

been a peculiar fellow—first, a Lutheran, then an Infidel and the last thing an Evolutionist; but now, thanks to the Lord and you and Brother Senger, I am a Christian and am rejoicing in the truth.

Praying for you, dear Brother, that our heavenly Father will continue his care over you, I am

Yours in Christ to the Glory of God,
E. SNYDER.

DEAR SIR:—

We were very much interested in the copy of the PEOPLES PULPIT, which was delivered at our door, and would like to have the issues which contained "Where Are the Dead?" and "The Rich Man in Hell," as these are subjects of great importance to us and our friends.

Wishing you success in your undertaking, I remain
Respectfully,

J. A. SLOCUM,—N. Y.

AN IMPOSTOR NOTED

A man considerably below average height, slightly built, small, dark mustache, and with a noticeably crooked left leg, and walking with limp, good talker and well posted doctrinally and knowing names of many brethren, has been imposing upon the friends in many places. He is skillful. He tells of needs, but refuses money at first. Later he accepts money with many

thanks and promises, and proceeds to look for other victims. Letters, especially from Ohio and Pennsylvania, tell of his good success as an impostor. Usually he wants a railway ticket, then later sells it. We should not be suspicious of everybody in distress; but we should generally content ourselves with supplying food or raiment needed.

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"THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS"

"The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at [in] the presence [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all saints."—1 Thess. 3:12, 13.

Not to sinners are these words addressed, but to saints. Not those who have not the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, and who therefore, are none of his, does the Apostle exhort; but those who already have been begotten of the holy Spirit of love. Increase in love signifies that love already has attained an ascendancy in the heart, a mastery in the mind, by which it is progressing, conquering and bringing into subjection all the thoughts and conduct of life. And this thought, that love is to increase in the hearts of God's people, is in full accord with the general testimony of the Scriptures, that we are to grow in grace and in knowledge and in love; approaching more and more and attaining and maintaining the "mark" which God hath set before us as the standard of character for which he will be pleased to award the prize in due time. It is as though a cistern were being filled more and more with pure water from hidden springs, until, increasing and increasing, it overflows with its abundance. Thus the Lord's people are to increase in love continually, until the love abounds or overflows in all the thoughts and words and conduct of life; not only carrying blessings to their own refreshment of all with whom they come in contact, but also redounding to the glory and praise of God from whom this blessing is derived.

The Apostle specifies only abounding love toward the brethren and toward all, but this presupposes the love which, first of all, is due to God our Father. Nor is it to be expected that any man will love his fellow-creatures to the extent indicated, unless he has first learned to love his Creator, has been taught of him, and has to some extent become a copy of his dear Son. This is in thorough accord with the Lord's statement of the full meaning of the Law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, heart, soul [being], and strength, and [then] thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." No man can love his neighbor in this Scriptural sense, until he has first loved his God to such a degree as to be not only willing but anxious to do those things which are pleasing in his sight; for God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God—1 John 4:16.

One reason why love does not increase more rapidly, and abound more thoroughly amongst God's people, is that so many of them have been blinded by the adversary to the real character of God, and under the misrepresentations of his character have been unable to worship and love him in spirit and in truth. Thank God for the light of the knowledge of himself now scattering the darkness and permitting his children to see him in his true light, in his glorious character! Thank God, the eyes of our understanding have been opened so that we can now see through the deceptions of the adversary!—Rev. 20:3.

The Apostle's words, "Even as we do toward you," are full of meaning and force. Paul and his associates were not teaching a Gospel which they did not appreciate and practise; on the contrary, they were exemplifying in their daily course of life this very abounding love, which, overflowing, was leading them to sacrifice their own interests and rights and privileges for the sake of the Lord's people everywhere. They were laying down their lives for the brethren—daily, hourly; they were sacrificing for the sake of others, opportunities and privileges as respected their earthly life, earthly pleasures,

etc. It is with particular force, therefore, that they exhort fellow-Christians to follow after them in the same way of self-sacrificing, loving obedience, as imitators of Jesus. And so it should be with all who exhort others to walk in the way of righteousness and love: In order that their words may have force and meaning they must exemplify them in their own lives. As they point to the "mark" of perfect love they must approximate that mark in their own daily lives, and certainly possess it in their hearts, their wills, their intentions. So whether they occupy pulpits, or whether they exhort others merely by the influence of their daily lives, they are living epistles read and known of all men who come in contact with them. The darkness may hate them, and say all manner of evil against them falsely, yet it must "take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus" and have learned of him; that they have the same spirit, the same disposition of heart, however crooked their natural dispositions may be.

HOW TO INCREASE AND ABOUND IN LOVE

Ah, says one, I have been desiring to increase in love and to overflow it upon others for these many years; but I know not how to cultivate it. What shall I do that I may have this overflowing love? The Apostle impliedly answers this question—that it is not what we can do, but what the Lord can do in us and for us. His words are, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love." It is the Lord's doing; we can accomplish very little for ourselves, and the sooner we learn this the better. The springs of our love must come from the fountain of love and grace and truth—from God, for "God is love." We began to receive of his spirit of love from the time we made our consecration to him, and began to live unto him, and not unto the flesh. He has various agencies and channels through which he is pleased to increase our love, and to cause it to abound and overflow and cleanse away the natural selfishness against which we, like all others, must contend.

These channels of grace are represented to us under various figures in the Scriptures. One channel or agency is the Word of God; another is divine providence; another is the fellowship of the body of Christ, the saints. The Lord uses all of these agencies in causing our love to increase and to abound. First, his Word, the basis of our faith and hopes, is also the basis of our love; for by giving ear to his Word, we taste and see that the Lord is gracious; that the Lord is loving; and in proportion as we see his love manifested, and discern his gracious character, in that same proportion we have before us the pattern toward which we are to aim, and love serves as the incentive to our emulation; as our Lord expressed it, "Be ye holy, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is holy." He is the pattern, and we are to copy that pattern as much as possible in our daily lives; but especially are we to have it as the accepted standard of our wills, our minds.

The Apostle refers to the Word of God as water which cleanses us from defilements of sin and selfishness; speaking of "the washing of water through the Word," by which the Bride is to be cleansed and made fit for joint-heirship with the heavenly Bridegroom. (Eph. 5:25-27) The Word of Truth cleanses our hearts by showing us our imperfections, in contrast with the divine perfections. And more than this, it

encourages us with certain promises, the object of which the Apostle Peter declares, saying, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature." Were it not for these promises, these hopes held out, our strivings for increasing and abounding love would no doubt succumb before the adverse influences of selfishness and sin in the present time; but by these promises of the Word the Lord invites us to press along the line "toward the mark for the prize."

Divine providence comes to our aid at various times, to assist us in making progress "toward the mark"; to assist us in increasing and abounding in love; for if, peradventure, one who at heart is fully consecrated to the Lord should tarry by the way, and become overcharged with the cares of this life, the Lord, in much mercy and love, will perhaps permit affliction or disaster of some kind to overtake him, to be a chastisement, a lesson, an assistance, and thus, as the Psalmist expresses it, "His rod and his staff they comfort us." (Psa. 23:4) It is by these providences of God that we are frequently taught lessons which we could never learn from the instructions of his Word alone. The lessons are impressed, or embossed, so to speak, upon the tablet of our hearts, and do us lasting good.

