

## SELF-DENIAL—ITS PURPOSE AND ITS IMPORTANCE

*"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple."*—Luke 14:33.

Denying one's self is self-denial. In considering what is meant by the phrase, "denying one's self," we must distinguish as to what self is and what are the self-rights. Upon mature reflection we perceive that our personality, our ego, is represented by our will. Evidently, then, our Lord requires that every one who becomes his disciple shall surrender his own will—"all that he hath"; for elsewhere the Master says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) Whether our will be good or bad, strong or weak, it must be given up when we consecrate ourselves to do the will of God; and when once we have surrendered our own will to do the divine will, it follows that henceforth we are to do God's will to the best of our ability in every matter.

After our consecration to do the will of God, and the subsequent acceptance on the part of our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Lord, we were begotten of the holy Spirit as sons of God, new creatures in Christ. This transaction meant that we gave up self-will and accepted God's will instead of our own on all subjects. This matter of giving up one's own will in order to do the will of another is a most radical proposition. Indeed, the yielding up of the will to any one except the heavenly Father is the most dangerous thing we can do. Very grave mistakes have been made in this way. In various cults, in denominational bodies and in political circles the surrender of the individual will, the failure to maintain a personal responsibility, has resulted in many serious mistakes and in much evil practise.

### THE START OF THE NEW CREATION

In the case of those who have surrendered their will to God the matter is altogether different, however. God has given our Lord Jesus Christ to be the Head over the church which is his body, and of which the consecrated, spirit-begotten children of God are the members in particular. No one could properly be a member of the body of Christ if he retained his own individual human will. This fact is well illustrated in the human body, every member of which is fully under the control of the head, unless the body is seriously diseased. The hands, the feet, etc., have no volition of their own, but respond to the will of the brain. And so it is with the members of the body of Christ; they are subject to the will of the Head, our Lord Jesus.

At first the new creature seems to have been nothing but a will. Originally as a human being he had a body, a mind, and a will which represented his personality, his ego, his being. But while he was still a natural man a proposition came to him: If he would heartily comply with certain terms and conditions, God would give him a change of nature from human to spirit. This change evidently would mean a new body, a new mind and a new will, in order that the new creature could adapt himself to his new environment. But in the divine arrangement for the Gospel age those who accepted this proposition received neither a new body nor a new mind first, but a new will, with the promise that the other two requirements would be given in the resurrection, as a result of cheerful compliance with all the terms of the covenant entered into with God at the time of consecration.

Thus the first step on the part of those who accepted the divine proposition to become members of the new creation was that of giving up the human will. Whoever took this step contracted to become dead as a human being—not that his human body or his human brain died, not that he lost the power to think, but that he promised to forgo his human personality and experience in order to be ruled thereafter by a new will, the will of God. Those who have taken this step of full consecration are accepted of the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been begotten of the holy Spirit as new creatures in Christ.

### NEW WILL THE NEW CREATURE

At the present time this new will is all that there is of the new creature. At the time of his spirit-begetting this new will had not yet attained control of the mind or of the body; but it is expected to conquer them, to bring them into obedience to the new standard of living. The new will should control the brain as to what things may be proper subjects of thought and what things may not be so considered. This new creature is exhorted to put away from his mind all selfish lines of thought, and to put far away from him all anger, wrath, malice, hatred, strife, works of the flesh, and to put on meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness and love.

From the Word of God the new creature learns that the former spirit, mind or disposition of anger, malice, hatred,

is of the flesh and of the devil, but that the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness, love, is the spirit, mind or disposition of Christ, and is in accord with God. He also learns that since he has been begotten of the holy Spirit of God, his human will must be kept dead, that his new will is to be God's will, and that it must not operate except in line with the divine arrangements. As the new creature develops, he gains more and more control over the mind, the body, the acts, the thoughts. It is the new will which is thus gaining control of the human body—the will of the new creature. This divine new will is entirely upon God's side, and hopes to receive some day the things promised in the Word of God to the overcomers of the Gospel age. When we characterize this new will as being divine, we do not mean to imply that there is no individuality about the new creature, however; for our Lord Jesus still maintains his individuality, and it is written that the church, the new creation, shall be like him.—1 John 3:1, 2; 2 Peter 1:4; Philippians 2:8-11.

The holy Spirit is the same disposition or mind, whether the Father or the Son or the church possesses it. When at the moment of spirit-begetting we received the impartation of this holy Spirit, we began to take on the divine spirit, or disposition. In other words, we have been making the divine mind ours. As the Apostle Paul intimates, we are being transformed, formed over, by the renewing of our minds, in order that we may prove more and more the good, the acceptable, the perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1, 2) As gradually our minds expand to grasp that will, we are enabled more and more to appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine mind; and we say to ourselves: "This is what I am aiming to reach." Thus our will is endeavoring continually to do the divine will, the divine purpose; for we have taken over to ourselves the mind of Christ, who delighted to do the Father's will.

### DESIRE TO DO RIGHT NOT SUFFICIENT

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross," setting aside his own will, disposing of it forever. If at any future time a will which is contrary to God's will should develop, then the whole transaction would be at an end; for the covenant of sacrifice into which we entered at consecration involves the death of the old mind and the old will. The new creature must never permit the will of the flesh to come into control again. So it is the new will that is working out the victory for the new creature; and every victory won over the flesh leads to the consummation, the death of the human nature.

