaching, declaring; “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission” of sins! (Hebrews 9:22) As the

Prophet hath declared, "By his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) Our lesson quotes briefly the divine prophecy that the worldly-wise would not appreciate the divine plan, and especially the center of that plan—the cross of Christ. Worldly wisdom would look in an entirely different direction.

However, God is not seeking the worldly-wise, but those loving righteousness, full of faith and obedience. Hence the majority of mankind, including the majority of the wise, are still to be found on the side of the wise, are still to be found on the side of the world; and only comparatively few have come properly and truly to the Lord's side, accepting the wisdom from above. These, in the eyes of the world, are foolish; but in the eyes of the Lord, they are wise. The wise, the great, the noble, the rich, the learned, are so well satisfied with what they have that they are not hungering nor thirsting, nor seeking after the divine arrangement. Hence those who accept the Lord's arrangement are usually the poor, the unlearned, etc., who realize their lack of wisdom and seek it from the Fountain of wisdom and through the channel of wisdom—the Bible.

The whole world is perishing because of original sin; and to nearly all of the world the cross of Christ is foolishness. We who believe God's message are said to be saved—to have passed from death into life—because we have come into relationship with the great Life-giver "through faith in his blood." To us the great Redeemer is the wisdom of God per-

sonified, and that wisdom is shown in the Master's course in sacrifice. When we accept this, he becomes our Justifier; and being justified by him, we are granted access to the Father, who receives our consecration sacrifices, and imparts to us a begetting of his holy Spirit. Our salvation continues as day by day we abide in the Lord and grow in grace, knowledge and the holy Spirit. Eventually our salvation will be completed; as it is written, our salvation shall be brought unto us at the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.—1 Peter 1:13; Titus 2:13.

When the royal priesthood shall have entered into the heavenly glory, then will begin the new dispensation of Messiah's kingdom, which will utterly scatter the errors of worldly wisdom and cause all the world of mankind to hear "the still, small Voice" of God. The Lord will then turn to the people a pure message, that they may all call upon him and serve him with one consent. (Zephaniah 3:8, 9) Then, during the Millennium will be the world's trial time; as now, during this Gospel age, is the Church's day of trial, testing and preparation for the fulness of Jehovah's favor and for everlasting life.

With such an appreciation of the value and the necessity of the cross of Christ, we can join heartily with the Apostle Paul in the Golden Text of this lesson: "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of Christ."

LESSON OF THE BLIGHTED FIG TREE

"Have faith in God."—Mark 11:22.

As Jesus and his apostles passed along the road from Bethany to Jerusalem preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, they had seen, en route, a fig tree. Our Lord, being hungry, went to the tree, seeking fruit thereon; for the time of figs was not yet past. But he found that the tree was barren. Then he pronounced a curse, a blight, upon the tree. The next day as they passed by Jesus' disciples noticed that the fig tree had withered from the roots. Then Peter said, "Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away!" Jesus answered, "Have faith in God." (Mark 11:13, 14, 20-22) Then he called their attention to the fact that it was not merely himself who had blighted the tree, but that the heavenly Father was to be recognized as behind him in this. He ascribed always the honor to the Father. He was merely the Finger of God. "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."—John 5:36; 14:10.

REAL OBJECT OF JESUS' MIRACULOUS WORKS

Some of the people of that time, as now, had malignant power; and Jesus' act might have been attributed to that source. So he would direct the minds of his disciples to the things that he did as being always of God—thus differentiating his power from that of Satan. Some might wonder that God would take notice of a tree because it was not bearing fruit. But Jesus was not an ordinary person. His course was not an example for us to go along the street and, seeing an unfruitful tree, say, "Cursed be this tree; it shall not bear any more fruit forever!" Should we adopt this course, we might be finding fault with trees and with everything else. But our Lord was especially sent of God. He was accustomed to do good as he went about. He healed the people and taught them, giving them forceful object lessons.

