

the privilege of feasting at the Lord's table in any way that he provides. And I always have a prayer and a blessing in my heart for you, that faithful Servant, who, despite the opposition of all the agents of the adversary, is still spreading this feast for the hungry, thirsty truth-seekers to feast upon; and

may the Lord still guide and bless you in this harvest work until the race is run and the victory won, is the prayer of your isolated sister in the truth, love and fellowship of our Lord and Master, and all of his consecrated children.

MRS. LOVINA PHILLIPS.—Ind.

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## "THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS"

*"Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness."*—2 Peter 3:11.

Many in the past have misunderstood St. Peter's prophecy concerning the destruction of the present heavens and earth. They have inferred that he meant the burning up of the literal earth and heavens in a great conflagration. This thought seems to be embodied in all the creeds, Protestant and Catholic. Apparently there has been a serious mistake here. The Apostle is using these words in a figurative sense, just as we might say that a man would move heaven and earth to accomplish his designs. Throughout the prophecies of the Bible the heavens mean the ecclesiastical powers and the earth means organized society, including the financial and the political powers.

The things of the present order are soon to pass away—its banking institutions, its great monetary affairs, its stocks and bonds, its politics, its great religious systems, indeed, the entire social fabric. The whole arrangement is now about to be melted down. An entirely new order is about to come in. This melting down will begin in the overthrow of the religious institutions. To the whole world it will be an unexpected and overwhelming catastrophe; but to the true church, watching as the Lord bade them to do, it will not be a surprise; for these are "children of the light," and this day of the Lord shall not overtake them as a thief.

The Lord's faithful, watching people, guided by the Word of Truth, will have an understanding of temporal affairs. As St. Paul has assured us, though this day shall come as a thief and a snare upon the whole world, it shall not so come upon God's children who are living up to their privileges. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your deliverance draweth nigh;" "When ye see these things, . . . know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." (Luke 21:28, 31) The Master does not say, When ye see all these things, but When ye see the beginning of them, then we are to lift up our heads and rejoice—not rejoicing in the trouble, nor in the sufferings of others, but in the fact that these things are the foretold signs that the present order is about to be succeeded by a new order, which will be far better, and more advantageous and desirable for all.

The church herself will be the "new heaven," and will come into great glory, power and privilege. The thought in the early church, evidently, was that these dispensational changes would very shortly come to pass. They were living in constant expectation of the coming of the Lord, the establishment of his kingdom and the glorification of the church. Some of them even felt too confident of the matter. The Apostle Paul writes to the church of Thessalonica saying that some of them had made a mistake in thinking that the day of the Lord might have already come. He tells them that that day could not come until the Man of Sin should be revealed. Thus in the days of the Apostles the church was ever on the qui vive; and throughout this entire age the Lord's people have been left in uncertainty as to the time of the Master's second coming, watching, preparing, for the things of the kingdom, knowing that the day of Christ would come as a "thief in the night" at the appointed time.—2 Thessalonians 5:3.

### WHAT THE WATCHERS NOW SEE

Now we who are living in this day see the beginning of these foretold events. We see the prelude to the great Battle of Armageddon. Our thought is that the Armageddon itself will be the mighty "Earthquake" spoken of in Revelation. (Revelation 16:16-18) In this great revolution and in the succeeding anarchy all earthly institutions will be swept away. The result of the anger, hatred and strife, if permitted to continue indefinitely, would be so terrible that it would bring about the destruction of the race; but for the elect's sake, that they may begin their glorious reign, God will cut short the carnage, and will set up his own kingdom under Christ and his elect church. Christ and his bride will take over the kingdoms of this world, and thus will hinder the strife of men from going to the extreme that it would otherwise go. But

it will not be stopped until the present order shall have been wholly dissolved.

A vivid description of this awful time of trouble is given by the prophets. For the benefit of our new readers, we give a few citations of such prophecies, which repay investigation. (Isaiah 24: 17-22; 28:21, 22; 33:7-14; 34:1-8; Psalm 18:7-19) See STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol 4, pp. 15-20. Along this same line, read also Isaiah 13:1-13; Jeremiah 25:8-38; Revelation 18; 16:12-21. We believe that the present strife in Europe is very forcefully depicted in some of the prophecies cited above, and that this is only the beginning of the great trouble and overthrow, the breaking in pieces of the nations as a potter's vessel. In our own land we see the portents of the coming trouble, in strikes, labor riots, I. W. W. demonstrations, etc. The Scriptures cited above declare in unmistakable language that the whole present order will go up in a mighty conflagration. The troubles not long since in the Colorado mines, the more recent strikes in London, Chicago, Bridgeport and Bayonne, are only premonitory rumblings which, with many other disturbances of like nature, presage the coming storm.

Selfishness is the great motive power of the world—if this thing is done or that thing is accomplished, something very advantageous to themselves will result. Because people want their own names to be great, they strain every nerve to accomplish that result. They do this also in political lines—trying to "feather their nests" for the future. In Europe they do the same along monarchical lines. Various houses in power seek to have and to hold the honor of the people. The whole world are setting their hearts and minds on the things which will bring no real satisfaction in the end, and not upon the things of the Lord.

The Apostle points out that all these things that occupy men's minds and absorb their energies are to pass away. None of them are to be permanent. We realize this to be so. We see that their passing away is just at hand in this our day. Others do not perceive it, although many thoughtful minds see that present conditions are unprecedented, that some great change must be impending; and their hearts are failing them for fear.

Surely the knowledge of these things, of the transitoriness, the trifling value of the most alluring of earth's gifts, should cause us to turn from them and to set our affections and hopes upon the heavenly things, which are infinite in value and which shall never pass away. We should lay up treasure in heaven, where the institutions will be permanent, and where armies and revolutions will not destroy the government. All those who believe in the great change just before us should be living for the future and not for the present. The more we discern, then, the teachings of the Bible, the more we imbibe its spirit, the more shall we live for and prepare for the great blessings promised for the future to those who love God. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," is the injunction of our Father in heaven.

### HOLY ATMOSPHERE, NOT MIASMA, FOR NEW CREATURES

These directions are not to the world, and they are not to the flesh of the children of God, but are for us as new creatures in Christ. The old creature being imperfect has no standing with God; but there is nothing unholy in the new creature, and the imperfections of his flesh being covered by the Robe of Christ's righteousness he has a standing with God. The difficulty which the new creature encounters is the weakness of the flesh in which he must tabernacle for the present, and the danger of being misled, enticed away, from the things that are holy. Day by day he seeks to control the flesh and to bring it wholly into subjection.

The new creature begotten from above, wishes to be holy and to keep his tabernacle holy. He breathes by nature a holy atmosphere; anything contrary is poisonous to this heavenly germ which must be fostered and nourished with the greatest care. That it may properly develop it is necessary that it be fed upon "the finest of the wheat;" it is necessary

too, that the very thoughts of the brain and the meditations of the heart should be conformed as nearly as possible to God's perfect standard for these new creatures. To this end rich supply is furnished by the Heavenly Father, who begat us to this new nature.

The child of God who is slovenly or careless in the management of his earthly body is not living in accord with true holiness, is not properly developing this heavenly "seed" begotten within him. These new creatures, so far as possible, should fellowship with one another. They are to seek to build one another up in the most holy faith. They are to remember that they are not to pull each other down, but are to endeavor to assist each other as far as they may be able. Whoever thinks to himself, "Sometime the kingdom is coming, sometime the time of trouble will overtake the present order

of things; but meantime we will enjoy the things of this world," will not be living up to his privileges, and will be very likely to be taken unawares as by "a thief in the night;" for he is not living in proper relationship with the Lord, and he will be likely to find when too late that he has lost the "prize."

"Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

"My Father! my Father! this heart would be thine!

Oh, keep it from wanderings!

