

EXTEND THE VOLUNTEER WORK

The brethren everywhere are remarkable for their loving zeal for the Lord, his truth and the brethren. In no way is this better shown than in what we term the Volunteer Work—the voluntary distribution of the Society's free literature. No other Society on earth ever manifested so much self-denying zeal in such a manner. We feel disinclined to advise any increase along this line. Nevertheless, it is ours to offer suggestions and indicate possibilities and supply the free literature, and yours, dear brethren, to determine the extent of your reasonable and possible service for the King of kings. We do know that there are millions of people in our home land who have never yet had a taste of the spiritual food, "meat in due season," which has so greatly refreshed and strengthened us. Hundreds of cities and towns and villages have received no volunteer attention. It is for you to decide,

individually and as classes, what you can do for these. One of our very best free papers has been widely distributed except in such places as suggested. It contains a most interesting article on "The True Basis for Human Equality," another on "Battering Down the Walls of Hell," and another showing that neither Pastor Russell nor the I. B. S. A. taught "The End of the World in 1914," but on the contrary that "the earth abideth forever."

We have 400,000 of these on hand for use in such previously unserved places. We will be glad to hear from all who are able and willing to join in this volunteer work. State the quantity desired and give shipping particulars. All charges will be prepaid. Mention No. 61, BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY.

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THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING OF THE PASSOVER

"When He seeth the blood the Lord will pass over the door and not suffer the destroyer to smite you."—Exodus 12:23.

The Passover season, as celebrated by the Jews, draws near—beginning this year on the 30th day of March (the 15th day of Nisan actually starting at 6 p. m. Monday, March 29th). But the interest of Christians centers especially in the slaying of the lamb, which preceded this Passover Feast. The Passover lamb was slain on the 14th day of the month Nisan, which date this year begins at 6 p. m. Sunday, March 28th. The Memorial of the death of the antitypical Passover Lamb, our Lord Jesus, which is celebrated on the same date, will therefore be observed by us on the evening of Sunday, March 28. How much we regret that while millions of Christians and Jews will in some formal ceremonies and in a perfunctory manner celebrate this great event of history but few of either religion discern the real significance of the celebration!

THE PASSOVER INSTITUTED

Could the minds of all these be awakened thoroughly to its true significance a religious revival would be started such as the world has never yet known. But alas! as the Apostle declares the god of this world has blinded the minds of many; and even some whose eyes of understanding are partially opened St. Peter describes as being blind and unable to see afar off or holden and unable to see the deep things of God in respect to these ceremonies which have been celebrated in the world for now more than 3500 years. And by the way it must be admitted even by Higher Critics and agnostics in general that an event so prominently marked so widely observed for so long a time must have a foundation in fact. There must have been just such an occurrence in Egypt; the first-born of Egypt must have perished in that tenth plague and the first-born of Israel must have been preserved from it—all who observed the injunction to remain under the blood—else this widespread celebration of the event would be inexplicable.

We need not remind you of the particulars connected with the institution except to say that the Israelites were held in a measure of serfdom by the Egyptians and that when the time in the Lord's providence arrived for their deliverance their masters sought selfishly to maintain their bondage and refused to let them go forth to the land of Canaan. One after another the Lord sent during the year nine different plagues upon the people of Egypt relieving them of one after another when their king craved mercy and made promises which he afterwards broke. Finally, the servant of the Lord, Moses, announced a great, crowning disaster—that the first-born in every family of Egypt would die in one night, and that in the home of the humblest peasants as well as in the home of the king there would be great mourning, as a result of which they would be glad finally to yield and let the Israelites go—yea, urge them to go, and in haste—lest the Lord should ultimately bring death upon the entire people if their king continued to harden his heart and resist the divine mandate.

The first three plagues were common to all in Egypt, including the district in which the Israelites resided. The next six plagues affected only the district occupied by the Egyptians. The last, the tenth plague, it was declared, should be common to the entire land of Egypt, including the part apportioned to the Israelites, except as the latter should show faith and obedience by providing a sacrificial lamb, whose blood was to be sprinkled upon the sides and the lintels of their doorways and whose flesh was to be eaten in the same night, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, the eaters standing staff in hand and girded ready for the journey—with full expectancy that the Lord would smite the first-born of the

Egyptians with death and make them willing to let the Israelites go, and with full faith also that they would share in this calamity were it not for the blood upon their door-posts and lintels.

THE ANTITYPICAL PASSOVER LAMB

The Israelites were commanded to celebrate this Passover as the first feature of the Jewish law and as one of their greatest memorials as a nation. As a matter of fact, we find that in some degree the Passover is celebrated by Jews in all parts of the world—even by those who claim to be agnostics and infidels. They have a measure of respect for it as an ancient custom. But is it not strange that, with the bright minds which many of them possess, our Jewish friends have never thought it worth while to inquire into the meaning of this celebration? Why was the lamb slain and eaten? Why was its blood sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintels? Because God so commanded, of course; but what reason, motive, object or lesson was there behind the divine command? Truly a reasonable God gives reasonable commands, and in due time will be willing that his faithful people should understand the significance of every requirement. Why are the Hebrews indifferent to this subject? Why does prejudice hold their minds?

Although Christianity has the answer to this question we regret that the majority of Christians, because of carelessness, are unable to give a reason and ground for any hope in connection with this matter. If the Jew can realize that his Sabbath day is a type or foreshadowing of a coming Epoch of rest and blessing and release from toil, sorrow and death, why can he not see that similarly all the features of the Mosaic law institution were designed by the Lord to be foreshadowings of various blessings, to be bestowed in due time? Why can it not be discerned by all that the Passover lamb typified, represented, the Lamb of God, that its death represented the death of Jesus, the Messiah? and that the sprinkling of its blood symbolizes, represents, the imputation of the merit of the death of Jesus to the entire household of faith, the passed-over class?

Blessed are those whose eyes of faith see that Jesus was indeed "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"—that the cancelation of the world's sin is effected by the payment of Adam's penalty—that as the whole world lost the favor of God and came under the divine sentence of death, with its concomitants of sorrow and pain, it was necessary before this sentence or curse could be removed that a satisfaction of justice should be made; and that therefore, as the Apostle declares, Christ died for our sins—the just for the unjust, that he might bring us back to God. Thus he opened up "a new and living way"—a way to life everlasting.

"A KIND OF FIRST-FRUIT"

Those familiar with the Bible have noticed that therein the church of Christ is called "the church of the first-born," and again "a kind of first-fruits unto God of his creatures." (Heb. 12:23; Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:4) This implies others ultimately of God's family later born—the after-fruits. Christian people seem to have overlooked these Scriptures so far as making application of them is concerned, and have generally come to believe that only those who are of the first-fruits will ever be saved, that there will be no after-fruits. But let us look at this type of the Passover—let us notice that it was God's purpose to save all Israelites, and that as a nation they represented all of mankind that will ever come into harmony with God and be granted eternal life in the Land of Promise.

Let us notice also that there were two passovers. There was a great one, when the whole nation by divine power was

miraculously delivered by the Lord and led by a sand-bar across the channel of the Red Sea especially prepared for them by the accentuation of winds and tides. That picture, or type, shows the ultimate deliverance from the power of sin and Satan of every creature who will ultimately come into accord with the Lord and desire to render him worship—not an Israelite was left behind.

But that passover at the Red Sea is not the one we are discussing particularly on this occasion—not the one whose antitype we are about to celebrate. No; the event which we celebrate is the antitype of the passing over, or sparing, of the first-borns of Israel. Only the first-borns were endangered, though the deliverance of all depended upon the salvation of the first-borns. Applying this in harmony with all the Scriptures, we see that the first-fruits unto God of his creatures, the church of the first-borns, alone, are being spared at the present time—being passed over—those who are under the blood. We see that the remainder of mankind who may desire to enlist and to follow the great antitypical Moses when he shall ultimately lead the people forth from the bondage of sin and death are not now endangered—merely the first-borns, whose names are written in heaven.

"THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORNS"

The first-born—the "church of the first-borns"—are those of mankind who in advance of the remainder have had the eyes of their understanding opened to a realization of their condition of bondage and their need of deliverance and of God's willingness to fulfill to them his good promises. More than this, they are such as have responded to the grace of God, have made a consecration of themselves to him and his service, and in return have been begotten again by the holy Spirit. With these first-born ones it is a matter of life and death whether or not they remain in the household of faith—behind the blood of sprinkling. For these to go forth from this condition would imply a disregard of divine mercy. It would signify that they were doing despite to divine goodness, and that, having enjoyed their share of the mercy of God as represented in the blood of the Lamb, they were not appreciative of it. Of such the Scriptures declare, "There remaineth no more a sacrifice" for their sins. They are to be esteemed as adversaries of God, whose fate was symbolized in the destruction of the first-born of Egypt.

