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## VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

### HAPPY NEW YEAR, 1905

Greetings, dear fellow Watchers! The great clock of Time marks another cycle, and shows us another day's march nearer Home—nearer to our "change," and contact fellowship with our Savior—nearer to the kingdom and its blessings for all the families of the earth.

"How light our trials then will seem!  
How short our pilgrim way!"

But, though thus rejoicing in the flight of time, it is not with us as with many of the poor world when they would express themselves similarly, perhaps at the moment meditating suicide. No, indeed! The love of Christ makes fresh our hearts, as a fountain ever springing, so that to the true children of God every day has the Christian's secret of a happy day and every year the same. We are greatly enjoying the present, with its songs and sighs, its pleasures and disappointments, its joys and discouragements, while waiting for and with the eye of faith looking for "That blessed hope, the glorious revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," and the wonderful riches of divine grace and blessing then to be showered upon the world of mankind under the New Covenant.

"It makes each trial blest" to realize that it is one of the "all things" promised to work for good to the Lord's spirit-begotten children, who are being prepared for joint-heirship with their Lord in the great kingdom which soon is to bless and uplift Adam and all his race. This is the secret which none but the blood-washed and consecrated, the spirit-begotten, can "comprehend."—(Eph. 3:18) These alone are able truly to sing:—

"Yes, happy every day has been  
Since I am his and he is mine.  
He leads me and I follow on  
Directed through the Word divine."

Not that we are absolutely pure and perfect, any of us (except "pure in heart," pure in our intentions and desires), but that we by faith realize that our Redeemer's merit covers us, and permits us, if overtaken of a fault unwillingly, to apply for a share of the merit of "the blood" to cleanse our wedding garment from spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that our communion and fellowship with our Lord be never hindered except for a moment as it were.

Let us start the New Year properly, remembering the Apostle's words: "Set your affections on things above;"—not on earthly things. If they slip away through earthly attractions reset them, time and time again. Gradually they will become more strongly attached to the heavenly things;—gradually we will come to appreciate both more truthfully and find that—

"The joys of earth of little worth  
Should not confine our thoughts to earth.  
Why grasp at transitory toys  
So near to heaven's eternal joys?"

Many adopted our suggestion of a text for 1904 with great profit, and now we suggest one for the year 1905 as follows:

### 1905—MOTTO TEXT—1905

"Wisdom is the Principal Thing;  
Therefore get Wisdom."—Prov. 4:7

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The Wisdom that is from Above  
is first Pure,

Then Peaceable, Gentle, Easy of Entreatment,  
Full of Mercy and Good Fruits."—Jas. 3:17

Let us as "Children of the Highest" give earnest heed to the heavenly counsel as the essence of wisdom. No matter how far advanced we may be in Christian character it will make us better to give earnest heed to this wisdom:—better husbands and wives, better parents and children, better collaborators, friends and neighbors! Let us be wise toward God, whatever fellow-men may consider us.

### "THEY WILL ACCUSE ME OF HERESY"

These words are becoming quite familiar to those who get a glance at the public press reports. Yesterday it was Rev. S. T. Carter, D. D., who thus feared as he addressed the Nassau Presbytery, telling them that he no longer believes the Bible narrative of the fall in Eden, and a divine curse in consequence, and the need of a Redeemer to effect atonement for the sin and to again open to man a way of life: today it is Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., a Congregationalist, who expresses the same fear to Harvard College students, while telling them of his abandonment of the very same doctrines. How it shocks us to hear these aged veterans tell that they are no longer soldiers of the cross and followers of the Lamb. The cross to them was needless and the Lamb's blood was unnecessary.

But there is a ridiculous side to this serious question. These aged Christian ministers intimate to us that for a long time they have had their *unbelief*;—for a long time they have been too cowardly to confess it;—for a long time therefore they have hypocritically posed as believers when they were unbelievers! Alas that such a view of their course is the only one possible. Alas that we must fear that there are others in the pulpits of Christendom, many of them, equally pharisaical.

Rev. Carter feared that the Nassau Presbytery would accuse him of heresy! Is that meant as a joke? Does not this learned doctor of divinity know the meaning of the word *heretic*? Did he claim that he is not an heretic and fear that the Presbytery would be falsely accusing him by calling him one? Let us see what the word *heretic* means, in plain English. We take the *Standard Dictionary's* definition.—

"*Heretic* (theological def.) An actual or former member of a church, or one whose allegiance is claimed by it, who holds religious opinions contrary to the fundamental doctrines or tenets of that church."

This fits Dr. Carter's case exactly. He admits that he no longer believes the fundamental teachings of the Presbyterian church, and that he no longer believes the fundamental teachings of the Bible respecting sin and its atonement, etc. He is a heretic, therefore, not only to the Presbyterian church but also, and more important by far, he is a heretic toward God and "the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."

But Dr. Carter's fears were groundless: Nassau Presbytery by a good majority decided that to brand him a "heretic" would be to brand the Presbytery the same. To say that Dr. Carter had been acting the hypocrite for years would be to charge themselves with the same dishonesty. So Dr. Carter's practical endorsement by Nassau Presbytery (one of the most influential in the land) must be understood by thinking people to mean that Nassau Presbytery is either totally or by majority composed of heretics who do not stand for the fundamentals of religion, neither as expressed in the Bible, God's standard, nor as expressed in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, which they have vowed to uphold and teach.

#### IS AN ATHEIST A HERETIC?

Dr. Lyman Abbott's pronunciamento has been published broadcast, but we give a liberal extract from it from the *Pittsburg Dispatch*, as follows:—

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Dec. 18.—Leaning for out over the pulpit in Appleton Chapel, his long white beard and flowing gown making him look like a veritable patriarch, Dr. Lyman Abbott, in a sermon to Harvard students tonight, broke away from the theology which today forms the basis of the faith of millions of orthodox Christians, and sounded the keynote of a new religion founded, not on the Bible, but on science and the outreachings of the human heart.

"I wonder," he said, "if you students in Harvard will understand me when I say that I no longer believe in a great first cause. Tomorrow the newspapers will get hold of this and brand me as a heretic. My God is a great and ever-present force, which is manifest in all the activities of man and all the workings of nature.

"I believe in a God who is in, and through, and of, everything—not an absentee God, whom we have to reach through a Bible or a priest or some other outside aid. Science, literature and history tell us that there is one eternal energy, that the Bible no longer can be accepted as ultimate, that many of its laws were copied from other religions, that the Ten Commandments did not spring spontaneously from Moses, but were, like all laws, a gradual growth, and that man is a creature, not a creation."