Oh, visit and nourish thy wilderness vine,

Though it be from the bitter springs!

Till the time of my trial and pruning is o'er,

And thy child is safe on eternity's shore!"

## IS MY HEART "GOOD GROUND"?

*"That on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."—Luke 8:15.*

We recognize these words as a portion of our Lord's parable of The Sower. A man went out to sow his field. As he scattered his seed, some fell on one kind of soil and some on another—some on thorny ground, some on stony ground, some on the hard, beaten pathway, and some on good ground. The good ground brought forth—some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold and some one hundred-fold.

According to the Master's interpretation of this parable, the good seed represents the message of the kingdom, which as it falls here and there appeals to some hearts differently from what it does to others. That seed falling upon the beaten pathway represented the message as heard by persons into whose hearts it did not enter at all. They simply heard with the outer ear and forgot. It made no impression. The Lord said that the reason for this was that the adversary came and caught the seed away. It had not penetrated even the surface of the hard ground. The conditions were not favorable for its entrance into the heart and the hearers soon forgot all that they had heard. The wiles of the adversary would always, if possible, prevent the seed from entering the heart and taking root.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES A SHALLOW HEART

Amongst those who do receive the truth are the stony-ground class. These are at first very much enthused, but they lack depth of character. They are not the kind the Lord is now seeking. They will not bring forth the fruitage, for they have not sufficient depth for rooting. They are shallow. They desire to trim their sails in harmony with the favorable winds of this life. As soon as they find out that the truth is not popular, they foresee persecution or social ostracism; then their ardor cools and their interest in the harvest message wanes and gradually dies out. Thus they are like wheat planted in shallow soil, which comes up and flourishes a little while; but when the hot sun comes out it withers away, not having much root.

The heart that is like the thorny ground is favorable as to soil. It is good ground, with fine prospects for developing the fruits of the holy Spirit. But it is infested with thorns, which are not removed, but are permitted to remain and so choke the wheat. These thorns are not the frivolous pleasures of life—theaters, cards, dancing, etc.; but, as the Lord explains in the parable, they are the cares of life, the ambitions of life, the deceitfulness of riches—perhaps the feeling that if they can accumulate wealth they can serve the Lord's cause the better. This tendency to go out after other things allows a condition to obtain that is unfavorable to the wheat class. These may be good business men, fine politicians, or they may be immersed in some kind of study. Others of them may be fine housekeepers and have a pride as to how well things are kept, or they may be leaders in society or in works of reform, etc. All these are the thorns of the parable. A heart of this kind does not bring forth fruit, because the ground, while good, is otherwise occupied, and the message of the kingdom and its work are crowded out to a large degree, so that no fruit is brought to perfection.

Then we come to the "good ground" class of this parable, ground where the soil is not only good, but cleared of all noxious weeds which would prevent the proper growth of the wheat seed. This condition represents entire consecration to God. Everything which would hinder has been cast out. The cares of this life are not permitted to enter this heart and choke the Word. Such a one has made a bona-fide contract with the Lord and knows when he is keeping it; and he will keep it. He has the proper quality or depth of character and

more or less of ability. And there is the special trait of thorough honesty, loyalty.

Amongst those of the class who are styled the "good ground," we find different conditions in life—not many noble, but some noble; not many great, but some great; not many learned, but some learned; not many wise, but some wise. But they must all be good of heart, and they must be honest, else they could not bring forth the necessary fruitage—honesty being the most important feature of all, with a degree of intelligence and appreciation of the truth. We see, then, how this class might bring forth varying amounts of fruitage, according to circumstances, conditions and ability. But they are in the right heart condition to bring forth their very best—some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold and some a hundred-fold.

In the picture we see that the truth is represented by the seed, and we see that the individuals are also represented by the seed. The thought is that a grain of Truth is planted, and that in an honest heart it produces a character which is in harmony with the truth. That seed of truth is the message of the kingdom, the Word of the kingdom—not a truth about the philosophies of men or some scientific truth, but a particular truth—not something that ignores God's plan and purports to be a better plan than that which God has arranged, but the one particular thing—the Word of the kingdom.

### FOUR HUNDRED MILLION TARES

It seems remarkable that with so many that are called Christian people—numbering now four hundred millions—they know so little about the kingdom! The vast majority have learned but very little of it, if anything. This is manifest when we look over in Europe and see millions fighting to the death, when we realize that other millions are ready to fight here in the United States also. This is because they have not become new creatures. As the natural seed enters the ground, sprouts and brings forth something that is fostered and developed by the soil, so the good seed of the truth in the proper heart brings forth good fruit. The message of the kingdom brings forth results in harmony with its nature. It reaches the proper class and brings them to an attitude where God accepts them as new creatures. These new creatures are the children of the kingdom; and these children of the kingdom are the wheat that will be garnered. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom."

Our Lord in another parable shows us a different kind of seed—tare seed. This tare-seed looks a little like wheat. It is not the true seed—not the seed of the kingdom. It may be a seed, or message, of morality or purity of life or total abstinence from intoxicating liquors, etc. No matter; it will not produce the kingdom class. The only seed which will produce this class is the good seed, the true kingdom message.

As we look about in the world we see that the great enemy oversowed this wheat-field of the kingdom with false seed, the darnel, the tare-seed, as represented by these various messages that have gone forth throughout the world. This seed does not necessarily bring forth bad people. They are people who are workers for various things, some of them more or less good, but they are not children of the kingdom. At the present time these tares are, many of them, influential. And the whole four hundred millions of them represent, not the true wheat-field, but merely an imitation, usurping the place really belonging to the true wheat class.

In this harvest time, now about ended, a separation has been taking place between the true wheat and the tares. The true wheat are being gathered into the garner, while the tares

are being bound in bundles to be burned—not literally burned, but destroyed as tares, as imitation wheat. They will soon cease to call themselves Christians. They will recognize themselves as what they have always been—parts of the world. Many of these are church members, but are purely of the world and its spirit. They discount the true wheat, and consider them a little queer, fanatics.

Many of these tares do not know what they are. But those who have received the message of the kingdom into good and honest hearts will bring forth fruitage in harmony therewith. It requires time to develop the right fruit. This class grow daily in knowledge, in love, and are building one another up in the most holy faith. They also do good unto all as they

have opportunity. This is the whole work which God is expecting of them. These are the ones who will ere long be gathered into the heavenly kingdom beyond the veil.

After the fire of this "Day of Wrath" shall have burned up this "present evil world," and burned out all the roots of pride, then will come the great time of blessing for the world of mankind. The great plowshare of trouble will prepare humanity for the great seed-sowing of the near future. It will take a thousand years to bring forth the glorious crop of the Millennium. Those gathered then will not be wheat, but the restitution class; wheat being used in the parables of our Lord to represent the spiritual class, the saints of the Gospel age.

## OUR CLEANSING—INWARD AND OUTWARD

*"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*—2 Corinthians 7:1.

Again we call attention to the fact that the Bible was not addressed to the world, but to the church; not to unbelievers, but to believers; not to sinners, but to those who have already turned away from sin. Many overlook this fact, and the result is a confusion of their minds.

But some may, perhaps, be inclined to say that the words of our text are applicable to sinners as well as saints—sinners especially—even though the Epistle itself is addressed "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints, who are in the whole of Achaia." We answer, No! our text cannot appropriately be applied to sinners in general, who have not yet come to God, who have not yet repented of their sins and been forgiven. God makes no appeals to such; he merely denounces them as sinners and refuses them all recognition, all fellowship, and tells them that there is no other name given under heaven amongst men whereby they can be saved from their sins than that of Jesus—through faith in his blood. In other words, God refuses to have any dealings whatsoever with those who cannot or will not accept of the great sin-offering which he has provided. As Jesus expressed the matter, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."—John 14:6.