In Philippians 2:12 the Apostle Paul exhorts the new creature in Christ to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. How necessary it is for us to battle against the adverse conditions of the human body, as well as against those of the world and of the devil! God has started his spirit-begotten children in this narrow way of giving up their own will and taking the divine will instead, of determining to live in harmony with God's will. We are to do his will even to the extent of sacrificing the human body. God is looking on to see whether or not we are overcoming self in this respect; for only the more than overcomers shall receive the promised glory, honor and immortality—the divine nature.

It is God who is working in us, the Apostle declares, as new creatures. He began that work when he drew us to himself through the knowledge of his provision through Christ Jesus for our salvation, and when he accepted us in the Beloved and begat us of his holy Spirit. Continually he gives us fresh beauties in his Word. But while God is working upon our wills, we must see to it that we go further than merely having the desire to do right. We must make strenuous efforts to put our desire into operation.

### OUR WILLS NOT OUR THOUGHTS

We must make sure that we do not mistake our thoughts for our will. The will is the decision, the determination of the majority of those faculties of the brain which constitute the mentality. The will of the flesh actually dies at the moment of consecration; and we receive the will of God instead, thenceforth to be our will. But we retain our human bodies, with the old brain, which has the same tendencies after consecration as before. When we accepted the will of God instead of our own will we did not fully understand that new will; but as time went on, the divine will became more and more apparent to us.

This determination to accept the will of God as our will

was not made for a day or a week or even a year, but for eternity. We are resolved to have no other will than that which God gives, that which he approves, that which is in harmony with him. Yet as we go on from day to day, new scenes arise before us. Sometimes our earthly senses seem to sidetrack us, and in many things we may feel that we are at liberty to choose what we shall do. But as we progress, we may learn that God has expressed himself in these very matters about which we had thought we might exercise our own preference.

If, for instance, we should say: "It is God's will that I should be his ambassador. What kind of coat shall I wear? What style of tie would be appropriate?" we have come to realize that the interests of God and of his cause are linked up with ours. Thus we have new thoughts upon the matter of our personal appearance. As soon as we perceive this point, we say to ourselves: "I had thought that my former course was the right one; but now I see that the divine interests are linked up with this matter; and God's will must rule in all the affairs of my life."

Each new circumstance surrounding us is a test of our loyalty to God. Therefore just as surely as we are loyal to him we shall choose his way; and the promptness with which we do whatever we see to be the Father's will becomes a test of our loyalty to him. On the other hand, we might hold to a thing that was contrary to the divine will, saying, "What difference will it make to the Father whether I do this thing or that?" Thus every circumstance of life forms a test of our devotion to God and to the principles of righteousness. We can have only one will. If we have truly presented ourselves to God in consecration and have been accepted by him and begotten as new creatures in Christ, then old things have passed away and all things have become new.

#### HYPNOTIC INFLUENCE OF SIN

As a matter of fact, however, the only thing that has actually become new is the will; for although we have new hopes, new aims, new aspirations, new desires, they are only the outworkings of that new will. If at any time we should return to a love of sin intentionally, wilfully, this act on our part would mean that the new will had died, had ceased to be, and that a human will had come into existence. Since the Father does not purpose to beget any one of the holy Spirit the second time, whoever had become an old creature again would have no opportunity of ever getting out of that state. He would be "twice dead, plucked up by the roots," as the Apostle declares.—Jude 12, 13.

But there are those who, while possessing the new will and still clinging to it, are brought into subjection to the flesh in some measure. For a time such might seem to be willing to do wrong and to have changed their will from a right one to a wrong one; whereas in reality they may not have done so at all. On the contrary they have been temporarily overcome by the fleshly appetites and desires common to the natural man. As new creatures in Christ God's people wish to bring every thought into captivity to the divine will. This is the earnest endeavor of the new will, the new creature. But sometimes the flesh advances such plausible theories, such false reasonings, that the new will seems to be beguiled (2 Corinthians 11:3) by the fleshly mind, just as a little bird is said to be hypnotized by a serpent. While every now and then the bird might try to fly away from the serpent, yet the latter watches it, allures it, draws it nearer and nearer, until finally it loses all power to get away.

This illustration well represents the overpowering effects of sin. (Hebrews 3:12, 13) Under the influence of the flesh, the new will may become more or less hypnotized, more or less under a spell. For this reason the Scriptures urge all new creatures to make no provision for the flesh. We are ever to remember that the flesh wars against the spirit continually. Therefore we are to be circumspect, to look all around us, and to note what conditions are about us. Before we undertake any project, we should ask ourselves: "Did I ever get into trouble by following this course heretofore? Am I in danger of being misled by such a course?" And so the Apostle urges new creatures to make straight paths for their feet, lest that which in themselves has been blemished by sin should turn them away from righteousness.—Heb. 12:11-15.