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If we grasp Dr. Abbott's language it means, what all atheists hold, that there is no God, that in some unexplainable sense all nature is God, and that we are all the children of nature, God, by evolution. Voltaire, Thos. Paine, and Robert Ingersoll never did such slight to justice and religion as this. They were too honest to wear a cloak of religion to conceal the poisoned dagger of infidelity for a close approach to permit spiritual assassination. Oh shame, shame! That a grey-haired man should wear the livery of a Christian minister, and the decorations of "Reverend" and of "Doctor of Divinity" to maintain his honor among men, and then, stealing into the Christian Chapel of one of the foremost colleges of the world, should seek to assassinate the Bible and its God and Christ, and to put the poison of infidelity into the streams of culture where they would be most effective in poisoning the entire household of faith!

Dr. Abbott, also, is afraid he will be found out as a "heretic," but—wiser on the subject than Dr. Carter—he does not anticipate trouble from the ministry, who he well knows are generally "tarred with the same stick,"—he fears that the newspapers will find him out. He is still more shrewd, for knowing that the newspapers would discern his heresy he doubtless wrote out the newspaper statement above with his own pen! Why? To deceive! To give the impression—this is not heresy, but the newspapers will know no better than to consider it so. What abominable hypocrisy in the name of Christianity! And yet at one time in our estimation Dr. Abbott was one of God's most sincere servants: we judge from his writings of thirty years ago. Verily a star, a bright one, is thus seen to have "fallen from heaven."

Surely we are witnessing the masterstrokes of Satanic craft as no time since the dark ages witnessed them. Then the adversary used ignorance and superstition and priestcraft as his tools: now he transforms himself and poses as an angel of light. Taking advantage of the recoil of civilization against the monstrous and unscriptural errors of the past, he takes the torch of higher criticism and becomes leader, that he may attract attention to the opposite extreme—equally far from the truth.

But we are neither surprised nor dismayed by such "falling of the stars from heaven," and the consequent "shaking" of the foundations of society as respects religious things. No; the Master foretold it all, and, as our older readers well know, we have been expecting these things for thirty years, and noting their gradual approach.

So far as the Lord's cause is concerned we would not even change matters; for although it will soon produce demoralization in nominal Christendom, it will result to the advantage of the Lord's true people, "Israelites indeed." We are in the "harvest" of the Gospel age, and while "wheat" and "tares" have grown together in the past, the Lord is seeing to it that now they must be manifested as totally different, that the "wheat" may all be reaped with the sickle of truth and be gathered into the heavenly "garner." In proportion as the eyes of our understanding open and we see these things, we may indeed lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing that our deliverance draweth near!

#### HIGHER CRITICISM AFFECTING ROMANISM

It would appear that *Romanism* also is seriously affected by "modern scholarship," otherwise "higher criticism" or refined infidelity. Papacy's claim of Infallibility makes her specially vulnerable. The following from the higher critical viewpoint appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*:

"The conclusion—painful as it is—that one is compelled to draw is that Rome regards the maintenance of her absolute authority, unlimited in its sphere and exercise, as the one thing to be fought for at all costs, even at the cost of the loss to the church of the great majority of her children. This is the spirit, and this the tempter, which brought about the Reformation; it does not spring from 'ineradicable confidence' in the future of the church, but rather from a well-grounded fear that the claim of Rome to absolute, infallible, and unlimited authority in all matters will not stand the test of history, and can not be maintained except by the rigorous repression of individual initiative and independent thought.

"The position in which the individual Catholic is placed by the policy of his rulers is one of grave difficulty, and nowhere is the situation more acute than in France. In the English Catholic body few of the laity, and fewer still of the clergy, take any interest in intellectual matters; but there are signs of grave mischief among the younger laymen even in England. They have been trained to draw no distinction between the Catholic faith and its scholastic expression, or the insecure historical basis upon which their teachers have founded it.

"The natural consequence is that, in so far as those who have been educated in this way become convinced of the strength of the critical position, their hold on the faith is likely to be weakened. Rome has weakened it still more by declaring that any attempt to find a synthesis between the critical position and the faith is unlawful for Catholics."

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But Rome will not be as much shaken as Protestantism in this respect. She has her grip upon the people through priestcraft and superstition, and it will hold to the "bitter end," when anarchy will down all. Meantime it will be all the more trying upon intelligent Protestant Christians, loyal to the Bible, to find the great Antichrist system on their side, defending the Bible, with all the "worldly wise" in opposition. The Lord, however, knows how to sift and shake his professed church so as to gather out of it all things that offend and they that do iniquity.

#### LACK OF CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY

Two conventions of Christian workers have been held recently to consider the dearth of Ministerial candidates. The *World's Work* says on the subject:—

"There is no real 'dearth' of students for the ministry. There is a slight back-set at the present time, but it is not so great as has occurred in other years, and reports of attendance of students in the theological seminaries, when compared with similar reports twenty-five years ago, show a marked and marvelous increase.

"In some quarters there is a determination in the quality of students, but the reports are not altogether unanimous. Methodists and Episcopalians report a decided increase in numbers and in quality, and other religious bodies vary in localities and colleges in this respect.

"There is a marked change in the sources of supply. The West and South provide a much larger proportion of students than the East. The response is greater in the newer regions than in the old, in the country than in the city, in the small churches than in the larger."

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It would seem, however, that there is a danger even more serious than that resulting from a lack of proper candidates for the ministry. Mr. Tomlinson wrote to twenty "successful pas-

tors," asking whether, if they had their lives to live over again, they would select the work they are now doing. Several replied "Yes" enthusiastically, three were undecided, nine gave emphatic negatives, and one declared that if he could avoid being "ordained," he would be glad to take up the work.

Reading between the lines it would appear that the consciences of the majority of ministers are causing them pain which they would be glad to be rid of if they knew of an equally honorable and remunerative engagement open to them. Having lost their *faith* they are not happy in their *unbelief*, and are ashamed of the hypocrisy of their position. Why do they not follow the examples of Drs. Carter and Abbott, you ask? Oh! their case is very different: Dr. Carter is on the superannuated list and not in contact with nor dependent on the public. And Dr. Abbott is quite independent as the editor of a prosperous journal. The others, many, many, are waiting to see how the public stands the heretical utterances of the independents, hoping some day that it will be safe for them to follow the same course without loss of position and income and honor of men. The general public does not comprehend the situation—"None of the wicked shall understand" (Dan. 12:10)—they call it "theological hair-splitting anyway." But the Lord's true sheep, who have believed in him as their *Redeemer*, will know and will understand, and the coming cleavage will awaken them and prepare them for the Light and Truth in fuller measure than they have yet received them.

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"If these twenty men be fairly representative," says the *New York Evening Post*, "the problem is not only how to get men to preach, but how to keep them preaching." The editor, evidently a "higher critic," proceeds to say:

"The causes that deter men from becoming clergymen are today pretty obvious. The old prejudice, that 'learning hath always been an enemy to the Gospel,' is still alive. Indeed, the struggle between rigid ecclesiastics, on the one hand, and scientists and scholars, on the other, first over evolution and then over the higher criticism, has dealt a severer blow to the church than the gentlemen who now so gracefully acquiesce in the new doctrines imagine. . . . The old contest is not forgotten, especially while the reactionary religious press keeps up its din about the higher criticism. Young men, viewing the past and the present, scrutinize the ordination vows, and frankly say they will not put their necks into the noose."