The reasonableness of the divine position is evident upon reflection. God in the present age is gathering out of the world a little flock, whose peculiar trait of character is faith in him and a desire to please him. In the age to come, the Millennial age, God purposes to deal with the remainder of mankind, and then all his requirements will be made so plain that the wayfaring man, though a simpleton, shall not err therein. (Isaiah 35:8) The Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth in that glorious Millennial day, and clearly manifest right from wrong, and show forth the divine character and attributes, so that every creature may see—yea, all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears be unstopped, as is clearly stated by the Prophet.—Isaiah 35:5.

But now, in the present age, there is a test of faith for this special little flock whom the Lord is selecting and whom he designates as his church. Any who cannot exercise the faith cannot be of this elect church but must wait for their blessing at the hands of the church during the reign of Christ, for which we still pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

### SAINTS NOT NATURALLY ALL NOBLE

Not only has God made faith a necessary element of acceptance in the present time, but additionally, love of righteousness is made a part of the test. It is not enough that we should have the eye of faith which would recognize Christ's death as the redemption-price for the sins of the world, we must additionally have hearts that love righteousness in order to come under divine favor. The heart that loves righteousness discerns the weakness of its own flesh, its downward tendencies. The moment that heart recognizes Jesus as the Redeemer it flees to him, not only to be covered with his merit as respects the sins that are past, but also to have the imputed covering of his righteousness as respects the unwilling blemishes and imperfections of the present and the future—imperfections that are contrary to the will and are the result of weaknesses inherited.

This class, not in harmony with the sin of the world, nor with their own weaknesses, is referred to by our Lord in his message, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden [under the yoke of sin and appreciating its penalty, death], and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." These learners—disciples, pupils in the school of Christ—are the class to whom the words of our text are addressed. It would be useless to exhort the world in general to cleanse themselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

The world is in sympathy with this very filthiness and has no desire to cleanse itself, has no just appreciation of how filthy it is in the sight of God and those who have his Spirit of holiness. The Lord describes the condition of the world as one in which anger, malice, envy and various lusts [desires] are the usual and normal conditions by turns. Lust, selfishness—which often amounts to brutality in its seeking of wealth, or pleasure or power—seeks to fill the natural mind, so that if it were taken away, with nothing substituted, life would lose all of its charms. Where would be the propriety in exhorting such to put away filthiness of the flesh and spirit when they have nothing as a substitute?

Some may, perhaps, urge that there are as many noble-minded people not believers as are found amongst believers. We answer, Yes! the Scriptures agree to this, assuring us that amongst believers are not many great or wise or noble according to the course of this world. The message of God's grace often lays hold upon the lower, meaner and more degraded members of the human family rather than upon the noble, who feel less keenly their own depravity and less necessity for the Savior and his assistance. If, then, amongst the world are to be found some who are noble-minded, and if believers are generally of a lower stratum, how comes it that God has a more particular interest in these than in unbelievers? By what kind of rule does the Lord accept as children some who naturally are less noble and reject some who naturally are more noble?

We answer that the rule or standard of divine acceptance is faith and obedience of heart. Those who with their hearts, their minds, their wills, turn away from sin and by faith accept the divine arrangement, the Lord is pleased to accept according to their wills, their intentions, and not according to their flesh and its blemishes. Their unwilling defects according to the flesh are veiled from his sight by the robe of Christ's righteousness covering them, to the extent of the inability of their new minds, which despise sin and seek to war a good warfare against it in their flesh and everywhere. Such is the class addressed by the Apostle in our text, saying, "Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit."

### GOD'S BELOVED DISESTEEMED

As the mouthpiece of the Lord the Apostle addresses all believers who have fled away from the sin and who are striving to be pleasing and acceptable to God, as "dearly beloved." The Apostle, a noble-minded man himself, appreciated the fact that many of these dearly beloved brethren had weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh. He did not love them on account of these blemishes, but in spite of them—because at heart they were loyal to the principles of righteousness and striving to overcome sin and its inclinations in their own mortal flesh, and—so far as their influence would go—in the world. But the world does not love these whom the Father loves, whom Jesus loves, whom the Apostle loves. Our Master's words are, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, that your fruit should be permanent."—John 15:16, 18, 19.

The world does not like these chosen ones because, confessing their own weaknesses and striving against them, they call them by their proper names—sins, meannesses, filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Every effort made by these to cleanse themselves is a reproof to others who are not striving to cleanse themselves, and who hate to be reminded that the

things in which they take their greatest pleasure are greed, selfishness, inordinate affections, strifes, pride, vainglory. Whoever is fully satisfactory to the world may be sure that he is not satisfactory to the Lord. Whoever is satisfactory to the Lord need not expect to be satisfactory to the world; for the fellowship of this world is enmity to God, and, therefore, the world is not subject to the divine standard, neither indeed can be, as the Apostle explains. (James 4:4; Romans 8:7) Its heart is in the other direction.

The law of the new creation—love for God with all our hearts and for our neighbor as ourselves—is to the world unreasonable, unthinkable, undesirable every way, and every reminder of it, even by the presence of those who at heart are on the side of righteousness, causes displeasure and discomfort. To these the Lord and his footstep followers have always been unwelcome—intruders. They prefer to be let alone, to have no suggestion offered to the effect that they are wrong. True, some of them have a pleasurable pride in generosity, a love of a good name, and a reputation for honesty and virtue. But they wish to be considered as standards and exemplars, and resent any intrusion, any measurements of their thoughts, words or deeds by the divine standards. Therefore those who continually recognize and honor the divine standards are disesteemed by them.

#### THE NECESSITY FOR CLEANSING

But why should the Apostle suggest that the church should do a cleansing work in their hearts and in their flesh when we find that God has wholly covered these blemishes from his sight? If the blemishes are covered, why trouble about them further? Ah, there are the best of reasons! Those who at heart are loyal to the Lord and his righteousness are distressed by their blemishes, their sins, the weaknesses of their flesh, even though they are aware that the Lord has graciously covered all these, and is not imputing their guilt because at heart they are opposed to them. The desire of this class is to build, to establish, character by faithfulness to principles of righteousness. They wish that their minds may become more and more established in faithfulness to the Lord and his Golden Rule of love; and that, so far as possible, the new mind shall control the fallen, imperfect flesh and bring it into subjection, into accord, with the divine law of love.

Whoever, after having experienced the Lord's blessing in the forgiveness of sins, has no desire to war a warfare against them, and to bring into subjection to his new mind the powers and talents of his mortal body, has not the true spirit of sonship. He would thereby be giving evidence that he does not truly love righteousness and that he does not truly hate iniquity. He would thus be testifying that he is not of the class whom the Lord desires as his sons on the spirit plane—as members of the little flock, the bride, the Lamb's wife.

We see, then, good reason why the brethren should be appealed to by the Apostle in our text. We see a good reason why all begotten by the same Spirit of holiness should give heed to his words and make the cleansing of the flesh and of the spirit the principal work of the remainder of life. We see that unless they do this, they will belie their pretensions of love for righteousness and hatred of iniquity. We see that by such a warfare against the weaknesses of the flesh and of the spirit, the Lord designs that they should establish a crystallized character. Thus as the Scriptures express it, they shall be "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light"—fit in heart for the divine service. Such as are then fit in heart for the service of the Millennial kingdom will, we are assured, be granted new bodies, free from all blemishes, in the first resurrection. Thus, having perfected their minds and established character in their hearts in the present life by controlling the flesh so far as possible, they demonstrate that at heart they have the character-likeness of their Lord and Redeemer. Only those who do thus develop into copies of God's dear Son will constitute the very elect, the kingdom class, the seed of Abraham, through whom the world will shortly receive its blessing.

