

ROCK OF AGES
Other foundation can
no man lay —
A RANSOM FOR ALL

"Watchman, What of the Night?
The Morning Cometh, and a Night also!" Isa. 21:12-14

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"I will stand upon my watch, and will set my foot upon the
Tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and
what answer I shall make to them that oppose me."—Hab. 2:1

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Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves (the restless, discontented) roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking to the things coming upon the earth (society); for the powers of the heavens (ecclesiasticism) shall be shaken. When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then know that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Look up, lift up your heads, rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh.—Matthew 24:33; Mark 13:29; Luke 21:25-31

THIS JOURNAL AND ITS SACRED MISSION

THIS Journal is one of the prime factors or instruments in the system of Bible Instruction, or "Seminary Extension," now being presented in all parts of the civilized world by the WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY, chartered A. D. 1881, "For the Promotion of Christian Knowledge." It not only serves as a class room where Bible Students may meet in the study of the Divine Word, but also as a channel of communication through which they may be reached with announcements of the Society's Conventions and of the coming of its traveling representatives styled "Pilgrims," and refreshed with reports of its Conventions.

Our "Berean Lessons" are topical rehearsals or reviews of our Society's published STUDIES, most entertainingly arranged, and very helpful to all who would merit the only honorary degree which the Society accords, viz., *Verbi Dei Minister* (V.D.M.), which, translated into English, is *Minister of the Divine Word*. Our treatment of the International S. S. Lessons is specially for the older Bible Students and Teachers. By some this feature is considered indispensable.

This Journal stands firmly for the defense of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated—Redemption through the precious blood of "the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all." (1 Pet. 1:19; 1 Tim. 2:6.) Building up on this sure foundation the gold, silver and precious stones (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Pet. 1:5-11) of the Word of God, its further mission is to—"Make all see what is the fellowship of the Mystery which . . . has been hid in God, . . . to the intent that now might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God"—"which in other Ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed."—Eph. 3:5-9, 10.

It stands free from all parties, sects and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the Holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken—according to the Divine wisdom granted unto us, to understand. Its attitude is not dogmatical, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust, to be used only in His service; hence our decisions relative to what may and what may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of His good pleasure, the teaching of His Word, for the upbuilding of His people in grace and knowledge. And we not only invite but urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word to which reference is constantly made, to facilitate such testing.

TO US THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH

That the Church is "the Temple of the Living God"—peculiarly "His workmanship," that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the Chief Corner Stone of His Temple, through which, when finished, God's blessing shall come "to all people," and they find access to Him.—1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29.

That meantime the chiseling, shaping and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's Atonement for sin, progresses; and when the last of these "living stones," "Elect and precious," shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the First Resurrection; and the Temple shall be filled with His glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8.

That the Basis of Hope, for the Church and the World, lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," "a Ransom for all," and will be "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," "in due time."—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

That the Hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, "see Him as He is," be "partaker of the Divine nature," and share His glory as His joint-heir.—1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4.

That the present mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next Age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6; 20:6.

That the hope for the World lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's Millennial Kingdom—the Restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and His glorified Church—when all the wilfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35.

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The Watch Tower Editorial Committee:

This journal is published under the supervision of an Editorial Committee at least three of whom have read and approved as truth each and every article appearing in these columns. The names of the Editorial Committee are: J. F. RUTHERFORD, W. E. VAN AMBURGH, F. H. ROBISON, GEO. H. FISHER, W. E. PAGE.

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LOCAL CONVENTIONS AT THANKSGIVING SEASON

Chicago, Ill., November 27-30. Brother Rutherford and several pilgrim brethren will be present. For further information address Entertainment Committee, 1305 Masonic Temple, Chicago, Ill.

Grand Rapids, Mich., November 27-30. Brother Rutherford hopes to be present on the 28th. For further information address S. C. DeGroot, 550 Lyon Street, N. E., Grand Rapids, Mich.

Cincinnati, O., November 29, 30. Address Victor Schmidt, 545 West 7th Street, Cincinnati, O., for information concerning this convention.

Toledo, O., November 27-30. For further information address C. W. Smith, 1021 Varland Ave., Toledo, Ohio.

St. Louis, Mo., November 27-30. J. B. Bernoudy, 7033 Lindell Ave., can be addressed for further information regarding this convention.

CONVENTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY BROTHER J. F. RUTHERFORD

Brooklyn, N. Y. Nov. 23 Grand Rapids, Mich. . . . Nov. 28
Chicago, Ill. " 30 Cleveland, O. Dec. 7

RE BEREAN BIBLE LESSONS

The October 15th issue erred in duplicating questions. Correction is made on pg. 351 by forwarding questions two weeks.

Lectures and Studies by Traveling Brethren

BROTHER J. A. BAEUERLEIN

Scranton, Pa. Nov. 23 Carbondale, Pa. Nov. 23

BROTHER E. W. BETLER

Valley Stream, N. Y. . . . Nov. 30 Bayonne, N. J. Dec. 7

BROTHER L. T. COHEN

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BROTHER E. L. DOCKEY

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BROTHER A. H. MACMILLAN

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RANSOM IMPLIES RESTITUTION

"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—1 Timothy 2:5, 6.



OUR text declares a great fact which Christian people generally ignore: if indeed they do not directly deny it. It is the fact that our Lord Jesus was a ransom price, the scope of which includes benefits broad enough to take in the entire family of Adam. Many people have been confused as to the real scope of the ransom by various Scripture statements concerning the church. The Scriptures do speak of a special elect class, which is being gathered out of the world during this Gospel age and which is promised joint-heirship with Christ in his mediatorial kingdom. The Scriptures do also speak of the fact that the great mass of mankind at the present time and throughout the six thousand years of man's history has been "without God, and without hope in the world," because without a knowledge of "the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we may be saved". These facts have led many people to the erroneous conclusion that our Lord's death has not been and never will be a *ransom price*, or off-set price, for the cancellation of the sins of mankind in general.

There are certain features to this kind of reasoning which are logical; for if the world in general has not received a blessing at the Lord's hands, it seems like a reasonable conclusion to say that Justice has not received a full ransom price for original sin. In seeming harmony with this thought is the fact that only a small proportion of humanity have been favored of the Lord with the opening of their eyes of understanding, and with the privilege, through faith, of coming back into harmony with their Creator. In seeming support for this fact also are the Scripture statements respecting the present "narrow way" and "strait gate", which "few" can find, and the many references to the *elect* as constituting only a little flock.

Building upon these facts and failing to take into proper consideration the whole counsel of God, our forefathers of the dark ages and since have proceeded to give various explanations of what they suppose will happen to the remainder of mankind, the non-elect, those not favored by the Almighty with the knowledge of the only name efficacious for salvation. They built various false doctrines, such as the eternal torture of all save the church, or of long-lasting purgatorial sufferings for the great majority of human beings—according to whether the fathers were Protestant or Romanist. These "traditions of the elders" have had a nauseating effect upon intelligent minds. They contradict the Scriptural declaration that God is just, loving, wise, and powerful. What we need in order to correct the nausea, to refresh the heart, to inspire a love and zeal for the Lord and his Word, is to see with

clearness what are the true doctrines of the Scriptures respecting these matters.

"TASTED DEATH FOR EVERY MAN"

The Scriptures tell us that our Lord Jesus "by the grace of God tasted death for *every* man". (Hebrews 2:9) They show conclusively that through his death he became a "propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins [the church's sins]; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world". (1 John 2:2) But to appreciate these statements, to see how they can be and are true, it is necessary to know that the Scriptures nowhere declare that the present Gospel age is the only period of divine favor, the only period for the forgiveness of sins, the only period for reconciliation with God, the only period of opportunity for being taught of God and of obtaining his blessing and favor, lost through original sin in Eden. As soon as we grasp this great fact our eyes begin to open to other facts:

(1) That prior to this Gospel age, during the Jewish age and previously, all the world, except that one little nation, were aliens, strangers, and foreigners from God and his promises, "without God and without hope in the world" (Ephesians 2:12);

(2) That the Scriptures clearly indicate a "world to come", a future epoch, in connection with the affairs of this world, under new and better conditions than now prevail (Hebrews 2:5);

(3) That that future epoch is called the "day of Christ", the "day of the Lord". It is indeed the Millennial day, the thousand years of Christ's reign for the very purpose of blessing and uplifting the world of mankind, for whose sins his death was the atonement price and who are to be healed by his stripes.

(4) We find that every invitation and injunction of the Gospel age is with a view to the selection of an elect class, who shall be joint-heirs with Christ during that Messianic reign, to share with him in the great work of true and general human uplift.

At this point many good people, laboring under a degree of blindness, caused by the smoke of the dark ages, feel disposed to believe and to insist that there can be no future probation. If we ask them why, they reply that the entire Scripture teaching contradicts the thought of a future hope, a hope beyond the tomb. To this we are obliged to reply, It is an error; the very reverse is true, as we shall show. We ask them for a single Scripture on their side of the subject. To their amazement they find none, but as a last resort quote from Ecclesiastes the words: "Where the tree falleth, there shall it be". (Ecclesiastes 11:3) A very slim text indeed to raise up as a barrier against the entire voice of the Scriptures, against all the de-

mands of reason and logic, and against the eternal welfare of the human race!

