

divine power and made their message the more impressive.

The essence of the preaching was that Jesus who had been crucified, had risen from the dead and had now shed forth this miraculous power upon his followers. This led to the mention of the prophecy of David which foretold the resurrection of Messiah, saying, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol"—Hades. (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27) The apostles pointed out that this was fulfilled in Jesus, in that God raised him from the dead; but that it was never fulfilled in the Prophet David, who on the contrary was still dead in his sepulchre, awaiting resurrection. David, as a prophet, had merely foretold the resurrection of Jesus.

With the various details the preaching went on, explaining the righteousness of Jesus, the beauties of his teaching, the wickedness of those who had crucified him without a cause, and showing how the entire Jewish nation was guilty before God, because as a people they were bound by their Law Covenant and the action of their officials had brought condemnation and guilt upon the whole people. Three thousand believed. The case was so plain that they were pricked to the heart—they realized that Jesus was the Son of God, and that a great crime had been committed in crucifying him. With fear and sorrow they cried out, "What shall we do?" The answer was, "Repent"—God is gracious; He will forgive you. In further explanation, they were told that they and their rulers had done this wicked deed in ignorance, and that God would very graciously forgive those who would acknowledge their sin and call upon him for forgiveness. They did so; they made a consecration of their lives to God, and became followers of Jesus.

DIVINE FAVOR ABOUT TO RETURN TO ISRAEL

The Bible declares that the Jewish people, because of their rejection of Messiah, were cut off from God's favor. Nevertheless the time is at hand when they shall be brought back again to the favor of God. Their eyes have been holden for more than eighteen centuries now, as are the eyes of the world in general. Only the few have the eyes of their understanding open to see the truth respecting these matters. St. Paul avers this, saying, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not."—2 Corinthians 4:4.

But through the Prophet, God has assured us that in due time all the blind eyes will be opened and all the deaf ears will be unstopped. (Isaiah 35:5) To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, will eventually come a full knowledge of the grace of God through Christ. It will then be for them to accept or reject intelligently. The rejectors will be wicked in a sense that none of the world are wicked now, because their wrong-doings are largely based upon ignorance and superstition. When brought to the full light, their crisis, or judgment, will be to everlasting life if they accept and obey the Lord, or to everlasting death if they sin against and wilfully reject the light and opportunities of that blessed Millennial day.

Respecting the Jews in that coming time, it is written that they shall look upon him whom they pierced, and mourn because of him; and that the Lord at that time will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and of supplication. (Zechariah 12:8-10) But that return of God's favor to natural Israel

will not come until spiritual Israel shall first have been completed. Bible students believe that we are now at the dawning of the new dispensation, that the church class will soon be completed and glorified with the Savior in his kingdom, and that then, forthwith, God's mercy will begin to operate toward the Jews again. This seems to be the clear teaching of St. Paul in Romans 11:25-32.

THE CURSE TO BE ROLLED AWAY

Another item of special importance in the lesson is that the Hell to which Jesus went was not hell-fire, but the grave, the state of death. God did not raise him up from the fire, but raised him from the dead. We are to remember that the same word—hell, sheol, hades—is used in the Bible respecting all mankind. All the good and the bad—old and young, male and female, of every nation—go down to the Bible hell; and according to the Bible they sleep there, awaiting the resurrection morning and the awakening of all the dead—"every man in his own order"—not all at once.—1 Corinthians 15:23.

The Bible represents that we are now in a night time, in which Satan is "the prince of this world," and sin and death reign. But it pictures the new dispensation of Messiah's kingdom as the glorious dawning of the new day of blessing for mankind, in which the curse of sin and death will be rolled away and the blessing of the Lord through Messiah's Kingdom will extend to every member of the race, giving all an opportunity for eternal life. This will not be the same opportunity that is granted to the church at the present time—not an opportunity for glory, honor and immortality on the spirit plane, as the church have—but an opportunity of returning to human perfection, to all that was lost in Eden and redeemed at Calvary.