Another channel of blessing and instruction which the Lord has provided and commended for the saints, and which surely has proven a blessing to all of the household of faith in running for the "mark," is the assistance which the Lord supplies to us through the "brethren." Sometimes it is "A word in season; how good it is!"—perhaps a word of counsel, perhaps a word of reproof, perhaps a word of instruction. Perhaps it is merely the testimony of daily lives of the brethren, as we see them patiently enduring hardness as good soldiers, without murmuring—taking with joy, with thankfulness, with faith, with confidence, all things which divine providence may permit, assured that they are all working out future blessing. Although this channel of blessing might at first seem to be of the brethren, we are sure, nevertheless, that it is of the Lord, though through the brethren. It is because the brethren who render such assistance in the way are the brethren who themselves are receiving assistance from the Lord; and so it has been from first to last; the Elder Brother, and all the brethren, as they become advanced members of the body of Christ, joyfully assist, even to the extent of laying down their lives for the brethren, and all this is the work of God—the effect of his spirit. By all these various agencies God is working in us to will, and working in us to do his good pleasure—that we may increase and abound in love.

But who are the "you" referred to by the Apostle? Does he mean that God makes all men to increase and abound in love? Surely not. The vast majority of men have no knowledge of the love of God here referred to. At the very most they know only the natural love, and frequently very little of that. When the Apostle says, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love," he refers to the church; not nominal church members, but the members of the true church, "whose names are written in heaven"; those who trust in the precious blood of Christ, and have made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, and been begotten again by the holy Spirit of love. These, and these only, are referred to. So long as we continue to be in and of this class we will be subject to the Father's discipline and instructions, for "What son is he that the Father chasteneth not? If any be without chastisement . . . then are they spurious and not sons."

WE NOW JOIN THE CHURCH—THE BODY OF CHRIST—ON PROBATION

These chastenings, providences, disciplines, instructions in the word of righteousness, and assistances through the brethren, will be ours as long as we are members of the body of Christ; and here we are to distinguish between the body of Christ in its embryo condition in the present life, and the body of Christ in its perfected condition in the resurrection. We now join the body of Christ, the church, on probation; with the understanding that if we are faithful we shall be accepted fully, and be members of the body of Christ in glory; and that if unfaithful to our vows, our covenants, we cannot be members of that glorified church. We are pupils in the school of Christ, and it is necessary for us to proceed to learn all the lessons appointed of the Father, else we shall never be permitted to graduate—to enter into all the rewards which he has promised to those who attain to the character-likeness of his dear Son.

It is to this end that we are all exhorted to make increase of love, until it shall abound in our hearts. Any who refuse to make increase in love and to permit it to abound, will

necessarily be cut off from this body of Christ, whatever portion theirs may be. As the Lord explains in his parable of the Vine and the branches: every branch, every individual member of Christ, that beareth fruit, the fruit of the spirit love—will be pruned of the Father that it may bring forth more and more of this precious fruit; and every branch that fails to bring forth the fruitage of love within a reasonable time, will be cut off and no longer be recognized as a branch of the Vine, as a member of the body, and will have no opportunity of participating in the glories of those who make their calling and election sure.

It is very important, therefore, that we not only become members of the class here addressed as "you," but that we continue in this class, and maintain our standing by faithfulness and progress under the Lord's leading and instruction. We are to remember that our part in the work is to fully submit ourselves, our wills; and to let the Lord work in us to will and to do his good pleasure. Submitting our wills does not mean stupor or indifference; but the setting of our energies in line with the direction which the Lord from time to time will give us through his Word, through the brethren, and through his providences, which shall shape our ways. We do not need to take anxious thought as though the Lord might forget to give us the needed lessons and experiences to bring us on, and to cause us to abound in love. All we need to do is to remember that he is faithful, and to seek grace and strength to walk in his way, as we shall see it pointed out to us by his providence and Word, step by step. "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet; a lantern to my footsteps."

THE OBJECT AND NECESSITY FOR SUCH DEVELOPMENT

The Apostle in our text tells us why it is necessary that we progress. It is "to the end," or with the object in view, of our hearts being established, fixed, settled, rooted, grounded in holiness. It is not sufficient, from the divine standpoint, that we learn something about love, and have the feeling of love thrilling our hearts, and that generous emotions shall occasionally be ours; what the Lord seeks is "a peculiar people," "a royal priesthood," thoroughly established, firmly fixed in love for righteousness—so that all unrighteousness, all sin, all injustice, would be an abomination to them. Not only will they not love iniquity, but, as the Scriptures declare, they will hate iniquity. And whoever truly loves righteousness must in the same proportion hate iniquity. But this is only the result of fixed character, and time and experience and many lessons from the Word of God and from the book of experience are necessary before character becomes so settled, so crystalized, that it is fixed and unwavering in its loyalty to righteousness. It is for this reason that the Lord has hedged up the way of his people during this Gospel age, and made the way of life, the way to the kingdom, a "narrow" one, full of difficulties, full of trials, which thereby become tests, and sift out those who do not develop the character which the Lord approves, and for which he promises a share with Christ in his kingdom.

Some may say, Alas! If the standard of character is so high as to be unblamable before God, who is perfect, how can I ever hope to attain it? And so all of us might say, if the perfect standard were a standard for the flesh; for all of us have learned, as did the Apostle, that "In my flesh dwelleth no good [perfect] thing"; and we have the inspired Word for it that "There is none righteous; no, not one." So, then, we may rest assured that God is not seeking to find in any a perfection of the flesh, and that if he should seek perfection in the flesh he would not find it. It is not such an unreasonable and impossible thing that the Apostle teaches; but something quite reasonable, viz., as he says, that our hearts may be established, fixed, in holiness before God our Father. Ah, yes! To have a heart [will—motive—intention] that is blameless, is a very different thing from having flesh that is blameless. The heart standing for the will, the intention, the desire, represents the "new creature." The flesh stands for itself. In its imperfection and its six thousand years of degradation as the slave and servant of sin, the flesh has become so imperfect that it is impossible to have it obey all the good desires of our consecrated hearts unblamably. It is the new creature, the new mind, that must reach this stage of development where it will be unblamable before the Father.

Not only is this a possible attainment, but we cannot conceive of any other condition being acceptable to God, in harmony with our calling. He has called us to be his church, his royal priesthood, that he might fit and prepare us for the great work of blessing all the families of the earth as members of the body of Christ, otherwise called the bride, called to association with the heavenly Bridegroom during his Millennial kingdom. Surely God could ask nothing less than that our hearts, our intentions, should be in accord with the prin-

ciples of righteousness, and that these principles should control our daily lives to the extent of our ability; and that thus we should seek to put away all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect holiness in the reverence of the Lord. (2 Cor. 7:1) Anything less than this good desire and endeavor could not possibly be acceptable in the sight of God; without these we could not hope to be of the finally acceptable elect church. But how reasonable is this arrangement! How gladly do we accept the divine will! How earnestly we wish that every imperfection and blemish of the flesh were done with, that the testings of our new minds were accomplished in their full establishment in righteousness! How we long to have our new bodies, promised to us in the "first resurrection"—bodies in which the new mind can act perfectly, without hindrance, without restraint, and glorify God perfectly in every act and word, as well as in our hearts, intentions! This is acceptable to God. He counts it, through the merit of Christ, exactly as though we were absolutely perfect in word and in deed, since such a condition is the desire of our hearts, our wills; he is merely waiting until this character is fixed, permanent.

THAT WE MAY BE ESTABLISHED—FIXED—IN THE PRESENCE OF OUR LORD

We perceive that this lesson comes up to date, in the sense that while it has been applicable to the Lord's people all through this Gospel age, it is specially applicable to us who are now living in the "harvest" time, in the time of the presence of the Son of man. For mark the Apostle's words in our text, that all this development in the spirit of love is to the end that we may be established, fixed, "in the presence

[*parousia*] of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all saints." We are now in this time of his presence, and it behooves us to inquire carefully of our hearts to what extent we are established in righteousness, in love for it, or to what extent our loyalty to righteousness is still unsettled—wavering.