The Scripture they quote is in full accord with what we claim; namely, that as a tree when it is fallen is lifeless and powerless and cannot raise itself up—so is man in death, under the sentence and wage of original sin. The Scripture argument is that the whole race of Adam was thus dead, without life, without power to raise itself out of its fallen condition, without any claims upon eternal life or divine favor in any sense. But, as our head text declares, our Lord Jesus “gave himself a ransom for all”, for Adam, the transgressor in particular, and for all of his race who share in his penalty, and the *all* redeemed is the same *all* which shall have the blessed opportunity for release from sin-and-death bondage.

It is because man is in this helpless condition, dead, powerless to revivify himself, that God has gone to his relief through Christ and caused the great ransom price to be provided nearly nineteen centuries ago. Our text assures us that the ransom sacrifice finished at Calvary was on behalf of all mankind, and is, consequently, to bring a blessing to all mankind.

SALVATION BY RESURRECTION

We are not arguing that all who have died have gone to heaven; quite to the contrary. We adhere to the Bible teaching that “the dead know not anything” (Ecclesiastes 9:5); that a resurrection is necessary to any future living. We hold with the Scriptures that at the end of this age the first resurrection was to take place, the resurrection of the “blessed and holy”, of those who have pleased God by both their faith and their obedience. These, the Scriptures tell us, shall be “kings and priests unto God and shall reign on the earth”. (Revelation 5:10) The object of their reign will be to bring blessings of knowledge and opportunity to “every creature”, to the “residue of men”. These participators in the first resurrection are the spiritual “seed of Abraham”, our Lord Jesus the head and his church, the members of his body. Thus the Apostle declares: “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise”.—Galatians 3:29.

The promise to which Christ and the church are heirs is that they shall be God’s instruments for the blessing, instruction and uplift of all the willing of the world of mankind. To be heirs of this promise made to Abraham (that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed), would be a meaningless farce and jest on the part of the Almighty had he not arranged for the purchase or ransom of all men and provided the time and means by which his blessings could accrue to the world. Thus we perceive that he has arranged a time for granting the world a trial for life, a trial respecting their willingness to abandon the ways of sin and death and to walk in the ways of righteousness under the enlightenment of the truth, which, we are assured, shall shine forth as the sun and whose beams shall heal humanity. (Malachi 4:2) The means for the blessing we see provided in Christ and in his bride, the elect church of this Gospel age; but the guarantee of the whole is fixed beyond peradventure in the fact that “Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man”; here, as our first text says, he became the mediator between God and man by giving himself a ransom for all.

The point we desire to emphasize here is that the giving of this ransom price and the acceptance of it by Justice implies divine intention for the blessing of all mankind, in full accord with the various testimonies of the Scripture. Why let a ransom be given for all if it were not God’s intention that all should benefit by it? We hold that it is beyond dispute that the giving of the ransom for all, and God’s acceptance of it in harmony with the divine promises, are the sure guarantee that ultimately a blessing must come to every member of Adam’s race as a result.

The fact that this knowledge has not reached all mankind in the past and is not reaching all mankind today, but, on the contrary only a small minority, and the fact that the knowledge of God’s favor and an intelligent acceptance of it on faith and a reasonable obedience in harmony with that faith are the demands of the divine Word, require no proof. Proof could be given on almost every page of the Scriptures that faith and effort at obedience, in harmony with that faith, are necessary to salvation, but we will content ourselves with mentioning a few citations.

The Apostle Paul says: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”; “How shall they believe on him whom they have not heard?” (Romans 10:14-17) “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Hebrews 11:6) “All that are in the grave shall hear his voice [that of the Son of Man] and shall come forth.” (John 5:28, 29) “The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep.” (Isaiah 11:9) “The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.” (Isaiah 35:5) “They shall no longer teach every man his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know him, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.”—Jer. 31:34.

TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME

Our ground text is in full accord with all of these statements, when it says that our Lord Jesus gave himself a ransom for all to be testified “in due time”. The present, then, is the due time for the church, the household of faith, to hear the voice of the Son of God; for they who now hear, live, pass from death unto life, to newness of life, into the begetting or beginning of a new nature. Bye and bye, when the present class of called, elect ones shall have been glorified with their Lord, all the remainder of mankind shall hear, “all that are in the grave shall hear his voice,” and come forth for the very purpose that they may hear, may understand, may appreciate, and may be assisted to obey the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, the great ransom, who in that day will be the king over all the earth and will bind Satan and will put down every opposing influence, to the intent that all may come to a full appreciation of God and his righteous laws and to full obedience thereto.

This is the Apostle Peter’s argument in Acts 3:22, 23: he points us to the fact that Moses was a type of Christ (Jesus the head and the church his body), and that this antitypical priest is being raised up by God from among Christ’s brethren, raised up to the glory, honor, and immortality of the divine nature and to the power and authority of the kingdom. The intent of all this is that as the seed of Abraham this great Messiah shall bless all the families of the earth with knowledge and every opportunity for return to all that was lost in Adam in the shape of divine

favor. All of those who will refuse to hear or obey that great Prophet, Priest, and King during the Millennial age—what of them? The Apostle answers: "It shall come to pass that the soul that will not hear [or obey] that prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people"; he shall be cut off in the second death, from which there will be no hope of recovery, no resurrection.

TIMES OF RESTITUTION

In full accord with this view is the Apostle Peter's statement respecting the blessings that are to come to mankind during the Millennial age, following our Lord's second advent and the glorification of his church to joint-heirship with him. The Apostle calls that period "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when he shall send Jesus Christ," at his second advent. The Apostle declares that in the meantime the heavens will receive or retain him "until the times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began". In other words, he assures us that those restitution times, or years of uplifting mankind, will follow as a result of the Lord's second coming and the establishment of his kingdom in glory and in power.—Acts 3:19-21.

That the times of restitution signify years of restitution we need not state; nor need we point out that the thousand years of Christ's reign are here referred to. The word restitution is more or less familiar to everyone as signifying to put back or bring back something to an original or previous condition. The Apostle is speaking of humanity, and hence the suggestion is that the work of Christ and his church in glory during the Messianic reign will be to restore mankind to the condition and privileges and blessings and favors enjoyed before sin entered the world, before the curse passed upon all because of one man's disobedience.—Romans 5:12, 18.

Evolutionists will have little sympathy with the Apostle's statement here, for, according to their erroneous theory *restitution* to an original condition would be the last thing for humanity to desire or hope for, or for God to promise as a blessing. But much more happiness is had if we do not consult evolutionists in this matter, but the Word of God, that liveth and abideth forever. In harmony with his promise we are to anticipate, therefore, that as the world of mankind has been in a falling and fallen condition for six thousand years, and that when the Lord's time shall come and times of restitution shall begin, so the present downward or fallen conditions will give place to upward conditions and to restitution activities for the general happyfying of all mankind.

BECAUSE "CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS"

The Lord's ransom sacrifice finished at Calvary is the basis upon which God can be just in maintaining the integrity of the original sentence of death against sinners and yet be the justifier of those who believe on him through Jesus (Romans 3:26) and release them from the sentence of death which was justly upon them as the imperfect posterity of the fallen Adam and as those who are unworthy of life eternal.

The more we look into this matter the more logical, reasonable, and satisfying we see the divine plan to be. The first man was perfect, made in the image of God, having the same character poise as God and, within his limited sphere, having the same appreciation

of moral, intellectual, and social principles as God has. This first man sinned with deliberation and received as a penalty the death sentence. After waiting more than four thousand years God sent a redeemer in the person of his Son. Since man was not a spirit being but a human or earthly being, therefore, as the Apostle explains, Christ took not hold on the nature of angels but humbled himself and came to the human plane, lower than he had enjoyed, and became the "man Christ Jesus". But since his life was not derived from the polluted Adamic fountain, he did not bear the marks of imperfection which mar all the children of Adam. Though a human being, yet he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners". Then, as the *man* Christ Jesus he gave himself a ransom for all, though the testimony or general knowledge concerning this fact was not to be known by all at once but only "in due time". It was a perfect man who had sinned and who had been condemned; therefore only a perfect man could be a ransom price or exactly corresponding price. The fact that all of Adam's children were condemned in him, or inherited his condemnation with the measure of life which he imparted to them through procreation, makes possible the fact that all may be redeemed by one man.—1 Corinthians 15:19, 22.

The testimony of this great event has already been in the world for nineteen centuries and it has selected the very class which God foreknew and foretold—a little flock of footstep followers who are to be joint-heirs with their Redeemer and Lord. Next in order, then, will come the testimony to the remainder of mankind, first, to those who will not have gone into the tomb, and secondly, to those who have already gone into the tomb but who will be awakened for the very purpose of receiving this testimony and being tested by it. In accord with this, the Apostle informs us that the church is "a kind of first fruits [unto God] of his creatures". The expression "firstfruits" implies an *after-fruitage*.—James 1:18.