We are to do our very best to make our path as smooth as possible. But if despite our earnest efforts we get into a quagmire, we are not to be overwhelmed with discouragement; for the promise is that God will not suffer his loyal-hearted children to be tempted above that which they are able to bear, but with every trial will provide a way of escape. (1 Corinthians 10:13) In every circumstance of life we are to look to our heavenly Father, knowing that he is the one

to help us. If we find ourselves involved in difficulties, we are to endeavor to extricate ourselves from them, remembering that God has made provision for our escape from what otherwise might prove to be too much for us. This course on our part implies that the new creature does not consent to the deeds of the flesh, but is seeking to take another course, is striving for the right way, even though for the time being it may have been hypnotized, lulled to sleep, off guard.

#### DISTINCTION BETWEEN MIND AND WILL

Of necessity the mind and the will are very closely related. Yet they are evidently not the same; for the mind can entertain, consider and discuss a variety of contradictory propositions, while the will is the determination in respect to a certain clearly defined course. The will may, however, direct the mind to discuss both sides of any proposition. In thus calling upon the faculties of the mind to consider any subject and to set forth the reasons pro and con, the new will has to do with the mind of the fallen flesh. From experience along this line the new will becomes conscious of the fact that it is dealing with a treacherous opponent, that certain elements of the mind are sure to be hostile to the new will. Consequently the new will should always restrict the mind as to the nature of the subjects to be considered and as to how far the discussion should be permitted to proceed.

From this we see that the new will must limit the operation of the mind, and that consequently various complications may result. If the will is weak, if it lacks experience, it may not be critical enough; and those faculties of the mind which are not in harmony with the new will may come forward with their strong arguments on the wrong side of the subject under consideration. Thus the whole being might be led into a wrong attitude, or even into actual sin of word, deed or thought. The new will has accepted the divine standard, which is superior to the fleshly brain which the new creature must use. This divine standard, which is the highest possible, and which cannot be changed, is revealed to us in the words of our Lord and the apostles. It is not to be swayed by the prejudices of the fallen flesh, but is to rule both body and mind. Hence the battle waged by the new creature is a conflict between the fleshly mind and the new will. The two are contrary.

But since the new creature has accepted the will of God, the mind of God, the purpose of God, he must rule his mortal body according to that standard, until finally the experiences which he undergoes in the school of Christ shall have developed him and prepared him for the new body which is to be given him in the resurrection.

A soul, a sentient being, is the result of the union of the life principle with an organism. (Genesis 2:7) When an organism and the life principle are united they produce a soul. Such are the human souls all about us. In the case of the church of Christ, to each one of us individually there came a time when we ceased to be human souls, and became new creatures in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17) But while we reckon ourselves dead indeed as human beings, yet we have only the human body in which to operate, as the Apostle declares.—Romans 6:3-8, 16-19; Col. 3:1-3.

#### HOW TO BECOME AN OVERCOMER

St. Paul also tells us that the power of God is able to quicken the mortal body in which the new creature sojourns, and that these new souls will not be without proper opportunity for service. More and more the fleshly body is to be brought into subjection to the new will; for the new creature dwells in an earthly tabernacle. If faithful, he will be by and by given a new body, a spiritual body. This combination of the new life imparted at spirit-begetting and the human body is the soul which God counts as a new creature. But it is not a perfect new creature, and will not be until God's properly arranged time.

From the foregoing argument we perceive that the value which we attach to words has much to do with our understanding of any matter. There is more or less of a philosophy about all our conversation. Taking man as the Bible does—in his fallen, sinful condition—and inquiring about the human will, we find that under present unfavorable conditions it is selfish, self-seeking. In all fallen beings there is more or less of selfishness, of the desire to look out for one's own interests, to please self and to take whatever course one prefers. This condition may continue for years. Thus the person may have heard of God's great proposition that whoever will set aside his own will and take the will of God instead shall in the resurrection have a change of nature from human to spiritual. This full consecration to do the will of God means the making void the human will in order to do the divine will. Those believers in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ who accepted this proposition were accepted of the

Father through our Lord Jesus, and begotten of the holy Spirit. Thus they were started in the narrow way of life eternal. Immediately they entered the school of Christ, there to be fitted for the high position to which they were called.

In this school our Lord's true followers have made progress toward the full overcoming of the spirit of the world. This progress can be achieved only by faith, by that implicit confidence in the Master's teaching and training which will keep them continually as earnest, diligent pupils under his guidance and instruction. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4) This text is very

suggestive of what it is to be an overcomer, to be one of those to whom pertain all the great and precious promises of the Word of God. The suggestion is simply this: Day by day we are to heed attentively and carry out patiently the instructions of our infallible Teacher and Guide in full, unquestioning faith in his wisdom and his love, no matter how heavy the daily cross may be or how severe the discipline.

The process is indeed tedious; but the end will be glorious. Even the daily discipline will, if borne patiently and meekly, bring the present reward of conscious progress in the great work of attaining the goal of ripened Christian character.

## INCORRUPTION AND IMMORTALITY—DISTINCTION BETWEEN THESE TERMS

*"This corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*—1 Corinthians 15:53.