#### "LET US CLEANSER OURSELVES"

The words, "Let us cleanse ourselves," do not have reference to our getting rid of Adamic condemnation. Such cleansing from original sin is impossible on our part, as the Apostle elsewhere explains. We cannot have it unless we receive it as a free gift from God. In what sense, then, do we cleanse ourselves? We answer that having been reckonedly cleansed by the Lord, and brought under the influence of his holy Spirit and the enlightening understanding of his Word, we are now invited to show our zeal for righteousness and to co-operate with him in the work. While all the condemnation is reckoned as having passed from us, we still have the opportunity of showing the Lord what our spirit, our intention, would be,

by striving against sin in our minds and in our flesh. The incentive to this cleansing is of the Lord, but the cleansing itself is something for us to do—"Let us cleanse ourselves." The cleansing work is a tedious one; for at first we did not discern how deeply defiled we were, how nearly all the suggestions of the mind were selfish. We did not even recognize selfishness as being sin.

As the eyes of our understanding opened more and more widely we got proper views of the Lord and his righteousness, our own conditions, the need of his covering robe, etc. Day by day, as we have since striven to put away sin, selfishness—yea, every element of ungodliness and unloveliness—we have become more painfully conscious of how deep was the stain which we at first, perhaps, thought was merely superficial. Many of the Lord's people, after years of labor in seeking to cleanse themselves from the filth of the flesh and of the spirit, now, alas, see more of their own blemishes than they discerned at first, even though they have gotten rid of much of this natural filthiness, selfishness, etc. This would make the work of cleansing a very discouraging one if it were not for the assurance of the Lord's Word that he regards us, not according to the flesh, but according to our intentions, our desires, our endeavors. He reckons us as overcomers because of our good warfare against the natural blemishes, whatever may be the measure of our success.

The distinction which the Apostle draws between the filthiness of the flesh and that of the spirit should be noticed. After we have accepted the Lord, we take our stand with him as the Captain of our Salvation, to be soldiers of the Cross and to fight a good fight against sin and all the works of the flesh and of the devil. Soon we find ourselves in company with others of the same class, and naturally and properly begin to cleanse the flesh, to put away evil practises, outward wrongdoing of every kind. This is well. What fellowship could there be between children of the light and any works of darkness? Before long, in the case of many, a considerable outward change is manifested—careless language is avoided, passions are restrained, selfishness is curbed, at least in its outward manifestations. Neighbors and friends may see a considerable change. This is good, but not sufficient. We must also cleanse our spirits, our minds. It is not sufficient that we avoid outward wrongdoing. Our minds must be cleansed. We must learn to hate sin, to repel its first advances. We must learn that our minds and our bodies are the temples of the Lord and that everything contrary to him and his law of righteousness and love must be barred.

Others are witnesses to some extent of our trials and triumphs of an outward kind. But the most important battles of the new creation are those which are known only to ourselves and to our Captain—the battle of the new mind or will against the influences of the old, natural disposition. The true soldier of the cross will find this battle-ground quite sufficient to engage all of his combativeness and destructiveness and to keep him fully occupied. Such as are on the alert to develop the new character have much less time than others to criticize their neighbors, friends and brethren. They find enough in themselves requiring vigilance and restraint. And as they progress in this direction, they become more sympathetic toward others who have the same or other weaknesses and inclinations contrary to the divine standards. They sympathize especially with the brethren of the new creation, who similarly have given their all to the Lord and are battling against the world, the flesh and the adversary, in their bodies and in their spirits.

#### OUR GRADUAL TRANSFORMATION

Those who have already come into relationship to the Father as children should remember that God's promises are that we shall be more and more received into his fellowship, have more and more of his blessing, in proportion as we are loyal to these principles with which we started out. If we have turned away from the world and from sin, and find that we have certain contaminations of the flesh, we should put all these away—even the taints of sin we should seek to put away. The more we energize ourselves in this direction, the more of God's favor shall we have, the more shall we be pleasing and acceptable to him.

The Apostle in pointing out that there is filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, does not mean that the new creature is filthy. The new creature, as we are elsewhere told, is undefiled. The new creature is holy. The word spirit is frequently used to represent mind. The will must be thoroughly changed before one can become a new creature at all. And for the will ever to draw back would mean a drawing back unto perdition. To have a will for sin would mean that we had lost the holy Spirit; that we are in the second death.

But the Lord's children have this new will, this new

treasure, in an earthen vessel. We have a natural disposition toward sin. Additionally, we have minds that, even though they are putting away the things of sin, have more or less recollection of the things of sin, the impurities of sin. So while we draw ourselves away from that which is sinful, we are to strive also to have our minds pure. We are to cast out everything in us that is sympathetic with sin. We are not to think of those things, we are not to permit ourselves to ruminate on what is sinful. We are to set our affection on things above.—Colossians 3:2.

As we fill our minds with God's promises, the whole character, the whole life, becomes more transformed. The Apostle says, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." Our minds which were in accord with the earthly things, the earthly nature, are not only to be lifted from obedience to sin, but are to be turned in a new direction. Our minds are to be filled with holy thoughts—thoughts of the Lord and his service. When the mind is in a right attitude toward God, it is comparatively easy to serve the law of God. The Apostle exhorts us to perfect holiness. We had the holiness started in us when we became the Lord's people. We gave ourselves wholly to him—He never accepts a part. Our consecration is to do God's will wholly. We present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. We started out saints; and the Lord recognizes none others than saints. Therefore we are to seek to live up to the divine standard in all the conduct of life—our words, deeds, thoughts.

#### OUR CLEANSING AND THE LORD'S CLEANSING

But this perfecting of holiness goes on, this cleansing of ourselves, noticing to see where there is anything in us that is impure, and putting all that away from our conduct—and, more than that, putting it away from our minds. As we do this, holiness spreads through all the avenues of life. And so a Christian ought to have a very beautiful character. If any Christian has not a beautiful character, it shows that he has not been properly attending to the matter of his cleansing, daily giving attention to his purification in his outward relationship to mankind, and inwardly in his relationship toward God.

We are to do all this in the fear of the Lord, the reverence of the Lord. There is a difference between the fear that is reverential and the fear that is slavish. The reverential fear is a profitable fear. We are not to fear our Heavenly Father as if he were a devil, who would turn on us and treat us with cruelty; but we are to have a godly fear, which will delight to do those things pleasing and acceptable in his sight. So all this cleansing of ourselves, all this perfecting of ourselves in holiness, is with a view to being perfected in the fear of the Lord. Having begotten us of his holy Spirit, having given us these precious promises, God will expect us not to put our talents into a napkin and make no progress, but to bring forth fruit—some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, some a hundred-fold. And as we do this, we shall be rewarded in proportion.

There is another Scripture which speaks of the Lord as doing this cleansing work. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." (Psalm 19:12-14) These words of the Prophet David are the sentiment of all the Lord's true people. By these words the Prophet showed his recognition of the fact that he was not capable of cleansing himself. He recognized that he might have secret faults that he did not appreciate himself—that he did not see himself. Perhaps he did not see some faults that others would see. He desired God to cleanse him from these. This indicated that he desired to get away from everything that was not in harmony with God.

This would be the proper sentiment for all Christians. We should pray to the Lord that he would show us whatever in our lives is not fully pleasing and acceptable to him, that he would help us to see ourselves as others see us, and especially to see ourselves as he sees us. We believe that many of the Lord's people have been shown their imperfections and weaknesses (in the Lord's providence) by a very severe jolt. We ask the Lord also, as did the Psalmist, to keep us back from presumptuous sins, to cleanse us wholly from these.