Here we note the beauty of the 21st verse—our Golden Text. The death of Jesus guarantees that all who will call upon the Lord in sincerity of heart will be saved from sin and death. It guarantees that all shall be brought to the condition where they will understand sufficiently to desire to call for this blessing. The heathen, the majority of people of civilized lands, and the Jews, have no such hearing ears now. Only the few out of every nation have yet received this great blessing. Only these, brought back into relationship with God, have yet been rescued from their alienated condition; and they are to be ultimately saved in the first resurrection, to glory, honor, immortality and a share in the kingdom of Messiah. Through these, ultimately the blessing of light and knowledge and uplifting influences will reach every member of the race, to afford all an opportunity for life everlasting in a world-wide Eden.

CASTLES

Let them that would build castles in the air,
Vault thither, without step or stair;
Instead of feet to climb, take wings to fly,
And think their turrets top the sky.
But let me lay all my foundations deep,
And learn, before I run, to creep.
Who digs through rocks to lay his ground-works low,
May in good time build high and sure, though slow.

CHRISTOPHER HARVEY.

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY"

"Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks."—1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18.

In the beginning, when Adam was in harmony with God, he was in the condition represented in the Scriptures as covenant relationship with God. The Word declares that Adam broke this holy covenant. (Hosea 6:7, margin) He became a sinner; and his children, born later, were sinners with him, through heredity. Instead of being born in covenant relationship with God, the children of Adam were born aliens. But God has had dealings with a few who exercised special faith and a desire to come into harmony with him. Abel, the second son of Adam, was one of these. He approached God with an animal sacrifice and was accepted. Enoch and Noah also came into a condition of fellowship with the Lord by faith, even though they were still legally under the condemnation passed upon Adam, the ransom-price not yet having been given.

Later on, God entered into covenant relationship with Abraham, because of his great faith and obedience; and afterwards with his son Isaac; then with his grandson Jacob. Still later, God entered into relationship with the seed of Jacob, under the Law Covenant at Sinai. The Lord had changed the name of Jacob to Israel—"a prince with God"

(Genesis 32:24-30); and the whole nation of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, were received as God's people, and were treated as if without sin. They had the privilege of going to him in prayer. But the sins of the Jewish nation were only typically blotted out from year to year. The blood of bulls and goats could never really take away sin, and the Jews held only the relationship of servants to God.

The Gentiles were altogether without God. They had no privilege of prayer. We come down to the beginning of the Gospel age and to the case of Cornelius. We read that he was a just man, who gave much alms to the people and prayed always. But his prayers could not be accepted, even after Jesus died. The death of Jesus did not bring Cornelius into covenant relationship with God. But when the seventy symbolic weeks of Jewish favor had been fulfilled, the due time had come for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles. God was then ready to receive him, and he sent an angel to him, who gave him this message from the Lord: "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God." The prayers and the alms of Cornelius had risen up as an incense before the Lord.

Had God not accepted these offerings before? No. They had been noted of God, but had not been received. God's way of receiving—except in a limited or typical way previous to the Gospel age—is by certain definite means which he has appointed—through an Advocate in this age, and through a Mediator in the next. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," says Jesus. Even when the due time had arrived, Cornelius could not come until God sent him word how to proceed.

KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH NECESSARY

The angel of the Lord said to Cornelius: "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11:13, 14) Those words were necessary to his saving—to the bringing of him into covenant relationship with God. Cornelius, being obedient, sent for Simon Peter, who gave him the necessary instruction for drawing nigh unto God through Jesus. And unless we come to the Father through Christ, our prayers would not be received any more than those of Cornelius had been.

What St. Peter told Cornelius was to the effect that God had provided a great Sin-Offering; that Jesus had tasted death for every man; that now, in advance of dealing with the world, God is taking out a little flock, to be joined with Christ in the blessing of the world. When Cornelius heard the good message, he believed with all his heart; and likewise those who were with him. Doubtless he had heard of Jesus before, but now he understood the matter. He had been in the right condition of heart all along. He had been praying and fasting. But even so he could not be accepted of God except through Jesus. He must have Christ as his Advocate.

HOW JESUS BECOMES OUR ADVOCATE

But what does it mean to have Jesus as our Advocate? It means that first, we must accept him as our ransom from sin and death. Next, he tells us, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." By merely believing that Jesus died, and that he was holy, etc., no one can become his disciple. "The devils also believe, and tremble." But justification to life comes when we receive the Lord on his terms. Then he becomes our Advocate.

