

WHEN THE NATIONS WILL SEEK GOD

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."—Acts 17:27.

New Testament evidences on this subject of seeking the Lord give the thought that not very many are in the condition of heart to seek him at the present time. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ" and the faith of Jesus should shine into their hearts. (2 Cor. 4:4) Nevertheless, as the Apostle puts it, God is "not far from every one of us," and every one who will seek or feel after him, he will be pleased to bless by a manifestation of himself. In fact, this is the very object of this present Gospel age—to find, to enlighten, to bless and to gather into a special class those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Those who thus seek after the Lord he guides, draws, influences. He leads them to the Lord Jesus Christ, pointing to him as the necessary way by which they may approach himself and assuring them that there is no other name given whereby they can be saved (Acts 4:12), and that all who will come unto him through Christ will be accepted.

Such as do come in this way, we have proven from our own experiences and the experiences of others, as well as from the Word, are met half way by the Lord. "Draw nigh unto me, and I will draw nigh unto you." (Jas. 4:8) And as they draw nigh and continue to approach closer by God's grace, they are brought by and by to a full realization that God is willing to accept them as sacrificers, as "members of the body of Christ." If they fall into line with the divine provision and present their bodies a living sacrifice, they will be looked upon as holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1); they will recognize the "high calling" to "glory and honor and immortality" with Christ. But if they fail to go on, they will thus receive the grace of God in vain.—2 Cor. 6:1.

The Apostle intimates, not only in the text under consideration, but also in his Epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. 2:4), that God wills that all men shall be saved; wills it in the sense that he will awaken them all from Adamic death and "bring them to a knowledge of the truth"; that they may be recovered entirely from all imperfections that belong to Adam's condemnation, and thus brought fully into harmony with him. Because this is his will, he has made ample provisions—not only in the arrangement by which our Lord died on behalf of all mankind, that he might be the Ransomer of all, but also in the provision that all shall have the opportunity of

coming to this knowledge and of benefiting thereby.—Heb. 2:9.

In this sermon on Mars Hill, the Apostle Paul pointed out to the men at Athens that this "unknown God," this God who was unknown to them, is the great God who has divided unto men their habitation and determined their bounds; that he is the supervisor of the nations; that he determines how long and under what conditions the nations may prosper and what liberties and opportunities they may have. Then he proceeds to point out that while God has for a long time left men in ignorance and winked at many of their imperfections and flagrant wrong-doings, as though he did not notice them all, nevertheless another step has now been taken in his great plan: "Now he commands all men everywhere to repent."

The Apostle further declares, I, Paul, have something to tell you about this great God and about his message—that all men everywhere should repent. Do you ask me why they should repent? I answer, for the reason that God is prepared to forgive them their sins, on this condition: He was not prepared to do this a short time ago; he was not prepared to do this until Christ died; but since Christ has died and ascended up on high and "appeared in the presence of God for us"—for believers—God is now willing to accept any who come unto him through Jesus. It is proper, therefore, that I should tell you that there is to be an opportunity of future life through him.

And, furthermore, it is proper that I should tell you also that "God has appointed a Day [the great Millennial period] in which he will judge [try] the world in righteousness." The whole world will then have a trial, a righteous trial, a fair, impartial trial, a full opportunity "to come unto the knowledge of the truth"; to come to a knowledge of right and wrong, a full opportunity to come to perfection of human life and to attain all that was lost in the fall of man. (Luke 19:10) This message should, as far as possible, be made known to all men everywhere, because every act of their lives will have a bearing upon the future; it will either uplift them to some extent out of the depths of degradation into which the world has been plunged through ignorance and superstition and bring a development of character, or it will condemn them and bring a measure of retribution, and thus make the conditions of the future more difficult than they would be if righteousness were sought.

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BROTHER RUSSELL'S EUROPEAN TOUR

[SEC. II.—ROME AND HOMEWARD BOUND]

Sunday, May 1st, was spent in Rome. We had a public service which indicated the deep interest of the comparatively few present. Possibly as many grains of wheat were found as though the meeting had been larger. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." On the whole, however, the meeting was quite a disappointment and came far from fulfilling the prophecy made respecting the large attendance—based upon what were supposed to be very liberal arrangements for a large central auditorium and very liberal advertising. The dear brother who had the matter in charge no doubt used his best judgment, but his experience in such matters was limited. We spelled our disappointment with an "H," and trusted that the Lord could and would overrule the matter according to his own wisdom. We hope to hear of further interest on the part of some present on that occasion. Our text was from Romans 1:16.

We had no appointment at Venice or Vienna, and went on to Warsaw, Russia. There we had a very enjoyable time with the class of about twenty. Brothers Rutherford and Koetitz accompanied us, and the latter served as interpreter. The very closest attention was given while we endeavored to show forth various features of present truth—especially did we emphasize the doctrine of the ransom. We especially endeavored to make clear how that Jesus gave himself sacrificially to the Father and what he laid down of earthly right was the ransom price, which, in due time, at the end of this age he will make over to justice on behalf of "the sins of all the people." We showed that this has not yet been done, that the world still "lieth in the Wicked One," and are children of wrath, and that only the church has escaped.

We pointed out that the restitution blessings which are to go to the world very shortly, are not the blessings which we seek who hope to be of the bride-class, and to attain the spirit nature, and joint-heirship with our Lord. We pointed out that the ransom-price, not yet paid over, is in the hands of justice, to our Redeemer's credit, and that during this Gospel age

he imputes the merit of his sacrifice to all who become his footstep followers. To these he imputes a sufficiency of merit to cover their blemishes that thus their sacrifices may be acceptable. On the basis of this imputation the sacrifices are acceptable with the Father, as saith the Apostle (Romans 12:1), "We beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." We spoke to the dear friends for about four hours, had luncheon with them, and took the night train for Berlin.

At Berlin we had a similarly interesting season of fellowship with the friends of the truth. We had a social dinner together—about two hundred. Subsequently we addressed them for nearly two hours, the topic being the same as at Warsaw. Then came a social tea generally participated in, and later our evening meeting, which was well attended. Many of the friends accompanied us to the railway station, bidding us good bye as we departed for the German Branch office at Barmen.

We had an enjoyable season at Barmen for nearly two days, speaking to the dear friends for nearly seven hours in all. One service was for the public and was attended by nearly 800, many of whom manifested deep interest. The meetings of the church varied in number, as not all were able to attend all the meetings, on account of business and other obligations. Here again we emphasized the Atonement for sin, and showed the work of the Mediator between God and men during the Millennial age to be wholly based upon the meritorious sacrifice of our Redeemer, begun at Jordan and finished at Calvary. We pointed out the gracious arrangement whereby the merit of that sacrifice is imputed to us who accept the divine invitation to become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ to the heavenly inheritance, and in the work of blessing all the families of the earth, as the Seed of Abraham.

We endeavored to make very plain that the merit of the

atonement lay in the Redeemer's sacrifice, and that the church is honored in that she is permitted to suffer with her Lord, and that this is a condition without which she may not hope to reign with him. After a delightful season of fellowship and study together of the Word of God we parted from the dear friends, many of whom accompanied us to the station, singing us good bye from the platform.

MEMENTOS OF THE DARKER PAST

We reached Harwich the next morning, Sunday, May 8th. To our pleasant surprise a committee of the London church met us here and journeyed with us to the Metropolis, entertaining us at breakfast on the dining car, and on the journey pointed out items of interest. One of these was a place where about three centuries ago a lad of 19 years was burned to death as a heretic because of his belief in the Bible and the ministry of its teachings, as opposed to the supposed orthodoxy of his time. At another point on the same road we passed the monument erected to the memory of seventeen martyrs to their loyalty to God's Word. And in London we noted the Memorial church at Smithfield Corners which commemorates many martyrdoms for the truth's sake.

Our mental comment was that the land which had witnessed such loyalty to God's Word centuries ago must still have many inhabitants loyal to the Scriptures and quite unwilling to be satisfied with the "new theology" of our day, marked by Evolution doctrines and denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures by the "higher critics."