We do not mean to say that the first-born of Egypt who died in that night and any of the first-born of the Israelites who may have departed from their homes contrary to command and died therefor, have gone into the second death. Quite to the contrary, we understand that all these matters were types, figures, illustrations, foreshadowings of matters on a higher plane, and that the realities belong to the church of Christ during this Gospel age since Pentecost. If we sin wilfully after we have received a knowledge of the truth, after we have tasted of the good Word of God, after we have been made partakers of the holy Spirit and thus members of the church of the first-born—if we should then fall away, it would be impossible to renew us again to repentance; God would have nothing further for us; our disregard of his mercy would mean that we would die the second death.—2 Peter 2:12; Jude 12.

From this standpoint the church of the first-born, through the begetting of the holy Spirit and the greater knowledge and privileges they enjoy every way, have a greater responsibility than the world, for they are the only ones as yet in danger of the second death. This is the lesson of the type and applies to Christians only.

By and by the night will have passed, the glorious morn of deliverance will have come, and The Christ, the antitypical Moses, Head and body, will lead forth, will deliver all Israel—all the people of God—all who when they shall know will be glad to reverence, honor and obey the will of God. That day of deliverance will be the entire Millennial age, at the close of which all evil and evil-doers, symbolized by the hosts of Egypt, will be utterly cut off in the second death.

"AS OFT AS YE DO THIS"

The Apostle clearly and positively identifies the passover lamb with our Lord Jesus, saying, "Christ our Passover is slain for us; therefore let us keep the feast." (1 Cor. 5:7, 8) He informs us that we all need "the blood of sprinkling," not upon our houses, but upon our hearts. (Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2) We are also to eat the unleavened (unfermented, pure) bread of truth, if we would be strong and prepared for the deliverance in the morning of the new dispensation. We also must eat the Lamb, must appropriate Christ, his merit, the value that was in him, to ourselves. Thus we put on Christ, not merely by faith, but more and more to the extent of our ability we put on his character, and are transformed day by day into his glorious image in our hearts.

We are to feed upon him as the Jews fed upon the literal lamb. Instead of the bitter herbs, which aided and whetted their appetites, we have bitter experiences and trials, which the Lord provides for us, and which help to wean our affections from earthly things, and give us increasing appetite to feed upon the Lamb and the unleavened Bread of Truth. We, too, are to remember that here we have no continuing city, but as pilgrims, strangers, travelers, staff in hand, girded for the journey, we are en route to the Heavenly Canaan and all the glorious things which God hath in reservation for the church of the first-born, in association with their Redeemer as kings and priests unto God.

Our Lord Jesus also fully identified himself with the Passover lamb. On the same night that he was betrayed, and just preceding his crucifixion, he gathered his disciples into the upper room, saying, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." It was necessary that as Jews they should celebrate the Passover supper on that night—the saving of the typical first-born from the typical "prince of this world." But as soon as the requirements of the type had been fulfilled, our Lord instituted a new Memorial upon the old foundation, saying, "As often as ye do this [celebrate the Memorial of the Passover season—annually] do it in remembrance of me!" (1 Cor. 11:24, 25) Your Jewish neighbors, whose eyes of understanding have not been opened, will not appreciate the matter in its true antitypical sense, but you—who recognize me as the Lamb of God, who in God's purpose has been slain from the foundation of the world—who recognize that I am about to give my life as the world's redemption-price—will note this Passover season with peculiar and sacred significance that others cannot appreciate. Henceforth you will not celebrate any longer the type, but memorialize the antitype, for I am about to die as the Lamb of God, and thus to provide the blood of sprinkling for the church of the first-born, and meat indeed for the entire household of faith.

"THIS IS MY BODY, BROKEN FOR YOU"

That the Lord's followers should no longer gather as the Jews had done previously to eat the literal Passover supper of lamb, in commemoration of the deliverance in Egypt our Lord shows by choosing new emblems—"unleavened bread" and the "fruit of the vine"—to represent him as the Lamb. Thenceforth his followers, in accord with his injunction, celebrated every year his death as their Passover Lamb, until after the Apostles had fallen asleep in death, and a great falling away had confused the faith of nominal Christendom, producing the epoch known as the dark ages. Even during the dark ages the teaching that Christ was the antitypical Passover Lamb persisted, though the celebration of his death in the Passover Supper which Jesus instituted fell into disuse. It was crowded out by that most terrible blasphemy, which has deceived and confused so many millions of Christendom—the Mass—introduced by Roman Catholicism. This in the Scriptures is called "the abomination of desolation," because of the disastrous influence it has had upon the faith and practise of the Lord's people. Although Protestants in general have repudiated the Mass, as being wholly contrary to the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, nevertheless the practises of Protestants are largely influenced yet by that terrible error, from which they have only partially escaped.

THE MASS IS NOT THE EUCHARIST

Many Protestants will innocently ask, Is not the Mass merely the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, under another name? O, no! we answer—it is wholly different! The Lord's Supper celebrates the death of Christ accomplished at Calvary. The Mass represents a new sacrifice for sins made every time the Mass is performed. Our Roman Catholic friends believe that when the priest blesses the wafer it becomes the actual body of Christ in his hands, for the very purpose of sacrificing him afresh. High Mass is a particular sacrifice of Christ for a particular sin of a particular individual. Low Mass is a sacrifice of Christ for the general sins of a congregation. Roman Catholics claim to believe in the merit of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary—that it covered original sin, general sins that are past; but they claim also that the daily sins, shortcomings, blemishes of every individual, require to be cleansed by fresh sacrifices of Christ from time to time. Thus, from their standpoint, as represented in the Mass, and as practised by the Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics and High Church Episcopalians, Christ is being sacrificed afresh all the world over every day. This in the Scriptures is called an "abomination" in God's sight, because it disregards, sets at naught, the fact as stated in the Bible, that Christ dieth no more, "that by one sacrifice he hath perfected forever all who come unto the Father through him."—Rom. 6:9; Heb. 10:14.

It will be readily seen that the repeated sacrifices represented in the Mass would have the effect of nullifying or minimizing the value of the great Sacrifice of Calvary, represented in the Passover and in the Memorial Supper. How could those who had come to look especially to the Mass for the cancellation of their sins be expected to look with as deep concern and as high an appreciation as otherwise back to the antitypical Passover? While, therefore, the celebration of Good Friday has continued, the celebration of the Memorial Supper preceding it fell into disuse long ago.

As for Protestants, repudiating the dogma of the Mass as wholly unscriptural, they have abandoned it and returned to a celebration of the Lord's Supper. Meantime, however, accustomed to the frequency of the Mass, they have considered it merely a matter of expediency how often the Lord's Supper should be celebrated. Hence we find some celebrating it every four months, some every three months, some every month, and some every Sunday. This general laxity and failure to reach a common ground of conformity is due to two things: (1) Christian people generally have overlooked the fact that our Lord's death was as the antitypical Passover Lamb, and that its celebration is the antitypical Passover Supper; (2) They have misunderstood our Lord's words, "As oft as ye do this," to mean, Do this as often as you please, whereas the words really signify, As often as you, my disciples (all of whom are Jews and accustomed to keeping the Passover), celebrate this occasion, do it in remembrance of me—not in remembrance of the literal lamb and the typical deliverance from typical Egypt and its bondage through the passing over of the typical first-born.

Those who celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly consider that they have Scriptural precedent for so doing because in the Bible we read that the early church met together on the first day of the week and on such occasions had the "breaking of bread." It is a great mistake, however, to confound such breaking of bread with the Memorial Supper, for the former was merely an ordinary meal. There is absolutely nothing in the record to indicate otherwise; the wine, the fruit of the vine, is not mentioned in connection with it, and the bread was not said to represent the broken body of our Lord. It was a cheerful social custom in the early church to celebrate our Lord's resurrection on the first day of the week, and this common social custom helped to unite the bonds of brotherhood and fellowship. In many places the Lord's people follow this custom still. The Tabernacle congregation at Brooklyn has such a breaking of bread every Lord's day between the afternoon and the evening services, as a convenience for those living at a distance, and especially as a desirable opportunity for extending fellowship amongst the Lord's people.

THE DATE OF THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

As we all know, the Jews used the moon more than we do in the reckoning of their time. Each new moon represented the beginning of a new month. The new moon which came closest to the spring equinox was reckoned as the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, the first day of the month Nisan. On the fifteenth day of that month, the Feast of Passover of the Jews, lasting a week, began. That Feast of seven days represented the joy, the peace, the blessing, which resulted to the first-borns of Israel from their passing over, and typified the complete joy, peace and blessing which every true Christian experiences through a realization of the passing over of his sins through the merit of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. All true Christians, therefore, in their hearts have a celebration of this Feast of Passover continually—the completeness of the matter being represented in the seven days, seven being a symbol of completeness. Not seeing the matter from the same standpoint, the Jews thought less of the killing of the Passover lamb and the eating of that supper than he did of the week following it. But our Lord emphasized the importance of the killing of the Passover lamb when he announced himself as its antitype and when he invited us to celebrate his death on its anniversary, until, at his second coming, our entrance into the kingdom would signify the complete fulfilment of all our blessings.