No one has a right to expect an answer to prayer except one who has become a disciple of Christ through full consecration. And whosoever cometh to the Father by him shall in no wise be cast out. (John 6:37) There is but one exception to this rule, and this is a class of minors, children lacking the full age of responsibility and of comprehension of these matters, one or both of whose parents are disciples of Christ. That age of responsibility would vary—in some it might be from twelve to fifteen years of age, and in some even later. But whoever reaches the point of full comprehension and responsibility, and does not consecrate himself to the Lord, would lose the privilege of prayer. In the case, then, of a minor child, either of whose parents is consecrated, he would have a right to look for answers to his prayers to God.

The Lord does not hinder any one from bowing the knee. Savages do so right along, but their prayers do not ascend up to God. The Jews were at one time an exception as regards prayer, but they were a typical people. That arrangement, however, was temporary, and has passed away. But soon they will again have the privilege of prayer, through the great Mediator; and all the world may join them in this privilege. Jesus will not be the Advocate for the world. This arrangement is only for the church of the present age.

OUR LIVES TO BE A PRAYER

Prayer seems to be the natural attitude of the human mind toward the Almighty. Even the heathens have a disposition to pray. Their fears, their hopes, all lead them to appeal to some great power beyond themselves. But the people of God, who know of his wisdom, power and love, and who have met the conditions of acceptable prayer, are alone authorized to come to the throne of grace. We realize what a blessing it is to have access to God, access to his presence—to have the ear of the Almighty Ruler of the universe. We know that with the emperors and kings of earth it is very difficult to gain a hearing; and that with people of great prominence it is not easy to secure an audience. Yet the great God has made provision that his people may come to him and make their petitions known.

The unrepentant sinner cannot come to God. But divine wisdom has made arrangement by which the sinner can get rid of his sin, and can then come to him in prayer and communion. The Jews had typical sacrifices, a typical Atonement Day, and a typical forgiveness of sins. But the forgiveness of our sins, through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, is actual,

and brings us to the place of acceptableness with the Father. He is pleased to have his children come to him in prayer. And it is our glad privilege to offer him worship and praise—the homage of our hearts.

We would make a distinction between worship and prayer. Worship is a bowing down, an acknowledgment of the majesty of God, an act of reverence, of adoration. But prayer is the offering of a petition. So when the Lord's people are encouraged in his Word to come to him in prayer, it is with the understanding that they are informed before they come as to what is pleasing to God for them to request. We have an example given of what a proper prayer would be in the one which our Lord taught his disciples.

The holy Spirit is the blessing most to be sought. This Spirit of God may be possessed in a greater or a lesser measure. We are given a measure of the Spirit when we are accepted as the disciples of Christ; and that flame of love there started is to become a consuming power in our lives. It is to burn out everything contrary to God, that our life may be a burning and shining light. In proportion as we recognize that we are deficient in the Spirit of righteousness, the Spirit of Truth, in that same proportion we should be importunate in prayer. Whoever realizes his need, and knows the source from which he can obtain the needed supply, will come to the throne of heavenly favor. We are not to neglect the duties and responsibilities of life in order to spend much time each day upon our knees, but our entire life is to be a ceaseless prayer.

From the time we become the Lord's children, we should strive more and more to attain the character-likeness to Christ, and we should continue in prayer and not faint. We should seek for more and more of the Spirit of the Lord, and should see that we fulfil the conditions by which we may obtain the filling of the Spirit. In this sense of the word, we should pray without ceasing, continuing to present the petition until we receive what we desire. But we shall not obtain the fulness of our desire until we are changed into the higher life, into the perfection of the new nature, in the resurrection. Then we shall pray no more. Then we shall be fully satisfied. Prayer will be swallowed up of praise.

OUR LORD'S SAMPLE PRAYER

In the prayer taught us by our Lord, we first give honor to God, recognizing him as our Father, acknowledging his greatness, and expressing the desire that his name be hal- lowed. We remember the kingdom that is promised; and we tell him of our desire of heart for that kingdom to come. We pray that his will may be fully done on earth. This implies that we have given up our own will, that we wish to have God's will wholly done in our mortal bodies.