#### ASSAULTS ON ST. PAUL

Higher Critics and Evolutionists find serious obstacles in the clear statements of the great Apostle Paul in the New Testament. No wonder then that he is discredited by them. It is their frequent claim that they take Jesus' statements and not St. Paul's—that the latter and not the former taught concerning Adam's fall and the consequent "curse," and the need of an atonement for sin, etc.

Seemingly they are willingly ignorant of our Lord's statement that all were "lost"—that he "came to seek and to save that which was lost." They also ignore his statement that the Son of man came "to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt.

20:28) They forget that it was our Lord who said to the unregenerate, "Ye are of your father the devil, for his works ye do;" and "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." They forget his declaration, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." They seem not to see that this teaches that all except believers will perish and that the thing to be believed is the ransom effected through our Redeemer's death on the cross.

The above utterances by our Lord are remarkably clear and explicit when we remember how few of his utterances are recorded; and that because it was not due time until Pentecost to pour out the holy Spirit, so it was not due time until then to clearly explain the "mysteries of the kingdom," and hence it is written that our Lord opened his mouth in parables and dark sayings, leaving to his Apostles, later, under the ministration of the spirit, to understand and explain to others "all things whatsoever he had spoken" darkly—"the deep things of God."

Recently a German professor made a bitter attack upon Paul along lines above indicated, and another, Professor Feine, answered him quite well. We below quote from that answer:—

"It must be regarded as the settled conclusion of honest research that Christianity, from the outset, was a religion that aimed at man's redemption. Not Paul, but the founder of Christianity, put this stamp upon the faith. It is true that the great Apostle, in his elaboration of the doctrine of justification, nowhere directly appeals or refers to an utterance of Jesus on this subject. Even in his discussion with Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:14-21), we do not find that Paul recalls for the benefit of Peter any particular word of Jesus on the topic under discussion. But notwithstanding all this, the germ of Paul's doctrine of justification is to be found in the teachings of Jesus himself.

"Jesus recognized the universal depravity, and was constantly calling men to repentance. He preached, as John the Baptist did before him, not that certain classes, or a few, must enter into the kingdom of God through repentance, but that all, without exception, must do so. (Matt. 18:23 seq.) In this thought lies the foundation of Paul's doctrine of justification, altho he developed this doctrine more emphatically than Jesus himself did.

"Again, the fundamental, Pauline doctrine that the call to Christianity and, indeed, our entire Christian life, are a gift of God's grace, has also been taken from Jesus. The latter spoke of the kingdom of God as a gift from on high, to be given to all for whom it had been prepared.

"According to Jesus, the kingdom of God is something already attainable in the present life, while Paul maintains that judgment by justification has already been determined. But even in this apparent contradiction may be recognized two sides of one and the same doctrine.

"The essential contents of Paul's doctrine of justification can be traced back to Jesus himself. It was not Paul who raised up the cross of Christ as the only means of salvation. Jesus himself had declared his death to be necessary for the salvation of mankind."

## "WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH"

JOHN 1:35-51.—JAN. 15.

*"Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."*

John's Gospel was written after the other three, and quite evidently with a view to setting forth matters not set forth in the other Gospels. Thus we find that it does not attempt to give a full history of the Lord's ministry in all particulars, but chiefly deals either with matters omitted or with details not given by the others. Our present lesson furnishes details respecting the gathering of the first apostles to the Lord. Much of its interest centers in the fact that it well illustrates the diversity of the Lord's dealings and providences as these are still exercised in the world in the drawing of others to himself, some in one way and some in another.

While the Scriptures inform us that at the time of the Lord's presentation "All men were in expectation of him," of Messiah, nevertheless we are to remember that all were expecting something totally different from what the Lord presented. They were expecting a personage of high rank, of great influence, of striking and commanding character; and our Lord, if he had been an imposter, would have sought to fill this public expectation. Either he would have given them to believe he controlled wealth and influence, or he would at least have been boastful and heady, thereby making up for any deficiencies along the line of their expectation. By a studied exclusiveness of manner, and haughty disdain of the poor and the sinful, an imposter would have sought to rank himself in the public estimation by claiming the possession of every noble and lofty sen-

timent above others. He was of the royal tribe of Judah—more than this, he was of the royal family of David—and had he been an imposter we may be sure that this relationship to the kingly line, and references to divine prophecy respecting the same, would have been flaunted on every possible occasion. On the contrary, we find our Lord "meek and lowly of heart"—not bombastic, not boastful, not self-obtrusive. Bearing these things in mind we see all the more clearly why he attracted special characters for his disciples, and why he failed to attract the masses: we see that it was the Father's design that he should attract to himself as disciples the meek and lowly of heart, the reverential, the sincere, and that he should more or less repel the worldly wise, the rulers, and the masses who subsequently crucified him. Let us note, too, that these same principles of attraction and repulsion have persisted throughout this Gospel age and are still operative. The masses may be temporarily influenced, and even say "Never man spake like this man," or again, "When Messiah cometh can he do greater works than this man doeth?" But the masses will not be attracted, because the Lord does not wish to attract those whose hearts are not in the proper attitude of consecration and faith. Consequently, all down through the Gospel age, those who have been the Lord's followers in the highest and truest sense of the word, "forsaking all to follow him," have been comparatively few, and, as described by the Apostle, "Nor

many great, not many wise, not many learned, not many noble according to the course of this world, but the poor of this world, rich in faith"—shall be heirs of the kingdom.

#### LOVE BOASTETH NOT—VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF

Notice the quiet, unostentatious, meek manner in which our Redeemer began the announcement of his mission. Quietly he presented himself to John for baptism, and after receiving there the anointing of the holy Spirit he went into absolute seclusion in the wilderness for more than a month, for forty days studying what the divine plan had arranged to be his course. True, he did not have the Bible, but he had the perfect memory, and for thirty years he had heard the reading of the law and the prophets in the Synagogue and was thoroughly familiar with them. He had the entire matter before his mind, and under the light of the holy Spirit he weighed the various declarations of the law and prophets, noted the course of sacrifice which these meant, his temptation lying in the suggestion that easier, less sacrificing courses seemed to present themselves as feasible. He triumphed over all the adversary's allurements and blandishments—determined not to do Satan's will, nor even follow his own judgment, but strictly and implicitly follow and obey the outlined program which the Father had laid down in the Word. He returned to John, seeking companionship with those who were nearest to the Lord and waiting for divine providence to guide in his affairs.