It would be a great blessing, doubtless, to many Christians if they could see this subject in its true light, could lay more weight upon the value of the death of Christ, and join more heartily in its celebration—on its anniversary, instead of at various other times and seasons, irregularly and without special significance. However, there have sprung up all over the civilized world little groups of the Lord's people who are taking heed to this subject, and whose delight it is to celebrate the Master's death according to his request—"As often as ye do this"—annually—"do it in remembrance of me." We believe that such a celebration brings special blessing to both heart and head. The nearer we come to the divine requirements the greater is the measure of our blessing, the more closely are we

drawn to our Master and Head, and to each other as members of his body.

The date of the celebration this year will fall on March 28, after 6 p. m., because at that hour begins the 14th day of the month Nisan, according to the Jewish reckoning. We urge upon all of the Lord's people everywhere to gather as may best suit their convenience in little groups or families to do this in remembrance of our Lord's great sacrifice. The fact that it is the anniversary of his death makes the matter the more impressive.

"LORD, IS IT I?"

We recall the circumstances of the first Memorial, the blessing of the bread, and of the cup, the fruit of the vine, of our Lord's exhortation that these represented his broken body and shed blood, and that those who are his followers should participate—not only feeding upon him, but being broken with him, not only partaking of the merit of his blood, his sacrifice, but also in laying down their lives in his service, in co-operating with him in every and any manner. How precious these thoughts are to those who are rightly in tune with the Lord!

Following these thoughts they may think of the course of Judas, who, though highly favored, loved filthy lucre to the extent that he was willing to sell his Master, and was bold enough even while his treachery toward the Lord was being exposed to cry, "Is it I?" The very thought that any who had companied with the Lord could thus deny him and betray him to his enemies causes a proper loathing of such conduct, and should properly fill us with caution, if not with fear, lest in any sense of the word we should for the sake of honor or wealth or any other matter sell the truth or any of its servants, the members of the body of Christ.

Let our minds, then, follow the Redeemer to Gethsemane's Garden, and behold him with strong cryings and tears praying to him who was able to save him out of death—expressive of the Master's fear of death lest in some particular he might have failed to follow out the Father's plan, and therefore be thought unworthy of a resurrection. We notice how our Lord was comforted by the Father through the angelic messenger with the assurance that he had faithfully kept his consecration vow and that he would surely have a resurrection as foretold. We behold how calm he was thereafter, when, before the High Priest and Pilate, and before Herod and Pilate again—"as a lamb before her shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth" in self defense. We see him faithful, courageous, to the very last, and we have his assurance that he could have asked of the Father and had more than twelve legions of angels for his protection. But instead of petitioning for aid to escape his sacrifice, his petition was for aid to endure it faithfully. What a lesson for all his footstep followers!

AN OCCASION FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

On the other hand, we remember that even amongst his loyal disciples the most courageous forsook the Lord and fled, and that one of them in his timidity even denied his Master! What an occasion is this for examining our own hearts as respects the degree of our faith, courage and willingness to suffer with him who redeemed us! What an opportunity is thus afforded for us to buttress our mind with resolutions that by his grace we will not deny our Master under any circumstances or conditions—that we will confess him not only with our lips but also by our conduct.

Next we are shocked with the thought that it was the Lord's professed people, the Jews, who crucified the Prince of Life! Not only so, but that it was the leaders of their religious thought, the chief priests, scribes, Pharisees and Doctors of the Law rather than the common people. We hearken to the Master's words, saying, "Marvel not if the world hate you; for ye know that it hated me before it hated you"; and we see that he meant the religious world in our case also.

DRINK YE OF THE SAME CUP

The lesson to us, then, is not to be surprised if the opposition to the truth and the persecutions of the light-bearers walking in the footsteps of Jesus shall come from the most prominent exponents of Christianity. This, however, should neither cause us to hate our opponents nor those who persecuted our Lord to the death. Rather we are to remember the words of the Apostle Peter—"I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Ah, yes! ignorance, blindness of heart and mind, are at the bottom of all the sufferings of Christ—Head and body. And the Father permits it to be so now, until the members of the body shall have filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. With the completion of the membership of the body of Christ, the very elect, and the completion of their testing as to faithfulness unto death, will come the conclusion of this Gospel age—the resurrection change of the church to be with and like her Lord.

Then, as our Master declared, those who now partake of his broken body and are broken with him in the service of the truth, those who now participate in his cup of suffering and self-denial, will by and by drink with him the new wine of joy in the kingdom—beyond the veil.—Matthew 26:29.

"LET US KEEP THE FEAST"

With that glorious morning of the new dispensation will begin the great work of the world's release from the bonds of sin and death—the great work of uplifting. The Apostle Peter calls that great epoch "The Times of Restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21) The thought before the minds of those who participate in this Memorial should be that expressed in the Apostle's words, "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him"; "If we be dead with him we shall also live with him"; "for the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.—Rom. 8:17; Rom. 6:8; 2 Timothy 2:11, 12.

With these thoughts respecting the passing over of the sins of the first-born through the merit of the precious blood, we may indeed keep the Feast of the Passover with joy, notwithstanding trials and difficulties. So doing, and continuing faithful as the followers of Jesus, very soon we shall have the great privilege of leading forth the Lord's hosts—all who ultimately shall hear and know and obey the great King—out of the dominion of sin and death, out of Egypt into Canaan. Yes, dear brethren, in the language of the Apostle, "Christ our Passover is slain for us; therefore let us keep the Feast."

THE CUP OF JOY IN THE KINGDOM

On the occasion of the institution of the Memorial of his death, the Master in his conversation with the Apostles, said: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29) Our Lord was here contrasting two great days—the day of suffering and the day of glory. This Gospel age has been the day of suffering. The Millennial age will be the day of glory, and is especially spoken of as "the day of Christ."

The fruit of the vine, the literal cup, represents two thoughts. The cup of wine is produced at the cost of the life of the grape. The grape loses its own individuality. The juice is pressed out, and thus the fruit of the vine is made ready for use. The cup of wine—the juice of the grape—represents, however, not only the crushing of the grape, but also the exhilaration that comes as the result. So in our drinking of this literal cup. To us it symbolizes our Savior's sufferings and death, and our own participation with him in these sufferings. But wine also represents joy, gladness, and is thus used in the Scriptures. So in the sense in which the Lord used the words "fruit of the vine" in the text just quoted, it represented the joys of the kingdom.

The Father marked out for our Lord Jesus in his earthly

experience a certain specific course. This course constituted his cup of suffering and death. But the Father promised him that after he had drunk this cup faithfully, he should be given a different cup, a different experience—glory, honor and immortality. And then the Savior was authorized by the Father to make the same proposition to those who might desire to become his followers—that if they would suffer with him, would drink his cup of death with him, then they should participate with him in his future cup of joy.

BY WAY OF THE CROSS

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." We are all to pass through the trying experiences represented by the wine-press. We are to lay down our lives in the divine service. We are to submit ourselves to the crushing experiences, to be obliterated as humans, and to become new creatures. "If we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him"—not otherwise. So we joyfully accept the invitation to drink of his cup. And not until the cup has been drained to the last shall we receive the other cup—the cup of kingdom joys. While our Lord had a great blessing in the obedience which he rendered to the Father, yet it was a trying time for him down to the last moment, when he cried, "It is finished!" And so with the church. We must drink all of the cup. We must endure all of the experiences. None of the cup is to be left.

All the sufferings of Christ will be complete when the body of Christ shall have finished its course. The new cup of joy was given our Lord when he was received up into glory. Then all the angels of God worshiped him. Soon our cup of joy will be given to us. Surely there was a joyous time when the sleeping saints were awakened and entered into their reward and received the cup of blessing! (See STUDIES, Vol. III., pp. 233-240; Vol. IV., p. 622) And one by one those who were alive and remained at the coming of the Master are being gathered home. Undoubtedly we shall all partake of this joy with them soon, if we are faithful. We believe the fulness of joy will not be reached until all the members of Christ are with him beyond the veil. Then we shall share his throne and partake of his glory. Then with our beloved Lord we shall drink of the new wine in the kingdom; for the promise is to all his faithful saints.

"Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away the stain.

"But Christ, the Heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A Sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

"My soul looks back to see
The burden he did bear,
While pouring out his life for me;
And sees her ransom there."

SACRIFICIAL LOVE VS. DUTY LOVE

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:37-39) "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John 15:12, 13.

The qualities of wisdom, justice, love and power are fully harmonized and unified in the character of our Heavenly Father, our Creator. In him these qualities are supplemental to each other, and in the fullest harmony. And we are to strive to incorporate into our own characters these same qualities. When we use these terms in reference to mankind, we are bound to recognize in how comparatively small a degree these character-qualities are possessed by humanity.