Here we notice the difference between the blessing God designed for the elect church being selected during this Gospel age, and the blessing he purposes for the obedient of the world of mankind in general. The church's blessing is not restitution; we do not see restitution work in the church. The restitution work waits for the restitution time, which begins with the establishment of God's kingdom. Believers of this present time indeed enjoy by faith such a reckoned righteousness as makes them acceptable sacrifices in the eyes of Jehovah, but they do not experience restitution. They are reckoned as having their sins covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, as being passed (in response to their faith and by virtue of the merit of Christ's ransom sacrifice on their behalf) from under the sentence of death in Adam to a share of life in Christ, receiving again the fellowship and communion with God lost by Adam through his disobedience in Eden. All of this in a sense serves as an equivalent to the restitution which is to come to the world in its due time. But the world will not get these things merely by faith; they will get them actually, gradually attaining to them more and more during the thousand years, until at its close all who shall have appreciated God's favors and obeyed the voice of the Great Prophet, Priest, and King will be actually perfect, as perfect as Adam was in every

talent, quality, power, and capacity, but with increased capacity through increased knowledge gained through experience.

HEAVENLY REWARD FOR ELECT ONLY

Not so the church of this Gospel age. She gets none of these restitution blessings actually. She merely has them by faith, and this for the special purpose of having them sacrificed under the direction of Jesus, the great High Priest. She is thus allowed to participate in the glories of his heavenly nature and his heavenly work. The Gospel invitation to the church is to lay down her life, to exchange these earthly privileges and blessings, secured by the precious blood of Christ, for heavenly privileges offered her as an extraordinary reward for extraordinary obedience; even as the Master said: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne".—Revelation 3:21.

Glory, honor, and immortality, the divine nature, will be the great reward bestowed upon the church at her great change from present earthly conditions to heavenly conditions, far beyond anything possible for the natural man to appreciate, and which even the saints can see but obscurely, as through an imperfect mirror. This great change is to come to the faithful bride by her participation in the first resurrection, the resurrection to spiritual perfection, and is the great hope and ambition set before us. It is for this that we are exhorted to lay aside every weight and every besetting sin and to run with patience the race set before us, sacrificing earthly things and treasures that we may have this better treasure, this pearl of great price, this share in the kingdom of our dear Redeemer.

HOLY PROPHETS FORETOLD THIS

The Apostle declares that these "times of restitution" that are coming were spoken of "by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began". Suffice it now that we take the Apostle's word, calling to mind the various statements and promises of the Lord and of the prophets, pointing out these glorious good things for the world of mankind, that are delayed only until the completion of the elect church. The prophets spoke of the restoration of Israel to divine favor, of how their blind eyes shall be opened, how they shall see in very truth that he whom they pierced is Messiah indeed, who gave his life for their ransom. It is clearly pointed out in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Romans that not only the falling away of Israel was foretold by the prophets, but also their regathering, their restoration to divine favor. But this, the Apostle shows us, will be after the completion of the Gospel church, spiritual Israel. Again he informs us that "they [the Jews] shall obtain mercy through your mercy". The glorified church, with Christ at her head as the great King, is

to dispense the mercies of God to the Jew first, and also to "all the families of the earth".

Let us hold fast to the doctrines of Christ as set forth in his own teachings, that he "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10); that he beheld mankind as a treasure in a field and bought the whole field that he might develop the treasure. Let us note that the same Gospel is set forth also in all the declarations of the apostles and of "all the holy prophets since the world began". While the doctrines of men would be inclined to lead us away from God, to make us think of the Almighty as unjust and cruel, heartless, loveless, and powerless, the doctrines of the Scriptures open the blind eyes and give us the power to see the King in his beauty, the glorious majesty of the God of love, the God of wisdom, the God of justice, and the God of power. They give us to see, as explained by the prophet, that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's ways and God's plans than man's plans.

From this standpoint of greater enlightenment respecting the divine character, we shall have greater desire to serve and please him, esteeming it a great privilege to lay down our very lives in his service, accounting all things as but loss and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, that we might know him intimately and be found in him, as his members, and be made sharers in his resurrection, the first resurrection.—Philippians 3:8-11.

"NONE OTHER NAME GIVEN"

All those who have died outside of Christ, outside of membership in his true church, are safe in the care of him who died for all. They are safe in that they are guaranteed full opportunity for life everlasting under the most favorable conditions. They are not safe in the sense of having salvation forced upon them. God will not torture even his enemies to all eternity, as once we feared, but now find to be unscriptural. Let us see that while the Scriptures teach that the worst that can befall any of his enemies will be "everlasting destruction" without hope of a future life, there is a grand hope taught for the ignorant, for those who now know little or nothing of God's purposes. All such shall be saved from their ignorance and be brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth, that they may be saved, in God's due time.—1 Tim. 2:4.

Let us recognize the truth of the Master's words and build a proper faith in accordance with its statement: "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son shall not see life" eternal (John 3:36), because salvation is by knowledge and not by ignorance, "through faith" in the precious blood, and not in ignorance of it. Salvation comes by a resurrection and by the Messianic kingdom in which the church of this Gospel age is invited to share with her Redeemer as his bride and joint-heir to accomplish the blessing and happification of all who will then prove willing and obedient.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Let there be light. From out the obscure darkness, here below

I long to know thy present perfect will, and then to see
Thy full completed purposes in me.

Supply the want that fills my longing heart;

Show me the part that I should work for thee: And with
my might

I'll serve thee as I may. Let there be light.

I see it now: The first gray shafts of morn are breaking
through—

'Tis joy to find thy boundless love for me and all mankind.
And as the shadows flee, with morning light

Give me a spirit broken, heart contrite—a zeal to show

Thy praise with keen delight. Prepare the way

Unto that glorious day—to clear undimmed light.

ISAIAH'S RHAPSODY NO. I

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God."—Isaiah 40:1.



THE prophecy of Isaiah is unique from several standpoints. One thing which makes it of special interest to the Lord's people is the fact that it is more frequently quoted by our Lord and the apostles than all of the other prophecies combined. The generally exalted character of the prophet's language and the clearness of vision granted him as a seer is another item of deep interest. And, thirdly, the physical structure of the prophecy is such as to demand special attention, because of the elaborate division and subdivision of its subject matter.

We offer a brief outline of the prophecy which confirms this remark. When divisions and subdivisions are indicated, it does not mean that these are made arbitrarily, but that the subject matter itself is divided, a fact which is easily demonstrated by anyone who cares to take the trouble to examine into it. It will be noted that the third division contains by far the major portion of the book and that the third subdivision of that division contains probably a half of the prophecy, viewed as to bulk. This third subdivision is specially Messianic in its character and begins with the fortieth chapter. At this time we offer some comments on the first eleven verses of the fortieth chapter. But first is inserted the general outline of the book:

DIVISION I: Chapter 1, which acts as a preface for the whole work; contains a brief outline of the subject matter to be discussed.

DIVISION II: Chapters 2 to 27, dealing, historically, with the testing of King Ahaz.

SUBDIVISION 1, Chapters 2 to 12

SUBDIVISION 2, Chapters 13 to 23

SUBDIVISION 3, Chapters 24 to 27

SONG 1, Chapter 25

SONG 2, Chapter 26

SONG 3, Chapter 27

DIVISION III: Chapters 28 to 66, dealing, in so far as history is involved, with the testing of King Hezekiah.

SUBDIVISION 1, Chapters 28 to 35

SUBDIVISION 2, Chapters 36 to 39

SUBDIVISION 3, Chapters 40 to 66, **MESSIANIC:**

PORTION 1, Chapters 40-48: Treating on the Messiah (here called "the servant of the Lord") in his evangelistic activities, or in the work of heralding the good tidings of Messiah's oncoming kingdom—the work of this Gospel age.

SECTION 1, Chapters 40 to 42.

SECTION 2, Chapters 43 to 45.

SECTION 3, Chapters 46 to 48.

PORTION 2, Chapters 49 to 57: Dealing with Messiah in his official capacity in the Millennial age.

SECTION 1, Chapters 49-52:12, as Prophet.

SECTION 2, Chapters 52:13 to 54, as Priest.

SECTION 3, Chapters 55 to 57, as King.

Kingly work No. 1, Chapter 55.

Kingly work No. 2, Chapter 56:8.

Kingly work No. 3, Chapter 56:9 to 57.

PORTION 3, Chapters 58 to 66: Dealing with the Messiah in his paternal relationship toward mankind during the Millennium.

SECTION 1, Chapters 58 to 60.

SECTION 2, Chapters 61 to 64.

First work, Chapters 61, 62.

Second work, Chapters 63.

Third work, Chapter 64.

SECTION 3, Chapters 65, 66.

FRAGMENTARY THREEFOLD INTERPRETATION

These elaborate divisions and subdivisions can hardly have been by accident. They were doubtless intended of the Lord, under whose influence or power Isaiah was directed to speak and write. (2 Peter 1:21) This three-fold system of its structure suggests to us the possibility of a three-fold application of the prophet's utterances; but no effort should be made to strain any passage. On examination we do find that there are many passages of the prophecy which have an application (1) to fleshly Israel in connection with the Babylonian captivity, either oncoming or experienced; (2) to fleshly Israel after the time of her long period of disfavor; (3) to spiritual Israel, especially after the time of her captivity in antitypical Babylon. There are other passages which are plainly applicable to two of these classes. Still other parts of the prophecy seem to apply only to spiritual Israel, while occasionally are found remarks apparently intended only for natural Israel.

The fortieth chapter is one freighted with special interest, because parts of it stretch over a long period of time—from about the time of the Babylonian captivity to the present day. Isaiah's prophecy was delivered about 150 years prior to the captivity, and this fact must be borne in mind in thinking of any of its historical aspects.