Although we arrived at the London Station at quite an early hour for Sunday (eight o'clock) we found nearly a hundred of the dear friends of the truth from the city and suburbs, awaiting with beaming eyes and cheering words. Amongst these was Brother Hemery, the Society's London representative; a number of London elders, and Brothers Driscoll and Jones from America. According to a preconceived arrangement the dear friends refrained from shaking hands at this time, lest we should be wearied, but when later we ascertained how eager they had all been, and how some of them had cycled almost thirty miles in order to be there to greet us, we felt sorry that we had not broken over the restrictions made in our defense—sorry that we had not shaken hands with each one of them individually as a token of our love and our great pleasure in meeting them.

We purpose not to withhold ourselves on any future occasion of the kind, but to rely upon the grace and strength of the Lord for the occasion, and to give ourselves and the greeting friends the pleasure of such an occasion. However, we will take this opportunity to suggest to some of the friends that they must not attempt to demonstrate all their love by a handshake—that they must not squeeze too hard. The spirit is willing and the flesh is strong in many instances. The large gathering at the station to meet us seemed the more remarkable when we learned that the dear friends in the ten days previous had been most energetically engaged in advertising our meeting, which was held the night of our arrival. When we advise you that 750,000 copies of the PEOPLES PULPIT had been circulated in London by the friends in the truth, it will be realized that some of them must of necessity have been wearied with their exertions. Hence the number at the station at that hour and the zeal manifested by their presence was the more remarkable. We may be sure that such love and loyalty to the Lord and to the Truth and to us as their servant, prepared these dear active friends for more of the Lord's blessings in connection with the meeting held.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Three public services were held in this, the greatest Auditorium in the world, on the three Sunday evenings of our stay in Great Britain. The first one was on the evening of our arrival, May 8th. It was a grand assemblage of very intelligent people, of whom the majority apparently were men. Brother Col. Sawyer served as Chairman. Our topic was "Hereafter." As the King had died the day previous, the subject seemed remarkably appropriate. We introduced our discourse with a few words referring to the King, as follows:

"In Germany I learned of the death of your esteemed monarch, Edward VII. I realized that not only your nation, but all Christendom, had lost an unobtrusive but wise Counsellor, a power for peace and good-will amongst men. I take this opportunity to express to this great audience my sympathy, which, I assure you, is shared by the vast majority of my American countrymen. My first thought was, that out of respect for the illustrious dead, his family, and the nation this service should be postponed. But my second thought was to the contrary. Surely at no more fitting hour could we consider 'The Great Hereafter.' There is, thank God, a 'hereafter' for kings as well as for peasants—and royal mourners and a

mourning nation need the message from God's Word particularly now. And, since no more representative audience will probably assemble in this capital of the empire, I have a suggestion to offer which I trust will meet with your approval. It is, that before offering prayer we show our sympathy for the royal family, in their bereavement, by standing." After a brief prayer, in which the Royal Family were remembered, the congregation joined in singing the hymn reputed to be the deceased king's favorite, "Nearer, My God, to Thee." For a few moments before we led in prayer, the congregation, with bowed heads, prayed silently. The occasion was a very impressive one.

In discussing the "Hereafter," we showed the generally accepted views of Catholics and Protestants, and then, in contrast with these, the Bible presentation, which we affirmed to be not only the hereafter of the church in glory and the steps of patient perseverance leading thereto. We pointed out that while the Bible shows, and the creeds confess, that only a little flock will be joint-heirs in the kingdom with Christ, nevertheless there is another salvation which is for the world. The world's earthly salvation we contrasted with the church's heavenly one. We showed that it will be a restitution to mental, moral and physical perfection, to be attained during the thousand years of Messiah's reign in glory, for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We showed the divine provision for an earthly Paradise for such restored sons of Adam as will accept the divine arrangement on their behalf, and that all others will be destroyed in the second death.

We pointed out that this was a very different outlook from the one ordinarily presented in the creeds of Christendom. While taking no more to heaven than the saintly and elect, as the Bible indicates, all the creeds consign the remainder of mankind either to centuries of torture in Purgatory, or to an eternity of torture in hell. We pointed out the unscripturalness and unreasonableness of this proposition, and showed in scriptural language that God's provision is a resurrection of the dead as the hope of both the church and the world—the church in the first resurrection to glory, honor and immortality.

We pointed out that the glorification of the elect on the spirit plane, as the spiritual "seed of Abraham," is scripturally declared for the very purpose of blessing all the families of earth—the non-elect—giving them fullest opportunity to come to the knowledge of the Lord, and of righteousness, and to avail themselves of a share of God's mercy and forgiveness for all the willing and obedient to life everlasting. We had a good hearing for nearly two hours. Custodians of the hall remarked that for an audience to sit for so long was practically unprecedented in their experience. We trust that some good was accomplished, that some were brought nearer to the Lord, some made to appreciate more fully God's love, justice, wisdom and power. The newspapers were so full of news pertaining to the deceased King, Edward VII. and the arrangements for his funeral, and to the royalty expected to attend it, that very meager remarks on the sermon appeared.

BRISTOL, MANCHESTER, OTLEY, NOTTINGHAM

We spent Monday looking about London for the Lord's answer to our prayers that we might be directed to more suitable quarters for the London Office, and to some suitable place centrally located for the regular church service. We learned much, but accomplished nothing. Places suitable seem difficult to find.

Tuesday brought us to Bristol, where there is a very interesting class of Bible Students in fellowship with us. A goodly delegation met us at the railway station, attended to our refreshment, and took us to the meeting place. The afternoon session was for the interested and we were pleasantly surprised to note how many were so deeply interested as to make arrangements to be at liberty from their business and household cares to attend the meetings. Not all, of course, were their own masters and able to control their own time, yet the will of many to be present evidently guided to the way which the Lord opened up for them. About 135 were present at the afternoon service, and 650 at the evening service, which was for the public.

At the afternoon service we endeavored to point out the importance of standing—not falling away from the Lord and the truth. We showed what were the conditions upon which the Lord accepted us as his children, inducted us into his family and to a knowledge of the truth. We showed the necessity for the spirit of love and loyalty to continue with us, in order that we might continue to have divine guidance and blessing, and that love is the principal thing. Incidentally we pointed out the relationship of the ransom-price to the world's deliverance. We showed that it was necessary for Jesus to die, "The

just for the unjust," in order that he might have the ransom-price with which to redeem the church and the world later on. God raised him from the dead a spirit being, so he might have his earthly rights to give to mankind.

We also called attention to the fact that our Lord's obtaining the ransom-price, by the sacrifice of himself, is a different matter entirely from his paying that ransom-price over to divine justice on behalf of sinners. He gave himself to be the ransom-price for the sins of the world nearly nineteen centuries ago. His giving of himself was acceptable to the Father, and what he sacrificed became the ransom-price for the whole world—quite sufficient for Adam and all his race whenever applied. We showed that he had not yet applied it for the whole world, and that hence the world is still "lying in the wicked one," still under divine condemnation, still unreconciled—waiting for God's "due time," when the ransom and its privileges will be testified to all.

We showed that the testimony respecting the value of our Lord's death as the ransom-price had already been given to us—believers, the household of faith, the church. We have received the testimony, and with the testimony God sent us an invitation to become associates with his Son, our Lord and Redeemer, in all of his great work of blessing all the families of the earth in the coming age, when in his Millennial kingdom glory he shall serve the world as its Mediator, standing between men and God. He will then satisfy divine Justice by making application of his merit for the sins of all the people. In consequence of that satisfaction, they will all be turned over to him, and his Millennial kingdom will begin. The Father will put all things under him, accepting the ransom-price as full satisfaction for the sins of all. During that thousand years the Mediator, Christ the Head and the church his body, Christ the Bridegroom and the church the bride, his joint-heir, will reign for the uplifting of mankind out of sin, degradation, death—up to perfection of mind, body and morals.