It was at this time, in the presence of his disciples, that John prophesied of Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Andrew and John were disciples of John the Baptist, and when they thus heard his testimony respecting Jesus and the declaration that he had a witness from God that Jesus was the Messiah, they sought the Lord's acquaintance. They followed after him, overtook him, and inquired where he was stopping. Apparently their object was to learn of him, to ascertain what further blessings the Lord had, and what further service than that they had engaged in with John the Baptist. They wanted the best that was to be had. They had not the partisan spirit to say, "We belong to John the Baptist and must stand up for him," as some of the Lord's dear people are inclined to do in respect to the various denominations. There were some of John's disciples who heard his testimony who did not seek to become followers of the Lamb of God, but who were quite content to remain John's disciples. We may properly enough suppose that being content with the lesser blessing and privilege implied that they were not so worthy of the higher privileges and blessings. They doubtless never became apostles, though some of them, probably, became followers of Jesus after the imprisonment of John.

John does not mention the other disciple that went with Andrew on this occasion, but this seems to have been his modest style of omitting special mention of himself. The two spent the remainder of the day with the Lord, and doubtless "learned of him," much to their comfort and joy and the establishment of their faith. The record is "They abode with him." This may refer to the temporary stay of one day, but it may with equal propriety be understood to mean that they remained with the Lord as his disciples thereafter—to the very end of life. We remember on one occasion, when some took offence at certain teachings of our Lord which they did not understand, how our Lord addressing the twelve said, "Will ye also go away?" But Peter answered, "Lord, to whom should we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," we must abide with you. So it should be with all of us who have become the Lord's followers. We are not his disciples for a day, but for all eternity. We abide with him in loyalty of heart whether we go to seek others or whether we listen to words at his feet, and he abides with us, as expressed in his own statement, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

"Not a brief glance I beg, a parting word;

But as thou dwell'st with thy disciples, Lord;

Familiar, condescending, patient, free,

Come, not to sojourn, but abide, with me!"

On the basis of that brief acquaintance, John and Andrew started forthwith to find others and bring them to the Master. The intimation of the Greek text is that Andrew and John both started out, each to find his own brother and bring him to the Lord, and that Andrew found his brother first, implying that John found his brother, James, a little later.

There are some points here that are well worthy of our attention:

(1) Andrew and John were not content to have the great blessing of fellowship with the Lord alone; they desired to make known their great find.

(2) They did not attempt to influence others until they were fully satisfied themselves and could give a definite positive message, saying, "We have found the Messiah"—the

Christ. (Messias is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew word Messiah, and is the equivalent of the Greek word Christ, which means the Anointed One.)

(3) They did not go to benighted heathen, speaking a different language. They did not say, "Our brethren and all the Jews here are already God's people and good enough and instructed enough by the scribes and Pharisees, and we will go and hunt up some outside Gentiles." They did not even say, "We will go and look up some of those sinners who are coming to John for baptism, and who ought to know about Messiah, the great Sin-Bearer." They did better than either of these things—they thought first of all about their own brethren, brethren according to the flesh, and in this case brethren also in religious faith and effort. There is a lesson here for us, easily applied: Our first duties lie toward those who are near to us as neighbors, friends, and especially as members of our own family circles. We should begin the proclamation of the Messiah whom we have found with them; then, after they fail to hear, or after they have heard the way of God, proclaim it to the next in turn, and so on and on.

This is the very plan we are pursuing at the present time, and to which some of our dear friends in the various denominations object. They say, "Take your tracts and books to the sinners, or go to the heathen." We reply that the message ought to go first of all to those who ought to be the most ready for it. They answer us that they have Moses and the prophets and the doctrines of the dark ages, but we reply that these only obscurely disclose the real character and the plan of God, and the real Messiah and his great work. We fain would tell all of them who have ears to hear and hearts to appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths, that they may appreciate with us the love of God which passeth all human understanding. This is our proper course, too, whether they hear or whether they forbear, and as the testimony goes on the circle will widen. It is widening, as reports in our last issue show. The knowledge of the King of kings and the kingdom which he is about to establish is scattered throughout Great Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, France, Italy, Australia, etc. We seek to cultivate the best fields and find them nearest home, but as the numbers and implements increase we extend operations in the name of the Lord, and with the firm conviction that ultimately in this harvest time he will find every true heart, every one fitted to be a disciple.

#### KNOWING JESUS AS THE MESSIAH

Many have seen or heard of Jesus as those who were with John the Baptist heard of him, but have not learned to know him as the Messiah—the Christ. This word Messiah covers a particular thought that today is very generally ignored amongst the Lord's professed followers. Remarkably few Christians know Jesus to be the Messiah at all. The word Messiah as already pointed out signifies the Anointed. The Jews, under the great promise made to Abraham, had been expecting a Messiah, a King, a Deliverer, who would exalt them as his special people and assistants, and use them in presenting the law of God to all peoples, nations and languages, and as authorized and empowered co-laborers to enforce those laws with rewards and penalties.

The word Messiah, or Anointed, thus signifies the great King who was looked for—the great Prophet, Priest and King—for prophets, priests and kings under the divine arrangement were anointed to their offices, and thus signified that in due time Christ would combine all three of these qualities in himself, and associate his church with himself in the exercise of the various offices as joint-heirs in his kingdom. The Scriptures show us that Israel as a nation was found unworthy to enter into all these blessings and privileges, and that, after selecting the Israelites indeed from that nation, the Lord has been gathering to himself and associating with him as his church, as his spiritual Israel, the faithful ones who have ears to hear and hearts to obey the same message from every nation, kindred, people and tongue.

Thus we see that to recognize and speak of Jesus as the Messiah means to speak of him as the great King who ultimately shall reign to bless the whole world, as the great King whose joint-heirs in the kingdom we hope to be,—members of his bride. This grand work of the Redeemer and the grand privileges to which the elect are being called have been lost sight of under the delusions and misrepresentations of the dark ages, which have worked the minds of many of the Lord's people into a frenzy of confusion and fear of eternal torment, and led them to believe that escape from that torment was the salvation offered, causing this erroneous idea to take the place of the gracious hopes set before us in the Gospel, that if faithful we shall be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord in the great kingdom for which he taught us to pray,

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

#### JESUS FOUND PHILIP

Note the varying methods of bringing the blessing to different persons. John the Baptist announced Jesus. Andrew and John heard him and sought the Lord. In turn they sought Peter and James, and now note a third method in Philip's case—the Lord himself found Philip. Particulars are not given, but we may be sure that in all these various findings the Lord had a hand, he was supervising. We are not to imagine that the Gospel work is left to chance. The Lord knoweth the heart, the Lord knoweth them that are his, and the truth is specially sent to the truth-hungry. We may safely say, all of us, that the Lord found us, else we should not be where we are or what we are. The poet has expressed this, saying,

"Yet he found me; I beheld him bleeding on the accursed tree;  
And my wistful heart said faintly, 'Some of self and some of thee.'"