In these first eleven verses of the fortieth chapter we have three pictures of Jehovah given to us: first, he is depicted as a Comforter after protracted suffering; second, he is represented as being the True One, whose word abides though all else fail; third, as the Shepherd who leads his people with paternal care. The first two verses announce comfort. The following nine verses contain three voices, or messages, each composed of three verses.

The chapter opens with the familiar words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God". Three imperatives or commands are given: (1) "Comfort ye"; (2) "speak ye"; (3) "cry". It will be noted also that the thing to be cried, or proclaimed, is three-fold in its nature: (1) "that her warfare is accomplished"; (2) "that her iniquity is pardoned"; (3) "that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins". Our King James version gives this last clause, "*for* she hath received," but the grammatical structure in all three cases is the same, and the rendering should be the same in each instance.

ONLY HEART CLASS COMFORTED

The Hebrew word here translated "comfortably" is rendered in the margin "to the heart of". God's message of comfort did come to the heart of Jerusalem as soon as the seventy years of Jerusalem's captivity had expired. The great mass of Jews who had been carried away captive into Babylon had become very comfortably situated there. They doubtless had social and commercial ties which they did not care to break. The homes, friends, and pleasant associations seemed very real and desirable to them; whereas Jerusalem seemed distant and as a thing belonging to the past. Doubtless they argued that a return to rebuild the temple and city of Jerusalem and to rehabilitate Judea was foolish, impractical, visionary. But about 50,000 souls so much appreciated the promises which God had given them through the prophets, were so keen in discerning the fact that those promises were associated

with Jerusalem, that they were willing to forego any temporal advantages which might accrue from their remaining in Babylon and to return and undertake the hardships and physical disadvantages of entrance into a ruined and devastated country.

This was the *heart* class of the Jews—here represented by the word Jerusalem. Without that “remnant” the Jewish race would have been lost to history. Their hearts burned at the prospect of participation in the blessings God had promised them. This message of comfort did not come to the majority of the Jews, for the simple reason that they had no need for it. Whoever tries to comfort those who are already comfortable is wasting his time and energy.

Furthermore, this message of comfort has come to God’s fleshly people Israel after their 1845-year period of divine disfavor and of spiritual blindness. Here too it is only the *heart* class, the Zionists, who have been comforted by these words of cheer from Jehovah’s prophet. Here too the majority of Jews have been too comfortably situated to be in need of prophetic comfort. The Zionist movement started with the humbler Jews who needed the very encouragement contained in these verses. The Lord provided them with it. They have been cheered, encouraged, and strengthened thereby.

Likewise there has been a heart class of spiritual Israel who have been cheered and comforted by the Lord’s message, especially since the time of spiritual Israel’s captivity, ending in the year 1799.

THREEFOLD GROUND FOR COMFORT

The causes or grounds for comfort are then stated in threefold manner. The word *cry* here means to make public by proclamation. It has no connection whatever with the word weep. The thing to be proclaimed was, first, the fact that “her warfare is accomplished”. The Hebrew word here rendered warfare is one which applies not to the actual hostilities but to the period of time during which warfare is active. Literally it means “period of conscription”. It refers, therefore, to time; and as respects the fleshly Israelites at Babylon it meant seventy years were expired. When that time was over, a knowledge of the fact that the desolation was to be seventy years (as foretold by Moses) would constitute a great comfort to them. Likewise, the knowledge of the fact that fleshly Israel’s period of dispersion was to equal their period of national favor (viz., 1845 years) would be a cause for comfort to God’s fleshly people at this end of the age. It has proven true. The Lord through his servant has explained to the Jews the meaning of the “double” mentioned by three of the Old Testament prophets. And when spiritual Israel found herself at the end of the 1260 years of Papal supremacy she could be and has been comforted by that knowledge.

The second cause for comfort lies in the words “that her iniquity is pardoned”. God in his wisdom saw that the seventy years of national humiliation suffered by the Jewish people would be a sufficient off-set on the books of divine justice to atone for the tendency which they had manifested for many centuries to go into idolatry, or to worship other gods than Jehovah. Evidently God’s wisdom calculated with accuracy on this point; for ever since the time of the captivity the Jews, as a people, have displayed no tendency what-

ever to lose sight of the fact that Jehovah is one God. A conviction as to the oneness of God constitutes the whole of the average Jew’s religion. Everything else in matters theological seems like speculation to him.

The third basis for comfort we find in the last clause of the second verse: “for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins”. On first reading this seems to indicate that some persons are to be punished twice as much as they deserve. But we know that Jehovah would never inflict unjust punishment. He cannot deny himself. The word double here really has the significance of *counterpart*, or equivalent portion. There may be counterparts in value or counterparts in time. One hand may be said to be a counterpart of the other. With fleshly Israel at the time of the captivity the seventy years were doubtless deemed to be a counterpart in value for their national carelessness of centuries. Fleshly Israel has also experienced another counterpart, not only in value but also in time. God gave them special privileges as a nation and singled them out from other nations to be recipients of his favor for 1845 years. We find also, as a counterpart to this period, that there have been 1845 years of national disfavor, beginning with our Lord’s declaration to the Jews that their house was left unto them desolate (in the year A. D. 33) and lasting until the year 1878, when divine favor began to be manifested again to fleshly Israel in the first notably favorable international legislation, which was enacted at the Congress of Berlin that year.

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

We now come to the first of the three voices mentioned in the subsequent nine verses: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness”. In the poetic and symbolic books of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament, the word *voice* does not refer to the literal sound produced by the vocal organs of the body, but to the message conveyed by the voice. In prophetic writings, naturally, the word applies to messages from God. It will be remembered that some nine years ago the Society published papers in Yiddish, which conveyed the message of comfort contained in this very chapter. Suggestions from prominent Zionists as to a name for the paper brought out the fact that the Yiddish equivalent of “the voice” would be understood at once by all Jews to designate some special message from Jehovah. Subsequent experience proved the suggestions of those Jewish gentlemen to be correct.

We are, then, about to listen to the message of him that proclaimeth in the wilderness. There can be no doubt that these words found a literal fulfillment in John the Baptist. (Matthew 3:3) But inasmuch as he himself was a figure of the church, a composite body, it seems reasonable to give the words a wider scope than could be done if they applied solely to John as an individual. In Scripture symbology the *earth* represents human society, organized and established and understood to have a degree of stability. But even in the earth there are varying degrees of fertility, of prominence, and various other differences and distinctions. Part of the earth’s surface is made up of desert or, in Scriptural language, wilderness. From God’s standpoint the earth, or human society, is now one vast wilderness. It is dry and devoid of those refreshing experiences and happifying companionships which would have been man’s portion had sin not entered and selfishness not reigned. Human beings

come in contact with each other, but there is very little true social intercourse. Especially is the earth dry and barren in respect to its companionship with Jehovah, the Creator.

The same prophet informs us that this desert state of humanity is attributable to the influence of Satan as the god of this world. He "maketh the world a wilderness". (Isaiah 14:17) This wilderness condition is not always to prevail for "the whole earth [shall finally be] full of his glory".—Isaiah 6:3; see also Isaiah 51:3; 32:2; Deuteronomy 32:10.

"PREPARE YE THE WAY"

In this wilderness or desert condition of human society God's message has gone forth, especially throughout this Gospel age, proclaiming the fact that a certain preparatory work is necessary to be accomplished before the grander scope of the Abrahamic promise can be fulfilled. (Acts 15:14-17) "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." The "way" and "highway" are both mentioned here, as is also true in the thirty-fifth chapter of this same prophecy. There the prophet says: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those". In ancient times *highways* were government roads, carefully built, but to be used only on strictly official business, for the use of imperial couriers, movement of troops in war time, etc. There were also the much-traveled caravan roads, referred to by the prophet under the ordinary term *way*. Both thoughts are evidently intended to be combined in the promise concerning the highway, for after mentioning both the highway and the way he says: "and it shall be called the way of holiness".

What is the purpose of a road? It is simply a means or agency to enable one to arrive at a desired destination. Then, what is the means or agency to be employed by Jehovah in enabling mankind to arrive back at the desired destination of paradise restored? Is it not the church, the Messiah class in glory, Christ the head and the church his body? And is not this highway class being prepared throughout this Gospel age? And is not this church class in, though not integral parts of, the barren and wilderness state of human society?

Surely any class which is to be used by Jehovah for such an exalted purpose as joint-heirship with Christ is in need of extensive preparatory experiences before being made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light". Those who are called to this exalted position are not more noble of character than others. Indeed the Apostle's remarks in 1 Corinthians 1:27, 28 seem plainly to correspond with our own observation to the effect that the Lord's people are less wonderfully endowed than perhaps the average of mankind. The Apostle further explains that God's purpose in choosing the mean things of the world is that the glory shall redound to him, where it belongs.

Before we shall be prepared for that glorious position we need to be straightened out in our heads. Crooked or distorted conceptions of God's character will have to be replaced by at least fairly accurate appreciation of the beauty and balance which inheres in God's being. We must learn to think of God and to deal with him not as though he were merely wisdom, or justice, or love, or power, singly; but we must come to considerable appreciation of the fact that all of

these characteristics work in harmony and produce symmetry in God and in all creatures made in his image. In order to straighten us out while we are still in this desert condition God has given us the precepts of his Word. But in order to impress these lessons on our minds he supplements the precepts with practical experiences which demonstrate to us the necessity and desirability of perfect balance in character.