During all the time of the Mediatorial kingdom the world of mankind will not be subjected to the Father, but to the go-between, the Mediator, the great Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, of many members. At the conclusion of the Mediatorial reign, when all unwilling to make progress shall be destroyed in the second death, and all willing and obedient shall have been brought up out of sin and death conditions to perfection—then The Christ, Head and Body, will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Thenceforth there will be no more mediation, no further mediatorial work or kingdom, because the necessity will be gone. Every man will be perfect and able to stand the test of Justice, and will be required to do so from the moment the Mediator steps aside and turns over the kingdom to God, even the Father.—1 Cor. 15:24.

We exhorted the friends to faithfulness, to loving zeal, to patient endurance, to the development of the fruits and graces of the Spirit, that they might be accounted worthy of association with the Redeemer, in his kingdom work as antitypical priests and kings unto God, as members of the antitypical Mediator between God and men. The service for the public attendance in the evening (about 600) was excellent indeed, when the general commotion incidental to the King's death and funeral is remembered; also remembering the fact that the meeting was on a week-night. Our subject was "Man's Past, Present and Future," and was dealt with after our usual manner. We remained over night, and when we took the train Wednesday morning a goodly company of the friends were on the platform. Some of them accompanied us to our next appointment. Those remaining on the platform waved their good bye, and we bade them adieu, expressing our appreciation of their loving zeal manifested in so many ways and our hopes that they might prove faithful to the end, and receive the crown of life.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD

At Manchester we were met at the station by a considerable delegation of the church and taken to dinner. Subsequently we addressed a gathered company of about 300 in their usual hall. Profound attention was given, and subsequently we were warmly greeted. We spoke from the text, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear (reverence) him, and he will show them his covenant." (Psa. 25:14) We considered how carefully the Lord has guarded the secrets of his plan, so that at no time have they been known except to the saints, otherwise it could not be understood. We noted Israel's covenant made at Sinai and the fact that it is still in force; that it did not cease at the cross, except as St. Paul declares—it ceased so far as those Jews were concerned who became dead to the Law and married to Christ. "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth," but he is not the end of the Law to others.

The Law Covenant has dominated the Jews and will continue to do so until the great antitypical Mediator shall step

forth and inaugurate for Israel the better arrangement, styled the New [Law] Covenant. It will not have a new Law, because the Law given to Israel was just, and holy, and perfect, but it will have a new Mediator more capable than Moses, and he will be able to show mercy to the people more effectively because his standing and authority as Mediator will be based upon "better sacrifices" than those which the typical Moses typically offered. But this great antitypical Mediator cannot undertake his great work until his own completion by the association of the church with himself as his "members," and this will not be completed until the "better sacrifices" are completed. We saw that this work of offering the "better sacrifices" is still in progress and that the Gospel age has been the antitypical "Day of Atonement." At its close the Mediator, Head and body, will be completed and glorified, and will inaugurate the New Covenant with Israel in harmony with the promises. The New Covenant will take over the Old Covenant and all the people that were under it, and thus alone can the Law Covenant, instituted by Moses, find fulfilment in its antitype.

Thus, St. Peter declared, "For Moses verily said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren like unto me (I am his likeness or type, forshadowing that great prophet in the small way), him shall ye hear in all things; and it shall come to pass that the soul that will not obey that Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people." (Acts 3:22, 23) All who will not come into line then with the great antitypical Mediator will perish in the second death, but first they must come to a knowledge of him. All the blind eyes must be opened, and all the deaf ears unstopped. The entire Gospel age has been set apart in the divine order for the raising up of this great Prophet like unto Moses—the great Mediator of the New Covenant. Jesus was raised up first, "Head over all things to the church which is his body." Subsequently the Apostles were raised up as members of his Body and since then selections have been made from people from every nation and clime. The great antitypical Mediator will soon be complete.

TYPE AND ANTITYPE

In proportion as the antitype came in the type ended, but only that proportion and no more. Thus the typical bullock of the atonement found its antitype in the "Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all," and the typical high-priest found an antitype in Jesus Christ, "The high-priest of our profession" or order, and the sacrifice of the bullock found its antitype in the consecration and death of Jesus. Thus also the under-priesthood finds its antitype in the consecrated church, as St. Peter declares. Thus also the Lord's goat on the day of atonement finds its antitype in the flesh of those who are now consecrated to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. As that goat went to the bullock outside the camp to be burned, so the Apostle exhorts us, "Let us go to him outside the camp bearing his reproach"—outside of human favor and esteem and fellowship, for "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." This last mentioned feature of the type has not yet been fully completed, hence the other features of the type incidental to the Law Covenant and its day of atonement have not yet found a fulfillment, but "not one jot or tittle shall fail." All shall be fulfilled in due time. The great Prophet, the antitype of Moses, will shortly be completed and be raised up from amongst his brethren, and then the second application of his blood will be made, "On behalf of all the people." Then, in view of that redemptive work—that payment of the ransom-price for all—the whole world will be turned over to the great Mediator, Priest and King. He will take unto himself his great mediatorial power and begin his reign for the overthrow of sin and death and for the uplifting of the willing and obedient of Adam's race.

The dear friends at Manchester had made a great distribution of Volunteer matter—about a hundred thousand copies of the PEOPLES PULPIT, besides other methods of advertising through the newspapers, etc., etc. A fine audience of very intelligent people listened with rapt attention to our presentation of the subject of "The Great Hereafter." The next day, Thursday the 12th, we bade adieu once more and went to Otley.

THEY HAD NOT MUCH ROOT IN THEMSELVES

Otley is a smaller place than we usually visit on such occasions, but the work there had a very interesting beginning. Some time ago a young man, a local elder in the Primitive Methodist church, purchased a copy of the *Plan of the Ages* at a second-hand book-stall. It deeply impressed him and he loaned it to five of his fellow-co-laborers, local preachers in the same church. All six received the truth with zeal. Violent opposition and misrepresentation came upon them in connection with their public avowal of the love of God and his divine

plan of the ages. Under the influence of that persecution one-half of them repudiated the truth much after the manner described by our Lord in the parable, Because they had not much root in themselves; when the sun of persecution arose they withered away. We were glad to meet the three who remained staunch and were glad under their arrangements to address the public, taking for our text "The Thief in Paradise, The Rich Man in Hell, and Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom." We had the close attention of a very intelligent audience. In the afternoon preceding we addressed the interested ones to the number of about sixty, some of whom came from the regions near. We discussed with them the glorious invitation granted to "the church of the Living God" and the call which has come to her—to be the bride of his Son, and joint-heir in his kingdom, setting before the minds of the class the glorious privilege thus afforded and the riches of grace providing the blessing. We exhorted all to faithfulness even unto death, to follow in the footsteps of Jesus; and we assured all such, in the Master's name, of the "crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Our next stop was at Nottingham. Here again we had a pleasant and profitable time of fellowship with the household of faith to the number of about ninety. Again we concluded that the uppermost thought of interest to the friends must be along the lines of our recent studies respecting the covenants and their mediators. Following the matter much as we did at the other places we endeavored to make especially clear the proper distinction between the meaning of an "Advocate" and "Mediator." A Mediator stands between two persons with a view of reconciling them and bringing them together. Thus the glorified Christ during his millennial Kingdom will stand between God and men. After satisfying justice by the application of the merit of his sacrifice finished at Calvary, the great Mediator will undertake to open the eyes of the blind world, to unstop the deaf ears, and to discipline and correct them so that they will appreciate God and his gracious arrangement on their behalf, and so come into harmony with his Millennial kingdom. It, by chastisement and rewards, will lift men up, up, up out of sin and death conditions to absolute human perfection. Then he will abdicate his office as Mediator between God and men, for there will be none who will longer need such a Mediator.