In this prayer there is a brief mention of our daily temporal needs: "Give us this day our daily bread"—no stipulation of fruits and vegetables, of delicacies, etc.—but simply our necessities for the day. We ask no more—we wish no more. Then we pray that our trespasses may be forgiven, **EVEN AS WE FORGIVE.** Finally comes the petition for our protection from evil influences. This expresses the appreciation of the fact that there are temptations from those with whom we have contact, and from the powers of evil—the powers of the air—and from our own flesh; and that we need divine aid. The petitions of this prayer, however, are very brief.

BECOMING MODESTY IN PRAYER

It would seem as though many have a wrong conception of prayer. We hear some people trying to tell the Lord things that he knows better than they. It is always improper, even in our intercourse with men, to tell a person better educated than ourselves anything about that which he knows far better than we. Jesus and the apostles never undertook to give any instructions to the Father regarding his plan, so far as we know. And when any one attempts to give the Lord instructions, he deceives neither the Lord nor others who hear; for he knows and they know that such a one is not addressing God, but the people. We have before mentioned an announcement in a Boston paper that on a certain occasion "Rev. So-and-so delivered the most beautiful prayer ever offered to a Boston audience."

Undoubtedly if we had the right conception of prayer—the Bible conception—our prayers in public would be very brief. The Scriptures are the only criterion, the only guide. They give us no account of any instance where the Lord's saints offered lengthy prayers in public. Praying in an unknown tongue would also be valueless, the Apostle Paul tells us, unless some one present interpret the same; and if one prays in an incoherent manner, so that he cannot be understood by those who hear, prayer might as well be offered in an unknown tongue. "How shall any say, Amen, at the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?"

While this shows that the Lord wishes us to take into consideration the hearers, we are not to pray to them, but are to turn the thoughts of all toward God, to an appreciation of his goodness, of his wisdom, love and mercy.

Leaving out all thought of teaching the people at that time, we should seek to direct all in a reverent manner to the throne of heavenly grace, in thought, that they may humble themselves before God. That which Christian people sometimes attempt to do in prayer should be done in preaching. According to the declaration of the Word, it has not pleased God to save by prayer those who believe, but by preaching. (Romans 10:14; 1 Corinthians 1:21) This does not mean necessarily public speaking, but includes also more private proclamation of the truth and also preaching by the printed page. We are to follow the direction of the Word in all ways.

While we thus speak of public prayer, and in respect to the propriety of brevity, and of the examples of Scripture concerning this, we would not give the thought that one should be limited in his private devotions. He who was perfect set us an example of private prayer. Our Lord sometimes prayed all night. But we presume that with the most of us it would be better not to do this; for we would be weaker for service the next day. In our weakness and imperfection we are probably not able to appreciate the peculiar position of our Lord. We would have nothing that we could say to the Lord which would keep us all night in prayer, except that which would be repetition. And our Master said: "Use not vain repetition"—"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." We are to ask rather for the condition of heart whereby we may be able to receive whatever he shall see fit to send, that we may get a blessing out of each of the Lord's providences.

So, then, summing up the matter, our petitions in public should be modeled considerably after the sample our Lord gave his disciples—a brief expression of earnest desire for the coming of God's Kingdom, an acknowledgment of sin, a request for divine forgiveness and help and supply of our needs, and a rendering of worship and praise. We think this should be about the range of our private devotions also, as a rule, respecting ourselves. It is eminently appropriate, however, that we remember one another at the throne of grace in private, and in a general way in public. But evidently the instruction of Scripture is that we should not seek to use prayer as a means to gain earthly favors, or tell the Lord what we wish done, or to be heard of men, but that we are to put first the spiritual things, the things for which we have been instructed to pray.

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTABLE, EFFECTIVE PRAYER

When Jesus said to his disciples, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him," he was setting before them a glorious standard in respect to the heavenly Father. But later on, this standard was very largely lost. During the dark ages the God of love was made to appear anything but loving and kind, and as having no real interest in the majority of his creatures. It was made to appear that the few in whom he had an interest were those who were relentless, cruel and vicious toward all outside their pale.