We use the terms justice and love as representing characteristics which are more or less imperfect in all mankind. We speak of charity, or generosity. This quality, a certain manifestation of love, goes beyond mere justice. Here is a person to whom we owe a dollar. It is not charity for us to pay him that dollar. It is duty, justice. A certain course would be right and nothing less than that would be right. Certain things are obligatory. Beyond obligation would be mercy, compassion, love.

What is our duty toward our neighbor? Suppose that the neighbor has fallen into debt or that his life has been forfeited. What ought we to do for him? Shall we give our lives for his life? Shall we assume his obligation? To do so would be a very loving deed. It might also be just, but it would go beyond the line of mere justice; for justice would require merely that we do for our neighbor just as we would have him do for us, if our positions were reversed. The Golden Rule would

measure what we should do for our neighbor. If after we have done this, we wished to do a little more, this would go beyond the demands of justice; it would be love, favor.

But we should notice that the law of God demands not only justice, but also love—love supreme to God, and love to our fellowmen. It demands mercy, kindness. Let us note the injunctions along this line which God gave to natural Israel under the law. Let us see how far-reaching they were. "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." (Exodus 23:4, 5; Proverbs 25:21, 22) If love so broad and so comprehensive as this is demanded by God's law, and was obligatory upon natural Israel, to what degree should spiritual Israel possess and manifest this noble quality!

JUSTICE PRONOUNCED MAN'S SENTENCE

The penalty that God placed upon our sinner race involved humanity in crying, sighing and death. It was not a special exercise of love that pronounced the death penalty. It was a special exercise of justice. However, there was no violation of the principle of love in this death sentence; it was in full

harmony with love. In due time God manifested his love for man, even in his fallen condition, by the gift of his choicest treasure—his Only Begotten Son. He was not deficient in love during all those four thousand years before he sent his Son to earth. His love remained as far as compatible with the perfection of his character. It was no longer a love of fellowship, as with a perfect being; but it was a love of pity, of compassion.

Love was not obligated to make provision for the redemption of fallen man. The act was one purely of grace; and if redemption was of grace, it was not of justice. In sending his Son, then, to be man's Redeemer, God took a step beyond anything that justice could require. Herein was manifested the love of God, the compassion of God, superabounding over what was his duty. No duty-claim could be pressed by man; for he had forfeited all his rights, and had become a convict before God's righteous law. But God's great mercy in providing a deliverance for this convict race illustrated his glorious and beneficent character. In this was manifested the love of God for us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; and this was Jehovah's own plan. So love can go beyond justice, and even beyond the measure of love demanded of a perfect character.

The love of God and of Christ, as manifested in the great plan of redemption, was a sacrificial love. So those who are invited to become members of Christ's body are to have this same love. It is not merely the love demanded by God's perfect law, which is incumbent upon all his intelligent creatures on whatever plane; but it is more. It is a love which will gladly lay down the life purchased for them by the death of Jesus. This life is laid down as a sacrifice with their Lord and Head. We lay down our lives in service for the brethren, and this sacrifice is acceptable because the merit of Christ is imputed to us, making us reckonedly perfect before God. As the Apostle says, "We ought to lay down our lives for the

brethren." The brethren could not demand this of us, nor we of them; but we should all do so gladly, as we have opportunity.—1 John 3:16.

LET US HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST

As Christ redeemed us by laying down his life as a willing sacrifice, so let us have this same mind, this same disposition, this same will. This is the special covenant of the church—the covenant of sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5) This is the covenant which our Lord made with the Father, and we are to follow in his footsteps. The world will gain everlasting life if they come up to the standard of justice required by God's law. But as for us, we must have a still higher standard.

So when the Apostle declares that "Love is the fulfilling of the law," he is not limiting those who are so governed by love as to do the Father's will even unto death, to the mere keeping of the law given to Israel. To be of this elect class, a member of the royal priesthood who covenant to lay down their lives as a sacrifice, requires more than merely fulfilling the demands of the law. It requires love to a self-sacrificing degree. And so by gladly carrying out our Father's will for us, we shall prove ourselves worthy of glory, honor and immortality, the divine nature—which has been promised to the overcoming class—the "more than conquerors."

"Love is the filling from one's own another's cup,

Love is a daily laying down and taking up;

A choosing of the stony path through each new day,

That other feet may tread with ease a smoother way.

"Love is not blind, but looks abroad through other eyes;

And asks not, 'Must I give?' but, 'May I sacrifice?'

Love hides its grief, that other hearts and lips may sing,

And burdened walks, that other lives may buoyant wing.

"Brother, hast thou a love like this within thy soul?

'Twill change thy name to saint when thou hast reached this goal."

OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."
—1 Thessalonians 5:15.

This text is a part of the counsel of the Apostle Paul to the church at Thessalonica, in connection with his message on the subject of the second coming of our Lord. He reminds them how carefully and faithfully they should live, who had such hopes of glory, such hopes of being gathered to Christ at his appearing and kingdom. He exhorts them that they "warn the unruly," that they "comfort the feeble-minded" [faint-hearted], that they "support the weak" [those not strong in the faith, comparatively undeveloped]. Then in the words of our text, he urges that "none render evil for evil unto any."

We do not understand the Apostle to mean that no one in the church should be permitted to render evil for evil. It would not be in the power nor in the jurisdiction of any one to see that none others do evil. The only ones who have such power or authority would be God himself and his great representative, Christ Jesus. In fact, if we undertake to see that no man renders evil for evil, we shall be busybodying in every man's matters; we shall cultivate the habit of evil-surmising, and shall have no time for our own business. The Apostle means, Let each one see to it that he does not return evil for evil. This principle is to govern each; each is to exercise care in his own case.

The thought seems to be that we should be critical of our own motives, of the principles underlying our own conduct. We should reason, "I am about to do so and so. Is this course right?" We should judge our actions in advance. We should not go blundering along, failing to take ourselves in hand, and then say, after the thing is done, "Well, I intend to make amends." Of course we should make amends if we have done wrong. But we should get into the habit of so controlling our mind that it would preclude our doing what we should not do.

While in the flesh, of course we shall never attain perfection in action or words, but we should earnestly endeavor to do our best to attain this. We shall not do our best unless we set ourselves very diligently about it, and determine that we will by the help of the Lord attain as full control of our flesh as is possible. If we make up our minds that we will conquer, much can be accomplished.

ALL THE SAINTS STRONG CHARACTERS

The Savior so loved to do right that he laid down his life for righteousness' sake. Thus it is to be with all who are under his banner, fighting a good fight. But there is a natural tendency to retaliation, especially in persons who have the disposition of conquering—the very class that God is now seeking. These are the ones who have the qualities of an overcomer.

They have a strong individuality; they have a will. They are not supine; they are not merely placid. Those to whom truth appeals are strong characters; and people of naturally strong character are inclined to carry out the law of Moses—"an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"—in the cases of those who have done wrong.

But the Lord's injunction to the church is to the contrary, for this is the way of the sinful world. God has not yet forced the world into obedience to righteousness; in the Millennial age he will do this. The special people who have followed Jesus from the world into consecration to God are pledged to do the will of God, to support the right. Being strong characters, they wish to correct that which is wrong. That is a natural impulse and a good one. But we must remember that it is not the time now for us to judge and discipline the world. The Scriptures say, "Judge nothing before the time." We are therefore to await God's time. If the matter is a legal one, and we are personally wronged by process of law, we are to yield to it in the right spirit, even though it be unjust. Let us wait for the Lord's time and way to set things straight.

THE CHRISTIAN NOT A GENERAL POLICEMAN

If you receive a double injury, here would be a double reason why you would wish to correct it. The inclination to try to do so would rise, but there should be nothing like retaliation. We are not to return evil for evil. We are under responsibility to do evil to none. The expression, "See that none render evil for evil," has been understood by some to signify that the Christian should be a kind of general policeman, to see that his brethren, his neighbors, and everybody else, do no one harm. This is a mistaken idea. There seems to be a certain exception, however, in the case of the head of a family. As the head of the house, one would be responsible to the civil law, as well as to the divine law, for the conduct of his household.

Some have supposed that this injunction of the Apostle means: Let the elders of each congregation see that the members of the congregation do no wrong. This likewise is not the right thought. This Scripture does not given an elder any more right to see that none render evil in return for evil than it does any one else. The passage seems to mean this: Let each of you see that you do not yourself render evil for evil.

There might be some ways in which it would be proper for any member of a family to render help to another member who

was being wronged. If, for instance, one saw another doing injustice to a third, he might remonstrate. He might say, Brother (or Sister), do you not think so and so about this matter? And so with the church. But the elders are charged more especially with looking after the interests of the church. If they should see some one in the Ecclesia not living up to the Scriptural standard, it would be quite proper to make a suggestion to that one about the matter. But we must not be busybodies in other people's affairs.

We are to build one another up; for thus the bride makes herself ready. These matters should be approached only after prayer and in the very wisest way possible, lest we do more harm than good. Let us remember that we are consecrated to righteousness, to follow that which is good. Let us also remember that not merely in the church are we to render no evil for evil, but amongst all men; for we have pledged our lives to follow that which is good under all conditions and circumstances.