We may be sure that all who do not speedily come to this condition of establishment in righteousness will be tested, sitted and rejected; for the time for the completion of the body of Christ is at hand. The Apostle asks, "Who shall be able to stand?" This is the question: Who shall be so thoroughly established in love that the trials and testings, necessary to prove him so, will be passed successfully? According to this we are not to wonder if various special trials are permitted now to come, thick and fast—trials which will test and prove our loyalty to the Lord and to the principles of love. Yet we are not to be discouraged with this thought of testing, but are to remember that he who began the good work in our hearts, began while we were yet sinners, by giving for us the great ransom price; that if he so loved us then, while we were yet sinners, much more does he love us now that we have accepted his grace, and are justified from all sin by faith in his blood, and are seeking to walk in his footsteps. And all who have this desire to receive the Lord's lessons, and to profit by them, and to become more and more copies of Jesus—all such have the assurance that it comes, not by their strength, but by the Lord's strength; and that if they submit themselves to him, he will perfect in them his spirit of love and righteousness and holiness; that they may be "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

DID OUR LORD DIE FOR THE FALLEN ANGELS?

The expression, "The wages of sin is death," is one which refers to the divine law in its general application. These words are not applied to angels, but to the children of men. To them, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23) This sentence or penalty of death was not pronounced against the angels, either before their sin or subsequently, so far as the records show. They, therefore, are not under such a sentence. The only sentence placed upon them was exclusion from God's favor and from the company of the holy angels, and to be restricted in their intercourse with humanity. They are now suffering the penalty put upon them.

If we should inquire the reason why God should deal differently with the angels than with mankind, we might say that, evidently, he has been making a great example or setting a lesson in his dealings with the human race, showing what would constitute the extreme penalty of wilful sin—a sin against light and the divine command. No such divine command, so far as we know, was given to the angels. They received a law in their nature; they perverted that law; they were created on the heavenly plane and they used their power for another purpose than that for which it was given. But in man's case matters were different: Adam knew definitely what was the command of the Lord—that he should not partake of the forbidden fruit; if he did partake of it the penalty would be death. This was a fair proposition and well understood.

GOD'S DEALINGS NOT MORE SEVERE WITH MEN THAN WITH ANGELS

However, God is not unkind or unjust toward men, and we may in some respects say that the dealings of the Almighty with the human family have been more gracious than with the fallen angels. Let us see: These angels condemned to exclusion from the righteous, have undoubtedly had a terrible time for the past 4,000 years. At least, any of them who had any love for righteousness or sympathy with righteousness and preserved to any extent their proper standard of character, must have had a fearful time in their intercourse and dealings with those more depraved or fallen. We must assume that some of them, especially since our Lord's death on the cross and his resurrection, have striven to do God's will and have been opposed to everything that would be contrary to his will, and that they would be subjected to severe torment from the others, to all sorts of evil communications, etc. We know that some of these wicked spirits take opportunity to exercise themselves thus toward those of humanity who come under their power, and so we must suppose that these same evil, fallen spirits would be against those who would favor righteousness.

We must suppose, therefore, that for several hundreds of years at least, some of these angels have been suffering severely for their attempt to obey God under the conditions

in which they have been for so long. Even though they are blameworthy, we think they are suffering a great deal more than humanity, because in Father Adam's case it was a matter of more or less suffering for 930 years, but at the close of the 930 years his sufferings were at an end; neither did he have to endure torment from demons during the 930 years. Now if we would compare 930 years of the angels' experience with Adam's 930 years, we would think that his experience was the more preferable. Adam was given to understand, too, vaguely, that a Redeemer would be provided, while the angels were kept in suspense and did not know what was God's purpose respecting them, and for more than 4,000 years they could but wonder what the outcome would be. During all this long period they have suffered more than any human being could suffer. God thus shows the variety of his wisdom and his knowledge and power under various circumstances and conditions.

He could have dealt with mankind in a somewhat similar way as with the angels, and merely put certain restrictions upon them, but he chose to make an illustration in mankind, for the benefit of angels and men, to show what would ultimately be the character of his dealings with all his creatures. And now since these repentant angels have had a sufficiency of punishment for their disobedience, an opportunity for release is to be granted to such as will stand their test faithfully, in the "Judgment of the Great Day." We understand that those angels who will not then desire to live righteously, will be cut off in death, the second death, and those who remain faithful will be restored to their former standing. Thus God's wisdom is manifest in the whole transaction.

Now regarding the second part of the question, as to our Lord's death having any effect relative to these angels: We see no way in which the redemption provided by God through Christ applies to the angels, as Jesus died for the race of Adam only. Justice never pronounced a sentence of death against the angels as far as any record shows, but merely pronounced a certain penalty against them for the course they took, and God will not restore them to his favor without a full, complete test. They will never recover their former standing otherwise, and those who do not stand the test will, in the end, receive the death penalty.

So, then, our thought is that the only way in which Christ's life had any effect upon them was as an illustration of the principles of divine dealing. They have had the opportunity to see that God is just and by no means clears the guilty; and they can see, too, that in the case of the guilty race of man God has had mercy, has provided for them a Redeemer, and that all who are under condemnation of death are to be released from that sentence. This is all a provision of the grace of God in that he sent his Son to be the Redeemer of the world of mankind and to give them an opportunity of being restored to his favor.

FALLEN ANGELS NO SHARE IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

The question is suggested, Could it be said that any of those fallen angels who have for a time, some perhaps for many centuries, lived separate from sin and striven to do God's will and suffered persecution from the wicked spirits, have a share in the sufferings of Christ?

We answer that they could not be said to be sharing the sufferings of Christ, because only the body of Christ can share in these sufferings. It might, perhaps, be said that they have, in a way, been suffering for the sake of righteousness, but that would not be the proper expression, we think, but, rather they are suffering on account of their sins. If they had been righteous they would not have needed to suffer, but it was because they did wrong—because they sinned—that these sufferings were brought upon them.

A question might present itself in respect to this text, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Col. 1:19, 20) We do not understand this passage to intimate, in any sense of the word, that "the blood of the cross" had anything to do with the salvation of the angels. It was the Father's good pleasure that in Christ all fulness should dwell, in the sense that he should have complete authority—not merely authority over man, but over all things—both heavenly and earthly. It was the Father's pleasure, originally, that through him he would reconcile all things unto himself. Man was out of harmony with God. It was God's will that Christ should harmonize man with God. And these fallen angels were out of harmony with God and it was God's will that they

also should be brought into harmony. Everything out of order was to be placed in order. Jehovah has entrusted it all to Christ to set right, just as a King might say to his Minister of State or his General, "Now you attend to this whole matter, putting down all insurrection wherever it is; see that no rebellion is left; bring everything into subjection, so that there will be peace and order throughout my entire domain." So likewise the Father tells the Lord Jesus to put everything in order as his representative, in respect to things earthly and things heavenly.

This work of reconciliation was made possible only "through the blood of his cross"; not that the blood of his cross was necessary for the effecting of all this reconciliation, but the blood of his cross was necessary so far as he was concerned; only by his proving faithful unto death, the death of the cross; only by such display of faithfulness, could our Lord be determined to be the right one to accomplish all these things. So, then, the blood of the cross had not merely its effect upon mankind, but the primary effect was upon the Lord Jesus himself, because he received the first blessing from the blood of his cross.

Another blessing from the blood of the cross was its imputation to the church, the household of faith, to enable them to become joint-sacrificers with him, by participating in his sufferings; and the third blessing from this blood will be as respects the world of mankind during the Millennial age. And it is his own exaltation through this that gives him rightful authority in God's plan to be the one to execute God's purposes during the Millennial age. This is the One who is to be the blessing of angels and men; he is to have full control of things both heavenly and earthly.

ARE WE BEGOTTEN TO THE DIVINE NATURE?