#### "THE PERFECTING OF HOLINESS"

Our text declares that such a purification of flesh and spirit, body and mind, constitutes a perfecting of holiness. The thought here is that holiness cannot be attained in a moment, but that it must be gradually effected, perfected. A right view of this matter will hinder us from falling into certain dangerous errors. Holiness is not a charm which we may put in our pockets; it is not a garment which may be worn occasionally. Holiness resembles more the tempering of a piece of metal; it enters into the entire fiber, changing its general characteristics; it is transforming in its influence.

True, there is a holiness reckoned to the Lord's people in the robe of Christ's righteousness, which is granted to us when first we turn from sin, accept the Redeemer, and consecrate ourselves to God. But this is not sufficient. We must work into our characters that which we have willed—or, as the Apostle expresses it, we must allow the Lord to work in us the holy will, and the holy conduct which must necessarily accompany the holy will, as opportunity and conditions will permit.

But how is this holiness perfected in us? How does God work in us to will and then to do his good pleasure? Our text answers this portion of the question, too, assuring us that it is God's part to give us the promises; and that these promises constitute the incentives to those who are in the right attitude of mind. Without these divine promises of the present and the future blessings, who would battle against his own weaknesses? Who would strenuously resist the attacks of the world and of the adversary? Moreover, who would willingly sacrifice his life and all his natural rights to serve the Lord and his cause, if there were no exceeding great and precious promises to quicken and energize him to the service of the King, in battling against sin, in assisting all who are on the side of righteousness? Surely there would be few, if any at all. And so our text intimates, saying, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves," etc. The promises are indeed the power of God unto our cleansing—our salvation—as pointed out by St. Paul.—Romans 1:16.

#### "GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES"

Looking into the context to see to what promises the Apostle refers, we find in the preceding verses the declaration, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18) What a promise! What a suggestion!—that we, by nature defiled and imperfect, should not only have the notice of our sovereign Creator, but should be invited to become his children and be given the assurance of his parental affection for us—that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him." How wonderful it seems! And then, as the Apostle elsewhere declares, this is not the end of the matter, but merely the beginning, for he says, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:17.

Yes, it is this thought of what is implied in the term children of God, sons of God. The blessings and riches of the Father are to be extended through our Lord Jesus, especially to the little flock, which is now being selected from amongst men to be his bride and associates in the kingdom. These are not accepted into the kingdom at once, but as it were on probation; as the Apostle says, "Now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be"—if we are faithful. As sons of God in the present life we have the joy of knowing of our Father's character through his Word, which we are permitted to understand, but which the world does not understand. We are assured of divine supervision; so that not the slightest thing can happen to these sons except as their Father sees would be to their advantage. But they must show their love, their devotion, their oneness of spirit with the Father and the Redeemer ere they can be counted in as his bride in the full, absolute and complete sense, and be granted a share in his glories.

It is to demonstrate their possession of these graces that these consecrated ones are left for a time in the midst of evil and unfavorable surroundings—to prove their love of righteousness, their opposition to iniquity, their love to God and their faithfulness to him, their love to all who are in sympathy with the divine arrangement. If they stand these tests fully, it will mean that they will endure considerable opposition from the world, the flesh and the adversary; and that they will be correspondingly strengthened by these experiences. It is this class to whom the Apostle refers saying, "If so be that we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him." We are to suffer as he did for right doing, and because our neighbors and friends are blind as to what is the right, the proper course. We are to suffer gladly and joyfully whatever cup the Father may pour for us, knowing that he is too good to be unkind, too wise to err.

"Let us then, dearly beloved, cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." As the Apostle Peter declares, "If we do these things, we shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:10, 11.



# FAITHFULNESS IN LITTLE THINGS

*"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."*—Luke 16:10.

We have in our text the statement of a great principle, one which could almost universally be acknowledged. Life's experiences have taught us that whoever can be trusted in little things can be trusted also in great matters. A man who is cautious in respects to small affairs is cautious also in important undertakings. One who is gentle in the little acts of every day life will be gentle on great occasions.

Our Lord applies this principle to his followers in a general way; and we believe it to be one of the most important lessons which the Christian can learn. There are many who are exceedingly careful about handling a large sum of money, but who are very careless in handling a small amount. There are those who are scrupulously exact as to large sums committed to their care, but who think nothing about the trifling amounts. But whoever cultivates a habit of carelessness about small things will be likely to become careless about large matters. On the other hand, whoever is careful of every dollar, every dime, who is careful to pay promptly every small debt, will be still more careful in respect to large amounts, large debts.

So it would appear to be a general principle in life that those who are careless in small things and careful in large matters will in due time or under great stress prove unreliable and unfaithful in everything, if such faithfulness should conflict with their own selfish interests. In other words, the trifles of life have an important bearing upon our character-building. Whoever learns to be conscientious about everything is being properly exercised by the lessons of life. We see this in our own individual experiences. Some are quite careless in regard to the rights of others; for instance, they would take without permission an umbrella belonging to another saying, "I want it only for an hour or so, and I will bring it back." Such a person is not properly conscientious about small things. One who would take an umbrella for even an hour has not sufficient principle to be trusted in larger things. Others will borrow articles, and forget or neglect to return them promptly, thus putting the owner to great inconvenience and annoyance. At best the habit of borrowing is deplorable.

The Scriptures tell us that our Lord is selecting a company to be with him as under priests, under judges, under kings, to have control of the affairs of earth during the thousand years of his reign; and that whoever is chosen for this work must have special fitness, special character. Those who fully yield themselves to him will be prepared for this important position; those who do not so yield themselves will not be prepared. Therefore our Lord gives us to understand that present opportunities are to be prized as opportunities for indicating what is our real attitude of heart. He makes it a condition that we cannot be his disciples unless we make a full surrender of ourselves to him as our great instructor, to be guided in all of our affairs in harmony with his will.

The Master tells us that no matter how small the affairs of life, we are to understand that the Father knows what are our needs; and that just as surely as he provides for the sparrows and the lilies of the field, so surely will he provide for those who are his children. Our Lord says to us, "Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?" Even while we were slaves of sin, the Father made provision for our return to his favor and to everlasting life, on condition that we obey him and respond to his clearly specified terms. How much more will he care for us now that we have become his children?

## HUMILITY ESSENTIAL TO SERVICE

Even in the smallest affairs of life we are to look for the Lord's will. The right attitude for us to maintain is this: I serve the Lord Christ; and whether it is a great work or a small one does not matter. "Therefore whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31) The humblest kind of service is acceptable to the Lord if prompted by love. We recall the case of our Lord Jesus. When opportunity was afforded him to talk with a poor Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, he did not say, "I came to preach the Gospel; and since this woman is only a Samaritan, I will not bother with her." When the disciples returned, they could not understand why the Master should be speaking with this woman instead of to a crowd. But Jesus, having the opportunity to preach, even if it were only to a Samaritan woman, improved his opportunity. He knew that through her the truth might go to others; that what she would learn she would tell to her neighbors, and that when the due time would come the Samaritans might hear and be all the more ready to benefit by the opportunity.

Wherever we find the opportunity to present the truth, we should appreciate the privilege. Of course we are not to

annoy any one with whom we come in contact; but if there seems to be an opportunity to serve, it is for us to be about our Father's business, and to improve the opportunity—whether it is to speak the truth or merely to give a kind word, etc. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; for he hath anointed me to preach Good Tidings to the meek." God is seeking those who are kind and sympathetic, desirous of helping others.