It was necessary that the disciples of Jesus be thoroughly convinced that he was sent of God before they could have developed in them the needful faith. They must continue this faith, consecrating their hearts and lives to God, before they would be ready for the Pentecostal blessing. Hence many of our Lord's works were of an outward, visible kind, intended for the enlightenment of his followers, for the establishment of his Messiahship, and for the manifestation of his future work for the world. Of his conversion of the water into wine, it is written, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his [coming] glory; and his disciples believed on him."—John 2:11.

St. Paul points out that the natural man cannot see the deep things of God because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Hence there was a necessity for teaching of this outward, material kind to Jesus' disciples; for they were but natural men. Although they recognized him as the Messiah, they did not realize this clearly at first. Jesus asked them on one occasion, "Whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered, "Thou art The Christ, the Son of the living

God." Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona! for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 16:15-17) It was a grand course of education, then, that Jesus gave his apostles.

And so as regarded the fig tree, the miracles of healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, feeding the thousands, etc., it was not so important that certain persons be physically healed at that time, nor so important that the multitudes should not go hungry over night, nor that divine displeasure should be visited upon an unintelligent tree. But it was important that the disciples should get the needed lessons and see that the Lord's power could and would be exercised on their behalf; that, with the realization that the Lord was on their side and would guide and protect them, they would be able to exercise great confidence. It was important also that we should have this assurance of our Father's love and care over us as his children. It was important that our Lord's coming glory during his kingdom reign should be illustrated and shown forth.

THE FIG TREE A SYMBOL

There is a further thought as regards the fig tree. We believe that the fig tree is a representation of the Jewish nation. This nation had been God's fig tree. In due time God sent his son seeking fruit from that nation, but he found none. The tree was barren. He found a few faithful individuals, but nationally nothing—no fruit as a nation; and the blight, or curse, of the Lord came upon the Jewish nation because with all their privileges and advantages they had not brought forth the proper fruits. Our Lord Jesus, five days before his crucifixion, pronounced their house desolate. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!"—Matt. 23:38, 39; Luke 13:34, 35.

Ever since that time, the Jews have been desolate and blighted as a nation. But there is a promise that this blighted fig tree shall again become a living tree—a living nation. They are to be restored to divine favor, after their "double" of disfavor has been fulfilled. [See STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. 2, pp. 217-230] This "double" we understand has been accomplished, and this is the meaning of the great awakening now among the Jews, and of the great Zionist movement.

Speaking of the time of his second advent and of the nearness then of the kingdom, Jesus said, "Learn a parable of the fig tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near; so ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors." (Mark 13:28, 29) The Jewish nation has been having a long winter time. But the spring time of this nation is now at hand. We already see this fig tree putting forth leaves. So we see that the lesson of the blighted fig tree was not merely a lesson for an hour, but a lesson to all the Lord's people from that time even until now.

LOVE IN THE CLASSES

"Love one another, as I have loved you," is the Master's instruction. (John 15:12) "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren," writes the Apostle. (1 John 3:16) "He that loveth him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten of the Father." (1 John 5:1) As a matter of fact, all who belong to the church of Christ have the spirit of love at the time of their spirit-begetting. And if progress be made in preparation for the kingdom, that spirit of love will increase and abound more and more, until it will be perfected in the resurrection. Then we shall have our new bodies, which will permit our loving hearts to manifest themselves fully. But in the meantime, how frequently the dear brethren of the Lord seriously try each other, vex each other, and fail to provoke to love and good works—inciting rather to strife!

While we should properly attribute such weakness, not to the new creature, but to the old, nevertheless we are never to forget that the growth of the new creature means the death of the old creature, and hence in proportion as our flesh is not dead to sin and selfishness, in that same proportion we, as new creatures, have not yet reached the ideal for which we strive.

The Editor frequently receives letters from elders of classes, asking advice as to how they shall deal with the classes, and from members of the classes asking how they should deal with their chosen elders and deacons. The chosen servants of the classes frequently feel that their brethren, who elected them, do not repose a sufficiency of confidence in them and entrust them fully enough with the management of the affairs of the class—that the class wishes to manage its own affairs and merely to have the advice of the elders. In such cases we recommend that the elders be fully content with such a condition—that it is the class as a whole which represents the Lord, and that no servant of the class has the privilege of exceeding the authority which the class gives to him by its vote.