In the words "beget" and "begetting," which are frequently used in the Scriptures, an analogy is drawn between the spiritual begetting and birth and the human begetting and birth. We are not, however, to understand the spiritual begetting and birth to be like the natural in every particular. It is merely an illustrative figure to give us a thought. The thought is that we are begotten of the holy Spirit of God with a view to our becoming partakers of the divine nature and that all who are spirit-begotten in the present time are begotten with that hope, with that object and end in view. It is to this end that the Apostle Peter says, God "has given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature."

We see the great Pattern, our Lord Jesus, in whom was illustrated all these various features that are applicable to us. We ask ourselves, To what was he begotten? The answer is that undoubtedly he was begotten to the divine nature; that he could not have reached perfection on any lower spirit plane; that if he had not come off "conqueror" in the fullest sense of the word he would have had nothing; and only those who attain his character-likeness and are overcomers—conquerors in the highest sense of the word—will be with him to share his glory and partake of his divine nature. Those who will constitute the "great company" class are such as fail to come off "more than conquerors"; they are those who, in other words, would have made "shipwreck" of the whole matter had it not been for the divine provision which we find outlined in the Word of God to the effect that these, "who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage," and who therefore fail to go on in the most approved manner, courageously, in the footsteps of Jesus, "shall be saved so as by fire"; they shall be saved by being forced to the point where they must either deny the Lord or else battle for righteousness.

We find this "great multitude" accorded the name of "overcomers," victors, as the palm branches granted to them indicates (Rev. 7:9), and we read that "they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They attain to a lower station than the divine. Evidently they attain that station through stress rather than through the voluntary walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Had Jesus been in their position; had he not come off "more than a conqueror," he would have made failure altogether, because there was no provision made to force him into anything or to make good for any lack of zeal on his part. Hence he was begotten to the divine nature and could not have received anything else. But what he does for the "great company" class is something aside entirely from that to which they were called and to which it was their privilege to attain had they reached this fullest degree of character-likeness to their Lord.

WERE ALL THE CONSECRATED BEGOTTEN TO THE DIVINE NATURE?

We answer, We might use an illustration from the earthly plane that would help us to some extent. We might say that a father desired to beget a son of his own likeness, his own nature; and in the begetting of this son, suppose that there were also begotten two other children. We will suppose that the birth was a birth of triplets—one son and two daughters. The son, we will suppose, was the objective point, the desire, the intention, at the time of the begetting, but the result yielded more than this. Now, the two female children thus born were born of the same begetting and were begotten to the same nature, and yet there is a difference between these in the birth. Just so in the spiritual birth. The begetting of each was to the divine nature. In the original purpose the "great company" did not enter in. They were, of course, foreknown, but they were not of the original design, if you please.

Now what constituted the difference between the birth of the male and of the female child? We realize that this is dealing with a delicate subject which is little understood, and which is considerably in question, but as far as we understand the latest deductions of Science, they teach that the nourishment of the newly begotten infant, during the early portion of the period of gestation, decides as to whether it will develop as a male or a female, and for a certain time nothing can be determined as to the sex; but as time goes on the development takes one or the other form. As to what may be the elements that would tend to produce the one more than the other or the kind of food that would be best suited to produce either kind, we need not discuss, but we can see that those who partake most abundantly of the grace of God ministered to us through the Truth will be the ones who will be born on the divine plane. These exceeding great and precious promises that are given to us are the spiritual food upon which we, as embryotic new creatures, must feed. No matter how much food may be supplied, if, for any reason, we fail to appropriate the necessary spiritual nourishment, we will be deficient to some extent. The Apostle's words seem to corroborate this thought—"To us are given exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature"—that is to say, If we do not use these we will not be partakers of this nature, but by the use of these exceeding great and precious promises we may "make our calling and election sure" and become joint-heirs with Christ on this highest plane and not on the lower plane.

We will supplement the thought respecting the begetting and birth of two different classes during the present time—the "little flock" and the "great company"—and suggest two other illustrations that have been brought to our attention as illustrating the possibility of differing results from similar begettings, depending upon the nourishment.

One of these illustrations is in the case of bees and the other in the case of ants: In the case of bees, from the same begetting come three different classes—the queen bee, the working bee and the drone bee—and the difference seems to be in the amount of feeding that each class gets. Those which are intended to be queen bees are specially fed, and those which are to be the working bees have another kind of food, and similarly with the drones.

There are also three classes of ants, and it is supposed that while all the eggs have the same appearance and there

seems to be no difference whatever in these, the various results seem to be produced to some extent by the different feeding of the larvae during their development.

Both of these illustrate very well what we are speaking of respecting the church and the great company. The church class is specially fed on the Truth of God's Word, the great and precious promises. Such as feed upon these may be developed to the highest plane, the divine nature, while others not so fed, not so nourished, will be born on the lower plane of being.

“GO YE ALSO INTO THE VINEYARD”

MATTHEW 20:1-16.—AUGUST 14.

GOLDEN TEXT:—“Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.”—Matt. 19:30.

Grape culture was one of the main industries of the days of the Great Teacher. The stony hillsides of Palestine were once terraced and extensively used as vineyards. On our recent visit we noted with particular interest the revival of this custom, as one of the evidences of the beginning of restitution in the Holy Land.—Acts 3:19-21.

The grapevine was honored of the Master, in that he used it in a parable to symbolize himself and the church, saying, “I am the Vine, ye are the branches”; “My Father is the husbandman”; “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit”; “Every branch in me which beareth fruit he pruneth it that it may bring forth more fruit”; “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.”

Our present study, The Parable of the Laborers, is in full accord with the foregoing, but shows the matter from a different standpoint. It shows how each one of the Lord's consecrated church, each heir of the Messianic Kingdom shortly to be established, is privileged to be a co-laborer with his Lord and Master, and with the Heavenly Father in the vineyard work—tending the vine, looking out for the injurious pests, keeping the soil in good condition, assisting every way in the production of “much fruit” and of fine quality. Evidently many Christian people do not appreciate the privilege of being laborers in the church of Christ—“building one another up in the most holy faith” until we all come to the full stature of a man in the Anointed One.

St. Paul appreciated this privilege greatly, saying, God hath made us qualified servants of the New Covenant. So then we, as ambassadors for God, beseech men, be ye reconciled to God. (2 Cor. 5:20) Whoever is negligent of his opportunities to serve others who manifest a hearing ear, a humble heart and a teachable spirit shows his own lack of appreciation of God's message.

He thus indicates that he has not fully come to a knowledge of God nor to a knowledge of the truth respecting the divine plan. And, indeed, the Scriptures declare that a deep knowledge of God, his Word and his purposes, is attained only as a gift of God, bestowed only upon those who are in a humble, faithful, zealous attitude of mind—“To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.”

The things pertaining to God's kingdom, in its future operation toward the world for a thousand years, will be openly manifested to every creature, shortly. But now it is appropriate, and is the divine will, that these things should be known only to the church, the consecrated, the spirit-begotten sons of God. Likewise there are important truths pertaining to the kingdom class, the church, which is being prepared to be the bride of Christ and his joint-heir in the kingdom. And these things are likewise intended to be comparatively secret—to be clearly and fully understood only by such as have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5) “The Secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him, and he will show them his covenant.” (Psalm 25:14) All such in close sympathy with the divine purposes will be anxious to serve the Lord, the truth and the brethren. And such from time to time will be specially sent into the vineyard, and will be specially used of the Lord for the assistance of his consecrated people in various ways.