Nathanael's case was still different. Philip found him, but he was naturally sceptical, fearful that his friend was being led astray by a false hope to follow a false Messiah. Philip's message to him briefly summed up was, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." His name is Jesus, and he comes from a place called Nazareth. Nazareth did not have a very savory reputation for wisdom and piety. On the contrary, the Nazarenes were looked upon as rather a fanatical people, and Nathanael sceptically answered his friend Philip, "Did you ever hear of anything good coming out of Nazareth?"—what you say of this man seems to contradict any reasonable hope or expectation you may have.

All along, in every sense of the word, the Lord has allowed his truth and his plan to come through channels more or less impaired. Our Lord Jesus seemed to have something of this kind in mind when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Luke 10:21) The Lord hides his truth in the sense of permitting it to come through unpopular channels. Sometimes the unpopularity is deserved and sometimes undeserved, but it always serves to keep away those who are not in the right attitude of heart. They are not, however, stumblings to the pure in heart, because the Lord will help them over these difficulties as he did in the case of Nathanael, under consideration.

#### A WORTHY MAN'S CHALLENGE

Philip's answer was, "Come and see;" test the matter for yourself if you are not satisfied—I have nothing more to say. Although nothing is said specially respecting Philip's character, we may reasonably assume from this incident that he was a man whose word and manner and general character had weight, that he was not given to foolishness of thought or word or conduct, otherwise Nathanael would have said within himself, if he had not said it to Philip, "I know you anyway to be rather flighty, always going off at a tangent," or, "I know you to be a man of poor moral character, and the thing which would commend itself to you would be discredited in my judgment in advance."

Alas, that such arguments should be forceful as against some of the Lord's followers who presume to invite others to him. In several instances we have known of the present truth being much injured by being advocated by some who were not of good character as well as by some not wise. It would be in the interest of the truth that any such who have given their hearts to the Lord, and therefore have passed from the foolish and sinful condition to the justified relationship, should make well known the fact of their radical change, of their thorough conversion from sin to righteousness, from folly to wisdom, before they begin to invite their neighbors and friends to the Lord.

Repentance and reformation are therefore placed in the forefront in the instructions given us through the Lord's Word respecting our coming to him and our discipleship and service. "To the wicked [the unrepentant, those not seeking to live according to the Lord's way, those walking after the flesh and not after the spirit] God saith, What hast thou to do to take my name into thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee."

#### "THE MEEK WILL HE GUIDE IN JUDGMENT"

When Jesus saw Nathanael he made the way very clear for

his faith to accept. His salutation was, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." This gives us a suggestion that it is entirely right for us to express at proper times our confidence in the religious character of those with whom we are conversing. We are neither to say, neither to think, nor in any sense of the word to manifest a doubt of the sincerity of all who are not fully with us in every point of faith and doctrine. On the contrary, we are to realize that any one whom we may expect to find interested in the message we have to present must beforehand be an Israelite indeed, without guile, without hypocrisy—otherwise the truth would not appeal to his heart and the Lord would not bless him in connection with our service and message.

Nathanael evidently took it that the Lord was flattering him, and he rather repelled at first this forwardness on the Lord's part to speak of him in such praiseworthy terms without a knowledge of him, and he answered, "Whence knowest thou me?" Our Lord's answer shows clearly the divine care over all who are in the right attitude of heart, and how the Lord himself has the direction of his message and his ministers that they may find all the true wheat. With this in mind we have every assurance that not a single grain will be left with the tares in the field—that all will be gathered into the "barn" condition of glory.

The Lord's answer was, "I saw thee under the fig-tree before Philip called thee." How much that meant to Nathanael! He doubtless had already heard about his friend Philip having accepted one who was proclaimed the Messiah, he doubtless was fearful for himself as well as for Philip; and under these circumstances went to a fig-tree as a closet for prayer, for the fig-tree has foliage which hangs low and would constitute it quite an arbor or shelter and a very suitable place for privacy and prayer.

We are not told of what took place under the fig-tree, but we are at some liberty to imagine that an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile there prayed to the heavenly Father for wisdom, for guidance, for instruction, for protection from deception, whether it came through his friend Philip or however it might come, that he might not be misled into following a false Messiah. And now to hear this one refer to his very prayer, his very petition, of which not a soul in the world had knowledge, and to tell him that this was before Philip had called him, meant to Nathanael that the Lord had supervised in the matter and had full knowledge of all his affairs, and therefore he had the assurance that the one he had come to under the guidance of Philip was none other than

#### "THE SON OF GOD, THE KING OF ISRAEL"

Addressing Nathanael and the other disciples incidentally, our Lord said, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater works than these," than this sure evidence of my Messiahship. As an Israelite indeed you are in the attitude of heart which would permit you to receive the Lord's blessing and to have the eyes of your understanding opened wider and wider to an appreciation of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Lord's great plan of salvation which centers in me. "Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye [all of my disciples, all who will follow me in the narrow way] shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Our Lord evidently by this expression called the attention of his hearers and of all his followers back to the days of Jacob and the vision which he had at Bethel, in which he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven on which angels of God were ascending and descending. Our Lord would have us understand that Jacob's vision was a pictorial illustration of the methods of divine grace: that our Lord himself was the ladder upon which communication between heaven and earth would be reestablished. And so, as our eyes of understanding open, we increasingly see this is the case. Upon this ladder, upon this connecting link between heaven and earth, between God and man, have descended to us the angels of divine favor, messages of love and mercy, forgiveness and adoption, and on this same ladder are messages returned to the Father, our prayers. We are accepted in the Beloved, we enter into the holies by faith, we receive the incoming and send back again the outgoing messages and messengers, and all of them upon the ladder, the connecting link, the Son of man, our Lord and Master, through whom alone we have access and relationship to the Father, and receive from him the exceeding great and precious things not only of this present life but also of that which is to come.



# FILLED AND TRANSFORMED

JOHN 2:1-11.—JAN. 22.

*"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."*

Cana of Galilee was the home city of Nathanael, one of the latest additions to the number of our Lord's disciples. He was one of six who had now given their adherence to Jesus as the Messiah. Apparently Nathanael had invited our Lord and the other disciples to be his guests at Cana, where a marriage feast was about to be held. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was present at the feast, doubtless as a very close friend of the family, as indicated by her knowledge in advance that the wine supply was running short. The customary hospitality of the Jews on such occasions would make it a serious breach of etiquette not to supply an abundance for their guests, as well as for neighbors and passers by, who, in the name of the bridegroom, would be urged to enter and partake of the hospitalities freely. Jesus and his disciples were amongst the specially invited guests.