But before beginning his work of Mediator between God and men, our great Redeemer does a work for the church in accordance with the Father's arrangement. During this Gospel age he proffers himself as Advocate to all who may have the hearing ears and appreciative hearts and who may turn from sin to serve the living God to the best of their ability, and who may exercise faith in the Redeemer, and approach the Father through him. Such as thus approach God are approaching justification by their faith and by their obedience. To such God declares, "Draw nigh to me and I will draw nigh to you." (Jas. 4:8) Every step that these advance from sin toward righteousness is a step toward God, toward justification, based upon their faith in God; toward covenant relationship. To such God draws nigh in the same proportion. At first they are justified to fellowship with God, as Abraham was justified by his faith and obedience. But the call of this present time is to sonship and joint-heirship with Christ in his kingdom.

Hence the Father points these who draw nigh to him to Jesus as "The way, the truth and the life," and his message is, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Those desiring fellowship with God to the full, to have his blessing of eternal life, may hope to attain it only through accepting the merit of Christ's sacrifice by faith and by making a consecration of themselves to be his disciples, and to walk in his steps. Faith such as Abraham had and exercised so beautifully could not bring him nearer to God than justification to fellowship and to receive a certain blessing promised, a "better resurrection." But those who come now to God, in view of the sacrifice of Christ, may accept him as their Advocate, and through him have full presentation to the Father, and may enter fully

into covenant relationship with him as sons. There is no other invitation at the present time than that of the spirit of full devotion to the Father's will; these alone are now sought.

THE IMPUTATION OF HIS MERIT

To these the appointed Advocate declares his willingness to be their Advocate—to undertake to be their spokesman with the Father, and to make good in the Father's sight for all their blemishes of the flesh, so as to enable them to offer (Mal. 3:3) a righteous sacrifice which God could accept. We pointed out that all these called to be the followers of Jesus, had, unlike their Leader, weak, imperfect and blemished bodies. They "were children of wrath even as others," but they got out of that condition by turning their hearts to God and away from sin; and by accepting his appointed way in Christ. But although there are many steps by which God may be approached quickly or slowly, nevertheless there is the one standard which must be attained before any can be accepted of the Father as members of the body of Christ. That step is full consecration even unto death. Then the Redeemer imputes such a portion of his merit to such as will make good the sinner's deficiency, and thus enable the Father to accept him as a sacrifice. This is in accord with the Apostle's words in Romans 12:1. Our sacrifices themselves are not holy and acceptable to God, but only because of our relationship to the great Advocate. Our Advocate imputes sufficient of his merit to make good our deficiency. If one is deficient 50 per cent., the Lord imputes to him that 50 per cent. If another is deficient 25 per cent., that amount is imputed to him. If another be deficient 75 per cent., that amount is imputed to him—to each according to his needs from the abundant sufficiency of him who loved us and bought us with his own blood.

Just as soon as our Redeemer makes this imputation of his merit on our behalf we are in the Father's sight justified fully and completely from all things—as much so as though we had never committed sin. It is in view of this justification that the Father accepts our sacrifice as holy and acceptable, and begets us of his holy Spirit. We exhorted the friends to remember that thus it was that they entered into covenant relationship with God, and that they could maintain that relationship only by continuing their sacrifice on the altar—laying down their lives for the brethren, and in the service of God generally, "doing good unto all men as they have opportunity, especially the household of faith." We reminded them that this covenant relationship into which the church has come is not by the covenant of the Law of Moses, nor by the New [Law] Covenant, which will take the place of the old Law Covenant with Israel, under the better Mediator, and which will operate during the Millennial age, and bring them into harmony with God, and into full covenant relationship only at the close of the Millennium.

Our covenant relationship, which we enter into at once through the assistance of our great Advocate, brings us immediately into fellowship, into sonship; and immediately makes us joint-heirs with Christ Jesus our Lord to the heavenly inheritance. Wherefore we are no longer aliens but sons. Not only does no Mediator stand between us and God, but no Mediator brought us to God. The Father himself called us and drew us, as the Scriptures declare, and himself pointed us to Jesus our Advocate. We called attention to the fact that an Advocate stands alongside of as a spokesman, and does not come between, as does the Mediator. We also drew attention to the fact that Jesus was not spoken of as our Mediator, but we are told that he is our "Advocate with the Father."

The evening session for the public was in Mechanics Hall, and was well attended; our topic was, "The Thief in Paradise, The Rich Man in Hell, and Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom." Bidding the Nottingham friends good-bye, with best wishes for their eternal welfare, and accepting their good wishes on our behalf, we went to London on Saturday, there to look further respecting the Lord's Providence for the future housing of his work.

DOES OUR LORD NOW OWN THE HUMAN RACE?

If a man were purchasing a building, had entered into negotiations for it, had signed a contract and were making arrangements to secure the money to apply it in payment for the building, it would be very appropriate, as soon as he had signed the contract, to say, This is the owner of the building. In the strict sense of the word, however, he would not be the owner until he had paid the price and all the receipts were properly given, and, instead of the contract, he had the deed. A contract is an agreement for the carrying out of a project; the deed witnesses the transaction actually accomplished.

As far as the contract was concerned, our Lord Jesus en-

tered into it with the Father; and in view of his having given to the Father the ransom-price—"Even as the Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many"—he already has a claim to being Lord of all, in a prospective sense, not in the actual sense, as there are millions of people on earth today of whom he is not Lord; their knees have not bowed; their tongues have not confessed. So he is not their Lord in the absolute sense, but his work is progressing, and, in view of the authority which will yet be exercised by him and of the work which he will yet do, the Father speaks of him prophetically as "Lord of all."

THE WORLD ASLEEP IN JESUS

We will here consider certain Scriptures as having a bearing upon the matter. We mention first the Scripture which says that the world "sleep in Jesus." (1 Thess. 4:14) How can they sleep in Jesus, unless Jesus owns the world? may be asked. We answer that they sleep in Jesus in exactly the same way that Abraham and all Israel sleep and all the kings and prophets are said to be asleep. Not that Jesus at the time of their death had paid a ransom-price for mankind, nor had come into the world to do so, but because, in the divine plan, God had made arrangements for the entire transaction and had guaranteed that a Redeemer would be found, that a ransom-price would be given, and that all mankind would be recovered from the tomb. Further, God himself spoke from that standpoint when he said that he was the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, speaking as though they were really not dead at all, but merely asleep, waiting for him.

Similarly, all who believed God could speak of and think of all who were dead as merely asleep for the time and awaiting the resurrection, even though Jesus had not yet come. The same is true since Jesus came and died. It is now still more reasonable and proper for us to say that all "sleep in Jesus," because now he is identified as the one who has given himself a ransom-price for all. It is not that the price has been applied for all, but merely that he has placed in the Father's hands his sacrificed life, which is his to appropriate and which is sufficient "for the sins of the whole world." (John 3:16) It has not as yet been appropriated for the world, but merely for the church, for the price is first a satisfaction for our sins, the church's sins, and afterwards for the sins of the whole world.—1 John 2:2.

THE CHURCH ALONE REDEEMED THUS FAR

We will next consider the text, Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. (1 Pet. 1:18, 19) The reference here is to us, the Church, and does not extend beyond the church to the world. It does not imply that the world is redeemed as yet. Jesus' merit, of course, is all-sufficient for the whole world, but he has not yet appropriated it for all men.

We will consider another text, "Ye are bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6:20) This text, similarly, speaks not of the world, but of the church. It is the "Ye" class that were bought, and even they were not bought when Jesus died at Calvary. There, indeed, he committed to the Father's hands a price (Luke 23:46) sufficient for all; but it was not then appropriated for anybody—not even for us, not until his resurrection and ascension, when "he appeared in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24) Then we were bought. "Ye were bought with the precious blood of Christ." His blood was made the offset so far as believers are concerned.

Another text: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2) We answer that he was a propitiation, satisfaction, for our sins, in one sense of the word, when he died, but the satisfaction had not then been applied for our sins. When he died the merit of his death was a satisfaction-price for the sins of the whole world, also, but it was not applied for the sins of the whole world. When he ascended up on high he appeared for us, the church class, and made satisfaction for our sins. Therefore, as we believe and make consecration, our sins are remitted. His merit is additionally the satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; but he has not yet applied it for the world, hence the world is not free from the penalty of sin; it is still under condemnation. Concerning us, however, the Apostle says, "We have escaped the condemnation that is on the world." And again he says, "We were children of wrath even as others." The others, we see, are still children of wrath. Why? Because the satisfaction for their sins has not yet been made. The great Redeemer has the satisfaction price; it merely awaits the due time for application.