According to the standard of God's Word, the disciples of Christ should be the most polished, the most courteous, the most refined, the most generous, the most kind and considerate, of all people. Theirs should not be merely an outward appearance of these graces, so common to the world, but should be a kindness, a gentleness, which springs from the heart, because of the possession of the Lord's Spirit, the spirit of justice, of mercy and of love. Thus they are to let their light shine in their lives.

DIFFERENT INSTRUCTIONS DURING JEWISH AGE

Under the Jewish law it was different in some respects. Every Jew was an avenger of God, to render just punishment for any crime. He who sins shall suffer, was the principle; and this is a right principle. During the period of the law dispensation it was very necessary, evidently, that these lessons

of just retribution for sin should be deeply impressed upon the people of Israel. So during that time it was commanded that if a man shed blood, by man should his blood be shed. (Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 24:13-20; Numbers 35:9-33) If they saw their neighbor do a wrong, they were to help adjust that wrong. They were to have this principle of justice thoroughly ingrained, because it is a principle of God's character. This rule held good from the days of Noah. (Genesis 9:6) It is right, too, that laws of justice be enforced by the world at the present time as far as they are able.

When Christ's kingdom is set up, The Christ will know how to make all due allowances for those who are weak. But we are instructed from the Scriptures that the Lord's people in the present time are not to judge the heart nor to be the avengers of justice. Neither are we to attempt to exact justice for ourselves; but we are to learn and to practise the principles of kindness, mercy and love. The church are to live on a different plane, a higher plane, than any others, not rendering evil for evil, but, contrariwise, returning good for evil.

We are to bear in mind that we are ourselves imperfect. We are to learn, as disciples of Christ, the great lesson of compassion. We are to show mercy by and by, when exalted to position of power, wherever conditions shall present themselves as needing mercy; and such conditions will abound; for all will be imperfect and weak until they can progress up out of their fallen state. So if we would be fitted for that responsible and honorable position of judges of the world, we must develop the qualities of love, mercy, compassion, now. We must learn to be very pitiful with the brethren and with the world of mankind, but must take heed to ourselves. Remembering our personal responsibility to the Lord, we are to judge our own course, and see that we ever "follow that which is good," both among the brethren and with all men.

GOD'S MERCIES TO DISOBEDIENT ISRAEL

MARCH 28.—QUARTERLY REVIEW.—READ NEHEMIAH 9:26-31.

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES—DIVINELY APPOINTED LEADERS—THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES—ONLY ONE LAW-GIVER AND ONE LAW—TWO PICTURES OF ISRAEL'S NATIONAL LIFE UNDER THE JUDGES—MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE AND CARE FOR GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE—LESSONS FOR THE SPIRITUAL ISRAELITES.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."—Proverbs 14:34.

Israel's history from the time of the division of Canaan amongst the tribes until the anointing of Saul to be their king, a period of 450 years (Acts 13:19-21), is called the Period of the Judges—Joshua being the first Judge and Samuel the last. These judges were evidently not elected to their position, but raised to it providentially. But as these judges had no power nor authority, collected no revenue and held no office which they could entail upon others, it follows that any power, or influence, they possessed was a personal one; and to give it weight or force implied a proper acknowledgment of them as divinely appointed, or "raised up."

This arrangement led the people continually to look to God for their helpers and leaders rather than to engage in an ordinary clasp of politics, in which personal ambition and spoils would dominate and control. God did the nominating; and the people, in proportion as they came into harmony with him, took cognizance of his choice (and practically endorsed it or voted for it) by their acceptance of the judge. There may have been a more methodical procedure in some instances; for the elders of Israel who had witnessed God's miraculous interposition on their behalf and who outlived Joshua seem to have constituted the Judges in the different tribes during the remainder of their lifetime.—Judges 2:7.

This arrangement by which God gave Israel their Judges in considerable harmony with his dealings with Spiritual Israel during the Gospel age—raising up for them from time to time special counselors, deliverers, ministers. Similarly spiritual Israelites are not to caucus, wire-pull and decide for themselves who shall be their spiritual leaders, but are to regard the Lord as the great Chief Captain and to look to him to raise up from time to time such spiritual chieftains as he may please. The acceptance of the leadings of these as God's appointees does not necessarily mean their selection by ballot, but may be indicated merely by giving ear to their teachings in harmony with the Word of the Lord.

The lead of such spiritual lieutenants of divine appointment will always be marked by spiritual victories and the bringing of the Lord's people into closer heart-relationship with him. Any leadership which does not produce such fruits is evidently not of the Lord, for the Spirit of the Lord leads not to bondage, ignorance or strife, but to love, joy, peace of heart, liberty of conscience.

Israel needed no congress or legislature; for it had one lawgiver—the Lord—and the law given at Mt. Sinai was to be

perpetually the guide of the nation. The priests and the Levites, under the law, were the appointed helpers of the people in things pertaining to God—to instruct them in the law and to represent them in the typical sacrificing, atonement work, etc. In each tribe, also, the elders, according to their capacity, had charge of the civil affairs of the tribe. As for soldiers and a war department they had none. The divine law was to separate them from other nations; and if they would remain faithful to the Lord, he was to be their protector against all antagonists.

Similarly, spiritual Israel in every congregation are to look out amongst themselves for fit men for the services needed. God's law is to keep them separate from the schemes, and war-fares and entanglements of the world. They are to be his peculiar people, and his pledge to them is that all things shall work together for their good so long as they abide faithful to him. Therefore they need no armies armed with carnal weapons, although they are all soldiers of the cross, pledged to fight against sin, especially each within himself, and to lay down their lives for each other—"the brethren."

TWO PICTURES OF NATIONAL LIFE

If the Book of Judges be read as a fully complete history of Israel during those four and one-half centuries, it would be a discouraging picture and to some extent would give the inference that they were continually in sin and idolatry, and suffering punishment therefor. But this would be an unfair view to take. On the contrary, the record passes by the happy period of Israel's prosperity, and especially points out their deflections from God, the punishments for such transgressions, and the deliverances from their troubles through the judges, or deliverers, whom God raised up for them. That this was in many respects a favorable time for the Israelites is implied in the Lord's promise, "I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning."—Isaiah 1:26.

Incidentally the story of Ruth and that of the parents of Samuel gives us little glimpses of the other side of the matter—of the God-fearing piety prevalent amongst many of the people, the happiness and contentment enjoyed. In our own day, if we judge of the affairs of the world wholly by the daily history and details in the newspapers, we might get the impression that crimes, strikes, accidents and imprisonments constitute the whole life in our land; for the great mass of the people attending to the ordinary affairs of life are scarcely mentioned.

In accordance with this are the following lines from the poet Whittier, in which he rejoices in this land of liberty and blessing, notwithstanding the unfavorable reports thereof which go out to the world daily through the press:

"Whate'er of folly, shame or crime
Within thy mighty bounds transpires,
With speed defying space or time,
Comes to us on the accusing wires;
While all thy wealth of noble deeds,
Thy homes of peace, thy votes unsold,
Thy love that pleads for human needs,
The wrongs redressed, but half is told!"

The Israelites had been instructed by the Lord to utterly exterminate the people of the land, which extermination we saw, in a previous lesson, prefigured our conquest as spiritual Israelites over the desires of the fallen nature. Israel, however, settled down to enjoy the Land of Promise without fully exterminating the condemned ones; and later on the false religions of the latter contaminated the Israelites through friendship and fellowship. Thus those whom God had condemned gradually alienated the hearts of many from their full, proper loyalty to the Lord, seducing many of them into a lascivious idolatry.

So with the spiritual Israelites who do not wage a valiant war against the natural desires of their own fallen flesh—they find shortly that the flesh prospers at the expense of the spiritual life, and that truces with the flesh mean that their love for the Lord is gradually cooled until some form of idolatry creeps in—the love of money or of praise of men or of self, etc., dividing with the Lord the love and reverence of their hearts.

We are not to suppose that all of the Israelites fell away into idolatry; we are rather to understand that repeatedly a considerable number of them became alienated for a time from the love and worship of the Lord, and thus repeatedly brought upon them the Lord's disfavor. Applying this to spiritual Israel, we are not to expect that the Lord's displeasure with his people would delay until they had fully and completely gone into idolatry to self or wealth or fame; but rather that when some of the affections of the heart begin to go out to other things, the Lord's chastisements would be sent to reprove, rebuke and correct while still there is in our hearts something of obedience and love toward him—before the world, the flesh and the adversary should have time to capture us completely.

These records of divine chastisements and of Israel's subsequent repentance and the Lord's deliverance are all proofs of the divine love and care for that consecrated people. So far as we have information the divine power was not thus exercised upon the other nations for their reproof, correction, etc. They were left as strangers, foreigners, aliens from God and from promises.