It is our experience that the Bible students feel a great need of protecting their rights and fulfilling the obligations which the Lord has placed upon them. Surely they are excusable even if they seem to exercise too great care in this matter—in view of the examples all around us, amongst both Protestants and Catholics, of the power of priestcraft, and the inclination of ecclesiastics to grasp power and authority and to ignore the ecclesia.

On the other hand, frequently the classes feel that they are being ridden or "bossed" by their elders—whether this is really so or not. They complain sometimes, for instance, that the elders get a fever for preaching and desire to give lectures on every possible occasion, sometimes even turning prayer and testimony meetings and Berean study classes into lecture opportunities. If intimations are given that Berean lessons are preferred, and that changes from the class order are not appreciated, the elders sometimes take offense with the whole class, declaring that they are not appreciated; and other times they either take offense at the individual who has had the courage to kindly mention the matter to them or fancy that he is an exception and that they are pleasing the class—a case of too much self-esteem sometimes.

PASTORAL ADVICE

It is difficult to know how to advise classes in such cases where the elders seem to have lost, not the spirit of the Lord, but the proper balance of a sound mind. We generally refer inquirers to the extended treatise on the subject in *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, Volume VI., and ask them to read afresh and act accordingly. But even after reading, some of the Lord's dear sheep do not know how to obtain proper Scriptural order and maintain the liberties of the class and refrain from permitting an elder to injure himself and the interests of the class!

Our general advice to the brethren is that they take such matters to the Lord in prayer, while watchful of any and every opportunity to promote what we believe to be the Lord's will in the classes. On the one hand, we must admit that it would be entirely wrong for a class to permit an elder to "boss" it or, as St. Peter said, "to lord it over God's heritage." (1 Peter 5:3) It would be injurious both to the elder and to the class interests.

On the other hand, the classes should seek to avoid capriciousness and faultfinding. They should esteem the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of devotion, the knowledge of the truth and talents for its presentation, wherever these are to be

found, and should gladly help one another to opportunities for development in grace, knowledge and utterance—each according to the talents which the Lord has bestowed upon him and in harmony with the directions of the Lord's Word. Forbearance, one with another, a willingness to wash one another's feet, symbolically, and to esteem each other for all Christ-like qualities, should be cultivated.

While the will of the class should be carefully sought by every elder, and fully expressed by every class in respect to all the order and arrangement of its affairs, nevertheless we should not be over-exacting in respect to how the will of the class is expressed. In other words, we should consider what is satisfactory to the majority of the class. Elders are not to be found fault with simply because the class satisfaction has not been expressed in some special, particular manner. In other words, a minority of the class should not feel at liberty to distract the class and stir up strife simply because methods which the minority prefer have not been accurately followed. Each member of the class has full liberty to express his conviction at opportune times—especially at election time; but he should be fully satisfied, after expressing his thought and preference, to abide by the preference of the majority, whether expressed positively or negatively.

JUSTICE FIRST—THEN LOVE

Let us, dear brethren, ever remember that while we are striving after love and its bond of perfectness, nevertheless our own course of action should be squared first of all by absolute justice, and then love may add to that as much as it may please. For instance, at an election some brother may unwisely nominate, for some service of the class, a brother who is not qualified for the position. We must not find fault with the brother, for he has his liberty of making the nomination and manifesting his unwisdom; but, on the other hand, we should not feel bound by his suggestion, nor should we allow fear of offending the nominated brother to hinder us from expressing, by vote, what we understand to be the Lord's will in the matter. And if voted down by the class, the nominated brother has no right to take offense, but should rather admire the courage of the brethren, as expressed in his rejection.

One thus rejected by a class has no right to inquire either of the class or of any member of it why they voted against him. That is their business and none of his. They merely exercised the right which they had according to their own conscience. It was a matter of justice. Love, in the sense of human sympathy, has no place in the deciding of such questions where the Word of the Lord lays down the rules to be followed by each member of the ecclesia. A failure to recognize principles of justice—righteousness—seems to lie at the foundation of nearly all class difficulties. We request that all who get into such troubles take the matter to the Lord in prayer and then consider the matter along the lines of absolute justice.