Notice another passage, "Christ died and rose and revived that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." (Rom. 14:9) The text very appropriately states the valuable transaction accomplished by our Lord. His death was a necessary feature of the redemptive work. His raising and revival were also necessary features. And further, he could not have been Lord in any other way than by the Father's proclaiming him "Lord of all," and "Let all the angels of God worship him." But while he is proclaimed to be Lord of all, it will take time to bring about the recognition of it. In harmony with this, the Apostle says, "In the fullness of time God will gather together under him (Jesus) all things in heaven and earth." But it will take the fullness of time, the fullness of the Millennial age, to accomplish this gathering together under him and making him Lord of all. So we see that prophetically and by divine appointment he already has that office, but now he waits

until his enemies shall be brought under him or made his footstool, and all things shall be subjected to him.

"A RANSOM FOR ALL"

We next consider the text, "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2:6) The giving of himself as the man Christ Jesus was when he presented himself at Jordan and surrendered all to the Father's will. This work of surrendering his earthly life and all his earthly rights was fully accomplished at Calvary when he cried, "It is finished." He had finished the work the Father had given him to do. He had given himself to be a "ransom for all," and his death-merit is sufficient to constitute a ransom for all, as soon as it shall be so appropriated. Thus far, we see, it has been applied only for us who believe, and the time for its application for the remainder of the world will be at the beginning of the Millennial age; but it will not reach all of the human family at the beginning.

While our Lord's merit is fully appropriated during the Gospel age for all who come unto him, it will be fully set free when the last of the consecrated ones shall have passed beyond the veil. His merit has been imputed to them for the very purpose of enabling them to be sacrificers and when it shall have been released by the death of the last of the consecrated, it will be again at his disposal for appropriation. Then the great High Priest will make the second sprinkling of the blood—not on our behalf, because we shall have no further need of it, having by that time become perfect as new creatures beyond the veil, members of his body. The second sprinkling will be on behalf of "all the people"—all who will come under the New Covenant arrangement—"to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile"; all who will desire, when they come to sufficient knowledge, under that New Covenant, to come under the merit of our Lord's ransom-price; and those who will fail to thus come, will reject the ransom-price and hence the blessings of restitution.

All these blessings will come gradually, not instantaneously, not by faith, but actually, by restitution processes. All through the Millennial age the Christ will be giving men the benefit of our Lord's ransom or "corresponding price," and the full benefit of this price will not have been given until the work of the Millennial age shall have been finished and shall have brought to perfection all who desire to be God's people, upon God's terms, as God never intended to give his blessings to any but those who desire to be in harmony with him on his terms. God never intended to do anything for those who are willingly and intentionally contrary, such as Satan.

It may be asked how the foregoing will conform with the text, "That he [Jesus], by the grace of God, should taste for every man." (Heb. 2:9) We answer that this is God's great work which he purposed in himself before the foundation of the world—that the ransoming of Adam and all his race should be accomplished through the death of Christ. Thus he tasted death for every man, whether the benefit of it was received on the Day of Pentecost, or later, during the age, or whether they will get it at the beginning of the Millennial age. It is for every man that he "tasted death," that he might give them the blessings that will come to the world of mankind down to the completion of the Millennial age, and, if obedient, to all eternity.

"He ascended up on high and led captivity captive"—or, as another translation gives it, and we think more correctly, "He ascended up on high leading forth a multitude of captives." This passage shows that he was the leader of all the captive race. We, the church, follow first; the "great company" follow next; the ancient worthies will follow soon afterward, and at the end of the Millennial age he will bring in the remainder of the race. They will all be led forth, all delivered from the power of sin and death.

THE PRICE ONE THING—THE APPLICATION OF IT ANOTHER THING

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." This passage does not state that Christ made an application of his merit for the ungodly; it merely states that God arranged his plan so that it was necessary for Christ to die for the ungodly. Why did God so arrange it? He arranged it on behalf of, or in the interest of, the ungodly—not merely the Jews and those who were, as some of us may have been, desirous of harmony with God, but for all the ungodly. The merit of his death was intended by the Father to be applicable to every member of the race, the ungodly race of Adam, all of them sinners and more or less depraved and degraded and out of the way.

Now, then, the object for which the price was given is one thing and the application of it is another. The purpose of Christ's death was to redeem the world, to be the world's ransom-price, that he might be the restorer of all. But in this plan there are time and order; the work progresses step by

step. The first step was for Christ himself to secure eternal glory by his own obedience to death and to have as an asset something that he could give away—his earthly life, which he had not forfeited.

The next step was that he should ascend up on high and apply this price. He appeared as advocate for a special class of humanity. What special class? We answer, He appeared for all those from among men who should desire to come into harmony with God, who should desire to accept God's favor and to become members of the body of Christ under an invitation or programme that God had arranged. When he appeared for these he imputed the merit of his sacrifice on their behalf, and thus all this merit is absorbed, so to speak, in this one work first undertaken, this work of justifying and assisting this special class who desire to walk in Jesus' steps, desire to suffer with him that they may also share with him the heavenly glory. He does this, not by first giving them earthly restitution, but by simply imputing his merit to them.

This imputation of his merit, coming to those who have turned from sin, who are believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have consecrated themselves to God, covers their Adamic sin and makes up for all deficiencies of their flesh, so that they can "present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, their reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1) In other words, he becomes endorser for these. They are not sufficient of themselves, but he guarantees for them that if they will faithfully perform this laying down of their lives, his merit will continue to be applied for all their imperfections. These are the royal priests, whom he in one picture represents as his bride, and in another as members of his body. These are "more than conquerors."

Then comes the secondary class, not up to this standard—a class that does not voluntarily, heartily and cheerfully lay down their lives in the desire to please the Father and do his will. These, nevertheless, are loyal at heart and are restrained from full sacrifice only through "fear of death," through fear of what it will cost them. They will be tested to the point that they will be obliged ultimately to lay down their lives, and to do so with a willing mind. They fail of coming off more than conquerors because of permitting experiences designed to test them to retard their progress in the matter of gaining the high position offered them, thus they become the second company. There is, also, a third class, those who die the "second death," who "draw back unto perdition."

By the time that these three classes shall have finished their course, all the merit that Christ imputed will be available again as at first; all will be at his disposal afresh. Then it will be applied in the sealing of the New Covenant which will be made with Israel, but which will be broad enough to include every individual of all the nations of the earth who will be willing to come under the same terms and to become the children of Abraham through faith and obedience.

"THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION"

In this connection let us consider the text, "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."—Eph. 1:14.

The holy Spirit now granted to the church is the earnest or foretaste of our inheritance. What are we to inherit? We are to "inherit all things." First of all we are to inherit the divine nature, and secondly, we are to inherit the great Abrahamic promise that through us, in union with our Lord Jesus, as members of his body, all the families of the earth shall be

blessed. We speak of ourselves as being of the Lord's purchased possession, and when we are changed to receive his glory, this part of his possession will be complete and we shall be perfected with him and be under his direct control.

After this another feature of the same possession, and linked in as part of this same promise, will become operative. The precious blood will then be applied to seal the New Covenant on behalf of the sins of all the people and the work of recovering the still larger possession will progress until the close of the Millennial age, when the whole possession will have been brought into line and everything subjected to his rule and turned over to the Father.

We will also consider the passage, "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Christ Jesus, hath abounded unto many."—Rom. 5:15.