How terribly our God has been maligned by those who have claimed to be his special representatives! How differently was he depicted by the Son who knew him so well! Hear him: "Be ye like unto your Father which is in Heaven; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." When the apostles asked Jesus whether they should call fire to come down from Heaven upon the Samaritans who refused to sell them bread, what was the Master's reply? "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of! The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And he was the image of the Father, and came to do not his own will.

Man is in a sadly fallen condition and needs to be restored to the image of God, to the likeness of God, to the condition of love, mercy and sympathy of which God is the embodiment. Yet, notwithstanding our fallen condition, parents love to give good gifts to their children. What parent, if his child should ask for a fish, would give him a serpent? Or if he should ask for bread, would give him a stone? And as we have received these traits from the Lord, and still have them to a considerable extent even in our blemished condition, we may form some idea of how he who is the Perfect One, the Infinite One, would delight to give good gifts to his children—"How much more shall your Father in Heaven give good things to them that ask him?" And his very best things are the spiritual things.

PROSPECTIVE SONS BEFORE PENTECOST

We are to remember that our Lord when on earth was in the fullest sense the Representative of the Father in the flesh. He was indeed "God manifest in the flesh." And those who were of the right attitude of heart were able to see the character of the Father in the Son. Those who believed on Jesus were accepted and treated in many respects as though they had been already fully received of the Father. The Scriptures, however, declare that the holy Spirit had not yet come. We see that the Spirit could not be given in begetting power until Jesus had died, and had entered into the presence of God to make reconciliation for the sins of the church. Forty days after the resurrection of Christ, he ascended to Heaven to present his merit, imputing it on behalf of all who would become his disciples during the Gospel age, the period of the high calling.

Even though the holy Spirit had not yet been bestowed, Jesus told his disciples that they might pray, "Our Father." This was in view of the condition of sonship into which they were so soon to be ushered. God is not the Father of any others than those who come to him in his appointed way—through his Son as the ransom-price, having made a full surrender of themselves, and their all to God. While our Lord was still in the flesh, his true followers were sons in a prospective sense. And yet, after the Master's death and resurrection, he told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. The Father would defer the answer to some of their prayers. He would not give them the blessing just at the time it was asked. There might be some good reason for withholding it until some future time—as in the granting of the holy Spirit in begetting. Yet they were to hold themselves in the proper attitude of faith, that they might be ready for the blessing when it should come from on high.

Their prayer might properly have been: "Heavenly Father, we have learned that at the proper time thou wilt give us the holy Spirit. We perceive that thou hast already given thy Spirit to Jesus our Master; that at the time of his baptism he received an unction from on high. And so we wait for the holy Spirit—we wait to receive this unction, this blessing from thee." And those who tarried in the upper room after the ascension of the Lord, received at Pentecost this very blessing, the holy Spirit—in its due time.

JESUS THE ONLY WAY

If we come down to the present, and inquire what we may pray for, the Lord answers through his Word that we may not pray except upon these same terms; namely, faith in his Son as our Redeemer, and a full dedication, devotion, of ourselves to walk in the footsteps of the Master—our blessed Exemplar. No man can come to the Father but by him. All such will be accepted, up to the required number of the elect. It would, therefore, not be right to encourage any to come to the Father in prayer until they become members of his family by a full consecration.

In the case of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, which we have cited in this article, we have seen that he was a just man, a good man. But he did not belong to the Jewish nation, to whom God had given his law. The only way in which Cornelius could have come into God's favor prior to his appointed time—three and a half years after the cross—was to have become a Jewish proselyte. But when it became chronologically due time for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles, this good man was notified, and gladly accepted the conditions and became a son of God, through faith in Christ. He received the begetting and anointing of the holy Spirit, just as the Jews had previously received them. All this shows us that God has a particular course marked out by which any may become his children. Unless they come in the appropriate way and in the appropriate time, none will be accepted as sons of the Highest.