Our Lord's mother brought to his attention the shortage of wine, and from this it has been assumed that she anticipated the miracle. We cannot agree to the reasonableness of this suggestion, because it is particularly stated that the miraculous creation of wine on this occasion was the beginning of Jesus' miracles. We must suppose, therefore, that Mary's long acquaintance with and dependance on her son had made her aware of his superior judgment and resourcefulness in all events and on all occasions. The matter was beyond her control, and, as was often the case with those in moderate circumstances, the bridegroom had probably spent all that he could afford to expend in preparations. Probably also, in anticipation of our Lord's presence at the marriage feast, a larger number of neighbors called on his account—to see the stranger of whom they had heard more or less through Nathanael and others.

## JESUS SOCIABLE IN THE HOME

This narrative gives us a little glimpse of the social side of our Lord's character, and convinces us that the asceticism illustrated by monks and nuns was not a part of his teaching either in word or example. His consecrated life was lived in the midst of the ordinary social conditions bearing upon any member of a moral and religious community. There is no suggestion of revelry or foolishness in our Lord's conduct, but it is reasonable to assume that he participated in the proper joys and fellowships and social amenities of such an occasion. This was in harmony with his own injunction to his followers, "Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep."

What every home needs is not only a visit from Jesus, but that it should be his home, his abiding place. It would be a safe rule of life for all of the Lord's followers to desire to go to any place they would have reason to believe the Lord would go if he were again present in the flesh; it would be a safe rule for us to do or say such things as we would have reason to expect that our Lord would do or say were he present in our stead. Blessings, we may be sure, went with the dear Master wherever he went, specially to those who like Nathanael were Israelites indeed, in whose hearts there was no guile.

When we remember that the word disciple means pupil or learner, and that all of the Lord's people are his disciples (though not all apostles), it gives us a suggestion that each disciple represents the Lord—that where we go he goes, that we are his representatives or "ambassadors." With this thought before our minds how careful we each should be to properly represent our glorious Lord;—to "show forth the praise of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." To this end how we need to pray, not only with our lips but also with our hearts, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." Verily "as he was so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17) "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not," but our duty, on all occasions is just the same: his message is that we shall let our light shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify our Father in heaven.

## "PEACE BE TO THIS HOUSE"

A suggestion respecting the influences accompanying the Lord's disciples—which influences, we believe, surely accompanied his own presence on all such occasions—is represented by his commission to his apostles when he sent them forth. They were to say, "Peace be upon this house," before entering. We do not take it that this is a command that we should openly and formally make such a declaration before entering any building, but we do believe that this should be the heart sentiment of every one of the Lord's consecrated people—their desire, their effort, their aim—that peace and blessing may accompany them wherever they may go, resting, refreshing

and uplifting the hearts of the poor groaning creation with whom they come in contact.

There are plenty of strife-breeders in the world whose entry of the portals of any home means, Strife be within these walls, whether they realize it or say it or not. Full of anger, malice, hatred and strife, their hearts speak forth of the abundance within, breeding discontent and unhappiness. With others who have passed that condition of bitterness of soul in malice and strife, and who have set their faces to walk in the Lord's footsteps, after the spirit and not after the flesh, and who therefore are putting away those works of the flesh and the devil, some time will surely elapse before they are filled with the spirit of love: and in that interim, before they are so filled with peace and joy and the fruits of the spirit as to overflow these in blessings wherever they go, there is apt to be a period in which evil speaking, back-biting, evil insinuations, evil surmises, unkindnesses, ungentleness of word and conduct, impatience, etc., will be manifested.

The influence of such, even though they be pupils in Christ, is a carnal influence, highly injurious to spiritual development, calculated to stop growth in the various graces and to disturb the peace and joy of their own hearts and the hearts of others who are seeking the right ways of the Lord. The lesson for us of the Lord's followers is not only to turn from sin to righteousness and from anger and envy and malice to love, but to keep the heart fully filled with the latter, so that out of its abundance of love and joy and peace our mouth may speak and our conduct may show our relationship and likeness to our Lord, that men may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and have learned of him.

## "HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER"

Our Lord's reply to his mother's suggestion appears rather cold and harsh, but this is largely the result of the translation. While the word "woman" is a proper translation, it does not give the elegant shading of the Greek original, which would more nearly signify lady. The word is the same, for instance, that the Emperor of Rome used in complimentary address to the Queen of Egypt, "Take courage, O woman." We may be sure that neither by word nor act did our Lord violate the commandment of the Law, "Honor thy father and thy mother." We may be sure that in all his words and conduct he was a very model of the meekness and gentleness, patience and love which his doctrines inculcated.

The expression, "What have I to do with thee?" would seem more properly to signify, "Do not attempt to dictate to me—I will know what to do when the appropriate time comes." Mary probably was intent upon hiding the fact of the shortage of the wine: Jesus on the other hand recognized that the miracle he was about to perform was less for the assistance of the bridegroom of the occasion than for a great lesson which, through the servants, probably became known to the entire company. Jesus therefore waited until the supply was not only running low but exhausted, until there was no wine, so that the miracle would not be minimized by the admixture of the new with the old.

Mary's word to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," was a further evidence that she was on terms of very close intimacy in that home. The servants properly enough would need such instructions, for otherwise they would not be prepared to take orders from one of the guests. Mary probably had no knowledge of what the Lord would command the servants to do, but, as before suggested, she had confidence in her son's resourcefulness and wisdom, and that as one of the guests whose entertainment had helped to exhaust the wine he would be pleased to take some steps to assist in replenishing the supply.

Here a question arises respecting the kind of wine provided by the bridegroom of which Jesus and his disciples evidently partook, and also respecting the kind of wine which the Lord subsequently produced and of which he probably partook. We know of nothing to indicate that this was merely grape juice unfermented. Everything seems to teach the reverse of this, that it was slightly alcoholic—the alcohol being produced in the wine through the processes of fermentation, resulting in what is known as "light wines." The remark of the governor of the feast that the wine which Jesus made was better than that at first supplied would, we think, support this theory, but it would not imply that the people were drunk, intoxicated, and that they had thus lost their taste or judgment.

In our view there is a great difference between present conditions and those of our Lord's time. Those people of a warmer country were accustomed to drinking light wines, in very much the same manner that we today drink water, tea,

coffee, etc., and they had no deleterious effects, and the same may be said of the people of some parts of Europe today. Besides, it was in a slower age and amongst people more moderate in every way. In our day, with everything done under pressure and nervous excitement, alcoholic stimulants of every kind seem to be poisonous to very many; it seems to be next to impossible for people to use such stimulants moderately.

It is for this reason alone that total abstinence may be recommended—because of the “present distress,” because of the increased expenditure of nervous energy and consequent increased danger of inebriety, and not because the Scriptures specially enjoin total abstinence. It is our conviction that if the Lord were present in the flesh today under our present conditions, circumstances, etc., he would rank amongst the most abstemious, because if such abstention were not necessary for himself, we believe that his love and sympathy for the weak, fallen race would impel him to avoid being anything like a stumbling-stone in the way of any of them.