In this text the Apostle evidently does not mean to be understood as saying that the full abundance of grace had then reached the many, because that would be an untruth. It is now 1,800 years since the Apostle's day, and the abundance of grace has not yet reached the majority of men. So we must understand him to mean that this abundance of grace that is in Christ according to the Father's plan and arrangement and purpose, is yet to reach the many. The world is yet in its sins, and Israel is yet in its sins and will not be recovered until after the Church shall have been glorified, as the Apostle says (Romans 11:27), "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

Since this grace has not yet gone to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles in general, the only way in which it has abounded is through the promise of God that the death of Christ will yet be made efficacious for all. Therefore, speaking from this prophetic standpoint, it is plain to be seen how Jesus is the Savior of the world, although he has not yet finished the work of saving the church and will not do so until the end of this age. Similarly he will not be the Savior of the world in the full sense until the end of the Millennial age. Some he will never save, because they will refuse the grace of God; and yet he is, according to the Scriptures, the Savior of all men—the Savior of the world.

He was the Savior of the world, according to the Scriptures, when he was born. The message of the angels was "Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." He was a Savior in the prospective sense—not because of what he was then, as a babe, and not merely because of what he has yet accomplished, but because, according to God's promise, of what he will effect up to the time when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. "He is a Savior and a great one," "able to save unto the uttermost all that will come unto the Father through him." (Isa. 19:20; Heb. 7:25) He is now saving us in a partial sense, by hope, because we have come unto the Father through him, according to the arrangement of this Gospel age. He will yet save us in the fullest sense in the "first resurrection." The saving of the world will then begin, when he shall awaken them from death; but they will not be fully saved, will not attain full restitution nor gain eternal life, except as they shall exercise faith and obedience. He opens the door. He makes the way. He provides all the arrangements by which they may know and obey.

The whole earth is a part of the purchased possession and shall be filled with the glory of God. And if any knee will then refuse to bow and any tongue refuse to confess and any fail to accept of the favor of God, there will be nothing further for him. He will be doing "despite to the spirit of grace" and will die the "second death."—Heb. 10:29; Jude 12.

GOOD SEED FOR GOOD GROUND

MATT. 13:1-9; 18:23.—JUNE 19.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Wherefore, putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls."—James 1:21—R. V.

From a boat our Lord taught a most wonderful lesson respecting the method used by the Almighty in the selection of the "little flock," whom he invites to be members with Christ Jesus in the administration of his Millennial kingdom. The kingdom message or invitation is the "seed" which is under consideration in the above parable, which, under favorable conditions, germinates and brings forth the required fruitage of character-development. Our Lord was the great Sower of this good seed of the kingdom, and after him came the Apostles. Since then he has used all of his faithful people more or less in this seed-sowing.

The fact that most of the "seed" of the divine message seems wasted is no proof that the message is not good and de-

sirable. This parable shows that the real fault lies in the soil—in the heart. If all hearts were right the message or seed would bring forth much fruit everywhere.

WAYSIDE HEARERS

The parable states that not all of the soil is good or suitable, nevertheless, the intimation is that it is within the power of many to correct and offset the unfavorable conditions in themselves. We are not left to conjecture, for this is one of the few parables which our Lord himself interpreted—a fact which many seem not to have noticed.

The "seed" is the message of the kingdom. Many do not understand it. On such ears the message is lost, for the adversary is on the alert to take it away, symbolized by the birds

devouring the exposed "seed by the wayside." Such "wayside" hearers constitute the most numerous class in every congregation of the nominal church. They are merely formalists.

STONY GROUND HEARERS

"Stony" ground represents another class of hearers of the kingdom message. To them it sounds good; they are interested, but they lack depth of character. They make professions and for a time flourish extraordinarily, but they lack the depth necessary to a character development suitable for the Lord's use in the work of the kingdom, and when the trials and testings come they stumble. They thought they might be carried to the kingdom on "flowery beds of ease," while "others fight to win the prize and sail through bloody seas." There is no easy road to the kingdom. The Master declares to all who would be of the elect "bride," "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the kingdom."

GOOD SEED BUT THORNY GROUND

The ground which will produce thorns is rich and very suitable for the production of proper Christian character, but it is infested with thorn seed and the soil cannot successfully produce both wheat and thorns; hence, as the parable shows, the thorns choke out the wheat so that a sufficient crop is not produced. These thorns are not, as some have suggested, sensual vices and criminal appetites. Hearts in which sensuality dominates have no ear whatever for the kingdom message, and are not mentioned in the parable, which refers only to those who are no longer willing sinners, but who are walking outwardly in the way of righteousness. The Master's word is, "He that receiveth the seed among thorns is he that heareth the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he becometh unfruitful." There are many noble people represented also by this portion of the parable. There are many who, if freed from the spirit of the world, from its ambitions and wealth and influence, its love of the good things of this life, would be very fruitful in righteousness. When we look about us and see the thrift and energy of many people of civilized lands, we say to ourselves, properly, If these lives were really turned into the way of the Lord and were rid of these earthly encumbrances, what grand, noble characters they would make. However, their strength, their energy, is absorbed by worldly affairs and cares, and they do not bring forth the fruitage demanded as the necessary qualification for the higher honors of a place with Christ in his kingdom. The

Master's message to such is, You cannot give your time and strength and influence to worldly matters and at the same time make your "calling and election sure" to a place with me in my kingdom. Whoever would be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me. Where I am there shall my disciple be.

"THAT YE BEAR MUCH FRUIT"

"Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit," said our Master. In this parable the good ground varies in its productiveness—thirty, sixty and an hundred fold. The larger the returns, the greater will be the Father's pleasure and the Savior's glory. Nor is the statement an extreme one, as some might suppose. The new "miracle wheat" sometimes produces more than two hundred grains from one. This parable seems to imply that the responsibility for the fruitfulness of the heart and life and character depends very greatly upon the individual and how he receives the message of the kingdom. Those in whom the fruits will be the most abundant will be such as grasp the invitation most intelligently and earnestly. "He that heareth the word and understandeth it" and whose heart is in a condition of loyalty to God and who frees himself from hindrances and worldly ambitions and aspirations and, like the Apostle Paul, can say, "This one thing I do," will surely gain the kingdom.

It is not sufficient that we hear the message of the kingdom; it is not sufficient that we have good hearts or good intentions in respect to it; it is additionally necessary, as the Master says, that we should understand the kingdom message; hence the need of Bible study. Intelligent people consider it very wise and proper that several years of study be devoted to preparation for the few years of earthly life. How much study, then, should be considered proper for our preparation for the eternal life and kingdom blessings? The time and effort thus consumed in character development for the kingdom are wisely spent, and the harvest of thirty, sixty or a hundred-fold illustrates the degree and intensity of our earnestness. The rewards in the kingdom will also be proportionate. "As star differeth from star in glory, so shall it be in the resurrection of the dead." Varying degrees of glory in the kingdom will be manifested, yet none will be acceptable to the Father who shall not have brought forth fruitage in good measure; the "well done" will never be pronounced if not merited.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

MATT. 13:24-43.—JUNE 26.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."—V. 43.

Here we have introduced by another "kingdom" parable a great prophecy. Our study of a week ago showed various classes of hearers of the truth. Today's study ignores all except the "good ground" hearers, which shows that our Lord foreknew the history of the Gospel age. We are informed that he and his Apostles sowed none but good seed, but that after the Apostles had fallen asleep in death, the great adversary, Satan, over-sowed the wheat field with tare seed, darnel. We are told that such spite-work is not uncommon in the Orient. The "darnel" seed is very different from the wheat, but the growing stalks look very much alike, and even when headed the resemblance is close, except to the expert, until the heads ripen; then the head of the wheat becomes heavy while the darnel, being light, stands upright. Only the expert can discern the wheat from the tares while growing.

The Master gave this parable to illustrate how error would be brought into the church by Satan, and that the children produced by the error would in many respects resemble or counterfeit those produced by the truth. It was impossible for the adversary to corrupt the seed of truth which Jesus and the Apostles sowed; neither was he allowed to interfere with the sowing of it, but he was permitted to over-sow it in the field and, if possible, to choke the wheat, and in a general way to deceive the outside world respecting the true character of the wheat—the children of the kingdom.