Through his word God declares that those who become his people during this Gospel age, become new creatures in Christ, to whom old things pass away and all things become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17) To those who are spiritually-minded there is very great evidence indeed that this is true; and yet this doctrine of spirit-begetting might be unrecognized by those who have not taken the step of full consecration to God. "Here a little and there a little" is the method we must pursue in order to see the deep things of God's Word; for this seems to be the one general principle upon which these "deep things" were recorded; and they will be revealed only in this manner. Those who study the Bible superficially overlook everything of importance; and as a result they find only a part of the truth. But those who search the Scriptures diligently are enabled to discern a wonderful plan which others have failed to perceive; for those who are not of the right class cannot see the truth in its clearness, beauty and harmony.

### IMMORTALITY AND INCORRUPTION

Those who have the right spirit will desire to know what the Lord has in reservation for his people; and this desire gives opportunity for the operation of the spirit of truth, and leads them to come together for Bible study. Thus, as they are searching to know the divine plan, the Lord reveals it more and more to them, "here a little and there a little"; and these littles make a great aggregate. In this way many doctrines long lost sight of have been brought to light. Among these is that of the resurrection of the dead.

The words "mortal" and "immortal" are not generally understood. The ordinary definition of mortal is dying, and of immortal, everlasting. Both of these definitions are wrong. Bible students have learned that in the study of God's Word confusion is unavoidable unless the true meaning of these words is clearly recognized. Mortal is a word which means liable to death; mortality, a state or condition in which death is possible, but not necessarily a dying condition unless a death sentence has been incurred. Immortal means not liable to death; immortality signifies the state or condition in which death is an impossibility—a death-proof condition.

To those who think that the Bible contains many such phrases as "immortal soul," "never-dying soul," etc., we can do nothing better than suggest that they take a Bible concordance and look for such expressions. They will find none; and thus those who are really seeking to know the truth on these subjects will readily perceive that Christian people in general have for centuries been mentally adding to the Word of God, much to their own confusion.

According to the Scriptures the angels have life everlasting, but are mortal; that is, their life continues everlastingly not because they are immortal, or death-proof, and so could not be developed by their Creator, but because he purposes that they shall live as long as they will use their lives in harmony with his just and loving arrangement. That this is true is demonstrated by the fact that Satan is eventually to be destroyed.—Hebrews 2:14; Psalm 145:20; 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

Before Adam's disobedience, his life condition was similar to that now enjoyed by the holy angels. He had life in full measure—lasting life—which he might have retained forever if he had remained obedient to God. But because Adam was not death-proof, because he did not have "life in himself," because he was dependent upon conditions subject to his Creator's pleasure, therefore God's warning that disobedience would result in death meant something. (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Romans 6:23) It meant the loss of the spark of life given Adam when he was created—"the breath of life," without which his body would moulder into dust, and the living soul, the sentient being, would cease to exist. If

father Adam had been immortal, death-proof, God's sentence would have been an empty threat, as Satan has made it appear to be through his lie to mother Eve.—Genesis 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 20:2.

But while the Scriptures speak of man's mortality, and indeed in nearly all particulars confine themselves to man's relationship to God, yet they no less positively teach in another way the mortality of angels; for they declare that Christ "only hath immortality" (1 Timothy 6:16)—the Father, as always, excepted. (1 Corinthians 15:27) Immortality is a quality of the divine nature, and was given to our Lord after his resurrection as a reward for his faithful obedience to the Father's will even to the extent of self-sacrifice. This exaltation raised him, as the Apostle declares, far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named in heaven and in earth.—Philippians 2:9; Ephesians 1:21; 1 John 3:2; 2 Peter 1:4.

### RESURRECTION THE ONLY HOPE OF THE WORLD

As the result of Adam's trial in Eden, the death sentence passed upon him, and by the laws of heredity has been inherited by all his posterity. But as the result of the ransom price laid down at Calvary, the opportunity for a new trial is to be granted in due time to each member of the human family; and only a favored minority get such opportunity and trial during this Gospel age, appointed for the church class. This means the rolling back of the original sentence of death, and the bringing of all mankind into a condition of judgment, or trial, for everlasting life, on the basis of their individual obedience or disobedience. This fact necessitates the awakening of the dead. Therefore we find that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has a very prominent place in the Scriptures.—Acts 24:14-16; 26:6-8; John 5:25, 28, 29.

The Scriptures teach that at the proper time all mankind will be granted a full trial, or judgment, to determine their worthiness or unworthiness of life everlasting. Not only those living at that time will be granted this opportunity, but those who have gone into the tomb will be awakened from the death sleep to be judged. This judgment day for all mankind is located in the Millennial age, even as the Gospel age is the day of judgment for the church. In its highest and ultimate sense restitution will be the bringing of mankind not only out of the tomb, but out of the various degrees of death, represented in sickness and imperfection, up, up, up, to lasting life, such as father Adam enjoyed before his disobedience. Full opportunity to attain this blessing of life everlasting will be granted to all who are willing and obedient under the reasonable terms of the New Covenant which is to be made with Israel in due time.—Jeremiah 31:31-34.

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE CHURCH

The phrase "first resurrection" is applied in Scripture to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus and the church which is his body. (Revelation 20:4-6; Philippians 3:10) This expression has the thought of chief resurrection, resurrection to the highest, chief position. All who share in it will have divine nature—glory, honor and immortality. But if we were to mention time and order in connection with it, we would speak of our Lord's resurrection as the Head of the Christ nineteen centuries ago—in the year 33 A. D.—and the resurrection of the church in 1878. Since then, each member of the church receives his resurrection "change" as he passes beyond the veil. Hence we believe that the first resurrection is still in progress.