So now the Lord's corrections in righteousness, his chastisements, etc., are evidences of special protection, care and relationship to the house of sons. It is because of our acceptance in Christ and our consecration to the Lord that he in turn has accepted us as sons and gives us the experiences, trials and difficulties needful to our testing and character-development. This is to the intent that we may realize the treachery and the seductive influences of our own fallen natures, represented by the Amalekites, the Canaanites, etc.; and that we may utterly destroy these, and thus come eventually into the condition mentioned by the Apostle when he declares that the consecrated should bring every thought into captivity to the will of God in Christ.—2 Corinthians 10:5.

When natural Israel learned one lesson after another and, as fast as each was learned, sent a cry of loyalty up to God, his power was exercised on their behalf, and their deliverance was effected. So with the Spiritual Israelite; when he recognizes the true situation and with thorough repentance turns unto the Lord and cries for deliverance from his own weaknesses and imperfections according to the flesh, his prayer is heard, and his deliverance is provided for with the assurance that the Lord's grace is sufficient. Such a cry to the Lord implies that the sins and weaknesses of the flesh were contrary to the transgressor's will. It implies that in some manner he was seduced or entangled by the world, the flesh or the adversary; but that his heart is still loyal to the Lord and to the truth. All such who cry to the Lord in sincerity and faith shall be heard, shall be delivered; for his grace is sufficient for us.

ISRAEL'S WRONG COURSE

The government of Israel was different from every other government in the world. God was their King; and in his providences, according to his covenant with them, he supervised their affairs—whether by permitting them to go into temporary captivity because of unfaithfulness to him, or by

prospering the nation and guiding their efforts favorably when they lived in obedience to him. In many respects their condition was most happy.

But in the days of the Prophet Samuel as the elders perceived that his sons were not to be relied upon to follow in their father's steps and be faithful, impartial judges, they forgot—or perhaps had never fully realized—that God was their real Judge, their King; and that Samuel was only his representative and mouthpiece. They forgot that although Samuel was growing old, the Lord was "the same yesterday, today and forever," and able to raise up for them, in his own due time, a judge of the kind best suited to their necessities. Doubtless, also, they did not realize that personally and nationally they were on a higher plane than the nations round about them that had kings. On the contrary, they felt that they were "out of style"; and, as people are very apt to do, they concluded that the majority must be right.

Influenced by this servility to custom, the elders of Israel petitioned Samuel that he as God's representative would anoint for them a king—make them a nation of servants to one of their own nation. It is hard for us to sympathize with such ignoble sentiments, such prayers for their own degradation. Samuel seems to have viewed the matter from this standpoint, and perhaps he also regarded it as a personal slight to himself. However, he very properly took the matter to the Lord in prayer; it was not for him to decide—he was merely the Lord's mouthpiece and representative, to speak to the Israelites whatever message he should receive.

How grand it would be if the whole world could be under such rule—heavenly wisdom directing and incorruptible earthly judges communicating and enforcing the divine message and law! The Scriptures inform us that this is what will eventually come to pass. (Isaiah 1:26) However, before that grand condition can be realized, it will be necessary for the Messiah to take his great power and reign. Then the people will be ready to hearken to the voice of the Lord through those whom he will appoint and recognize as his mouthpiece. As it is written, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

THE MESSIANIC REIGN AUTOCRATIC

In recounting to Israel the manner of a king, neither the Lord nor the Prophet Samuel meant that the description given would be the proper one for a model king, but rather that it would be the general course of any man raised to such imperial power as the kings of olden time enjoyed. The wrong course of kings in general may be traceable to three conditions: (1) All men are imperfect and fallen, and hence in the case of any king it would be merely a question of the degree of imperfection and the tendency to pride, selfishness and abuse of power; (2) The imperfection of those over whom a king reigns makes possible, and to some extent reasonable, the usurpation of great power; (3) The adversary's derangement of all earthly affairs, putting darkness for light, often makes it seem to both ruler and subjects that an abuse of power is really to the advantage of those ruled.

The question then arises, How will it be with Messiah's kingdom? We reply that the Scriptures teach that his rule will be autocratic in the extreme; nevertheless, no one who understands the matter need have any fear; for he who is to take the throne of the world is the one who so loved the world as to give himself a ransom for all mankind. Instead of his kingdom being one of selfishness, which would ruin its subjects for its own aggrandizement, he has shown his Spirit to be the reverse of this, in that he left the glory of the heavenly courts and humbled himself to a lower nature, in order to become man's substitute—He "tasted death for every man." It is this one who is now highly exalted and appointed heir of all things.

Let us also remember that the church, now being selected from the world, is composed of those only who have their Master's Spirit and who delight to lay down their lives in co-operation with their Lord and Head. Let us remember that according to the divine predestination none shall be of that elect class save those who are copies of God's dear Son; and that the tests of discipleship are such as to prove their love and loyalty to God, to Christ, to their brethren, to the world, yea, to their enemies also.

Who need fear an autocratic government in the hands of such a glorious King? Indeed, such a government will be the most helpful, the most profitable, that the world could possibly have—wise, just, loving, helpful. Let us, therefore, who have been called to this high calling lay aside every weight and every besetting sin, and, by the Lord's assisting grace, gain this great prize of joint-heirship with him in his Messianic kingdom, to have a share with him in the blessing of all the families of the earth, in the recovery of whosoever will from sin and death.

SAUL REJECTED BY THE LORD

APRIL 4.—1 SAMUEL 15:10-23.

DISOBEDIENCE TO THE HEAVENLY KING COST SAUL THE THRONE—HIS FIRST SEVERE TEST—LESSON TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL—SAUL'S SECOND SEVERE TEST—WHY THE AMALEKITES WERE DESTROYED—WAS THEIR CONDEMNATION JUST?—SAUL'S WRONG ATTITUDE OF HEART—BEAUTY AND STRENGTH OF SAMUEL'S CHARACTER

"Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice."—1 Samuel 15:22.

The words of the Golden Text of this Study are the Lord's rebuke to King Saul by the Prophet Samuel, in connection with the announcement that Saul, by disobedience to the Heavenly King, had forfeited his privilege of representing God on the throne of Israel. The rending of the kingdom from the hands of Saul meant more than his own displacement; it meant that his son and his successive heirs should not continue as the Lord's representatives in the kingdom.

For a number of years Saul seems to have prospered fairly on the throne, and the people of Israel prospered with him. It was several years after his coronation that his first severe testing, noted in our lesson of two weeks ago, came to him. At that time a war was instituted against the Philistines, who apparently dominated Israel. Saul waited several days for the Prophet Samuel to come to offer the sacrifices of the Lord, previous to the beginning of the battle. Samuel was provisionally hindered, and Saul himself, after waiting for a time, offered the sacrifices to the Lord, contrary to the divine arrangement, and then proceeded to battle, the result being a considerable defeat to his forces.

Apparently King Saul was not evilly intentioned, but lacked proper respect and reverence for the Lord and his arrangements. This incident may be said to have been the beginning of Saul's rejection by the Lord. The Prophet Samuel's words to him were, "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord; . . . now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart."—1 Samuel 13:13, 14.

APPLICATION TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

The lesson of this incident is as applicable to spiritual Israel today as it was to King Saul and to natural Israel in their day—"Obedience is better than sacrifice." In how many ways we may see expressions of this same condition amongst many who profess the Lord's name today! Many are workers in the Lord's cause in the various denominations of Christendom, and many are their sacrifices of time and money; but inasmuch as they are not obedient to the Lord, they fail of the blessing they would have and, indeed, in a considerable measure cut themselves off from greater privileges and opportunities. Yea, many of them, we fear, are cutting themselves off from the kingdom, from glory and from joint-heirship with our Lord in that kingdom.

From this lesson, given us in King Saul's experience, we should learn that our Heavenly Father wishes us to be very attentive to his Word, and not to think for a moment that we can improve thereon, or that times and circumstances will alter the propriety of our obedience to him. Had King Saul been obedient and the results disastrous, he would at least have had a clear conscience; he could have said that he had been obedient to God and was not responsible for results. But if he had been obedient, God would have been responsible for results; and we know that divine power would have brought about the proper results. Let us apply the lesson to ourselves in respect to our daily conduct in every matter of life. Let us hearken to the Word of God and keep close to it, not fearing the results, but having faith that he who keeps us never slumbers nor sleeps and is too wise to err, as well as competent to meet every emergency that could possibly come upon us as a result of our obedience.

How many of the Lord's people in Babylon would be blessed by following the instructions of this lesson! Time and again they have said to themselves, "I see that present institutions and arrangements are contrary to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ and the practise of the early church; but what can I do? I am identified with this system and am engaged in sacrificing for its upbuilding. If now I withdraw my hand, it will mean more or less disaster. I wish I were free from human institutions, and that I had my hands filled with the Lord's work along the lines of his Word; but I cannot let go, for necessity seems to be upon me. I must perform a sacrifice, and this seems to be my most convenient place for so doing."