When all the church is instructed and when the last one has graduated, having been found faithful even unto death and having been glorified with his Lord and Head, then shall be inaugurated the stupendous changes in earth's society which are mentioned in the fourth and fifth verses.

GREAT SOCIAL CHANGES

After God has finished dealing with the church, and when the merit of Christ's ransom sacrifice has been applied for the benefit of all mankind, when the new government is established with a view to blessing all the families of the earth, then "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low". Retaining the figure of the earth, as representing human society, we observe that some portions of the earth are relatively submerged. They are valleys and low places. These would picture the submerged portions of humanity, those who live below a reasonable and fair average of happiness. It is a fact that probably two-thirds of the present inhabitants of the earth live much below what we would term a reasonable average of comfort and blessing. The vast populations of China, of India, parts of Africa, and other places experience great difficulty in keeping alive physically, not to mention exercising their powers of mind in realms which are enjoyed by most of European and American peoples. These submerged valley classes of humanity are to be exalted; not exalted unduly, nor to their injury, but raised from the position which they now occupy to a fair average opportunity for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The most benevolent economists that have ever lived never had so grand and comprehensive a view of blessing for the masses as is here intimated in these few words.

But the other side of this question is also worthy of special note. "Every mountain and hill shall be made low." As we look back over human history, we see that certain limited classes of mankind have stood out very prominently in earth's affairs. They have occupied prominent positions in respect to their fellowmen. They have stood out in human society very much as the mountain peaks and hills stand out. These shall be made low. We are not to understand that anyone will be humiliated unduly or unjustly, but rather that, in comparison with the balance of mankind, they shall occupy a lower position than they do at present. Evidently God never intended one human being to worship another and some very fallible human beings have demanded and received considerable worship. It will not be respecting the opportunities for attaining perfection of mind, of body, of environment, etc., that they will be debased, but merely in respect to this undue and inappropriate homage rendered by the humbler masses of mankind toward a limited dominating class. It shall be terminated, to the blessing and satisfaction of all.

The straightening out of heads, of minds, which is going on now in the church under the Lord's direction will be carried on in the Millennial age in har-

mony with the same principles now revealed to the church. Not only will the crooked conceptions of God be dispensed with in the minds of the people but also all crooked or perverse dealings and conduct shall be finally banished from the earth. Moreover, the rough places shall be made plain. Whoever now attempts to walk in the way of holiness finds many difficulties. It is a narrow way and purposely strewn with many things intended to discourage those not possessed of sufficient faith and love for the Lord to enable them to fulfill the Father's demands in such manner as to be worthy of the glorious reward promised to the church. But then the stones and stumbling blocks of ignorance and superstition shall be gathered out of the way. When the government shall be upon Christ's shoulders and he shall be the Prince of Peace righteousness shall become popular and unrighteousness visited with summary chastisement and correction.

JEHOVAH'S GLOBY REVEALED

The glorious result of all this grand leveling process in human society, of all this making of the crooked things straight, of all this smoothing of the rough places for mankind, will be that God's glory, God's beauty and poise of character, shall be revealed to the minds and hearts of the now troubled, but then happy, residue of mankind. All flesh shall see that glory together. By the end of the thousand years of Messiah's beneficent reign no more ignorance will remain concerning God's true character. The last vestige of that darkness which now covers the earth will have been dispelled by the glorious light of the Millennial day. "All shall know him, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."—Jeremiah 31:31, 34.

"For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." While these few clauses foregoing contain promises of blessing first for the church and then for all mankind, fulfilling, in fact, the desire of all nations, though the things promised are so great as to stagger the imagination, we have God's assurance that he will carry them out. He signs his own name and endorses all that the prophet has uttered. This, like the signature on the check of a reliable business man, whose assets are practically inexhaustible, makes all that is written above it thoroughly dependable. All omnipotence is pledged to the fulfillment of that which he has purposed through Christ Jesus.

We now look at the second voice or message. As the first message calls strongly upon our faith and constitutes something of a test to it, so the second message constitutes a test to hope. Throughout this Gospel age those who have read this wonderful prophecy of divine blessings have doubtless looked upon them as desirable. The question would naturally arise in our minds: How long until these blessings are inaugurated? It has now been 2600 and more years since the Lord gave these promises; are they ever to be fulfilled? This second message seems to be given with a view to revealing to us the fact that the Father knew the time would seem long.

The illustration is here given us of grass and flowers of the field. In the springtime they grow up and no special attention or account is taken of them. The hot spring wind* blows over them and they are withered. If the spring wind spares them, then in a few months they wither and die in the ordinary course

of nature. Such would seem to be the case with humanity. Generation after generation would rise up, wither, and die, to be replaced in turn by other generations. To the casual observer it would seem as though God paid no more attention to humanity or their eternal interests than he does to the grass and flowers of the field. But as a double reassurance of the fulfillment of the things above promised Jehovah again affixes his name, or endorses his own check—"the word of our God shall stand forever," irrespective of the obstacles, real or imagined.

CALL AND MESSAGE TO ZION

Then comes the third voice or message, addressed, apparently, to the church class during the harvest period of this Gospel age: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain". The four words in our English text, "that bringest good tidings," are all one word in Hebrew, which word means both *evangelizer* and *evangelized*. This description would fit no other class but the church, for she is evangelized by the Gospel and becomes an evangelizer or proclaimer of the Gospel to others. Three things are suggested to her: (1) "get thee up into the high mountain"; (2) "lift up thy voice"; (3) and a triple headed command, (a) "lift it up", (b) "fear not", (c) "say". Then the thing to be proclaimed is a three-word message: "*Behold your God!*"

Zion, or the church class, is first to get up into the high mountain. As mountain in one of the foregoing verses refers to dominating classes, so here the mountain, kingdom, or dominating class over mankind throughout the Millennial age will be the glorified Christ, head and body. During this harvest period those members of the church whose trial time was finished prior to 1878 got up into the mountain condition in a very real sense of that word, for they experienced the first resurrection to glory, honor, and immortality. But those this side the veil have been granted a clearer, sharper and more exalted understanding of what the kingdom class is, what the kingdom glories are, and the stipulation for membership therein, than has ever been granted the church before this time. With this vantage and with the exalted vision vouchsafed her from this high point of understanding, she has been able, under the Lord's direction, to respond to the other commands given. Just as though one, desiring to address a large concourse of people, might go part way up the slope of a hillside, so the Lord's people during the last forty or fifty years have been enabled to see human affairs with a clearness not excelled, or even approached, by the wisest of the world. This clearness has been due merely to the fact that God's due time had arrived for the further unfolding of his Word.

Very much the same picture is given us in Isaiah 52:7. There the church class is represented as being upon the mountain side and bringing good tidings, publishing peace, bringing good tidings of good things to come, and publishing salvation for the world. Never in all the history of the world has there been such a vast publishing work concerning the oncoming blessings of Messiah's kingdom as in the last fifty years.

*What is here called "the breath of the Lord" has reference to the Sirocco wind, which still arises in Asia Minor and is so hot as to destroy fresh herbage.

"BEHOLD YOUR GOD"

But these blessings are not to be enjoyed selfishly by the church; for the next clause says that she is to lift up her voice with strength—she is to proclaim the message with energy. Who can doubt that this has been done? Then the exhortation is repeated, as though something had intervened to cause Zion to fear and to be abashed at her own temerity in thus addressing the nations of the earth: "Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah [the denominations of Christendom]—Behold your God!"

This is the Lord's message to Christendom: that the Lord has come and that he is about to take unto himself his great power and reign; that the unrest and disturbance now in the earth are but preliminary to the dissolution of man's puny works, and preparatory to the establishment of the reign of righteousness, justice, love and truth. Those who share in the promulgation of this message "esteem the words of his mouth more than [their] necessary food". This message to nominal Zion by the true Zion is also mentioned in the picture given us in Isaiah 52:7: "that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

These three last words of the ninth verse, "behold your God," constitute the pivot of the whole prophecy of Isaiah. After that the character of the book is more pronouncedly Messianic; as the fulfillment of these words constitutes the pivotal point in all human experience—first the initial *parousia*, then the *apokalupsis*, or revelation, of Christ in earth's affairs.

"Behold, the Lord God will come with strength, his arm ruling for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." God has already manifested his wisdom toward mankind, though yet unappreciated by them; likewise, he has already manifested his justice, in the arrangement established with fleshly Israel; he has also shown the world his love in his kindness toward us, the church, through Christ Jesus; but thus far God has not given any special revelation of his power. This is the characteristic most easily recognized by a sin-cursed and perverted race. And in harmony with the statement of this verse our Master tells us that "they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory". (Matthew 24:30) Christ Jesus, as the arm or powerful instrumentality of Jehovah, shall rule for God and accomplish all that the Father wishes to have done as to the blessing of mankind. Our Lord's reward will be with him for all those whose trial time has gone before—for the ancient worthies, for the great company, and for the little flock. But his work, his real work, to which the gathering of the church is but a subsidiary item, is the saving of "that which was lost". The great work of the Millennial age, "the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" shall be accomplished.