St. Paul mentions his intense desire to be made a sharer in our Lord's resurrection—the great first resurrection, the resurrection to the spirit plane—a partaker of the divine nature. In order to attain this distinction, he was anxious

to make his calling and election sure by being made conformable unto our Lord's death, by being a living sacrifice; for he realized that only thus could he attain membership in the glorified body of Christ.

#### TWO CLASSES IN THE RESURRECTION

In the context from which our text is taken, the Apostle is discussing this first resurrection. He says, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Here he mentions two classes—those who had died in Christ during the Gospel age and those who remained alive at his second coming. These classes are also pointed out in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

In this connection the Apostle seems to use the words mortal and immortality, corruptible and incorruption, in such a way as to imply a distinction between them. Apparently he applies the words corruptible and incorruption when he speaks of those who would have gone into the tomb, and mortal and immortality when he mentions those who would not yet have passed into death when our Lord returns. Those who had gone into the tomb, into corruption, would put on incorruption; but those who were still alive would put on immortality. Those who are mortal are liable to death; those of the church who remained alive at the time of the second advent would in their resurrection "change" receive the body that is not liable to death. The terms corruptible and incorruption seemingly refer to those of the body of Christ who were dead at the time of our Lord's return, and the words mortal and immortality to those who remained alive at that time onward until the last member had experienced his resurrection "change."

#### PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CHURCH IN THE FLESH

Addressing the new creatures in Christ, and informing us that we are spirit-begotten, the Apostle tells us that this new creature has its residence in the old human body. (2 Corinthians 4:7; 5:1) We are no longer old creatures, because the old will is gone. The new will has come in, and taken possession of what was once the old person. The "old man" and his works are cast off; and the "new man" begins to use the mortal body in the service of God. The Apostle Peter speaks of us as in times past having done the will of the flesh, and reminds us that henceforth we are to serve the will of God, the will of Christ. (1 Peter 4:1-5) This new will has no body of its own as yet, and for the time being uses the old body.

In discussing this subject, St. Paul declares that the new creature is to put off forever those things which are associated with the fallen flesh—the works of the flesh and the devil; such as anger, wrath, malice, hatred, strife, etc. Some have by nature more of these weaknesses than have others; but all have some of them. As a result, the new creature has a continual work of putting off the things pertaining to the fallen flesh. Meanwhile, the flesh is not counted the new creature; but it is his body in the sense that he owns or controls it. In other words, it is his property, and he is responsible for it.

The new body of the new creature is to be a spirit body. The Lord has promised that if we are faithful while we have the treasure of the new mind in these earthen vessels he will give us a new body of the kind which he has arranged for us. This will be a spirit body of the divine nature, and will have the quality of life in itself—immortality. But as long as the new creature has the old body, there will be a constant conflict between the new will and the flesh; for the new will seeks to control it. Nevertheless, we as new creatures are to maintain a good fight, recognizing that the things of the spirit are contrary to the things of the flesh. The two are contrary, irreconcilable; they can never come into harmony. Therefore the new creature is to maintain a severe attack of opposition until finally he shall have won a complete victory and the flesh shall be entirely overthrown.—Romans 8:13, 14; Galatians 5:15-25.

The conquest of the fallen human nature will not be fully accomplished until the flesh is fully dead. While the body is counted dead at consecration, yet it is not actually dead until it parts with life. The new creature uses this old body, but

is promised a new one at the resurrection of the just. This change will be instantaneous, not gradual; as the Apostle declares, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."—1 Corinthians 15:52.

#### RESURRECTION BEGUN IN THE SAINTLY

The development of the new creature is a work of time. It is a matter of the soul, the mind and the will, coming into harmony with God and losing all harmony with sin. After both mind and will have been tested and fully developed, the new creature will be accounted worthy of the resurrection. The Apostle tells us that it is sown in weakness, raised in power; it is sown in dishonor, raised in glory; it is sown an animal body; raised a spiritual body. We do not understand this to mean that the body is sown, and that the body is raised; but that what is sown is the ego, the individual, the person who was once a fleshly or earthly being, but who has become a new creature.

In this same connection the Apostle declares in our text that this mortal must put on immortality. He seems to be speaking of those who would be alive when our Lord returned. He says that while we shall not all fall asleep in death, nevertheless we shall all experience a change—from the earthly to the heavenly nature; and that we who are in a mortal condition will put on immortality. In other words, the resurrection change of the church will complete the work which has been going on for years. This work began when at our consecration our wills were buried or immersed into the will of Christ, immediately after which we were begotten of the holy Spirit as new creatures in Christ, and raised to walk in newness of life. But unless this resurrection continues, we shall not be ready for the consummation of the resurrection in the end of the age, "at the last trump."

Meantime the faithful overcomers are continually putting off the deeds of the old nature—anger, malice, hatred—and putting on meekness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. Whoever is growing in truth is growing in all these fruits and graces of the holy Spirit; and as he puts on these qualities, he becomes strong as a new creature. Finally he completes the matter by putting on his new body; for at the time of his "change" he ceases to have further use for his human organism, and then he receives the spirit body which God has promised. When this has been received, he will have been perfected as a new creature in Christ.