The Lord is not pleased with such arguments. His message to us is that to obey is better than sacrifice; that we leave the matter of our sacrifice in his hands; for unless he accepts it, our sacrifice will amount to nothing, and he accepts sacrifices only from those who are first obedient. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues."—Revelation 18:4.

Although the Lord announced the rejection of King Saul, the prediction was evidently not fulfilled for several years

after—perhaps for ten years. The decree stood as if it were a dead letter; for quite possibly King Saul was properly exercised by his rejection and became more attentive and more obedient to the divine will, and David, who was probably anointed about this time, was not yet sufficiently developed to be the Lord's representative in Saul's stead in the kingdom.

KING SAUL'S SECOND TEST

King Saul's next severe trial was in connection with the Amalekites—a fierce nomadic people who on several occasions had done injury to the people of Israel. In sending the message to the king, the Lord gave special instructions that the Amalekites should be destroyed, saying, "Utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Without mentioning other of Amalek's transgressions, he specifies that the destruction here was on account of Amalek's oppression to Israel in the way when the Israelites came up out of the land of Egypt, several centuries previously.

This narrative is seized upon by skeptics to prove either one or the other of two things: (1) That it was the imagination of either Samuel or Saul or of some one writing fictitiously in their names; or (2) That if it be accepted as being the command of the Lord, it would prove him to be a monster—lacking in justice, pity, sympathy and love—that he should thus command the wholesale slaughter of human creatures and dumb animals. There is but one answer to make to this matter, and it should be satisfactory to all who understand it. It is this:

(1) The slaughter of the Amalekites did not mean, as is usually inferred, that being admittedly wicked they went forth with to eternal torture. Death had the same meaning to the Amalekites that it had to their cattle—a termination of whatever was desirable in the present life; and the desirable things of the present life were probably not more to the Amalekites than to their herds. Slaughtered by the sword, the Amalekites suffered far less than if they had been made the subjects of famine or pestilence, and had died of hunger or disease—the ending of life with little pain to themselves or trouble to others—the ending of comparatively uneventful lives, anyway.

They all went down to the great prison-house of death—Sheol, Hades, the tomb, God foreknew and had already arranged a great redemption, not only for them, but for all mankind. And that redemption, secured by the great sacrifice of Christ centuries after their death, will by and by secure to them release from their imprisonment—an awakening from the sleep of death. They will be amongst the class mentioned by our Lord, saying, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth." They will come forth under much more favorable conditions, to learn of the grace of God in Christ and to be amongst the families of the earth who shall be blessed by the seed of Abraham—spiritual Israel. The Amalekites will not be in the chief resurrection, but will be awakened unto the privileges of restitution by judgments—corrections in righteousness.

(2) It is quite true of the Amalekites, as it was of the Amorites, that they would have been cut off sooner, but that their iniquity was not yet come to the full. One lesson to be learned from this is that even though those nations may not be under special covenant relationship with God, there is a certain divine supervision—that their iniquities go not too far; and that, when these iniquities have reached their full, punishment is to be expected. We know not the particulars respecting the Amalekites; but, knowing the character of God, and his justice and mercy, we may be sure that in some particular sense of the word their iniquities had come to the full and running-over measure before this order for their execution was committed to King Saul.

KING SAUL'S WILFUL DISOBEDIENCE

Saul's error in this trial was his failure to carry out the command of the Lord explicitly. He slew all the Amalekites, old and young, except the king, whom he kept alive, possibly thinking to exhibit him in some kind of triumphal display. But as for the flocks and herds, he consented with his people to spare all that were desirable.

It was at this juncture that the Prophet Samuel came to him and the colloquy of our lesson ensued. The general narrative—Samuel's indignation and the Lord's positive statement—clearly indicates that King Saul had not misunderstood his instructions, but had with considerable deliberation violated them. Consequently we must understand his words addressed

to the Prophet Samuel to have been to a great extent hypocritical. He first salutes the Prophet with blessings and with assurances that he had performed the commandment of the Lord successfully.

Immediately the Prophet replied, "What meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" The Prophet understood at once that the work of destruction had not been complete—that King Saul and the Israelites were anxious to take a spoil. This was wholly contrary to the divine direction. They were not to destroy their enemies to their own advantage, but to act simply as the agents of the Lord in thus executing his decree, the sentence of justice. They were not to take booty and thus to become like the nations about them—a robber nation, profiting by the troubles which they inflicted upon the enemies of the Lord. This is in full accord with the Lord's character and the foregoing explanation of it.

Seeing that the Prophet was not likely to sympathize with his violation of the command, King Saul began hypocritically to represent that all the sheep and oxen captured from the enemy were to be sacrificed to the Lord; and incidentally this would have meant a great feast for the Israelites; for the flesh of animals so sacrificed was eaten by them. The Prophet stopped the king in his explanation, and told him of the Lord's words of the night preceding, which in Jewish reckoning would be "this night," because their day began in the evening.

The divine message calls attention to the fact that Saul was humble when he was chosen as the Lord's representative upon the throne, and that at that time he was very willing to give strict obedience to the heavenly voice; but the intimidation is that he had grown more self-confident, and therefore less reliant upon the Lord and less attentive to the Lord's commands. Getting into the wrong attitude of heart, he had failed to execute properly a very plain, specific direction. Knowingly and in violation of the Lord's command he had the spoil separated, and had spared the best when the Lord had commanded the reverse.

If, in applying the principles of this lesson to the Lord's people today, we think of the Amalekites as representing sins and remember that the Lord's command comes to us to put away sin entirely, we may get a good lesson. Like Saul, many are disposed to destroy the vilest things connected with sin, but to save the king sin, merely making him a prisoner. Many are disposed, also, to seek out the things which they realize to be condemned of the Lord to destruction—such things as would be choice and desirable to their taste; and frequently, like Saul, they claim that even these sins of the less obnoxious kind are held on to for the purpose of sacrificing them in order thus to honor God. How deceitful above all things is the heart! How necessary it is that all who would be in accord with the Lord should be thoroughly true-hearted, thoroughly sincere; and that under the Lord's direction we should seek to take away the life of every sinful principle, evil teaching, evil doctrine and all unholy words, deeds and thoughts!

OBEDIENCE VERSUS SACRIFICE

King Saul sought to defend his course, to put as good a face upon the matter as possible and to lay the responsibility for the saving of the spoil upon the hosts of Israel, who with himself were very desirous of offering sacrifices to the Lord. The Prophet's answer is the pith of this Study and contains its Golden Text. He clearly pointed out to the king what the latter should have known and what all should recognize; namely, that offering sacrifices is far less pleasing to the Lord than is obedience to his Word. No one could offer an acceptable sacrifice to God unless he was obedient in his heart and unless the sacrifice represented that obedience.

So with God's people today. It is not so much of ill-gotten wealth that we may sacrifice to the Lord; it is not so much the proceeds acquired directly or indirectly by wrong doing that we may sacrifice acceptably. Our sacrifice must be from the heart. First of all must be the will. He who gives his will, his heart, to the Lord gives all; he who gives not his will, who comes not into heart obedience unto the Lord, can offer no sacrifice that could be acceptable to the Lord. "Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice," is a lesson which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus.

It is also necessary to have the spirit of obedience. Whoever has that spirit will not only obey the divine will, but will seek to know the divine will more and more that he may obey it. It is of this class that the Scriptures declare, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them"; and again, in the words of our Redeemer, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is written in my heart."

King Saul had been very diligent in his opposition to witchcraft and idolatry throughout the land of Israel, and in so doing was accomplishing a good work in accord with the divine plan, the divine will; but the Prophet calls attention to the fact that his energy in such matters would not prove an offset to his deliberate, wilful neglect of the divine injunction. The Lord's commands against sin and every evil thing are to be executed to the very letter, no matter how highly exalted the sin may be in dignity and place, and no matter how precious or valuable or desirable or toothsome the sin may be to our fallen natures. Though it be as dear as a right hand or as a right eye, there is no course open to the Lord's followers but to be obedient—obedient even unto death.

Although fully rejected, King Saul was not removed until the due time. The Prophet Samuel associated himself with the king in a public sacrifice, commemorating the victory over the Amalekites; and on this occasion he slew Agag with his own hand, and then departed to his home. He never afterward saw King Saul; yet the Scriptures declare, "Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul"—thus again showing us the beauty and the strength of the Prophet's character. He was ever ready to do the command of the Lord in any and every particular, yet was not without a feeling of compassion for those who were out of the way—not a compassion which would make them his friends and lead him to co-operate in their wrong course, but one which would have been glad to co-operate with them at any time in a righteous course.

INTERESTING LETTERS

MIRACLE WHEAT TAKES PRIZE

GREATEST WHEAT STATE SENDS MIRACLE WHEAT AS ITS
BEST PRIZE WHEAT TO THE WORLD'S FAIR.