SHEEP NOT OF THIS FOLD

During that time Christ Jesus shall deal with his "other sheep", which are not of this (Gospel-age-church) fold. There will be a three-fold work accomplished by Messiah in the next age: (1) "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd"; (2) "He shall gather the lambs with his arm"; (3) and "shall gently lead those that are with young". The care and solicitude manifested by the oriental shepherd is a matter well known even by people who have never visited

that part of the world. Messiah shall feed his hungry flock of the Millennial age as a shepherd feeds his flock. The shepherd does not attempt to feed the sheep forcibly; all he does is to lead the sheep to where the green pastures are. If the sheep is hungry he will avail himself of the privileges offered. If he is not hungry, he will not eat, and it would be folly to try to force him. The more we have of the Lord's spirit, the wiser will we be in these respects. We will not attempt to force divine favors upon anyone. All that we should desire to do is to call their attention to God's gracious provisions and to his goodness. If our auditors are hungry for the truth we will need to use no force or compulsion. If divine goodness and mercy are not attractive to a person, then no influence or eloquence of ours could be expected to be availing.

The Master said that the sheep of the next age would hear his voice and be blessed by him. (John 10:16) Many of those who will be brought forth from the tomb will have very weak characters. They will lack the strength and sturdiness manifested by many others, even among imperfect beings. Possibly they will have been born and have lived their previous span of life under conditions where they were pampered and which did not minister to the development of strength and fibre of character. Such weak ones shall be given every assistance necessary to enable them to obtain the blessings God designs them to have. As the shepherd sometimes carries the weak little lambs, not as a permanent arrangement but merely to enable them to keep up with a fair average of progress, so Christ will tenderly deal with all the needs of humanity, with the end in view of full development and strength on their part.

NURTURERS OF THE FLOCK

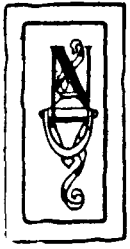
"Those that are with young" are, of course, the ewes of the flock, those directly intrusted with the imparting of elemental nourishment to the lambs. Such would seem to correspond with the position to be occupied by the ancient worthies in the Millennial kingdom. The ancient worthies will be gently led in that they will have an advantageous standing during the whole thousand years. First, they will have the advantage of a better or prior resurrection, evidently coming forth from the tomb in perfection of body. (Hebrews 11:35) Then they will have the advantage of not being directly under Jehovah's imperial law, but under the martial law of Christ, under which only that degree of obedience which can be rendered by any individual will be required. It is true that the ancient worthies will have perfect bodies, but they will be inexperienced in the handling of them. Furthermore, they will find themselves in very trying circumstances. Part of the inheritance of the perfect man is to have a perfect environment; whereas the ancient worthies will be surrounded on every hand by imperfect beings and a measurably imperfect earth. The slightest departure from the lines of perfect conduct on the part of a creature directly subject to divine law would mean his death. The ancient worthies will have all the advantages to character of sacrificial work during the thousand years of human restoration and be exposed to very little of the dangers which would surround them, were it not for the new law covenant and its Mediator. These advantages will work together in such a way as to enable the ancient worthies to impart nourishment to the undeveloped masses of mankind.

THE EMPTY TOMB; THE RISEN LORD

— — DECEMBER 21.—JOHN 20:1-10; 21:15-19. — —

THE NECESSITY FOR INDUBITABLE PROOFS OF OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION—"PUT TO DEATH IN FLESH, MADE ALIVE IN SPIRIT"—VARIOUS ACCOUNTS OF THE RESURRECTION HARMONIZED—OUR LORD'S SKILLFUL METHOD OF REPROOF OF THE APOSTLE PETER—THE PRIMARY QUALIFICATION FOR ELDERSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST THUS SET FORTH.

"He is risen, even as he said."—Matthew 28:2.



NOT only was it necessary that Christ should rise from the dead and become alive forevermore in order to accomplish the great work planned of God, foretold in the prophets, and secured by our Lord's own sacrifice, but it was necessary also that indubitable proofs of his resurrection should be given to his disciples, for themselves and for us through them. The necessity for this lay in the fact that in the divine plan this Gospel age was marked out to be a faith age, for the selection of a special little flock able, like father Abraham, to walk by faith and not by sight. But faith, in order to be faith and not mere credulity, must needs have some reasonable foundation upon which to build its superstructure; and it was to provide this foundation for faith that our Lord remained with his followers for forty days after his resurrection, before ascending to the Father. As the Evangelist declares: "He showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."—Acts 1:3.

The disciples realized that great events were transpiring, though how great and momentous was their character they but slightly comprehended. They knew that their hopes as respects an earthly kingdom, and their Master as an earthly lord, had failed. They had vague, indefinite hope that all he had said to them would in some manner have a fulfillment; but how or when or where was beyond their conception. They knew not that a change of dispensation was occurring; that the rejection of Israel after the flesh, and the calling of a new Israel after the spirit, was commenced; and that they themselves were among the first thus privileged to pass from the relationship of servants of God to that of sons.—John 1:12.

As yet they knew nothing about spiritual things, not having been begotten of the holy Spirit to sonship and to the knowledge of things to come. Jesus not yet having been glorified, their begetting of the holy Spirit was impossible until after his sacrifice for sins had been presented in the Most Holy and accepted of the Father. They knew not that the new kingdom was to be a spiritual one; and that Christ Jesus, its Head, must pass from fleshly conditions to spiritual conditions in this resurrection, even as he had foretold, saying, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God". They had much to learn; but they had a greater teacher and, as we see, his arrangements for their instruction were especially adapted to their conditions as natural men, to give them such foundation of knowledge and experience as would subsequently be helpful to them when they should be begotten of the holy Spirit at Pentecost.

A GROSS BUT COMMON ERROR

The Apostle Peter informs us that Christ was "put to death in *flesh* and quickened [made alive] in *spirit*". His words being true, those who declare that our Lord arose from the dead a fleshly being at the time of his ascension are grossly in error. Indeed, it is evident that they have misconceived the entire subject of the atonement; for if our Lord as the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom, he could not be restored to manhood in a resurrection without annulling the ransom—taking back the price he had laid down for our sins. The Scriptural thought is that as a man had sinned and had been sentenced to death, it was necessary that the Redeemer should become a man and should give his manhood as the ransom price for Adam and his race; and the Scriptural declaration is not that this ransom price was taken back, but that God raised our Lord from the dead a new creature of a new nature—not in flesh, not in human nature, but in spirit, a spirit being.—1 Peter 3:18.

The Apostle Paul agrees with Peter's testimony that Jesus was quickened in spirit, saying that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with *power*, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead". (Romans 1:4) Again, the same Apostle, describing the first resurrection, says in 1 Corinthians 15:42-45: "Thus also is the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural [ani-

mal] body, it is raised a spiritual body". Elsewhere the Apostle declares that the church's highest ambition is to be a partaker in this first resurrection, which he denominates "his resurrection", the Christ resurrection, the resurrection to spirit conditions, which came first to our Lord Jesus, and in which all of his body, his bride, are to have a share.—Philippians 3:10; Revelation 20:6.

There can be no question that in this description of the first resurrection the Apostle means us to understand his words just as they read. Whoever interpolates and adds to the Word of God, and declares that it was sown a natural (animal) body and raised a natural (animal) body, and subsequently changed to a spiritual body, wrests the Scriptures to his own injury, to the darkening of his own understanding of the divine plan. In the same connection the Apostle declares that "the body which thou sowest is not quickened", but that in the resurrection "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, to every seed his own body"—in the resurrection, not after it. (1 Corinthians 15:35-38) If the church belongs to the spiritual seed, to which is to be given the spirit body in the resurrection, then unquestionably the Lord Jesus, the Head of the church, belongs to the same spiritual seed, and accordingly God gave him a spirit body in his resurrection. Likewise, in a succeeding verse the Apostle declares that at his resurrection our Lord became the second Adam. Then, contrasting this second Adam with the first, he says: "The first man Adam was made a living soul [an animal or earthly being]; the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] spirit [being]".—1 Corinthians 15:38-45.

PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION NECESSARY

The lessons to be learned by our Lord's immediate followers would necessarily be more difficult to them than to us; for we have been begotten of the holy Spirit, and are thereby enabled to appreciate spiritual things. To meet the exigency it was necessary that our Lord, the spirit being, be present with them for forty days, invisible, as spirit beings always are invisible to men, unless through the operation of a miracle. It was necessary for the disciples to know of his resurrection in order that they should have faith in his message, and act accordingly, as he desired. Yet, had he appeared to them in the glory of his spirit being, opening their eyes to see the supernatural splendor as he showed himself in vision to John on the isle of Patmos, his face as lightning, his arms and his feet shining like molten brass in the furnace, the effect would have been to terrorize them. Their natural minds would have been unable to link such manifestations with their Lord, recently crucified. Neither would he have had opportunity under such conditions to give them instructions; for they would not have received these by reason of terror.

It was necessary, therefore, that our Lord, a spirit being, manifest himself, as in the long past he had manifested himself to Abraham and Sarah, and as angels under divine commission had done on sundry occasions—as a man. (Genesis 18:1) He must lead their minds step by step, and their thoughts link by link, from the cross and the tomb to an appreciation of his present exaltation as a spirit being, respecting which he himself explained to them, contrasting it with his previous condition. (Matthew 28:18) This leading of their minds must be such as would gradually force upon them the conviction that he was changed, that he was no longer a man, and no longer subject to human conditions, as before his death. Having this thought in mind, we shall have no difficulty whatever in seeing how our Lord inculcated these instructions during the forty days in his interviews with his followers.