We have advocated in the Sixth Volume of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES* that, if possible, the will of the class be expressed by the majority—at least eighty-five per cent. of the whole number. This, however, does not mean that either justice or love would turn over all of the affairs of the class to the remaining fifteen per cent and allow them to dictate, as for instance, to permit them to determine that there shall be no elders or deacons elected because the minority would hold fifteen per cent of the whole amount and insist that its ideals should be met or that the whole work of the class should come to a standstill. This would neither be loving nor just, and should not be submitted to.

The majority rule is the standard of justice, and what we suggested in excess of that was a concession of love—an attempt to meet the tastes and preferences, if possible, of the entire class, or at least a large majority of the class. The majority should lovingly desire to regulate the class affairs, so far as possible, to suit every member of the class; and to whatever extent there is a failure to do this there is an invitation to discord and to a split in the class. While, of course, a division of the interest into two classes is always deplorable and should be striven against, and sacrifices be made by all to maintain a "unity of spirit in the bond of peace," nevertheless a division of the class for a time would certainly be preferable to a continual strife, which would hinder the spiritual progress of all concerned.

A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD MARTYR

A letter has just been received from Wellington, New Zealand, saying that one of the Bible students of that vicinity, fourteen years old, had been imprisoned for refusing to regis-

ter for military service because of religious objection to participation in war in any sense of the word. He was permitted to come out of his prison to partake of the Memorial

Supper, April 16th, and then returned to prison. It seems very remarkable the hold that militarism is gaining.

Word comes to us from England that some of the Bible students there were ordered to report for military duty. These registered their objection, but were refused immunity from service—receiving, however, the assurance that they would be put in non-combatant positions in the war. This promise was

“LET HIM BUY A SWORD”

Why did our Lord say to his disciples, “He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one” (Luke 22:36, 38), and then afterward say to St. Peter: “Put up thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”?—Matthew 26:51, 52.

We should remember the circumstances. Jesus knew that his hour was come in which he would be betrayed, made prisoner, and the next day be crucified. It was necessary to show that his capture was not made by force, but that he voluntarily permitted himself to be taken and crucified. The Father might know, the angels might know, and his disciples might know that he had power to ask of the Father legions of angels for his defense and protection from the hands of his enemies; but others could not know this. It was desirable that it should be clearly manifested that Jesus and his disciples could have defended themselves, as St. Peter, indeed, started out to do when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus promptly healed the ear and instructed Peter to be non-resistant, and surrendered himself, merely requesting that his disciples be not molested.

The circumstance demonstrated that our Lord surrendered

afterward neglected, and they were put into regular service at once. We are not to forget that practically all the world is claiming to be Christ's kingdom, and yet that any who seek to follow the Words of Jesus seem to be thoroughly disrespected and hated of all men and all nations. What a proof we have here that Messiah's kingdom is future! How glad we are that it is nigh, even at the door!

himself voluntarily, and therein was the lesson. Had there been no swords in the company of his disciples, it might have been claimed that no defense could have been made. The having of the swords made possible the exhibition of the courage of the disciples, and the willingness of Jesus to submit.

When Jesus said that if necessary their garments should be sold to purchase a sword, the apostles responded that they had in their company two swords; and Jesus answered, “It is enough.” They were intended merely for a demonstration, and not for a defense.

Nothing in this Scripture seems to give any warrant to warfare, nor to the implication of some that Jesus desired his followers to take the sword. True, not all who have taken to the sword have perished by the sword, and not all who have avoided the sword have preserved their lives, but it is a general principle which the Lord discusses. He who prepares himself for warfare and trouble will be pretty sure to get plenty of it, according to the general course of the fallen human nature. On the other hand, the Lord's disciples are enjoined to “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”—Hebrews 12:14.

INTERESTING LETTERS

WAS DISGUSTED WITH MAKE-BELIEVE RELIGION

DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL:—

A deep feeling of love for you, the honored servant of our Father in heaven, prompts me to express my thankfulness just this once for having been brought into the light now shining so brightly. Hitherto I have sought to quell the desire from a realization that you receive many thousands such letters, and that I should not encroach upon your valuable time. Please do not feel obligated to answer this.