It is our privilege to give a cheerful word at all times. As a rule people have sad experiences. Often there is a worm at the core, the heart. It has been noted that those who have committed suicide have sometimes laughed and joked a little while before taking their lives. The world would be in a terrible condition if everybody told all his troubles and carried his heart on his sleeve. It is better that they hide their troubles and that we cover ours from sight. It is better to cultivate the spirit which sings:

"Content whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

## LITTLE TESTS OF CHARACTER

We should esteem it a privilege to address wrappers for tracts, or whatever the opportunity of the hour may be in the Lord's service. Should some one say, "I would rather preach," we reply, If the Lord opens up the way and gives you an opportunity to preach, do so. And if you have several opportunities to preach in one day, whether to one person, or to ten persons, or to a thousand, make use of them. But if you do not have any opportunity to preach, you may have the privilege of addressing wrappers. In this way you are instrumental in helping to place reading matter in the hands of others, even if the postman is the one who takes it to the house where it will be read. Or if our work is in the kitchen or any other part of the home, it is service of the Lord if we do all as unto him. But he kindly gives us opportunity to do something for the brethren.

So whatever we do, we are doing it for the Lord, we are doing it as unto him, doing it as he would have it done. There is a way of looking at things that makes us feel happy. It is a good thing to ask ourselves occasionally, What am I seeking? What is my motive in doing this? For whom am I working?

As we thus work for the Lord and strive to please him, and cultivate the spirit of thankfulness for service in the little things, we shall be proving our worthiness for the great things. Our desire to render faithful service to the Lord will manifest itself in economy in the home and in consideration for others around us. Whoever will strike too many matches, or who will strike matches on the walls of the house, is thus manifesting that he is not fully trustworthy. Whoever whistles around the house to disturb others, or who gets up at a very early hour and makes so much noise that others cannot rest, or who comes in late at night and goes noisily to his room, demonstrates that he has not learned to observe the Golden Rule, has not learned to respect the rights of others.

The very beginning of all our conduct as members of the body of Christ should be the observance of the principles of justice. We should think as to what are the rights of others and as to whether we are impinging on those rights. If we find that we are so doing, we may know that we are violating the law of justice. In every circumstance of life, justice must come first, and afterwards we may be as kind and generous as possible.

## "LORD, IS IT I?"

In respect to spiritual matters the principle is the same. Little rifts in the lute spoil the music. God is seeking a very special class for the kingdom. He desires those who will be absolutely loyal to him, loyal to his Word, faithful not only in some great thing, but also in the smallest affairs of life—faithful in thought, word and deed. Whoever is thus faithful, whoever exercises care in all these respects, will be fitting and preparing himself for the kingdom. Whoever is careless and inattentive to little things is not fit for the great honor the Lord has in store for the wholly faithful. He is watching us closely, but with a kindly eye. He wishes us to succeed. He gives us the necessary instruction and guidance. When we practice carefulness in little things, we are thereby developing our characters along right lines. If we fail to do this, we shall never become fit to be entrusted with important matters. Let us each make this a personal question: What kind of character am I developing as the days go by?

But the Christian who makes a mistake, and who sees his mistake and makes what amends are possible, will find his experience beneficial to him—perhaps throughout the remainder of his life. Through the castigation which he imposes upon himself he will learn greater carefulness. Care and

watchfulness are necessary, and we should see to it that they extend to every affair of life—to the use of our time, our talents, our money, etc. Whatever we have of these is from the Lord and belongs to him. We should therefore carefully consider what we shall do with these opportunities and be very conscientious in the use of them—how much we shall use for ourselves and how we shall use the remainder. Our course in these matters will show to the Lord whether or not we are fitted for a place in glory.

Our use or abuse of all the talents, great or small, entrusted to us by the Master will demonstrate how careful we are to note his will and to do that will in respect to this feature of our stewardship. By and by he purposes to give to the faithful those things which will be of far more value than dimes and dollars; affairs of great responsibility will be committed to them. If any have not been faithful—if any one has thought of the time, the dimes, the dollars, etc., as being his own, and has so used them, that one will not be of the class the Lord is seeking. He is viewing us according to the Covenant of Sacrifice which we have made with him.

(Psalm 50:5) If we had a million dollars, it would be only a small thing in his sight. It is the manner in which we use the things of this life that manifests our loyalty to the Lord and that demonstrates how we would use the divine power during the thousand years of Messiah's kingdom, for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Our grandest opportunities for service are comparatively insignificant. But we are to appreciate even the least service which we may be able to render. We are to esteem that our service here is not to be compared with the things which the Lord has in reservation for those who love him. For a thousand years they are to reign with their Lord; and then will follow the ages to come" during which he will show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward them through Christ Jesus their Lord. (Ephesians 2:7) In view of this future inheritance of the saints in light, is it any wonder that our Lord wishes us to have kind, just, generous hearts? Our opportunity of being in the little flock will depend largely upon our appreciation of our opportunities for serving the Lord in the little things of the present life.

## ELIJAH A GREAT PROPHET

AUGUST 29.—1 KINGS 17:1-16.

A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF THE TRUE GOD—ELIJAH A TYPE OF THE CHURCH—THE ANTITYPICAL ELIJAH—THE ANTITYPICAL JEZEBEL AND AHAH—THE ANTITYPICAL 1260 DAYS OF SPIRITUAL FAMINE—REFORMATION BY SECTS—THE LATEST REFORM MOVEMENT.

*"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."*—1 Peter 5:7.

Elijah was a great prophet. This fact is evidenced not only by the account of the Old Testament, from which our lesson is taken, but also by the words of Jesus respecting him, and the words of the Apostle James. (James 5:16-18) He comes to our attention as the Lord's mouthpiece to King Ahab, of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. He brought the king a threat of famine, assuring him that there would be no rain nor dew upon the land of Israel until Elijah would pray God for it. This meant drouth, famine, trouble. Elijah was not making this declaration on any authority of his own, but because it was the divine program and he had been so directed of the Lord. True prophets of God are not boastful, and never take honors or powers themselves. They speak merely as divine mouthpieces.

The reason for such a trouble, chastisement, coming upon King Ahab and the nation of Israel was that it was intended to be corrective, and additionally, as we shall see, it was prophetic or typical. The Israelites had gone into idolatry, and King Ahab had cooperated and had been a leader. The prophets of God had been persecuted, and the prophets of Baal had been honored. A great national chastisement might do them good. Accordingly, as stated in the first verse of our lesson, the issue was plainly declared to the king by Elijah, who then was directed to go to the brook Cherith.

This brook is in the mountainside, on the roadway leading from Jerusalem down to the Dead Sea, near the place where the Jordan enters it. It was a lonely spot, and is now marked by an ancient convent. There, for three and a half years, the Prophet made his home, away from the public, and was fed by ravens, which brought him bread and flesh morning and evening. The water of the brook slaked his thirst. As the drouth continued, the brook finally dried up; and the Prophet was directed to the home of a widow of the town of Zarephath—beyond Israel's border, in the land of Zidon.

Jesus referred to this incident, remarking that the woman was a Gentile, and that the sending of Elijah to her implied that she was more worthy of the blessings he accorded than were any of the widows of the land of Israel. (Luke 4:25, 26) The poor widow had but a remnant of meal whereby to make a few cakes to sustain herself and her son; but at the Prophet's suggestion she had faith enough to share her little remnant with him. The result was a miracle. The remnant continued, as the Prophet had declared, throughout the famine. "The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Elijah."

### ELIJAH'S ANTITYPICAL PROPHECY

As already suggested, Elijah's prophecy was larger than on the surface appeared; for he and all of his doings were a type on a small scale of greater things which came afterwards. Elijah was a type of the church in the flesh—the church of which Jesus is the Head, and all of his saintly followers are the members. It was of this antitypical Elijah that God declared, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the children to the

fathers, and the heart of the fathers to the children; otherwise I will come and smite the earth with a curse."—Malachi 4:5, 6.

Jesus and his apostles, and all of his followers, as the members of this greater Elijah, actuated by the Spirit of God, have been delivering a message to the world. They have been reproving sin, and making known to the world the righteousness of God. If the world had heeded the message, the kingdom of Messiah on the spirit plane would eventually have been ushered in, as the desire of all nations, without any great time of trouble, or "day of wrath," being necessary. But the world has not heeded the message of Jesus and his followers; and hence the smiting of the earth with a curse, the blow of the great time of trouble now beginning, is the only way by which Messiah's kingdom can be ushered in.