THE VARIOUS ACCOUNTS HARMONIZED

To harmonize the several accounts of our Lord's resurrection we must suppose that the women charged with the work of embalming our Lord's body lived in different parts of the city, and did not all arrive at the tomb at the same hour. Mary Magdalene arrived first; and finding the tomb empty, she hastened and first found Peter and afterward John, both of whom at once ran to the sepulcher. Mary herself probably returned more slowly to the same place, arriving there after they and the other women had gone. She had been weeping. Then she stooped down in order to look through the low door-

way, as though to reassure herself that the tomb was empty. There she saw for the first time two angels in white, who inquired respecting her sorrow. The angels had doubtless been there when she was there before; but she had not seen them, because of their choosing not to "appear". Indeed, the Scriptures assure us, saying, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?" Again, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Hebrews 1:14; Psalm 34:7.

Doubtless holy angels had in charge not only our Lord's body, but also the interests of his bereaved followers; and now, and on other occasions, some of these *appeared*. They appeared because they could not be seen without appearing except by a miracle. They appeared as young men, although they were not men but angels; not flesh, but spirit beings, assuming fleshly bodies for a time, in order that they might render the service necessary. In Luke 24:4 these same angels appearing as men are said to have been clothed in shining garments, so that they might not be understood to be men, but might at once be recognized as heavenly messengers. On the contrary, when our risen Lord as a quickening spirit similarly "appeared" in the flesh, he did not appear in shining garments, but in ordinary apparel, assumed for the purpose, and in order that he might have the better opportunity for giving the instructions which his followers needed.

OUR LORD'S APPEARANCE AS A GARDENER

The words of the angels to Mary would be calculated to assuage her grief; for they manifested no grief, and by their question implied that she had no ground for it. At this juncture something attracted Mary's attention; and on turning around she discovered another person near her, evidently in ordinary garments, whom she presumed to be a servant of Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the garden—his gardener. She considered herself a trespasser to some extent; and assuming that our Lord's body was no longer wanted in the rich man's tomb, she inquired where he had been taken, that she might take the proper steps to care for his reinterment.

Then Jesus (for it was he who had "appeared" in the form of a gardener) spoke her name. At once she recognized the voice; and crying, "Master, Teacher!" she fell at his feet, grasping them as though fearful that somehow, if she let go, she might never again get the opportunity of touching his blessed person. Our Lord's words, "Touch me not," would more properly be translated, "Cling not to me; for I have not yet ascended to my Father. I will be here a while yet, before I ascend. But your great opportunity for clinging to me and trusting in me will be after I have presented to the Father, and he has accepted, the great atonement for sins which I have just accomplished at Calvary." Mary's touch could do our Lord no harm; for others touched him subsequently, as the record shows. But our Lord would lead Mary's mind away from a mere clinging in the flesh to the higher relationship and intimacy of heart and of spirit which now would be possible, not only for her, but for all his followers, not only then but ever since.

Our Lord gave Mary a message, a service to perform; and so it is with all who love the Lord and seek him. They are not merely to enjoy him selfishly, but are given a commission in his service for the brethren. This seems as true today as ever. And by the way, this is the second instance in which our Lord ever addressed his disciples as brethren, with all that the word implies of fellowship and of all being the children of one Father. (Matthew 12:48) Now he emphasized this relationship by referring to the Father as his Father and their Father, his God and their God. How close this brings our Lord to us in fellowship and relationship, not by pulling him down, but by realizing him as highly exalted, far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named! It lifts us up; and by faith it enables us to consider ourselves, as the Lord considers us, "brethren," prospective joint-heirs with him, who shall by and by be like him, our Elder Brother, sharing through his grace and assistance in his resurrection, and participating as joint-heirs in his kingdom—"if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together".—Romans 8:17.

OUR LORD'S FIFTH MANIFESTATION

We now come to our Lord's fifth manifestation of himself after his resurrection. Some would say the seventh, not counting, as we do, that our Lord's manifestation to Mary was the same referred to in Matthew as his appearance to

"the women", and that his showing himself to Peter was in the walk to Emmaus. All of these manifestations, whether we count them four or six, occurred within the first eight days after our Lord's resurrection—on the two first days—and were in or near Jerusalem. What we designate the fifth appearance was in another part of the country altogether, in Galilee, and was probably at least two weeks later. No account is given of the doings of the apostles in the interim; but we can surmise that they probably waited in Jerusalem over the third and possibly over the fourth Sunday after the resurrection, and were disappointed that our Lord made no further manifestation. They then remembered, perhaps, the message which Jesus sent them by Mary, that he would meet them in Galilee.

Having no further business in Jerusalem, and their Master having thus disappeared, "changed," so that although they believed him to be no longer dead, he was invisible to them except as he would appear for a few moments and talk to them and then disappear indefinitely, they were at a loss what to do, and decided to return to their home country on the Sea of Galilee. More than this, as active men in the prime of life they must be doing. Several of them had been fishermen. Jesus had called them from their nets to be "fishers of men"; and they had left all to follow him. But now they could no longer follow. Everything was changed when he was changed, as far as they could perceive. They could no longer carry on the work; for what could they preach? How could they tell others of their hopes in a king who had been crucified, and whom, although he was risen, they could no longer see or point out to others? They had not yet received their new commission, nor were they quite ready for it.

It is interesting for us to note that while our Lord was invisible to the disciples they were visible to him; that all of their plans, arrangements and doings were fully known to him; and that he was ready to take advantage of every circumstance and to make all things work together for their good. Thus by miraculous power exercised in some manner unknown to us, he hindered fish from going into their nets that night. Not knowing the true situation, they were no doubt greatly disappointed, grieved, vexed, at their poor success, and perhaps classed it as a part of the failure and tribulation which had in some respects followed them ever since they had espoused the cause of Jesus. And there is a lesson here for each and all of our Lord's people today. We do not know what is for our highest welfare. Sometimes those things which we crave and desire to grasp, considering them to be good, might really be to our disadvantage. Blessed are they who by faith are able to pierce the gloom of every trial and difficulty and perplexity, and to realize that "the Lord knoweth them that are his", and that he is causing all things to work together for their highest good. So it was with the apostles. Their disappointment became a channel of blessed instruction.

In the dawn of the morning Jesus appeared to them as a man, standing on the seashore. He called out to them to inquire whether they had any fish, as though he would purchase. They replied that they had toiled all night, but had caught nothing. The stranger then suggested that they cast the net on the other side of the ship. So humbled were they by their disappointment that they did not stop to argue the question and to declare that they were experienced fishermen and knew their business. They merely concluded that as they had been lifting and casting the net all night they might just as well do it again, and thus demonstrate to the stranger that there were no fish in that vicinity. But, behold! immediately the net filled with great fish, so that these seven strong men were unable to draw it, and were obliged to drag it to the shore.

BREAKFASTING WITH THE RISEN LORD

Immediately the disciples grasped the thought that the stranger was Jesus, and none of them more quickly than the loving John. Devoted, impulsive Peter, whose heart still burned as he remembered our Lord's words, and perhaps as he recalled his own weaknesses in connection with our Lord's last night of earth-life, could not wait for the boat to take him ashore, but swam, apparently fearing lest the Master should disappear again before he would have another opportunity to converse with him. When the disciples reached the shore, they found, not only Jesus, but a fire and fish thereon already cooked. Here they had the lesson that under our Lord's care and supervision they could be either successful or unsuccessful in the fishing business; and that he had the

power, not only to give them fish in the ordinary way, but to provide cooked fish miraculously if it better served his purpose so to do.

They breakfasted with Jesus; for they knew him, not by any marks of nails, but by the miracle which he had performed. We read rather peculiarly: "None of them durst ask him, knowing it was the Lord". The conversation while they breakfasted is not recorded, the Evangelist coming directly to the important words which our Lord addressed to Peter, the senior and leader of this new fish-business partnership. Our Lord addressed Peter, not as he had been accustomed to do, but by his old name, "Simon, son of Jona," possibly as an intimation to Peter that during the last few days he had not manifested the rocklike qualities implied in his surname, and was now inclined to leave the work for the church and engage in secular business.

The inquiry was most pointed, "Lovest thou me more than these?"—boats, nets, fishing tackle, etc. 'You started out to be my disciple; and now I ask you the question, In which place is your heart—with me in the service of the kingdom, or in the fish business?' Peter's answer was prompt: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus then responded: "Feed my lambs," 'my little ones, instead of longer following the fish business'. Then Jesus said the same thing the second time; and Peter made the same reply. Our Lord then answered: "Take care of my sheep"—'give your attention, care, thought, to them rather than to these fishing implements, boats, etc.' The third time Jesus asked Peter almost the same question, though using a different verb. Peter was grieved with this. It seemed to imply doubt on our Lord's part; and perhaps it reminded him the third time that he had denied his Lord three times, and that now the Master was

requiring him three times to confess his love. It touched a very tender spot in Peter's heart and experiences; and we may be sure that it was not done by our Lord, even in this delicate manner, with a view merely to pain Peter, but with a view to his blessing, his profit. Peter's confession this time was still stronger: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee" Jesus said to him: "Feed my sheep". With this third confession our Lord restored him fully as a bishop or shepherd.