AGREED FOR A PENNY A DAY

The word “penny” here is from the Greek *denarius*, a silver coin of about 17 cents value. But the value of money has so

changed in recent years that today a laborer's wage in proportion to other things would be considerably more. The *denarius* was the Roman standard of that time, as the *lira* is the Italian standard, the *mark* the German standard, the *franc* the French standard, the shilling the English standard, and the dollar the American standard. It is worthy of note that in one of the fine old English cathedrals the records show that its excellent chisel work, superior to anything of today, cost “a penny a day and a bag of meal for each laborer.” The parable of our lesson is evidently intended to teach that God will give all that he has agreed to all who labor—that he in generosity gives more than he has stipulated.

At the close of the day we read that those first hired murmured against their lord. We cannot suppose that any who would be counted worthy of a share in the kingdom would murmur against the Giver of all Good. The rewarding is to be expected at the close of the harvest day and the murmuring may be expected there also. The “penny” or reward would thus seem to be something of the joys, blessings, honors and privileges of God's people in the present life, at the close of this age. Those who murmur that they do not receive a sufficiency of honor and distinction and of divine acknowledgment will be thereby proving themselves unfit for the future service “beyond the veil” as members of the church in glory. This would seem to point a warning to those of God's people who have been long in the truth, and who have had great privileges of service, that if they murmur against the blessings and rewards coming to them, it will mean that they were laboring for the reward merely and not appreciating the privilege of being laborers with Christ and with the Father; it would imply that they had failed to enter into the spirit of the wonderful privileges granted them of serving the Lord, the truth and the brethren. The right spirit, the proper interest in the Father's work and in the brethren should prompt all to rejoice with every new laborer and to be glad that all such should receive of the Lord's favors, blessings and enlightenment as fully, as freely, as themselves. Surely any who have not this spirit have not the Spirit of Christ on this subject at least.

The general lesson is that God is so just, so generous, so bountiful, in his dealings that all those who appreciate matters from his standpoint will rejoice in the blessings which overflow upon others. A failure to appreciate the Lord's generosity was one cause of stumbling to the Jews eighteen centuries ago—they were offended that the Gospel message should go out beyond them to the Gentiles. Similarly today some Christian people are stumbling over the fact that the Word of God shows that, whereas Divine blessings are now confined to the church, “the elect,” the servants and hand-maidens of the Gospel age, yet the time is near at hand when “God will pour out his spirit upon all flesh,” and when all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

All who have the privilege of bearing the labor and heat of the day in the Lord's service must be glad of the privilege, in order to be worthy of participation in the kingdom. Thus some who seem to be first in their promptness to respond to the Lord's call for laborers may be amongst the last to receive special blessings of grace and truth, and this may serve as a special test upon them—as respects their loyalty, and the motives which actuated them in engaging in the vineyard work. “Let us take heed, lest a promise having been left us any should seem to come short.”

SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS

WHY WERE NOT JOB AND OTHERS PRIESTS?

Question.—Since it was the priests who were to offer the sacrifices and since no one could be a priest except he was called of God, how was it that some of the Ancient Worthies, Job and others, who were not priests, offered up sacrifices?

Answer.—The sacrifices which these offered were not sin offerings. They did not offer up sacrifices according to the types of the law, as the Day of Atonement sacrifices, for instance. This whole arrangement of the Jewish Law, by which the sacrificing was taken out of the individual's hands and

put into the hands of the priests, was a new departure in God's dealings.

Abraham, we know, presented offerings before the establishment of the priesthood. The exact time in which Job lived we do not know. We merely know that he was Job of Uz, and walked before God with a perfect heart; but we think we are justified in supposing that he did not live during the law dispensation, with its typical sacrifices. If this be true, his course was in full line with Abraham's course when he offered up sacrifices. When Abraham was stayed from offering his son, he offered up the ram caught in the thicket, as the Lord directed.

What these patriarchs did in the matter of offering up sacrifices was evidently a token on their part of appreciation of God and of the fact that a sacrifice for sins was necessary, just as Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and offered them to God, though he was not called to be a priest; but none of these sacrifices was accepted in the same sense that the sacrifices were accepted under the law. None of these sacrifices ever made the offerers themselves perfect, nor did they atone for anyone else; they were merely the same as a prayer would be, a manifestation of a good desire of heart and of appreciation of God and a desire to reverence him, and a recognition of the fact that sin required some atonement. So when the Lord showed how this sin-atonement was to be made he pictured the work of this Gospel age. He appointed a priest to represent the Lord Jesus, and under-priests to represent the church. A work of sacrifice was done on a particular day of the year—the Atonement Day—representing the work of this Gospel age in which these "better sacrifices" for sin are offered; and under this larger arrangement no one is permitted to offer the sacrifice except a priest, God thus indicating that the work is entirely under his supervision and direction.

"THY DEAD MEN—MY DEAD BODY"

Question.—What is meant by "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise"?—Isa. 26:19.

Answer.—Seemingly the addition of a few words by the translators has caused difficulty in connection with this text. They inserted the words to make the passage clear, as they thought, but instead they obscured it, through failure to see that God's dead now are those who are members of the body of Christ.

Omitting the words "together with," and "men," the passage reads properly enough: "Thy dead shall live; my dead Body, they shall arise," thus referring, we believe, to the resurrection of the church, the body of Christ, the Lord's peculiar people. And this is a general signal, as it were, for the blessing of all mankind. In due time all the dead shall be awakened. Moreover, they awaken not to suffering and to torment, but to sing. They shall come forth to learn of the goodness of God, his merciful provisions, and shall avail themselves of these provisions, in the "Times of Restitution of all things." Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust" of the earth.

WHEN DID OUR LORD BECOME THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF THE FATHER

Question.—When did Christ become the express image of God, as recorded?—Hebrews 1:3.

Answer.—Surely our Lord Jesus was an express likeness of the Father's person before he came into the world; he left that glory, however; he became a man—"he humbled himself." It was from this standpoint that he prayed, "Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." There is a glory of human nature which our Lord possessed while he was a man, "the man Christ Jesus"—a perfect man in the likeness of God. However, the Apostle's reference in the above text was not to his prehuman existence nor to his earthly glory as a perfect man, but to the glory which he attained in his resurrection, as the Apostle declares, saying, "Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things on earth and things under the earth." (Phil. 2:9, 10) This, we believe, was the particular time to which the Apostle referred.

We are not to understand that he began to purge our sins when he left the heavenly glory nor when he made his consecration, nor when he died on the cross. In all these sufferings our Lord was demonstrating his worthiness of the high exaltation. Having fulfilled the law and laid down his life, our Lord had the human life, the earthly nature and earthly rights, to dispose of. He had not forfeited these by sin. They were his, therefore, to give away. When "he ascended up on high" he presented this merit of his as the satisfaction for our sins, the sins of his followers, to purge or cleanse, not only those who were waiting in the upper room at Pentecost, but also all others of the same class down through this Gos-

pel age, till the full number of the "elect" should be found.

THE GREAT COMPANY OR THE ANCIENT WORTHIES

Question.—Will the ancient worthies have precedence of resurrection over the "great company" class of this Gospel age?

Answer.—In the light of what we have been discussing of late in THE WATCH TOWER, it is evident that the merit of Christ is applied, on behalf of the church during this Gospel age—on behalf of all who essay to be of the church; it is used to impute to those who desire to become sacrificers and who consecrate themselves to God that they may present an acceptable sacrifice and thus become members of the spiritual class and joint-heirs with Christ. This applies to the "great company" as well as to the "little flock." It applies to all who are begotten of the holy Spirit because they could not be begotten of the Spirit except by the imputation of Christ's merit of their earthly sacrifice.

It follows, then, as a matter of necessity that before the merit of Christ's death could be applied on behalf of the ancient worthies or Israel, under the New Covenant arrangement for Israel and the world, it must be released as respects all those to whom it is now imputed for the purpose of giving them the opportunity of attaining the spiritual station. This would prove conclusively, we think, that the "great company" class will be resurrected before the ancient worthies will be brought forth.

"GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND"

Question.—What does this text signify?

Answer.—In olden times when they wore flowing garments, girdles were constantly worn for two purposes; one was to gird up their garments—as, for instance, we sometimes sing, "Gird thy bridal robes around thee." The girdle, therefore, was useful in keeping the garments in their proper place, or position, so that they would not be disordered in appearance, nor cause one to trip and fall. Then, secondly, the girdle was used for its effect upon the loins during active labor. For instance, when one was engaged in a strenuous occupation, such as lifting a heavy weight or carrying a heavy burden or running a race, the muscles of the abdomen would play an important part.

Even in speaking we find the muscles of the abdomen contract, and thus give us the more force and strength of voice. In any kind of manual labor this is found to be the case, and these muscles become comparatively rigid. It is the custom, therefore, among workmen, even today, to wear a belt. When they have particularly severe tasks they take another "hitch" in their belt—that is, they pull it up a few notches more, making it a little tighter around the waist, the object being to support the muscles of the abdomen and to enable them to accomplish more labor with less fatigue; and when they are at rest they slacken the belt.

This seems to be the special thought of the Apostle here—"Gird up the loins of your mind." As there are loins in the body and they have their important part to perform and we strengthen them in time of exercise, or necessity, so with our minds. We who have devoted ourselves to be the Lord's people, to do his service, realize that our minds need to be strengthened. We need to be of good courage. We need to be fortified against all disposition to lassitude.

When we undertake to gird up the loins of our minds it signifies that we have determined upon a course of activity; that rest and ease are put aside and that we are now engaging in an important work which we realize requires all the strength that we possess. The Christian has a great task before him, to lay down his life in the Lord's service, to accomplish all that he may be able to accomplish in respect to the use of opportunities which the Lord has provided us as his servants, his followers, that we may have a good report to give when he calls us to render our account; that we may say, Thou gavest me two, or, Thou gavest me five talents and I have gained, two; or, thou gavest me five talents and I have gained, beside, other five.

WHY FORBID GOD'S SERVICE?

Question.—Why did the disciples forbid the man whom they found casting out devils? Why did they not allow him to go on and do the best he could in casting them out? What was the ground of their objection?

Answer.—Evidently the Apostles when sent forth had very similar sentiments to those which prevail today. Our Catholic friends, for instance, would say, You do not have the Apostolic ordination; therefore, you cannot preach. You cannot serve in any religious capacity. Our Episcopalian friends would seem to say, No, you did not have the holy hands of the Episcopal Bishop laid upon you.

A little disposition of the same nature is manifested by

nearly all of the denominations—What authority have you? So the disciples, finding a man who was casting out devils in Jesus' name, said, What authority have you to cast out devils? Jesus did not send you out as one of the twelve; he did not send you out as one of the seventy. You have no business in this work.

Our Lord's answer to them showed that they were laboring under a mistaken view. While they were specially commissioned to perform miracles, yet if anyone else could do the same things, it was not their province to hinder or object in any sense of the word, but rather they should have taken the broad, sympathetic view, and said, My dear friend, I see you are casting out devils. You are doing a good work. We are glad you can cast them out because of all the poor people you can relieve. The fact that you have not followed with us indicates that you do not know our Master, and we should be glad to have you come and get acquainted with him, too.

And so, we thing, it should be with us. Whenever we find anyone doing a good work, helping the world in any sense of the word, whether it be by keeping a mission or helping the heathen or helping a newsboy, or by some other work, to oppose sin or relieve suffering, we should be sympathetic to the extent that we see they have good hearts, good intentions, good desires. Instead of working against them or hundering them in any manner, we should speak an encouraging word and endeavor to lead them to fuller light. This does not mean that we should follow with them and leave our special commission of teaching the truth which the Lord has given us, but that we should not object to the Lord's using various agencies for accomplishing his work. We should not think that we alone have the privilege of engaging in his work; that we have patent rights on his work, and can hinder others from doing what they may be able to do and take pleasure in doing.

UNACCEPTABLE WORKERS FOR JESUS

Question.—Our Lord declared that many in that day shall say, "Lord, Lord, have we not taught in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" And his declaration continues that he will then say to such, "I never knew you. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." (Matt. 7:22, 23) How shall we understand this in harmony with the above statement of our Lord that his disciples should not forbid him who followed not with them, but who cast out devils in his name?

Answer.—We would understand that God may permit people to do certain good works who are not fit for the kingdom class, who are not fully submissive to the Lord Jesus and his Headship, who are not fully taught and used of him. They may be exercising a certain amount of faith and the Lord may recognize them to that extent, but he will not guarantee that anybody who has power to work miracles and preach publicly, will be granted a place in the kingdom. We are therefore not at liberty to say that everyone who is engaged in mission work or slum work will be in the kingdom. He may be doing a good work; but he may not be of that special class which the Lord is now seeking. We are not to object to his work, if it is a good work. It is not ours to interfere with him, for the Lord is able to take care of his own work. It is our work to take care of ourselves, although we are not to acknowledge or co-operate with those who we believe are associating error even with good works. We should not in any sense lend our influence to the assistance of evil.

We are to take the standpoint of leaving to the Lord the management of his own affairs, the interests of his cause in general. He is abundantly able to attend to the whole matter. We are to see to it that our hearts are fully submissive, and that our heads, our will, are under the Headship, Leadership of the Lord; that his will is done in us, and that our sacrifices are not made to be seen of men, but are made as unto God; thus we shall have his approval in that day. To such he says he will be glad to give acknowledgment, and to confess them before the Father and his holy angels.

DOES CHARACTER DETERMINE THE KIND OF RESURRECTION?

Question.—From the Scriptural standpoint, does the character of the individual's death indicate the kind of his resurrection?

Answer.—The Apostle's argument (1 Cor. 15) respecting the resurrection is that God will give to every seed its own kind of body. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." Mankind in general, therefore, in the resurrection, will come forth with natural bodies—"that which is born of the flesh is flesh" and that which is born of the flesh dies or "sleeps" for a time, and will be awakened "flesh." That which is born of the flesh and subsequently begotten of the holy Spirit is reckoned as a new creature, and when the new creature falls asleep, it is asleep as a spirit being—is asleep waiting for the resurrection change. In this case the resurrection change is thus expressed by the Apostle: "Sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown an animal body, raised a spirit body;" but anyone not begotten of the holy Spirit will, of course, not change his nature in the grave. There is no change in the grave either for good or evil. "As the tree falleth so shall it lie;" the awakening will be according to the character of the individual. If he has become a new creature in Christ he will be raised or perfected as a new creature, in the resurrection. If he is a good natural man he will be awakened a good natural man; if he is a bad natural man he will be awakened a bad natural man; if he is one of the ancient worthies, we understand he will be awakened a perfect man.

BEGINNING OF MELCHISEDEC PRIESTHOOD

Question.—When did our Lord become a Priest after the order of Melchisedec?

Answer.—Our Lord entered upon his Melchisedec priesthood individually, personally, at the time of his resurrection, when, as the Apostle declares, God announced, "Let all the angels of God worship him." In this individual sense he became the Melchisedec Priest, although only the "Head" was yet formed. Since the intelligence is in the head, we can see how the head might stand for the body, as could no other member of the body. A hand stretched forth might represent the body, but it could not have the intelligence of the head, and we could not say that the presence was there, but as soon as the Head was born from the dead, as soon as the Head was accepted as the Melchisedec Priest, that soon the whole matter would have a standing with God, the intelligence residing in the Head. We agree, however, that we shall not exercise our full office as a Melchisedec priest until the whole church shall be with their Head in glory, members of his body. A Melchisedec priest is a blessing priest, a priest who has the power to bless. Melchisedec was able to bless Abraham. Far superior, therefore, to the Aaronic priesthood is the Melchisedec priesthood.