#### WATER-POTS FILLED FULL

In those days they did not have hydrants, pumps, etc., but kept the water for family use in large earthen vessels called water-pots. On such an occasion as this an extra quantity would be needed, and quite probably water-pots had been borrowed from neighbors. They were of different sizes but all quite large, two firkins represented by eighteen gallons and three firkins by twenty-seven gallons, or nine gallons each firkin. It was the custom to use this water supply specially for washing the vessels of the household and the hands and feet of the guests, hence the need of so great a supply.

When the proper time came for the performance of the miracle our Lord instructed that water be fetched and that these six water-pots be filled to the brim. This use of the ordinary water-jars would prevent any suspicion of their containing any powders or mixtures that might constitute a basis for the miracle, and the filling of them to the brim would likewise hinder anyone from thinking that something was added to the water by our Lord. Besides, the water thus rising to the surface where it could be seen would show its own clearness and purity.

The change from water to wine was evidently instantaneous, for our Lord at once directed them to draw the wine and serve first the governor of the feast, who would thus have a knowledge of the fresh supply. The latter commented upon the new wine as superior to the first, and remarked to the host that usually the best was given first, when the palate would be the more keen to detect the quality. This was a testimony to the excellence of the wine which Jesus made. We cannot think that at an ordinary feast simple grape-juice would be regarded as superior wine, nor on the other hand need we suppose that the wine which Jesus made contained such a proportion of alcohol as would make it injurious to the users.

But there was another reason why the vessels were filled

to the brim with pure water: they were symbolical, they represented the Lord's people in this present time. Water is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of life, the “water of life.” It particularly figures or illustrates natural or human life, as, for instance, in Revelation 22:17, where the symbol is given of the spirit and the bride during the Millennial age saying to the world of mankind, “Come, partake of the water of life freely.” It represents the restitution work, the revival of mankind from the power of death, the infusion of the restitution life.

#### OUR TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS

In these earthen vessels the water had been considerably exhausted, there was very little remaining in each vessel. So with us as members of the human family, our life forces are well exhausted through the fall. The Jews, as God's favored people under the typical Law Covenant, were justified to a certain extent, but not in the full sense of the word—not justified to life—and the filling up of the water-pots with water to the brim represented or foreshadowed the full and complete justification to life, to all human rights and privileges reckonedly granted to all who become the Lord's followers. As the Apostle expresses it, “Being justified by faith we have peace with God.”

But the figure or illustration goes further and shows us the transforming of these justified lives, the impartation of a new nature by miraculous change. The thought is expressed by the Apostle when he says that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, we become new creatures.

The change of the water to wine, therefore, represents the change of the justified being, constituting him a new creation in Christ Jesus. As the water will represent the justification, so the wine will represent the superior joys of the spirit granted to those who through faith and a full consecration attain to the begetting of the spirit—an adoption into the spiritual family. True, these joys at present are not as real as they will be by and by—they are joys of hope, of anticipation, which we have in earthly vessels, as the Apostle declares. By and by, however, according to the Lord's promise, a share in the Lord's resurrection will give us the new vessels, the golden vessels, the perfect conditions in which our joys and favors will be realized and appreciated to the full. There is a hint of this in our Lord's declaration at the last supper that those who would drink of his cup of suffering and self-sacrifice in the present time would by and by share with him the new wine, the divine nature and life and joys in the kingdom.

This discernment of a spiritual signification in the wine is in full accord with the statement of our last verse of the lesson, which assures us that our Lord's miracles, etc., manifested forth—that is, beforehand—his coming glory and the blessings which he will then bestow upon his faithful.

“The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was planned.”

## ESSENTIALS TO A SHARE IN THE KINGDOM

JOHN 3:1-16.—JAN. 29.

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

The visit of Nicodemus, a Jewish ruler, to our Lord was evidently early in our Lord's ministry. We know little of the man, except that on various occasions he manifested sincerity and considerable faith in our Lord and sympathy with his cause. It was this same man who defended our Lord in a discussion amongst the Pharisees and priests respecting him. He said, “Does our Law judge any man before it hear him?” whereupon his fellow-rulers said, “Art thou also one of his disciples?” Nicodemus was not ready to affirm discipleship even then, but that his sympathy continued with the Lord is evidenced by the fact that he was one of the prominent men who requested the privilege of burying our Lord's body after the crucifixion. We know not what may have been the end of his course, but we fear that while he was too good to be an opponent of the Truth he had not enough stamina in character to be one of the Lord's disciples. Herein we have a lesson which each should apply to himself. The Lord is seeking disciples who are willing to take up their cross and follow him, after having counted the cost. Such as shrink from paying the cost of discipleship cannot be disciples, cannot share the kingdom, whatever blessings the Lord may have in reservation for them in connection with or under the kingdom.

We cannot reasonably find fault with Nicodemus for coming to Jesus by night. Throughout the day our Lord was busy teaching, and a visit then would have been more or less an interruption; besides, Nicodemus had no right to cast the in-

fluence of his presence and office on the side of our Lord until he had in some degree satisfied himself on the subject. Nevertheless, the entire character of Nicodemus seems lacking in courage, for even at the time he presented himself to our Lord on this occasion he declared his conviction that he was a teacher sent from God and that he believed the miracles to be genuine. With that much evidence in hand he would have been fully justified in going to our Lord in a public way, acknowledging as much as he saw and asking for further proofs.

#### BEGOTTEN AGAIN—BORN AGAIN

Nicodemus had the Jewish hopes, and evidently was one of those in expectation of Messiah, and the kingdom which Messiah was to establish for the blessing of Israel and the world. The entire conversation is evidently not given, but the Lord's answer implies that the inquiry of Nicodemus was along these lines—the Messianic kingdom and the conditions of membership therein.

Our Lord promptly put the matter in a very plain light, assuring his visitor that no one could have the kingdom unless born again. A little later in the conversation he added that no one could enter into the kingdom except by being born again. (v. 5) The word “born” is properly enough used in both these instances, and thus we learn that the Lord had reference to the future—reference to the resurrection birth described by the Apostle in 1 Corinthians, 15:42-44—born from the dead to the glory, honor and immortality, and a share in

the kingdom, assured to those who have part in the first resurrection. These all will be spirit beings, and with their Lord will constitute the spiritual kingdom, which will be invisible to mankind in general—invisible to all its earthly subjects, as Satan the prince of this world is invisible to mankind.