HOW LOVE FOR THE LORD IS MANIFESTED

It is worthy of notice that our Lord's words on these three occasions were not exactly the same, although the Common Version so represents them. In the New Testament Greek two words are translated love, *agapao* and *phileo*. When our Lord said "lovest" in the first two inquiries, he used the former word, which signifies love in its strongest, purest and most disinterested form; but in his third inquiry he used the other form, which signifies attachment, duty-love, the obligatory love such as relatives bear toward each other even when the other, deeper love is lacking. Peter in all of his answers uses the latter form of the word, thus asseverating his personal attachment and devotion to our Lord; but in view of recent experiences he refrained from claiming the highest love, for which our Lord inquired. This humility was an excellent sign, showing that Peter had learned a needed lesson and had ceased to boast, but rather feared his own weakness. Our Lord's use the third time of the word indicating duty-love grieved Peter especially because by changing the word the Master implied, 'Are you sure that you have even the duty-love, Peter?' This discrimination between these two words is borne out by other uses of them in the New Testament.

THE TRAINING OF PETER AND JOHN

— DECEMBER 28.—I JOHN 1:1-9. —

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS—NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE, OF FAITH IN THE ATONEMENT AND OF INDIVIDUAL ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST AS OUR PERSONAL SAVIOR—MISTAKEN VIEWS OF SO-CALLED PERFECTIONISTS—HOW WE MAY KNOW WHETHER WE ARE WALKING IN THE LIGHT—WHY IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO AVOID SHORT-COMINGS AND FAULTS—CLEANSED BY THE BLOOD.

"Ye shall be my witnesses."—Acts 1:8.



THE Apostle John's epistle is not addressed to unbelievers, unjustified persons, sinners in the ordinary sense of the word. On the contrary he is addressing the justified and sanctified in Christ Jesus; and he classes himself with these, using the plural pronoun "we". The frequent mistake of applying this and similar passages to sinners in general has been injurious in two particulars:

(1) It has been injurious to the unregenerate in that it has given some the impression that there is no difference between the church and the world; and that all alike have access to God in prayer and for the forgiveness of daily trespasses. It has thus hindered some from realizing the necessity of faith in the atonement, and from definitely entering into covenant relationship with the Lord under the terms of the Grace Covenant. (Psalm 50:5) On the contrary all should be clearly informed of the fact that repentance and a particular, positive acceptance of Christ as their personal Savior are absolutely necessary before they can be "accepted in the Beloved", and treated as "sons of God" and enjoy the privileges of this relationship—prayer, fellowship with God, divine care or providential oversight of their affairs and interests, and the favor of forgiveness of daily trespasses through the merit of the great High Priest.

(2) This oversight has had an injurious effect upon some Christians, who have gone to the extreme of claiming that they can never commit sin after their past sins have been graciously forgiven by the Lord and after they have entered into covenant relationship with him. Hence we have the very wrong views and teachings of so-called "perfectionists" who claim, not merely that they are *reckoned* perfect now, but that they are *actually* perfect in all their thoughts, words and deeds, deceiving themselves and laying themselves liable to many grievous errors, as the Apostle declares in this connection.—Verses 8, 10.

The Apostle's object in writing this epistle he clearly states, saying, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full". It is a noteworthy fact that the vast majority of Christians never experience the fullness of joy, peace and

blessing that they might possess. Too many are content with simply diluted first principles of the doctrine of Christ; and, as the Apostle Paul declares, such are merely "babes" in Christ. (Hebrews 5:12-6:3) Of course they have a blessing in any relationship to the Lord, but they have not the fullness of joy which would be theirs if they progressed in grace and in knowledge "to the full stature of a man in Christ". The object of the Apostle's writing them was to stir up the pure minds of believers to an appreciation and enjoyment of their privileges, that thereby they might grow and develop.

GROWTH OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

The Apostle John follows the example of our Lord Jesus in symbolizing truth and righteousness as Light, and sin and every evil way as so much of opposing Darkness. God himself thus considered would be the very perfection of light. "In him is no darkness," no sin, no imperfection. With this thought before the mind the Apostle points out that any growth of fellowship with God to which we may aspire must be along the lines of truth, goodness, purity; and that it would be sin for us to say to others or to imagine in our own hearts that we are walking with God and having fellowship with him, if our course in life is a dark, a sinful one. Such are merely deceiving themselves and others. They are not deceiving God; and they are not getting the blessings of those who do "walk in the light".

Moreover, to the extent that we walk in the light and in harmony and fellowship with God, we shall find ourselves in fellowship with all others who are likeminded. So then, if we do not "love the brethren, whom we have seen," so as to be able to have fellowship and spiritual pleasure with them, it would be an indication that we are not wholly in harmony and fellowship with God. But who are the "brethren"? Our Lord tells us that not all who profess his name are true or full brethren. He says: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven [be recognized as his brethren and joint-heirs]; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven". We thus see that it is by our deeds and not merely by our professions that we

are accepted of our Lord, who again says: "Who are my brethren?... Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother."—Matthew 7:21; 12:50.

So then we are not to anticipate "fellowship" with all who merely name the name of Christ as a proof of their fellowship with the Father. We are to anticipate this *true* fellowship with those who are earnestly seeking to do the Father's will, to serve his cause, and to exemplify the instructions of his Word in their deeds as well as in their professions. Between all such there must be, whether hidden or open, a bond of fellowship and union. That bond is the one faith and the one baptism into the one Lord.

CLEANSED BY THE BLOOD

But while this fellowship between us and our Lord and all who have his spirit is based upon our walking in the light, our following in his footsteps to the extent of our ability, nevertheless it does not imply absolute freedom from the imperfection of sin, although under the Gospel age arrangement nothing is charged up to us as sin except in proportion as it has been wilfully done. Nevertheless, because of the manifold temptations and the weaknesses of our flesh, the result of inherited predisposition toward sin, it is impossible for us to avoid shortcomings and faults. These may be properly termed sins, as in this lesson; for "sin is a transgression of the law", however unintentional. But during this Gospel age the divine arrangement on behalf of the Lord's people is that these *unintentional* faults and short-comings need not be charged up against us as sins, but instead may be cleansed away upon our application to the great High Priest, through the merit of the precious blood. Thus it is that the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin, keeps us clean from sin, if realizing our imperfections we continually make application for forgiveness.—Romans 7:17-20.

Further on in this epistle the Apostle uses the word "sin" in a different sense from the above, saying (3:6-9), "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him nor [even] known him.... He that committeth sin is of the devil.... Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God." Again he says (5:18): "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not".

In these passages the Apostle uses the word "sin" in its full or absolute sense, meaning wilful sin, deliberate sin, intentional sin, sins that are not merely shortcomings and faults, due largely or wholly to the imperfections of the flesh, inherited from our ancestors. No one, the Apostle assures us, who has been begotten of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness and truth, could have any sympathy with sin so as to engage therein wilfully, knowingly and intentionally. All who so love sin and wilfully do it, and approve of it after

they have a knowledge of the truth, are children of darkness who love darkness and who thus show that they have the spirit or disposition of Satan.—Romans 6:12-16.

THE PROPER COURSE OF FAITH AND CONDUCT

Let us return to the consideration of the other use of the word "sin" as found in today's lesson, applying the term to the faults and imperfections against which God's people are zealously striving, which they are seeking to stamp out of their mortal bodies, and against which they are continually fighting a good fight and coming off conquerors and more than conquerors, through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. The Apostle intimates that there is danger that some will go to the extreme of denying that they have any faults, and thus deceive themselves and get into a snare of the adversary.

It may be asked, 'What difference can it make, if they are seeking to live godly, whether they claim to live perfectly or admit that they are imperfect and apply continually for cleansing through the precious blood?' We reply that it makes a great difference. Only as we confess our sins can they be forgiven. Consequently those who deny that they have any imperfections, faults, sins, have a great load of these uncanceled, unforgiven, charged up against them; and because of this they would be accounted unworthy to be taken further along in the path of light, under the lead of the holy Spirit, into the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love and the wisdom of God, revealed in his Word as meat in due season for the household of faith. Thus we see that there is but one proper course of faith and conduct in which we may have a complete fellowship with the Lord. Those who take any other course are making God a liar; and he will not fellowship with them, but will leave them to the darkness of their own way. Can we wonder then that so many are in darkness and lack evidences of fellowship with God, when we see how few confess their faults and seek to overcome them and to be cleansed in the only way of divine appointment?

These things are not written to cultivate in us the thought that we may sin with impunity, and be overtaken with faults through carelessness and inattention to the divine Word, and then go to the Lord for forgiveness. Quite to the contrary, these assurances of divine favor and willingness to forgive are designed to have upon our hearts a mellowing influence which will make us all the more careful to avoid sin and to maintain fellowship with him who is the perfection of light and holiness. "These things are written that we sin not", that we become not boastful of self, self-righteous, self-justified, and thus abominable in the Lord's sight; but that, fleeing from our weaknesses and imperfections, we may lay hold upon the grace of God in Christ for their forgiveness and for grace and strength increasingly to fight a good fight against sin.

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