DEAR FRIENDS AND BRETHREN:

A copy of the Chicago Daily Tribune recently came to my notice containing articles, the object of which was an attack upon the Association and especially upon Pastor Russell. Among other points of attack was Miracle wheat, and thinking that some information on the subject might be of value to you in meeting this attack, I enclose herewith picture and data relative to a field of Miracle wheat I grew last year. This picture, among thousands of others of the best fields raised in the state, was sent to the Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture, J. C. Mohler. From this collection was to be chosen the one which would represent the State at the World's Fair, which convenes February 20th.

Now the judges in this matter did not know that this was Miracle wheat, hence they had nothing to bias their decision. So Miracle wheat received the award.

I grew 70 acres of this wheat and planted and cared for it in the regular, ordinary way, and had no trouble in disposing of it to my neighbor wheat-growers last fall for seed, at \$2 per bushel.

In this section of the country we have to sow more to the acre than in some localities, hence we could not follow the 20 lbs. to the acre rate of seeding, but some we seeded at the

rate of 1/2 bushel and some at the rate of 3/4 bushel per acre, and we found the three pecks to be the better. If we were going to sow again we would sow rather more than this.

My field yielded 49 bushels to the acre—more than twice the average yield of wheat in this vicinity and in many instances more than three times as much. If this information is of any value to you or any of the friends who may have charge of the matter of setting these things straight before the public, I am thankful for the opportunity to furnish the same. With Christian love and best regards, I am

Your brother and fellow-servant,

W. A. JARRETT.

403,000 SEE CREATION DRAMA IN LONDON

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

On Sunday, the 13th inst., we completed the first seven days at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Two Sundays are included, as we have no presentation on Mondays. The following are the figures:

	Attendance.	Sale of Scenarios.
First seven days Opera House	19,767	967
First seven days Royal Albert Hall	24,192	1,066

We count it a privilege indeed to be enabled to send reports of the Lord's work here that are an encouragement to you, and to our beloved co-laborers in the U. S. A. All the

time we are mindful of the great blessings which have come to us through you, His honored servant, and the great incentive we have received from time to time by the noble example of our dear brethren laboring by your side. It will probably never be our privilege to witness to eight millions, as in America; in fact, so far as London is concerned, the witness seems to be drawing to a close for lack of funds, although we have not as yet reached a half million of its population—only some 403,000. We are truly thankful for the opportunities which have been granted us, however, and realize that these are of the Lord's provision.

The Royal Albert Hall was somewhat of a surprise to us. On inquiry regarding it we found the manager quite willing to do everything in his power to meet us. He evidently had a good impression of our former visits to the Hall, when you gave the lectures which were so greatly used of the Lord for the opening up of the work in Great Britain. The actual net out-of-pockets was suggested by him as a fee, but exceeded our limit as to cost. Ultimately he agreed upon a figure of £200 for thirteen days, and accepted the risk of selling £10 in reserved seats per night to make up the necessary difference. A sum of £20 will easily cover the balance for "extras," and this we hope to provide from the sale of Scenarios.

It would seem to be the Lord's purpose for the DRAMA to be held back for awhile, possibly over the holiday season. We have no funds and no serviceable applications at present. In the meantime the Eureka DRAMA is claiming our attention.

At a prayer, praise and testimony meeting held at the Royal Albert Hall last evening, after the big public meeting was over, the brothers and sisters expressed their gratitude to the Lord for all the privileges bestowed. All felt uplifted and full of fervor for the truth.

Since the above was written Brother Hemery has received a letter from Sister Seibert enclosing a draft for £100. This generous gift is intended for the PHOTO-DRAMA, we understand; but Sister Seibert does not make it clear whether it is to be divided between the provinces and London, or whether it is intended for London only. The money is most welcome, and every care will be exercised to use same wisely as the Lord may direct. With much fond love,

Your brother in the Lord.

H. J. SHEARN.

"THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN"

DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Some time has passed since we left you all at dear "Bethel," and nothing have you heard from us, but now as we are in Sweden's northernmost city, we want to send a message of love to you and all the Bethel family from one of Sweden's

Drama groups, in which we have the privilege of laboring for our Master.

What a wonderful privilege we have to be able to help spread the "Tidings of Great Joy" amidst the world's tumult, and also what a privilege to be able to present the Drama up here, where it is so dark and cold just now! The sun is invisible fifty-two days during the winter months! Truly we have seen God's power and the manifestations of his love so wonderful that we have, oh! so much to rejoice over.

Wherever the Drama has been presented so far, much interest has been shown, and not once has the theater or hall been large enough for all to gain entrance, and many times have more been turned away than have been able to get in.

One evidence of God's power was manifested in Lidköping. It had been snowing for two days, and during one of the afternoon performances it began to snow still harder, and half an hour after the performance was over the electric power was cut off and the whole city was in darkness, with the exception of a few gas lights here and there. The two hours before the 8 o'clock performance were trying ones for us. Shortly before 7 o'clock people began to gather. All the light we had was a candle held by a sister at the book table. People kept gathering more and more, and in spite of the storm and no power, waited patiently to get in. The brothers helped to line up, and in our hearts we were sorely troubled. We prayed silently, "O God, if it be thy will and the Drama is of thee, give us power, for Jesus' sake."

Seven volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and twenty-five SCENARIOS were sold, with the light of the candle. It was fifteen minutes of 8; the candle was still giving its faint light; the people were invited in, and in but a few minutes the house was filled to its uttermost capacity. We intended to play a few records on the graphophone and then tell them something about the Drama work. We had played two pieces, and it was 8 o'clock. I came to the platform and was ready to speak to the people when the power came with a wonderful flash! The people rejoiced with us, and loud applause rang through the whole theater. We learned so much through this experience. We had no need of power before 8 o'clock, but it came just when we needed it. God wants us to be patient and to trust him.

This is only one incident, and we have experienced so many. God is love. His truth proclaims it; day by day his truth we prove.

* * *

With greetings of Christian love to you and all the dear friends, we are

Your humble servants for the Master's use,
BROTHER AND SISTER UNDEN.—Sweden.

CHANGES IN "SCRIPTURE STUDIES"

We call attention to a few slight changes which have been made in four pages of Vol. II. and six pages of Vol. III., "STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES." These are all trivial and do not alter the real sense and lesson, but conform to the facts as we have them today. The pages containing these corrections are as follows:

- Vol. II., page 77, line 1, "will be the farthest limit," reads "will see the disintegration."
- Vol. II., page 77, line 6, "will obtain full universal control," reads "will begin to assume control."
- Vol. II., page 77, lines 16, 17, "end of A. D. 1914," reads "end of the overthrow."
- Vol. II., page 81, line 9, "can date only from A. D. 1914," reads "could not precede A. D. 1915."
- Vol. II., page 170, line 16, "at that time they will all be overturned,"
- Vol. II., page 221, line 25, "full favor until A. D. 1914," reads "full favor until after 1915."
- Vol. III., page 94, line 29, "in this end or harvest," reads "at the end of this harvest."
- Vol. III., page 126, line 12, "at A. D. 1914," reads "after 1914."
- Vol. III., page 133, line 21, "ere the harvest is fully ended,"†
- Vol. III., page 228, line 11, "some time before 1914," reads "very soon after 1914."
- Vol. III., page 228, line 15, "just how long before," reads "just how long after."
- Vol. III., page 362, line 11, "some time before," reads "some time near."
- Vol. III., page 364, line 14, "must not only witness," reads "may not only witness."

Unless we find the chronology in Vols. II. and III. to be wrong, we must believe that it will be practically the same chronology as will be used throughout the Millennial age.

So far from the events of our time disproving the chronology, they seem to confirm it. The gathering of the nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat ("valley of graves") is evidently in progress. They are gradually realizing it to be a life and death struggle that will be awfully costly. They do not see, as we do, that it means their destruction—"grinding to powder;" viz., the EARTHQUAKE of revolution, to be followed by the FIRE of anarchy, which will utterly consume them and prepare the earth for Messiah's kingdom, and cause them to hear the "still small voice."—1 Kings 19:11, 12.

The present is a time of testing, we believe, to many of the Lord's people. Have we in the past been active merely because we hoped for our glorious change in A. D. 1914, or have we been active because of our love and loyalty to the Lord and his message and the brethren!

Never before has the world been so ready to hear the kingdom message. Never before, therefore, have the privileges and opportunities of the colporteurs been so great. If there are some parts where colporteurs find it difficult to make sales because of scarcity of money, there are other parts of the country where money is not so scarce and where high prices for food make the community prosperous.

Let us see to it that we testify to the Lord by our faithfulness in letting our light shine more and more, demonstrating our loyalty to him even unto death. "Faithful is he that called you," who also will do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

COTTON SEED FREE

Again we have some cotton seed for free distribution. It is of the Caravonica cotton type, which has been so success-

ful in South Africa. It is quite prolific. Our subscribers are welcome to sample lots, free.

*How long it will require to accomplish this overturning we are not informed, but have reason to believe the period will be short.

†The end of the harvest will probably include the burning of the tares.