I first came in contact with present truth in 1902, through reading several of the volumes; and a profound impression was made upon me. At that time I was teacher of a large school in Jamaica, Catechist of the Church of England, Sunday School Superintendent, Choir Master, and the rest of it. Pressure on all sides was brought to bear, and my desire to embrace the truth was squeezed out of me. For nearly ten years I never came in contact with so much as one of your tracts. I became intensely worldly; and, thoroughly disgusted with myself and the make-believe religion, I quit the whole thing in 1907 and started anew on the Isthmus of Panama.

In September, 1911, my wife bought a copy of “Daniel and the Revelation.” Trying to read this book caused me to root out an old paper covered Volume V, which had followed us around these many years. It was in trying to compare the two books that I got a fresh start; and the Lord, almost miraculously, supplied the other volumes. Determined that the opportunity should not slip this time, I carefully made up my mind, and offered myself in full consecration to God on January 1st, 1912. My dear wife also consecrated about the same time.

Since then our path has been continuously upward. We have read hard, prayed much, and endeavored to live Christ; and oh, the blessedness! Only those who have been with Jesus and have learned of him can appreciate this wonderful transformation of mind.

Next to the Lord Jesus our thanks are due to you, as our consecration was solely the product of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, and your writings have been the most important element in the development of our characters.

Enclosed are four questions which have caused a good deal of division of thought among us of the Panama class. I am aware that all of them have been treated by you time and again. But we are so dull of comprehension and so leaky!

I close with warmest love and appreciation for you and the Bethel family, whom we remember daily in prayer.

I am yours by his grace,

G. L. HARRY.—Balboa, Canal Zone.

Questions. (1) When the Apostle Paul says, “Let your women keep silence in the churches” (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11, 12), does he include giving thoughts in a Berean study?

(2) Does the church belong to the order of Melchizedek

during the Gospel age, actually or prospectively? In either case, where does the “reigning” come in? Or are we in some way connected with the Aaronic Priesthood?

(3) What is meant by “intuitive knowledge”? Does the Lord Jesus now possess this kind of knowledge, and will the church eventually attain to the same?

(4) Since all must “honor the Son even as they honor the Father,” wherein is Jehovah's superiority? Is it a superiority of mental power or merely of seniority?

ANSWER TO ABOVE LETTER AND QUESTIONS

Your welcome letter of the 3rd inst. is before me. I rejoice with you that the Lord has pursued you through his mercy and love, and that you have surrendered to him. I trust you may continue to abide under his shadow and to serve him and to thus have the necessary preparation for a share in the heavenly kingdom.

Replying to your questions: We understand that there would be no violation of the Apostle's injunction in the sisters' taking part in a Berean study. If there are no consecrated or competent brethren present, I see no reason why the sisters might not lead a Berean class. The church in association with her Head will be the Melchizedek Priest, during the Millennial age. That Priest, Prophet, Teacher, is not yet fully raised up from amongst the people, but will be entirely raised up by the close of this age, perfected in the first resurrection. (Acts 3:23; Eph. 2:10-16) Consequently no reigning takes place as yet, except as our Lord is taking to himself his great power and beginning his reign—the majority of the church already with him on the other side the veil, and we on this side gradually passing over.

Intuitive knowledge would be a direct apprehension, without the process of reasoning, or the necessity for proof. The Bible assures us that all power is possessed by our Lord Jesus since his resurrection. This would seem to include intuitive knowledge. The church has the promise that in the resurrection she will be like her Lord. It is further written: “Now we know in part; then we shall know even as we are known.”

To honor the Son even as we honor the Father does not mean necessarily to give him the same degree of honor; but rather we might state it, “We honor the Father. Even so let us honor the Son also—as the Son, as the Father's Logos and Chief Representative.”

With Christian love to yourself and all the dear friends with whom you are associated or come in contact, I remain
Your brother and servant in the Lord.

RE SOME CLASS BUSINESS METHODS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Ever since our class has been organized much time has been consumed each month in our business meetings, but since all matters are decided by the class, under present arrangements, we do not see how such meetings can be avoided and less time spent.