Elsewhere in this same chapter from which our text is taken, the Apostle indicates that in the resurrection there will be different orders, or classes of those who come forth from the tomb. (Verses 22, 23) First will come the church of Christ, in the first resurrection. Next in order will be the great company, those spirit-begotten ones who have failed to make their calling and election sure. While this class, or order, will have a glorious portion upon the spirit plane, yet it will not be so high as that attained by the church, the body of Christ. Another order to come forth in the resurrection will be the ancient worthies, who have the testimony that during their lifetime they had pleased God. (Hebrews 11:39-40) As to the orders to follow, we have no Scriptural information.

Here it may be well to point out that the title "Church of the Firstborn" (Hebrews 12:23) was evidently designed to include all who would be born of the Spirit—not only the little flock who attain the chief resurrection, but also the great company who come up out of the great tribulation. In the type the entire tribe of Levi was taken as representative of all the firstborns of Israel, those who were spared when the firstborns of Egypt perished. (Exodus 12:12, 13; Numbers 3:40-45) This tribe consisted of the priestly family, high priest and under priests representing the little flock, and the Levites representing the great company.

In a general way the Scriptures seem to pass by the great company class, whatever is stated of them being done in an inferential manner. If the Lord had made special promises to them, it would imply that they had been called to occupy that position; whereas the Scriptures plainly state that all of the church are called in the one hope of their calling. (Ephesians 4:4) God did not call any one to the great company. Those who are finally assigned to that position receive it as a kind of secondary reward, inferior to that which was originally offered them.

## THE BINDING OF THE STRONG MAN

*"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."*  
—Revelation 20:2.

[Reprint of article published in issue of May 1, 1910, which please see.]

## JOSEPH MADE RULER OF EGYPT

[The first ten paragraphs of this article were reprinted from article entitled, "In the School of Adversity," published in issue of October 1, 1901. Paragraphs 11 to 18 were reprinted from article entitled, "For God Was With Him," published in the same issue. The remainder was reprinted from article entitled, "Them That Honor Me I Will Honor," published in issue of April 15, 1907. Please see the articles named.]

## A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We thank thee, Father, for this day;  
We thank thee for the narrow way,  
For love and joy and peace of heart,  
Foiling the tempter's cunning art.  
We thank thee for the mind to do  
Thy sovereign will the whole day through,  
To take each moment as a gift  
Divinely sent us, to uplift  
Some fellow pilgrim on the way,  
Or check the thought that fain would stray  
Afar from thee and speed its way  
To earth's dull care or revels gay.

We thank thee for a mind intent  
On counting tests as blessings sent  
Straight from the courts of heavenly love  
To bind our souls to things above.  
We thank thee for faith's anchorage,  
That doth our every power engage  
To reach that land where is no night,  
Where dwells the Lamb, thereof the Light.  
With grateful hearts thy love we own;  
We thank thee for the gracious loan,  
Through Christ, of merit for each hour  
Till we shall waken, "raised in power."

## JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

[The first fifteen paragraphs and the last paragraph of this article were reprinted from article entitled, "Blessed are the Merciful," published in issue of April 15, 1907. The remainder was reprinted from article entitled, "Joseph the Merciful," published in issue of October 15, 1901. Please see the articles named.]

## OUR LORD JESUS' PRE-HUMAN EXISTENCE

Question.—Before his consecration, had Jesus any knowledge of his pre-human existence?

Answer.—There is nothing in the Scriptures to the effect that up to the time when Jesus made his consecration and was begotten of the holy Spirit he had a definite knowledge respecting his pre-human existence. The fact that nothing of that kind is stated, however, would not prove that he did not have some information regarding the matter. We read that as a boy he grew in wisdom, in stature and in favor with God and men. We know that in boyhood he was studying the Word of God, the prophecies, the law. Even as a child he had come to a sufficiency of knowledge to enable him to think out quite clearly the meaning of some of the prophecies, to see that he had a great work to do, and to conjecture as to the nature of that work.

This is shown in his meeting with the doctors of the law at the age of twelve, hearing them and asking them questions respecting the prophecies, seeking to know to what extent he might be eligible for some kind of service to God as a boy, or what would be the starting point at which he would begin his ministry. Having ascertained that he could not begin his work until he reached the age of thirty, he returned home, content to wait until that time. There is no indication of any special knowledge or impartation of the Spirit of God until he consecrated himself and was baptized at Jordan.

From his mother Jesus must have gained some knowledge of his origin—of how he came into the world. His mother did not know of his pre-human existence; but she had been informed by the angel that her son would not be born after the manner of men. He had said to Mary: "The holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall

overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And to Joseph the angel said: "That which is conceived in her is of the holy Spirit." So Mary undoubtedly told her son that he had not a human father, but that his Father was God. All our knowledge of our Lord's pre-existent condition comes to us from Scriptures written later, and from the Master's own words after he was begotten of the holy Spirit.