The nations, having accepted a form of godliness merely, and without the power and spirit of it, are Christian nations merely in name, not in fact, as the present great war for commercial supremacy of the world abundantly demonstrates. By this war and by the great revolution which the Bible declares will follow it, and by the world-wide anarchy which will result from the revolution, all the kingdoms of the world will be overthrown and all the present systems and institutions will be ground to powder, that the way for Messiah's kingdom, and its place, may be prepared. What did not come through obedience to the truth will come through the overthrow of those who heard but neglected, perverted and distorted the divine message of "Peace on earth, good will to men."

### FULFILMENT OF THAT PROPHECY

That God meant Elijah to be a type of the church is confirmed to us by certain statements in the Revelation. The matter is there covertly presented, a great religious system being figuratively described as Jezebel, and the worldly system to which this professed church of Christ is united being represented by Ahab, the king of Israel. In this figure, as Elijah fled from Jezebel and Ahab's power for three and one-half years, so the church is said to flee into the wilderness to a place prepared for her, where she is miraculously sustained of the Lord for three and a half "times," or symbolic years, otherwise explained as 42 months, or 1260 days.—Revelation 2:20-23; 12:6, 14; 13:5; 11:2, 3.

That long period of time when the true church was eclipsed by the success of Babylon marked the time of great spiritual drouth. As during the time of Elijah's absence at the brook Cherith and in Zidon there was no rain, so with the world, during those 1260 years there was no spiritual rain, no refreshment from on high. During that long period the Word of God, the Bible, was suppressed and neglected. The Bishops, Catholic and Protestant, suppressed it because if the people paid attention to the teachings of Jesus and the twelve apostles whom he appointed (St. Paul taking the place of Judas), they would proportionately ignore the teachings of the bishops who falsely proclaimed themselves "apostolic" bishops, and arrogated to themselves the power and authority which Jesus declared belonged only to the twelve. These

twelve our Lord declared to be the twelve stars to guide the church (Revelation 12:1), and the twelve foundation stones of the glorious New Jerusalem, which is about to be established.—Revelation 21:14.

It was during that dark time that there was a famine in the land, as mentioned by the Prophet—not a famine for bread nor a thirst for water, but a famine for the hearing of the Word of the Lord. (Amos 8:11, 12) According to the Bible those 1260 years of drouth began with the year 539 A. D., when ecclesiastical power attained persecuting ability, and ended in 1799 A. D., as its persecutions came to an end, at the time of Napoleon's great victory, when the pope was taken prisoner to France.

In another sense, however, the 1260 years would very properly extend from the year 325 A. D. to the year 1585 A. D. It was in the year 325 A. D. that the self-styled apostolic bishops convened under the patronage of Emperor Constantine, constituted themselves the Ecumenical Council of Nice, and formulated the first of the great creeds, the Nicene Creed. From that time onward for 1260 years the Bible was neglected; for the creeds made by these so-called apostolic bishops

were accepted as instead of the Bible, as brief and comprehensive statements of its teachings, which alone were to be believed. Any one thereafter studying the Bible was esteemed to be finding fault with the creeds, and was correspondingly condemned. The creeds were studied, and the Bible thereafter was neglected.

It was during that long period of 1260 years that the egregious errors which have since troubled mankind became interwoven with the creeds of the dark ages. And it is since those 1260 years ended that the reform movement has prevailed—not a satisfactory reformation, according to the Bible, but a reformation by sects. Misguided by the thought that the church should be one of outward organization, each reformer gathered his followers to him and started a new sect, which claimed to be the true church. Undoubtedly the adversary had much to do with the organization of these various denominations, which nowhere have authority in the Bible. (1 Corinthians 1:11-13; 3:3-5) In recent times Christian people are realizing that none of these is the true church of Christ, which is composed only of saints; and they gather to the Lord, irrespective of denominational lines of any kind.

## THE PILGRIM'S WANTS

[Reprint of poem in issue of January 15, 1904, which please see.]

## RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN

*"Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."*—1 John 5:18.

When attempting to explain spiritual things, there is always a difficulty, particularly because we have only human words with which to express ourselves. Therefore, in order to make spiritual things clear, the Scriptures give us various similes and other figures of speech. In this text the Apostle John speaks of those who are begotten of God, those who have experienced a change of nature, who were first begotten according to the flesh, as children of Adam, and who have been begotten again—begotten of God. (1 Peter 1:3) Since our Lord's resurrection, God has been inviting some to come out from the world and become new creatures—no longer human beings, but spirit beings.

The first step toward this change of nature is the receiving of a new will. But we can see that it is a mistake to call the new will alone the new creature; for the new will comes to us before we receive the holy Spirit. It is the new will that presents our sacrifice. If we did not have the new will, we would not present our bodies a living sacrifice. The next step is that of the Redeemer's becoming a Surety for this sacrifice and for the attainment of the new nature. The third step is the Heavenly Father's acceptance of this sacrifice, of this slaying of the earthly nature by the Redeemer, and his giving of a special sign of his acceptance. That special sign of acceptance is the begetting of the holy Spirit.

It is very necessary that we keep the new human will separate and distinct from that which we receive at the begetting of the Spirit. We had the new will first; we desired and purposed to do God's will. Then we approached the Father in the way he had arranged—through our Redeemer. It is the new will that makes the sacrifice. The offering being presented, the merit of Jesus is applied, and thus the sacrifice becomes at once acceptable to the Father. Up to this point the will of the individual is still a human will, a new human will. The offering is then slain by the High Priest, our Lord Jesus, the acceptance of the Father being marked immediately by the begetting of the Spirit.

Just what God does at this juncture we do not fully understand. We do not understand clearly what a natural begetting is, though we have better means of understanding the natural begetting than of understanding the spiritual begetting. As to the spiritual begetting, we have the divine expression that it is the starting of a new life. The one receiving it gains a supernatural illumination. Thereafter he is a changed person, a new person, a new creature. He is now in Christ Jesus. He has new hopes, aims and objects, and is more and more enabled to apprehend spiritual things as the quickening influences of the holy Spirit operate upon his mind.

But all this is something that cannot be explained to those who have not taken the necessary steps by which spiritual things may be understood. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually

discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:9-15) Not until we have received this heavenly illumination can we discern them in the way of appreciating them fully. Spiritual discernment grows from a small beginning. "Old things have passed away and all things have become new." These old things pass away, not instantly, but gradually; and the starting point is marked by this expression, "begotten of God."

### NEW CREATURE DOES NOT PRACTISE SIN

To be begotten of God, then, is to receive the beginning of a new life, a new nature. The Apostle John declares of such, "Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin [doth not practise sin—Diaglott]." (1 John 3:9) So long as these are under such holy control, inspired by the great and precious promises, and possessing the holy will, they could not sin wilfully—could not practise sin in their lives.

We are to distinguish between a wilful sin and being overtaken by a fault. The reference in our text is to wilful sin, the practise of sin. The new creature cannot sin because it is the heavenly seed, the seed of the new nature. Every flower, every animal, sprang from a seed of life. However infinitesimal the seed may be, however embryotic, life is there. Likewise with the Christian; so long as any of the holy mind of God is present, there is life. But if he sins wilfully, this holy seed is dead. If this seed perish, the individual is dead as a new creature. Nothing would then await the individual but the second death; for he had been lifted out of the first, or Adamic death, and to die again would mean that he had come under the extreme penalty of God's law a second time. This would be an individual sentence, and would be eternal. Such would be "twice dead," as the Apostle Jude puts it—"plucked up by the roots."—Jude 12.