We are to have in mind the Almighty power of God by which he could hinder Satan and prevent the accomplishment of his plans at any and all times. We are to remember that the divine plan of the ages permits many things which God does not approve, but in his Word condemns. We are to remember that the divine plan spans several ages and that only the finished work will fully display the divine wisdom, justice, love and power. We are to remember that, in the present time, God permits the wrath of demons and men to oppose his purposes, but only so far as he can and eventually will overrule these to his own glory and for the good of all in harmony with himself.

"LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER"

The parable represents the servants as asking whether or not the "tares" should be gathered out from the "wheat," and thus the enemy's work be destroyed. The answer is, No, because in so doing there would be such a commotion in the wheat field as to disturb all of the wheat—so intimately were the true and false associated—their roots intertwining in society, in the home, etc. Instead the Master declared that both should be allowed to grow together throughout the age until the harvest-time at the end of the age; then the "reapers" should be instructed concerning the gathering together and separating of the two classes. The wheat would then be gathered into the barn and the tares would be bundled for burning, to the end that none of the bad seed might affect the future crop.

At the special request of the disciples the Master interpreted this parable also. Jesus himself was the sower of the good seed of the kingdom message. Satan was the sower of the crop of seed of false doctrines and deception. The "harvest" time will be the end of this age, just before the inauguration of the new age of Christ's Millennial kingdom. The wheat class will be those counted fit to be associated with Christ in the glory of his Millennial kingdom, and the gathering into the "barn" or garner represents the resurrection change which this wheat will experience. The Apostle explains this, saying: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown an animal (earthly) body, it is raised a spiritual (heavenly) body." This is the resurrection of the dead—the first resurrection.—1 Cor. 15:43, 44; Rev. 20:6.

The tare class is represented as being gathered out of the kingdom (vs. 41), in the sense that the church at the present time is God's kingdom in embryo—in a state of progressive development or preparation for the glory and work of the future. All of the kingdom class are fully consecrated to God and begotten of the Spirit with a view to their becoming divine spirit beings in the resurrection. Others who are not thus spirit-begotten have no right to class themselves with the "wheat"

nor to consider themselves heirs of the kingdom. Their presence in the church of Christ is out of order. They have been permitted to commingle with the wheat for centuries, but with the end of the age the dispensational change will come, incidental to the inauguration of the millennium.

It would be a mistake to suppose that there are to be thieves and murderers of the baser sort among these offenders, but they include some whom the Apostle describes as doing the works of the flesh and the devil, namely, anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. However, many "tares" are fine people of generous disposition, but not "new creatures" in Christ Jesus. They are blame-worthy, not because of not being spirit-be-gotten, but because they are in the nominal church and posing as Christians. They are offensive in this sense in the Master's sight. Nor are they entirely to be blamed for thinking themselves Christians. They have been encouraged so to think and act by preachers and teachers, many of whom, like themselves, have no knowledge of the kingdom nor of the spirit-begetting power which initiates into membership in it. The gathering of these into "bundles"—into lodges, societies, churches, sects, parties—will especially be an evidence of the "harvest" work in progress. The true are exhorted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and that they come not into bondage to sects and parties. They are to avoid membership in "bundles," but stand in the full fellowship of all who are of the true "wheat" class.

The casting of these bundles into the furnace will mean their destruction, but we are in no sense to understand the furnace to be a literal one, nor the fire which will consume the tares to be a literal fire. The fire with which this age will end will be a great "time of trouble" foretold in the Scriptures as preceding and introducing the Millennial kingdom—"A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Daniel 12:1) In that time of trouble the delusions which now make the tares think themselves to be the true "church" will all be dissolved—they will all be reduced to their proper place—the earthly plane—and recognize themselves as merely of the earth, earthly, and not in any sense members of the called-out, spirit-be-gotten, elect "church of the living God."

THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER

Hearken now to the Master's words respecting the consummation of the church's hope in the end of this age. He says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"! "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." Not every one has the hearing ear, but this is the Lord's message to those who have the proper attitude of heart—to all who have the ability to understand spiritual things. Let such understand that with the close of this age the Lord's saintly ones, irrespective of the earthly church systems, will be associated with the Redeemer in the glory of his Millennial kingdom and will shine forth as the sun for the blessing and enlightenment and uplifting of the human family.

PICTURES OF THE KINGDOM

MATT. 13:31-33; 44:52.—JULY 3.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."—Rom. 14:17.

Let us keep in memory that the Master's parables of the kingdom of Heaven relate to the class of people whom he is calling out of the world of mankind to be associated with him in his Millennial kingdom soon to be inaugurated. Let us remember that sometimes this class is spoken of as including, nominally, not merely the saintly, the wheat class, but also, to some extent, the tares, as shown in our study of last week. These different parable-pictures represent the same subject from different standpoints, just as we take a photograph of a building from the north, the south, the east and west, internally and externally.

LIKE A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

As a mustard seed is very small, yet produces a large bush, so that the fowls of the air may lodge in its branches, so this illustrates how the gospel of the kingdom would, from a small beginning, attain to a considerable size. Its size would not be great among the trees, but great among bushes or herbage. Thus the message of Christ received at first only by the poor and the few of Israel, has finally grown to such important dimensions that the fowls like to gather in its branches. But let us remember that the fowls, according to our Lord's interpretation of a previous parable, represent the servants of the wicked one. So then the teaching of this parable would lead us to conclude that the church of Christ, at one time, was so unimportant in the world that it was a shame and a dishonor to belong to it, but that ultimately it would become honorable and great and the adversary's servants would have pleasure in its shade. This development the Scriptures represent as being Babylon, declaring that, as a whole, with the various branches and denominations, the nominal church of Christ is Babylonish. Hearken to the Lord's words: "She has become the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." The intimation is that there is a large outward development of the Church which is not to her advantage and glory but contrariwise. Nevertheless, this is, nominally, the church of Christ. However his spirit may have been misrepresented and there may have been an improper development, ultimately the great Head of the church will bring order out of chaos and confusion and will glorify and use his "elect."

"LEAVEN HIDDEN IN THE MEAL"

The parable of the "leaven" (v. 33) illustrates the process by which, as was foretold, the church would get into the wrong condition. As a woman would take her batch of flour for baking and put leaven (yeast) in it and the result would be that the mass would become leavened, so it would be with the church of Christ; the food of the entire household would become leavened or corrupted. Every portion would become more or less vitiated with the leaven of false doctrines which would permeate the entire mass. Thus today nearly every doctrine inculcated by Jesus and his apostles has become more or less perverted or twisted by the errors of the dark ages.

TREASURE HID IN A FIELD

The desirability of obtaining joint-heirship with Christ in

his Millennial kingdom, is pictured in the parable of "the treasure hidden in the field." The finder, realizing its value, desired it for himself and had such faith in it that he disposed of all of his property in order to buy that field, which he believed to contain the precious treasure. Only those who will appreciate the Gospel message will gain its glorious promises. If we love the present life with its joys and prospects, its hopes and ambitions, then we will labor for these, but if we intelligently hear and, by faith, believe the Gospel offer of this age of a share with Christ in his Millennial kingdom, then in proportion to our faith and appreciation will be our self-sacrificing zeal to attain that prize. Whoever believes the message of the kingdom will find his faith an inspiration, indeed a necessary inspiration, to the attainment of the prize, for it will cost all that he has of earthly blessings; and unless he has faith that he will find the prize, he will surely be unwilling to sacrifice all he has for it. The field belongs to God. He has put the treasure there. He offers it for sale to any willing to pay the price. The buyer is the Lord and those who accept his invitation to join with him in the sacrifice of their earthly interests that they may be sharers with him in his heavenly glories—in the work of the Millennial age, to unearth all that treasure in the blessing of the world of mankind. The hiding of the treasure is necessary; as our Lord said, "Cast not your pearls before swine"; they will not understand you, they will think you foolish, and in their disappointment may do you injury. "Hast thou faith, have it to thyself before God." Make your sacrifice of earthly things to him and he who seeth in secret will reward you openly.