Just how and when Jesus came to know of his pre-existence with the Father we do not know. It seems doubtful that he knew of this before his spirit-begetting. After he was begotten of the Spirit, the deep things of God were opened up to him. He then saw from the Scriptures of the Old Testament that he was to be the slain lamb; that he would later be restored to the heavenly plane of life, and that he was to be honored of the Father after his sacrificial work for man.

We know that his pre-existence was made very plain and clear to Jesus; for he declared this on various occasions. He said: "What and if the Son of Man shall ascend up where he was before?" Again, "Before Abraham was, I am." (John 6:62; 8:58) In his last prayer with his disciples before his crucifixion, he prayed: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was; Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." He spoke of himself as the "bread which cometh down from heaven." Again he said: "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." St. John calls him the Word, the Logos, which was "in the beginning with the God," and declares that "all things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made."—John 1:1-3.

## LETTERS FROM AFIELD

### RESOLVED TO "ABIDE IN THE SHIP"

DEAR BRETHREN:—

I desire to express my continued appreciation of THE WATCH TOWER, and my complete confidence that the same loving Providence which guided our Pastor in founding the TOWER (Z '16, page 173) continues to guide and direct the Editorial Committee in their labors of love through its columns. How short is the memory which forgets the oft repeated assurances of Brother Russell that THE WATCH TOWER is the Lord's channel for the truth and that he was its servant! What a loyal "faithful servant" he proved himself to be, even to the very last! And now, though passed from the busy scenes of his earthly labors, he still ministers; for his "works do follow" him.

The Word says that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." The spring of 1918, like the fall of 1914, brought disappointment to many hearts. Nevertheless we can, and do, look up and lift up our heads as we behold the multiplied evidences of "the effect of every vision." As in the past, so now each disappointment brings its trials and siftings; but when the clouds have gone, greatest opportunities come for service. (Z '16, page 170) "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," and we have found it so. I am glad that according to the will of God I am still here and pressing toward the mark for the prize.

But it is sad to note that many once loyal and obedient no longer walk with us, some even opposing the way of the truth. Can it be that such were heedless of repeated warnings to "resist everything akin to occultism," and have given ear to evil suggestions, have become victims of abbreviation and so have made shipwreck of their faith? Such foolish and subversive suggestions as: "THE WATCH TOWER is no longer the channel," "The manna ceased at Passover," "The present executive committee are usurpers," etc., are finding free circulation in some quarters. Are these brethren going blind? Even a superficial examination of Brother Russell's writings would reveal the folly of such suggestions. In the TOWER of 1909, page 234, the Pastor says: "Truth tests character." Yet these brethren argue that error has crept into its columns to test the church. Whither are they drifting? A careful reading of the TOWER for 1909, top of page 287; that of 1910, page 391; and that of 1913, page 85, may serve to open the eyes of some to their danger. See also Proverbs 26:17-28.

I fully believe that the Lord is still at the helm, guiding the Society's affairs as of old, even as he promised: "Awake, O sword . . . against the man that is my fellow, . . . and I will turn my hand over the little [humble] ones." As far as I am concerned, through the grace of him that never faileth, I am resolved to "abide in the ship."



The Pastor's words are true: "Whatever may be the difficulties of the Lord's children in the near future, there will be special comfort in remembering that the Lord is able to make full provision for all his truehearted ones, and that he will do so. He will continue to use these agencies; and there will be the strengthening of his people to the end of the way. If there be any who will not be thus led, it must be because there is something wrong in themselves." —Z 1915, page 376.

If I read my Bible aright and understand the Pastor's thought, much remains to be done before the kingdom of Christ assumes full control; and surely the faithful, loyal disciples will be honored, as in the past, with further opportunities for service. Yes; the church will emerge from its "dungeon." (Jeremiah 38) May we all be found faithful!

With assurances of love toward the Bethel family, and praying the Lord's rich blessing upon you in your new quarters, I am

Your fellow servant,

W. A. B.—Oregon.

#### GREETINGS FROM AFAR

DEAR BRETHREN:—

The Rockdale church of the I. B. S. A. all unite in sending love and greetings to all their brethren in Christ. We realize that all the ways of God are good; yea, all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as love him. The Lord deals graciously with his people. Though he puts them into the furnace, he will not suffer it to be heated one degree more than is needful. He presides over it himself. In the midst of all their trials, he never leaves nor forsakes them. It is delightful to consider that the sufferings which the footstep followers of our Master are now called upon to endure are the only sufferings which they shall ever experience. God is a sovereign good and wise. Who can harm us if we be followers of that which is good? Suffering we may endure, but real injury we shall not sustain; for Eternal Truth has declared that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose.

May we all make the glory of God our first and chief concern! If Jesus be precious to us, and all else esteemed as nothing when compared with him, we shall be able to walk before God with a perfect heart, upright and sincere, setting the Lord always before us and doing all things to the glory of his name. Let our whole desire be that Christ may be magnified in our bodies, whether it be by life or death.

The church here numbers about thirty, and was formed about twenty months ago, the Lord having sent his messenger, Brother Gates, to this district, to sow this field. We are in full accord with THE STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES; and THE WATCH TOWERS are much appreciated by all and are eagerly read and, being "meat in due season," bring comfort and hope, and give us greater zeal in our Master's work.