Our Lord could not have been this Melchisedec priest until his resurrection, evidently, because he had nothing with which to bless. Before he could do any blessing he must himself lay down his life, and by laying down his human life in obedience to the Father, he would thus receive or have to his credit the merit which he could draw upon in the blessing of us, and ultimately all the families of the earth.

Question.—How long will this priesthood of the order of Melchisedec last?

Answer.—"Thou art a priest for the age," or rather, a priest ever, an ever-priest, a lasting priest; not one who would pass away by death; not one who would drop his office in some unsatisfactory manner, but one who would fully accomplish all the purposes for which he was appointed as a priest. Our Lord was appointed a priest because there was necessity for a priest. It is not an office that would be necessary amongst the angels, who are perfect, but it is an office necessary amongst men, because of their imperfection. To be a priest, therefore, to the end or completion, would mean that he would be a priest. Mediator, Reconciler, Harmonizer in this matter of estrangement between God and man. Therefore, this office will end with the Millennial age, when he shall have accomplished all this work and will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. Then he will be a priest no more. There will be no need of a priest of any kind, sacrificing or reigning. The very significance of the office is that of intercessor or mediator, or assister in some manner of those who are in some difficulty.

THE GREATEST—THE SERVANT

MATTHEW 20:17-34.—AUGUST 21.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."

Ambition moves the world—selfish ambition. A certain kind of ambition—to please God and to have his rewards, is encouraged by the exceeding great and precious promises of

God's Word. Think of the promise held out to the consecrated, self-sacrificing followers of Jesus—that, if faithful unto death, they shall receive the "crown of life," immortality,

and attain a place with their Master in his Throne—as participants in the glories and honors of his kingdom! There is no earthly appeal to ambition so strong as this, which comes from the Creator to such as have the hearing ear of faith. Nevertheless, the ambitions awakened by these promises, we are warned, might become our snares. The very condition upon which we may attain the kingdom is our faithful endurance of shame, contempt, misunderstanding, and our demonstration to the last of humility and absolute loyalty to God and full resignation to his providences. Whoever would reign with Messiah in his approaching kingdom, for which we pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven,” must humble himself under the mighty hand of God, that he may be exalted in due time.—1 Peter 5:6.

The prospect of the kingdom was bright before the minds of the Apostles, even when Jesus was foretelling his ignominious sufferings and death; so that two of his beloved followers, James and John, through their mother, importuned a promise that they should sit, the one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of the Great King when his kingdom should be established.

This request drew from the Great Teacher the suggestion that his loving and ambitious disciples had, perhaps, not fully counted the cost of such exaltation. He inquired if they were willing to drink of his cup of ignominy and reproach, and if they were willing to be baptized with his baptism, into his death—the sacrifice of all earthly interests. They had counted the cost, and promptly responded as to their willingness. They had learned well the lessons of the Great Teacher. He assured them that with this willingness of mind the privilege would be theirs of sharing his ignominy and his death and of sitting with him on his throne. But as respects the chief positions, they were not at his disposal. At the conclusion of the testings of his people, those positions of highest honor in the kingdom next to himself will be given according to the just standards which the Father has prepared and established. How we can rejoice with those Apostles in the fullness of their consecration and in the assurance of the Master! And we also should strive by faithfulness to attain a place with the Master in his Throne, as members of his body, the church.

The ambition of James and John was shown in their desire for places of special nearness to the Lord. Jesus did not prove them specifically, but indirectly. When the other ten

heard how these two had sought to bespeak the chief places of honor they were indignant. The Master took advantage of the incident to show how different is God's judgment from that of men. With men the aggressive and powerful hold the lordship and dominion over the others, but in the divine arrangement the order is reversed. God will honor most and put in the highest positions, the humble, the submissive, the meek. On this incident the Lord based a general instruction to his followers on the necessity for humility. We are to take the divine standpoint and honor most in the church those who most serve the church, and not those who demand service and honors and seek self-exaltation. Our Lord pointed to his own course as an illustration: they acknowledged him as their Master, and yet no one served them so much as did he. Indeed, he came into the world not to be served, but to serve others, even to the extent of laying down his life as the ransom price for many, for the world, to be applied for their release from sin and death condemnation in God's time—during the Messianic kingdom.

BLESSING THE BLIND AND THE POOR

Journeying on the Master had an opportunity of exemplifying his position as a servant. Two blind men, learning that he was passing, exercised such faith that they hailed him as the Messiah, the Son of David, entreating mercy, help, relief. Instead of passing them by, saying, You are only blind beggars, anyway, the Master stopped and called them to him and, in response to their request, touched their eyes, and immediately they received sight. Other Scriptures indicate that the Great Teacher's miracles were not performed without cost to himself, “Virtue (vitality) went out of him and healed them all.”—Luke 6:19.

He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, humbling himself to serve the humblest and poorest unfortunates! Here we have an illustration of the spirit of meekness, the spirit of service, which must characterize the hearts, and, in some degree, control the lives of all true followers, disciples, of the Great Teacher. If it is not in our power to open the eyes of the physically blind, it is in our power to help many to a clearer insight into the things of God which the natural eye hath not seen, nor ear heard—the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him and that, loving him, follow in the footsteps of Jesus. (1 Cor. 2:9) Let us, then, seek the true, God-given ambition; but let us specially seek to know and to do the will of our Father in heaven.

ISRAEL'S KING REJECTED

MATTHEW 21:1-17.—AUGUST 28.

GOLDEN TEXT:—“*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!*”

While God foreknew and the prophets foretold that the Jewish nation would reject Jesus and not receive him as their King, nevertheless, everything was done as though the results were not foreknown and foretold. The prophecies were fulfilled. Today's study illustrates this. Jesus offered himself to Israel as their Messianic King, just five days before his crucifixion, and on the exact day upon which, as the Lamb of God, he should have been received by them, in order that they might have been “passed over” and, as a nation, become the antitypical Levites from amongst whom would have been selected the antitypical priests. Their failure to receive Jesus at the appointed time did not at all interfere with the divine arrangement, for all of the Jews found worthy to be of the spiritual Levites and spiritual priests were selected, although the nation was rejected. The remainder of those spiritual, antitypical priests and Levites God has been gathering from amongst the Gentiles ever since. By and by all these, of whom Jesus is the Chief Priest, will be glorified on the spirit plane. Then will begin the great Messianic work for Israel, and through Israel for all the nations of the world. Thus in due time Israel's experiences will be realized on a grander scale than they ever dreamed of. Abraham, Isaac and all the prophets shall be made princes or rulers in all the earth. Israel restored to divine favor shall “obtain mercy” of God through the glorified church, and shall become the channel of God's favor for pouring out upon mankind riches of grace.

SABBATH AT BETHANY

The Sabbath day prior to his crucifixion was spent by the Great Teacher at the home of Lazarus and Martha and Mary. His fame had spread by reason of the miracle performed upon Lazarus. A feast was given in his honor on Sabbath night after sundown. It was then that Mary anointed him with the precious perfume which Jesus said was an anointing for his burial. The fragrance of this perfume has come down to us through the ages. The next morning, to fulfill the Scriptures, Jesus sent for the ass and its little colt to be

brought. The ass was probably a white one, for it is reputed to have been the custom of the kings of Israel to ride upon white asses. The multitude who had come to see Jesus, and Lazarus whom he had brought from the tomb, filled with admiration, hailed Jesus with shouts, as “The Son of David!” The Great King! The Messiah! Certain scribes and Pharisees called attention to this and suggested that Jesus rebuke them. His answer was that, had the people refused to acclaim him, the stones would have cried out; because it had been prophesied centuries before, “Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold thy King cometh unto thee. He is meek and having salvation; lowly, and sitting upon an ass, with its colt, the foal of an ass.” The little procession headed for Jerusalem, the multitude shouting and strewing their clothing and palm branches for the ass to tread upon, as marks of honor to the great King whom they imperfectly, indistinctly, recognized—not realizing the still greater glory and honor of his later revealing in the end of this age, when “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to him.”

“YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT DESOLATE”

Four months ago—on April 24—we passed over the historic road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, thinking the while of the great incident of this lesson. The road sweeps around the side of the Mount of Olives on a reasonable grade until suddenly a turn of the road and the sharp declivity of the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) brings Jerusalem into full view in a moment. Time and again we walked over part of the road and noted where the Master halted the little procession and wept over the city, saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings [for safety], and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till [that day when] ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”—Matt. 23:37-39.

Our heart went out in sympathy for the Jewish people. We recalled how they have been nationally "left desolate" for eighteen centuries, and have been persecuted, even, alas, by those who have named the name of Christ! We specially rejoiced to think that "the time of Jacob's trouble" will soon be over—that the time when they will enter into the New Covenant relationship with God will soon be at hand. (Jer. 31:31; Rom. 11:27) We rejoiced to think that soon Immanuel in the glory of his kingdom will be revealed, and that all flesh shall behold the glory of that kingdom. Then the Lord will pour upon Israel the spirit of prayer and of supplication, and they shall look upon him whom they pierced. (Zech. 12:10) We rejoice to think that "that day" when they shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," is nigh at hand. But, we reflect, that the time of special favor to spiritual Israel must be correspondingly drawing to a close.

That spot where Jesus stopped to prophecy Israel's future was the same one over which, a little later, the army of Titus marched to the destruction of Jerusalem, and, amidst famine,

finally accomplished the destruction of the city, taking, according to records, ninety-seven thousand prisoners. One million, one hundred thousand were said to have perished through famine and war. The ground around the City of Jerusalem the Romans planted thick with crosses, on which Jews were crucified, until there was room for no more, says history.

CLEANSING THE TYPICAL TEMPLE

The Great Teacher's entry into Jerusalem caused considerable commotion. He went directly to the Temple and ordered from it the money-changers and dove-sellers, who had no right within its hallowed precincts. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy, "The zeal of thine house has consumed me." The poor, the blind, the lame, again had his ministries. Again the chief religionists of the times were vexed and considered him an intruder upon their arrangements, and were displeased with the multitude's shouting his praise as the Messiah, the Son of David. They rebuked the Teacher, who answered, Scripturally, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."—Matt. 21:16; Psalm 8:2.

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

We have had a very delightful visit from our dear Brother Bundy, who stopped with us for several days in Jacksonville, and I am writing to say that the Lord has blessed his visit greatly—to me at least.

As you know, I have not been in harmony with the Class here for more than two and one-half years; had many objections to many things, "the vow" included, and now, after this long and unpleasant experience, through which the Lord has brought me, and from which he has saved me, I may be qualified to sound a note of warning to some others who, perhaps, are now under a similar cloud, or who may be harboring in their hearts some wrong thoughts that may sooner or later develop and blind them, and God only knows what the results may be.

Satan succeeded in getting a kind of sugar-coated poison in my heart, but the sugar coat soon wore off, and I found myself in mighty bad company—people whose principal business seems to be not to advance the Lord's cause and to develop the Christ-like character with the fruits of the Spirit, being more and more manifest; people whose business seems to be the destruction of the faith of the Lord's "little flock" and the discrediting, to say the least, of the one whom the Lord has been pleased to use in bringing us all into the light of the "present truth," even yourself, dear Brother. And only to think, I found myself, when I was roused to the fact, in this company, and I praise the Lord that he enabled me to get a good square look at myself and then at the company I was in, and I saw the positive earmarks in myself, as well as in them, of an unclean and unholy spirit, which, however, well concealed, savored not of the sweet, kind, humble spirit of our Lord and his true followers.

After the Lord had opened my eyes to see the great danger that I was in, I went back to the class and tried real hard to be sweet and to take up things where I had left off. It was a hard task and crucifying, indeed, to the flesh. I made a clean, frank statement, as honest as I knew how to make, and the Lord blessed it to my good. But the weeks that have followed have been weeks of veritable torture. Satan has withstood me to my very face and has tortured me through both men and women who are under his control, even using some of the Lord's own people to this end along almost every line. I have faced financial ruin as well, and from worse to worse until I thought I would lose my mind—driven almost to the very verge of suicide, Satan daring to take liberties with me that he never thought of taking before; but the Lord did not let me go. He has used our dear Brother Walter Bundy to show me (and, strange to say, against my will), that, as peculiar as it might seem to me, there was really a blessing, and not only so, but a positive means of safety, in that little "vow." It had been the experience of many others, as well as his own, he said. After twenty-four hours of real struggle the Lord showed this to me very clearly. And now, dear Brother, if you would care to have it there, I want you to put my name on that vow list, for I have made "the vow" my own before the Lord and for the first time in nearly three years I have peace. Praise His Name!

I am now able to see how foolish I was, and how I presumed to criticise you and tried to disprove some of the things which you taught—you, whom the Lord had used to teach me all the real knowledge that I ever had concerning the Scriptures! You, who are so far ahead of me in every respect!

Could I possibly have been in my right mind to thus presume?

I do not consider you infallible, dear Brother, and I am sure that you do not so consider yourself, but I am very sure that you are a mighty safe one to follow, and by the grace and help of the Lord I am going to humbly follow until the Lord shows me positively that I should cease. Am trusting that I shall never again be deceived by the adversary or listen to any of those whom he may be using in trying to injure the Lord's dear servant—no matter who they may be or how well they may mean in their own poor, deceived hearts.

Yours in the Precious Name,

J. J. McNAMARA,—Fla.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I have wanted so often to write and tell you how much I appreciate and enjoy the Lord's blessings through the precious WATCH TOWER visits. My heart is full to overflowing with gratitude and praise to note how our great Captain is gloriously leading his people on safely even in the midst of Satan's oppositions and misrepresentations. And, dear Brother, you don't know how much I am rejoicing as I see your loving zeal and faithful care for the best interests of the Lord's true sheep.

I am glad to say I have always recognized in you the Lord's chosen servant to give us the meat in due season. Some who have once rejoiced with us, but see no beauty now that they might desire, are watching your every word that they might accuse you, but we know why Satan is so vigorously opposing you. It is because of your loyalty to God and his truth. Your face is set as a flint to do his will, and you shall not be ashamed. (Isa. 50:7) So, dear Brother and Pastor, accept my humble appreciation of your faithfulness and zeal in serving the great Captain's orders.

Faithfully yours in our Redeemer and Advocate,

MRS. LYDIA MESSNER.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Although it is several months since we appropriated to ourselves a share in "the vow," we are reminded that we had not written you to that effect, and believing that it will be pleasing to you, we proceed to do so now. While from the first we believed "the vow" to be of the Lord, we were inclined to look upon it as simply a test of our love for each other, because of the conflicting opinions of many.

Believing beyond doubt that we were safe on that score, we tried to dismiss the matter from our minds without making a very careful study of it. We were, however, led to consider it more seriously by your comments in THE TOWERS. Then it dawned upon us that we should not treat lightly anything which we believed came from the Lord. We are happy to say that we now understand what are some of the blessings experienced by those who have taken "the vow."

Assuring you, dear brother, of our increasing love for you as we become better acquainted, and witness your unselfish zeal and devotion to the Lord, the truth and the friends, and wishing you our Heavenly Father's continued blessings, we are by his grace.

Yours in Christ,

J. L. CAIN, WIFE AND DAUGHTER.