THE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

Pearls were much more in vogue in ancient times than now. Pearl buyers traded in these gems and carried them to the market, where they were highly estimated. The parable represents one of these pearl merchants as coming across the finest pearl he had ever seen. He considered it so priceless that he was quite rejoiced to sell or trade all of his other pearls and property that he might become the owner of that pearl.

This parable represents the Gospel offer of a share with Christ in his kingdom as being superior to all other propositions of the world. The honor of the world, of name and fame, position and wealth, is indeed desirable; as the Scriptures say, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"; but when our eyes behold "the pearl of great price," the kingdom offer of joint-heirship with our Lord Jesus in his heavenly glory and the association with him in his work of blessing all the families of the earth, we realize that this is a priceless thing, worth more by far than all the honors and dignities and pleasures of the world. Those worthy to buy this pearl will gladly exchange all earthly things therefor—even their good name, and this will be necessary, as the Master forewarned them, saying, "They shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the

prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11, 12) He that is not willing to have the Kingdom at such a cost is not worthy of the kingdom. The Apostle has said, "Through much tribulation must we enter the kingdom" (Acts 14:22); and only those who willingly endure such tribulations for righteousness' sake—for the sake of the truth, in obedience to the Heavenly calling—are overcomers. And only to the "overcomers" has the Lord given "the exceeding great and precious promises." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."—Rev. 3:21.

THE NET GATHERED OF EVERY KIND

Another parable of the kingdom represents the gospel message as a "net." Only one kind of fish is desired, but the net gathers every kind. Not every kind will inherit the kingdom as joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, hence the end of this age will be a sifting, separating time, as represented in the parable. The desirable fish will be gathered into vessels, the remainder will be cast back into the sea as unfit for the kingdom, but not necessarily unfit for any purpose. During Christ's Millennial reign that class unfit for the kingdom will be dealt with and blessed and, if possible, made useful and fit for eternal life.

Here, as in the parable of the wheat and the tares, the furnace of fire, and the weeping and gnashing of teeth in connection therewith, symbolize the great time of trouble with which this age will end, giving place to the Millennial kingdom, the kingdom for the establishment of which upon the earth the church has been praying so unceasingly for nineteen centuries,

"Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." What a kingdom that will be! It will be a kingdom entrusted to a "little flock"—"Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"—and it will be fully empowered to establish the rule of heaven among mankind!

Our study closes with the Lord's exhortation that all who are instructed respecting the things pertaining to the kingdom should set their affairs in order.

Lay down your rails, ye nations, near and far,
Yoke your full trains to steam's triumphal car,
Link town to town, unite in iron bands
The long-estranged and oft-embattled lands,
Peace, mild-eyed seraph; knowledge, light divine,
Shall send their messengers by every line.
Men joined in amity shall wonder long
That hate had power to lead their fathers wrong;
Or that false glory lured their hearts astray,
And made it virtuous and sublime to slay.
How grandly now these wonders of our day
Are making preparation for Christ's royal way,
And with what joyous hope our souls
Do watch the ball of progress as it rolls,
Knowing that all as yet completed or begun
Is but the dawning that precedes the sun.

JESUS DID NOT FORFEIT EARTHLY LIFE

A forfeited life is not a sacrificed life. If our Lord had forfeited his life it would not have been a sacrifice. A life that is forfeited is a life that is taken away for some just cause or reason; but his was taken without a cause. He suffered. As to how he suffered and why he suffered the Scriptures are quite distinct in telling us—"he presented himself without blemish unto God." That is to say, he purposed to do God's will; he bowed to God's will; he consecrated his whole life to the doing of God's will. To test his loyalty and obedience to the full, God required that he should be obedient, submissive, "unto death, even the death of the cross." His life was not taken from him, either by God or by men; as he himself declared, he could have called for divine aid, according to divine arrangement, and more than twelve legions of angels would have protected his life: "No man taketh away my life; I lay it down of myself." So, then, in this matter of Jesus' sacrifice, it was neither that man took away his life, nor that God demanded it, but God gave him the opportunity of demonstrating his loyalty. This involved a sacrifice in that it put him into the place where to do what God desired to have done, meant a giving up of all his earthly rights and privileges.

When he came to the time of his death he did not make application of his merit in advance, saying, "I do this for such a purpose and such a thing, and I apply whatever merit there is in my obedience to such a purpose." He did nothing of the kind. There was no such application made. When we speak of Christ's death as the ransom-price for the sins of the whole world; when we say that "he gave himself a ransom for all," we are taking into consideration other features of the divine arrangement by which it will be possible for the Lord Jesus to apply the merit of that sacrifice on behalf of the world of mankind as their ransom-price. This will be accomplished in its due time. (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) It was not accomplished when he died, but was to be accomplished subsequently.

After our Lord had manifested his obedience even unto death, the Father was well pleased to fulfil to him all and more than he had ever intimated or promised. Hence he raised him from the dead—not in the same condition in which he was previously—a man—but in the glorious condition of the divine nature, "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named." It would have been possible for the Father to restore our Lord Jesus to the earthly nature; but that would not have been, as we understand it, in keeping with his promise that there would be a special reward for this special obedience—"the joy that was set before him."

JESUS HAD THE RIGHT TO THE EARTHLY NATURE

When our Lord Jesus, therefore, was raised from the dead by the Father on the third day, to this glorious nature which he now possesses—so much better than the earthly condition—he had a right also to the earthly nature. He would not, of course, have thought of exchanging the higher condition for the earthly condition; and especially since such a change would frustrate the entire plan of God. To explain: Suppose our Lord Jesus, having been raised from the dead to the glory of the Father, to the divine nature, had said, "Father, I greatly appreciate your kindness and favor towards me in thus high-

ly exalting me; but now I prefer the human nature." If we could imagine his saying such a thing, we cannot see but that he would have had the right to it, as he had never forfeited his human life. He merely laid it down. He submitted himself in obedience to God; and if in his resurrection he had preferred the earthly nature, it would have been entirely proper that he have it back again. But to have taken it back would have been to undo all the work he had started out to do. He would thus have given away the heavenly nature, which was far more desirable, and respecting which he himself said, "Father, glorify me with the glory that I had with thee before the world was." He would in this way have ignored not only his own expressed preference in the matter, but also the divine plan, order and arrangement, as it was God's will that he should have this high nature and that he should also have the right to earthly life, the earthly nature, that he might bestow the earthly nature with all of rights and privileges, as the "ransom," or corresponding price, for Adam's forfeited life and all of its earthly privileges.

IMPUTING HIS MERIT NOW TO THOSE WHO COVENANT TO SACRIFICE IT

Actually our Lord has not yet ransomed all, but he gave himself, in the sense of performing the sacrifice, more than 1800 years ago. But he has not yet applied the merit as the ransom-price for all the world. What is he doing with the ransom-price all this time? The ransom-price was placed into the hands of the Father. When Jesus died he said, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit." The Lord Jesus, therefore, as the Great Messiah, has the right to all those things which he intends to bestow upon the whole world of mankind—Adam and all his race. He will give them all the opportunity of becoming people of God. What is he doing with the merit in the meantime? He is imputing it to any individual from amongst Adam's race who desires to come into full relationship with the Father, on condition that such individual follow in his footsteps and lay down his earthly life as he laid his down. To each one of this kind, who comes to him, the Lord imputes his merit at the moment he makes his consecration to sacrifice, and this imputation of the Lord's merit makes him acceptable with the Father, who begets him as a new creature. Thenceforth such are new creatures, and their earthly life is given to up as Jesus' life was given up—in sacrifice. All of these, therefore, who are now invited to come under this special arrangement through the use of the merit of Christ's death, come under the imputation of that merit, not the bestowment of it.

There is a difference between imputing the merit and bestowing it. For instance, if we hand you \$100 we bestow \$100 upon you, passing it directly to you. But if we endorse your note for \$100 we are imputing to you \$100. In the case of the church it is an imputation; there is actually no passing of the merit over. What our Lord has to give is the right to human life, the human privileges which were Adam's originally and which he lost—all that he had. That right to human life our Lord has to give away, but he is not giving it away now. He is keeping it to give to the world in due time. He is now