Praying that God will bless and sustain you all in every trial, and at the end grant you victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the assurance of our deepest love and constant prayers, we are

Your brethren in Christ,

THE ROCKDALE CHURCH.—N. S. W.

#### BLESSED ONES THAT DIE IN THE LORD

Mr. Walter Thomas, Vandergrift, Pa.

DEAR SIR:—

I presume you have doubtless received the sad news of your brother, Marks R. Thomas' death; but I am writing to assure that he was prepared fully to meet his Master.

I had a few minutes conversation with him just about one hour before he passed away, and he impressed me as being the sweetest character I have ever met in the Army in my seventeen years of service. He remarked that if he should pass away he would show the men around him "how easy a Christian could die"; and it was reported that his death was a happy one, if such could be.

I wish to extend to you my sincere sympathy in your bereavement, and hope you will have strength to bear the sad news. Faithfully yours,

S. J. SMITH, Major-Chaplain, Field Artillery,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

#### FINDS GREAT PLEASURE IN BIBLE STUDY

DEAR BRETHREN:—

Grace and peace be unto you! We note the return of the Society to its birthplace as of the Lord; and the hope of still sharing in the service on behalf of the multitude yet to be drawn into contact with the truth is thrilling. If we read the signs of the times correctly in conjunction with the prophecies, we can see a gigantic federation of religious and civil interests soon. At any rate, present conditions are causing an immense amount of thinking and of investigation leading to causes. On the other hand Jewish themes are threading the

shuttle for a new garment as the nations approach the finale of the present conflict.

I wish also to say that the study of the Ezekiel Temple is surely a fruitful theme to Bible students. How wonderful is the thought of restitution for every wrong done, with the addition of 20 per cent interest, to be rendered by all who come forth from the tomb! Again, how marvelous it is that the east gate is to be closed forever when the church has entered it; and that the ancient worthies will guard the entrance all through the Millennium. Also, how just is the Jewish system of weights and measures and of symbolism of numbers!

Some signs and Scriptures indicate that THE WATCH TOWER will continue right through the time of trouble, and that through it the divine power will be exhibited in preserving the fruits of our Pastor's great labors. Be this as it may, we look for a move to the glory of the Lord shortly, through THE WATCH TOWER, using the treasures laid up by our Pastor. We would be glad to hear more about the prophecies of Jeremiah, as they seem so full of interest at this time, especially to the church.

The Lord bless and keep you all, loving and faithfully doing his will.

Yours in the most loving of bonds,

J. G.—Colp.

#### LOVING GREETINGS FROM THE NORTHWEST

DEAR BRETHREN:—

Greetings in the name of God our Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you. The Everett Church have voted to send their Christian love and support to you all in this our time of special trial and of trying experiences. Do not forget to keep us on the list when Pilgrims are routed this way.

There seem to be some who have taken a stand against THE WATCH TOWER because of certain articles published therein. They say that the TOWER is not used of the Lord any more. Yet some of the articles thus criticized were from the pen of our beloved Pastor. Here we know that we have arrived at a time when every one must stand for himself, or in other words, "when every tub must stand on its own bottom." Let every one read prayerfully and carefully Romans 14:4, 22, 23.

We have learned well the lesson that there are two tables: one, the table of Babylon, full of error and uncleanness; the other, the table of the Lord, spread with heavenly bounties, a feast of fat things. (Psalm 23:5) We also know that God has used THE WATCH TOWER ever since its dedication, to proclaim our Lord's presence and to do the harvest work. Then why should he cast it off at this time above all others, just when we need its help as never before? We remember his promise that he will never leave nor forsake us. We also believe that through the TOWER the Lord is fulfilling the statement of Isaiah 21:5: "Prepare the table, watch in the watch-tower, eat, drink; arise, ye princes, anoint the shield."

Have not our prayers been answered as we have asked God's guidance of the dear brethren at the Watch Tower office? Dear ones, let us keep together, provoking one another unto love and good works, building each other up in the most holy faith. Laying aside all malice and jealousy, let us pray for one another always, remembering our standard, the mark of the prize—perfect love. God bless THE WATCH TOWER!

With much Christian love and prayer,

THE EVERETT ECCLESIA.—Wash.

#### "NATIONS SHALL COME TO THY LIGHT"

GENTLEMEN:—

By accident I got the loan of a copy of one of the publications of your Society. I read the most of it carefully and, I must admit, was very favorably impressed. I am an Episcopalian, but have not attended services to any great extent. The many quotations and your interpretations from the Bible have led me to doubt my position as a believer in the doctrines of that church. Now, there is one important point that must be clearly and satisfactorily answered before I separate from the Episcopalian Society: In your Finale of this book in question I read thus: "Are you aware that he or she who denies or denounces the sayings of this little booklet is not denouncing the compiler, but the Word of God?" By this, I presume, you hold the Bible as your only authority. In other words the Bible, and the Bible only, is your guide and the guide of every teacher in your church.

Now I have long been doubtful as to the confidence I should possess before taking the Bible as the Word of God. If the Bible is your guide, and your only guide, satisfy me that it is indeed the Word of God; and I will become a member of your church immediately. I am sincere in this matter, but need convincing. Do not presume that I am a prayerless