Nicodemus discerned that there was something here far beyond anything he had contemplated. As a Jew he had been looking for and waiting for an earthly kingdom and an earthly King, but now he was informed that only by passing through a change, a begetting and a new birth to a new nature, could he hope ever to participate in or even to see the kingdom of God. No wonder he was astonished and inquired further respecting the new birth. Would it be like the first birth? Would those who would be heirs of the kingdom be born again as they once had been born of a mother?

Our Lord's answer to the query is given. To be begotten of an earthly father and later to be born of an earthly mother would insure that the progeny would be earthly also—that which is begotten and born of the flesh is flesh. There is, however, a likeness between such an earthly birth and the new birth necessary to a share in the kingdom. There must be a begetting, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13) There must also be a period of gestation for this spiritual new creature that will precede its resurrection birth. Thus all who will share in the spiritual kingdom as spirit beings must first be begotten of the spirit and subsequently be developed of the spirit, growing in all of its fruits and graces, and ultimately be born of the spirit, born from the dead a spiritual being like the Lord and a sharer in his glory, honor and immortality. That which is begotten and born of the spirit is spirit, is not flesh—"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven."

Nicodemus still marveled at such teaching. Could it be possible that himself and all the great teachers of the Jewish nation had such a misconception of the kingdom! This was indeed true, and similarly we might say that a great many today have equally erroneous conceptions of the kingdom, although not in every particular the same errors that beclouded the mind of Nicodemus and others of the prominent Jews. The difficulty today in this harvest of the Gospel age is that our Lord's words above quoted and which seem so plain are misunderstood, and supposed to refer not at all to the resurrection but entirely to the begetting of the present time.

This is in part at least the fault of the translators of our common version Bible, who, knowing that the same Greek word is translated both "begotten" and "born" in our English language, have not properly distinguished between these, nor given English readers the proper knowledge that there are two thoughts behind this one word—the thought of begetting and, after gestation, ultimately birth. Few enough of Christian people have any clear conception of what begetting of the Spirit signifies, and their confusion is doubled when they are told that they are now born of the spirit. No wonder that the majority of Christian people are in such perplexity on this subject, and would not know what to say if asked whether or not they were begotten of the spirit, or what they mean when they express the hope that they have been born of the spirit.

Every Christian should know of the Lord's promise to accept him to a new nature through begetting of the holy Spirit;—should know that his justified heart has been fully consecrated to the Lord, should know that he has been begotten of the holy Spirit, which is the earnest or begetting to the new nature, which, if maintained, will ultimately be born of the spirit in the resurrection.

#### AN ILLUSTRATION OF A SPIRIT-BORN BEING

Our Lord admonishes Nicodemus that he must not be too much surprised at the great mistake he and others had made in regard to the terms and conditions which would qualify them for a place in the kingdom; they should marvel not, but realize the necessity of being born again—of attaining to the first resurrection if they would be members of the kingdom class.

Our Lord's illustration respecting such spirit-begotten ones is very clear and explicit. Nicodemus could understand about the blowing wind, which had power but was invisible. Our Lord explained to him that this illustrated the character of the beings born of the spirit; they will be like the wind, which can go and come, can be heard and to some extent felt, but which cannot be seen—"Thus is every one that is born of the spirit." Likewise Nicodemus, or whoever else would be an heir of the kingdom, must experience such a great change or transformation, such a birth of the spirit, which would make them like the angels, invisible, able to go and come without being seen of men.

Nicodemus, marveling still more at this explanation of the

first resurrection and the character of those who would have part in it, exclaimed, "How can these things be!" Is it possible! Our Lord's answer was that a ruler in Israel should have comprehended these things. Evidently, therefore, a proper study of the matter from the Scriptural standpoint might have led true Israelites indeed to more or less of an appreciation of the character of the kingdom in advance of its coming. While they would not have been able to appreciate any of its details, they might have understood better than they did. They were content to live on too low a plane; they did not enjoy all the knowledge available because probably too self-satisfied, because they did not sufficiently hunger and thirst after the Truth.

This our Lord declares is the reason why Nicodemus and his fellow officials, the Doctors of the Jewish church, were not ready for his message, not ready to receive the truth—"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness"—our message.

Our Lord continues: You would like to have me explain about this spiritual kingdom, its operations, etc., but this I cannot do; you are not in condition to receive my word. "If I told you earthly things and you believed not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" The person who cannot grasp with clearness and distinctness the features of God's plan which relate to the world in general, certainly need not expect that he would be in any condition to understand or appreciate the things which pertain to the spiritual conditions, which are higher and therefore more difficult of comprehension.

#### NATURAL VS. SPIRITUAL THINGS

Evidently Nicodemus was inquiring particularly respecting the heavenly kingdom to which the Lord had referred. He was desirous of measuring with his judgment the probabilities of such a kingdom as our Lord had announced. Many of our day look at the matter similarly, and refuse to believe the things beyond the range of their natural senses—they lack the sixth sense of faith, or spiritual apprehension. As our Lord explained, the difficulty lies in the fact that they have not thoroughly believed the Lord's testimony in respect to earthly things—they have not thoroughly subjected their minds to him. Only after faith and obedience respecting earthly things, and a full consecration of our hearts to the Lord, need we expect the begetting of the spirit, which would enable us to grasp mentally by faith some of the exceeding great and precious things which God hath in reservation for them that specially love him—for the church as the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Neither need those who have the spiritual sense expect to understand spiritual things with the full comprehensiveness with which they grasp earthly matters. The things not seen as yet—which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man"—are "revealed unto us by his spirit," as the Lord declares. He does not go into particulars with us, but in general terms tells us of glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with his Son as Kings and Priests and Judges of the world. In a general way we may grasp this matter after we have come into proper relationship to the Lord; we grasp it as a whole and not in its details, which are not revealed. What we do see, however, is almost overwhelming in its grandeur, and with the Apostle we assure ourselves that these are indeed exceeding great and precious promises, by which we may attain to the divine nature.—2 Peter 1:4.

#### NO MAN HATH ASCENDED UP

Continuing his argument, that Nicodemus must receive by faith whatever he would know about heavenly things and that he would be entirely dependent upon Jesus' word, our Lord remarked that no man ever ascended up to heaven, and that himself, the Son of man, who alone had come down from heaven, was alone able to speak with knowledge and authority respecting heavenly matters. This is still the case. There is but one testimony respecting these heavenly things—our Lord's own words while in the flesh and his subsequent revelations through the holy Spirit by the apostles. We must accept this testimony, for there is no other.

Here we note the peculiar and unsatisfactory condition of the world in general—not only of the heathen but also of the learned professors of Christendom, who deny our Lord's pre-human existence and deny the revelations he has since made through his apostles. (John 16:13, 14; Rev. 1:1) The heathen believe things pertaining to an invisible realm, a spiritual or heavenly state, but without evidence except such as comes to them through the fallen spirits. In civilized lands those who reject our Lord's revelation on the subject have nothing whatever to base their faith upon, except such unsat-