So we see the Apostle John's meaning—whoever is in the spirit-begotten condition, whoever has this embryo of the new nature, could not sin wilfully, could not take pleasure in sin, could not give himself over to sin. To do so would signify that he had lost this holy Spirit, and that he had become unholy again. As St. Peter explains, it would be like the sow that was washed returning to her wallowing in the mire. The Apostle John says that one begotten of the holy Spirit will "keep himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." He not only will not sin wilfully, but he will keep constantly on guard, watching himself, just as a watchman guards the castle or the city or the house. He watches all the doors, all the avenues of access.

### THE NECESSITY FOR VIGILANCE

This thought of setting a watch over ourselves, of keeping ourselves so that the wicked one cannot touch or injure us, suggests another thought: The Lord himself is the great center of righteousness, purity, truth. All who are on the side of righteousness, purity, truth, will shun sin, will have no fellowship with it; for even if we should not really enter into sin in act, if we have any sympathy with it, we would be to that extent out of harmony with the Lord. As in a



circle the nearer to the center the greater the safety; so it is with the circle of righteousness, whose center is Jehovah himself.

The slightest sympathy with sin would cause the child of God to depart to that extent from the center of purity. As he widened the distance between himself and the Lord, he would draw nearer to the outer rim of the circle. Think of an island surrounded by water infested with crocodiles. The person who would remain in the center of the island would be perfectly safe from those enemies. But the nearer one approached to the coast line, the greater his danger. So Satan is represented as a wily foe; and to the extent that any of us would not watch himself, he would be getting nearer to the circumference of that circle. Any sympathy with what is not in the fullest harmony with the mind of the Lord, any participation in sin, would carry him closer and closer to the place of danger. The intimation of the Scrip-

tures is that such a one would be in great danger of being touched, caught, by the great adversary and his demon host, to his injury, perhaps to his ruin.

Presumably every Christian has had something of this experience of drawing near to the place of danger. In proportion as we live near to the Lord, we are under divine protection. In proportion as we waver in our loyalty, we come nearer to the adversary. One might thus endanger himself without actually sinning. His heart might still be true to the Lord, yet he might be touched by sin by being involved with others in some way. Therefore the Word of God warns us to watch our actions, to watch our companionship, our conduct, to abide "in the secret place of the Most High," to "make straight paths for our feet," lest that which is weak and lame be turned out of the way. Rather, let it be healed, by keeping very close to our God, as far away as possible from the point of danger.

## A WORD OF PASTORAL COUNSEL

We note a strong similarity in some respects between our spiritual and our natural experiences. We must partake of food if we would have strength. For the new creature in Christ, God's Word has provided this necessary food—milk for babes, strong meat for those of greater development. As we feed upon the gracious promises of God's Word, they strengthen our hearts and nerve our energies for patient endurance and active service for the glory of our King, for the blessing of the brethren, and for our own spiritual upbuilding. We perceive that one great lack amongst Christian people in general is that very many have ceased to partake of the spiritual food which the Heavenly Father has provided for the nourishment of his people. Many, therefore, are weak and sickly spiritually; and many have fallen asleep in respect to spiritual matters, having become overcharged with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches, money-lust, and the excitement of business and pleasure.—Mark 4:18, 19.

Since we have come to a knowledge of present truth we find our spiritual appetite sharpening more and more. We are growing day by day by means of the nourishment supplied. We love the strong meat. We take delight in masticating it. A work of Bible study is progressing all over the world, the like of which was never before known. The classes of the I. B. S. A. are becoming known for their knowledge of the Word of God, collectively and individually. The world, especially the "Christian world," is taking knowledge of them.

But here we need to note dangers threatening these Bible Students. And these dangers we especially call to the attention of the class leaders. The first is that it is true in respect to spiritual feasting as in respect to natural feasting, that

we need liquids as well as solids. By solids we refer to those spiritual foods which require mastication, mental assimilation, investigation, etc. From these we derive our strength. The liquid refreshments correspond more particularly to our spiritual fellowship which is non-doctrinal; namely, exhortation, praise, worship, testimony respecting the Lord, our personal relationship with him, his gracious providential care over us, etc. The class that neglects the liquid refreshments is sure to feel the loss. As the physical system requires the liquids to carry the nutriment properly to all parts, so the spiritual organism requires the liquid refreshments to carry the strength of the nutriment of the doctrines of Christ to every member for the mutual refreshment of all.

Again, it is noticed that while both solids and liquids are needed, it is preferable not to use the two at the same time. He who washes his solid food down with liquid refreshment fails to get all the nutriment out of it, because he masticates less. As the process of digestion is begun in the mouth, where the saliva is mixed thoroughly with the food, the washing of the food down with liquids interferes with an important part of digestion. Therefore, all physicians advise that little liquid be taken with the solids, but that at appropriate times a sufficiency of liquids be supplied to the system. So we advise in the spiritual eating—that the solids, the doctrines of the Word of God, be thoroughly masticated, with comparatively little of testimony or exhortation intermingled—just a little of praise and worship to give a proper setting. Then let the spiritual liquids be appropriated in full measure at suitable seasons.

## INTERESTING LETTERS

### RE THE "SPIRIT OF DIVISION"

DEAR BRETHREN:—

Last month we wrote you asking for separate pilgrim visits, and we have your reply of June 25th suggesting the possibility of our triumph over the "spirit of division," and stating your intention of making suggestion to the — class that a portion of the time of the visiting pilgrim brother be given to us.

For your letter we wish to thank you, and to thank our Heavenly Father whose providences are over us. We do not want to have the spirit of division, and we continually search our hearts for that which we must overcome, and do continually pray and study the Word for the holy Spirit in our hearts, and for the spirit of a sound mind. We will welcome reproof, correction, guidance, as the Lord may send it.

By the favor of God we have one chief desire: to be in accord with his will, to make our calling and election sure, to love and serve the brethren—and all in his way. Day by day our most earnest desire for these things increases, and we are determined to be his children wholly, believing his promises, believing these things are his will for us. In humility and thankfulness we testify that we are being dealt with as sons. So, if it should be the Father's will, we do desire to have the pilgrim brethren visit us, and our request was made if we know our hearts, without a thought of complaint against or criticism of others.

The regular — class was organized before our coming into it; the leaders have an established policy, so to speak. From time to time it has seemed to us that the Scriptures, and our Pastor's faithful interpretation of them, were not being followed, which developed to an issue between us, and we quietly resigned and withdrew—absolutely without harsh-

ness, with words and thoughts of love. We continually pray for each of them, we yearn for them and miss them, and search our own hearts to see if we can find bitterness or wrong that must be gotten out.

Our consecration is to God our Father, as we will it, and not to anything or anybody else. We will to choose his way, and pray for wisdom to see it and grace to walk in it, and we wish for fellowship with the pilgrim brethren to this end alone. No class meetings are held here with the pilgrims—the meetings being either public or semi-public—and we feel the need of heart-to-heart meetings with these brethren, at times when there will be no outsiders present.

Our withdrawal from the class was not hasty, but only prompt when the choice was necessary as to whom we must follow. It is not our thought to recite a grievance—we have none—nor disappointment, nor hurt, nor regret; for the ordering is of the Lord, and we are rejoicing in his providence.

So in this matter we are thankful in advance for what shall be done. All of the children of God are so safe! and we have very great cause for blessing and praising his name, feeling we shall be cared for. I have tried to write from the heart—sincerely. If you have any further suggestion or counsel, or if nothing more be considered necessary, we shall think it well.

Looking over into the Land, the tabernacling days nearly over, the world in fear, the way each day yet narrower, how could we have time or inclination to quarrel with the brethren! I pray your hearts may be continued in patient endurance; we daily speak of you in love and sympathy. God bless you!

In Christ, faithfully yours,