PRAYERS THAT COME UP AS A MEMORIAL

God's dealing with Cornelius would indicate that in the case of any who now come to God, and pray to him, not knowing the appointed way, their prayers would, like those of Cornelius, come up as a memorial before God. As the Lord took notice of the prayers of Cornelius and the desires of his heart to worship and serve God, so we may suppose that he would take notice now of prayers and desires to come close to him. He might not send some one like Peter to give them instruction at this time. That would depend upon his decision as to whether this would be the course of wisdom, as to whether such a one was suited to his present purpose. But any prayers offered in sincerity would not pass unnoticed, but would receive reward in due time, whether now or later.

Suppose that one were living in a heathen land where

Christ was not known, and suppose such a one was feeling after God and praying according to his light. The Lord could not accept him as his child under those conditions; but he might, if his wisdom approved, guide that honest seeker to a knowledge of Christ, whether it would come through tracts in the mail, through a sermon, or through meeting one of the Lord's ambassadors who could communicate with him in his own tongue. We are sure that every hungry soul will receive the light and the knowledge necessary to his salvation in the Lord's own good time. After hearing of God, and of the manifestation of his love in Christ, it remains for each individual to accept or to reject the message. If he fails or refuses to make consecration to God when he receives the light, no prayer he would offer would be accepted.

THE CHIEF OF ALL GOOD GIFTS

We read that the heavenly Father will give good gifts to those who ask him; that is, he will give that which would be good for them. We are not to dictate to him what his blessings are to be. We are not to ask for all manner of earthly things. In the case of the Jews, they asked chiefly for the earthly blessings; because heavenly blessings were not promised them. But we who come into the relationship of sons of God are to pray for what he has specifically promised us—the holy Spirit. And our Father in Heaven will give us those things which are best to fit and prepare us for the heavenly kingdom.

The Lord will give whatever temporal blessings are to the best interest of the new creature. Everything that he would give will be a good gift. We do not always know what would be best for us. A parent dealing with a child might find it necessary at certain times to give medicine instead of food. The parent gives this for the good of the child. So with our heavenly Father. Sometimes he gives us tests of faith, tests of loyalty, tests of love. All these experiences are designed to develop in us strength of character, and to thereby fit us for further and more advanced blessings.

The Father deals with us as new creatures in Christ. If, for instance, some of his children are becoming overcharged with the blessings or cares of this life, God might give to such some kind of a purgative as respects earthly things. Such a one might break a leg or have some other earthly calamity—something that would work out for his good as a new creature. If the Lord's consecrated people would all come to the point where their chief desire, their highest aspiration, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might be filled with the Spirit of God, the spirit of truth, the spirit of a sound mind, that they might know and do his will, what a great blessing it would bring! It is the will of the Lord that his children should have in large measure this chiefest of all blessings, but he grants it only on certain conditions. He withholds it until they learn to appreciate its value and to so earnestly desire it that they will apply themselves diligently to meet these conditions, and will continue in supplication until their opportunity shall bring down the answer.

THE UNSPEAKABLE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

The Apostle Paul exhorts the saints that they "pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." These words do not signify that we should be always upon our knees or continually uttering a prayer. But we should never cease to pray, and our prayers should be in the spirit—earnest, sincere. The children of God are not to "say prayers," they are to pray. There is much formal prayer—much saying of prayers—which do not get higher than the head of the one who repeats the words. The Scriptures speak of this as drawing near to God with the lips when the heart is far from him. It would be better that we should not approach the Lord at all than that we should do so in an improper manner.

It is most wonderful privilege to draw near the great Creator and Lord of Heaven and earth; and we should come in the spirit of reverence and devotion. Our Lord declared that the Father seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth. We must come only in the name of Christ. He is the only way of approach. And we must come thoughtfully and earnestly. We should not think of uttering a single word that we do not mean and have not thought upon. We believe a great many have done themselves injury by going through a form of words in a mere formalistic manner. This is not prayer. True prayer is the language of the heart. Therefore the greater our earnestness, the more acceptable the prayer will be, and the greater blessing shall we receive.

We are not to come to God without faith and without an earnest desire for his blessing. We are to enter into the spirit of our petition, that the Lord may see the earnestness of our heart in the matter. There seems to be a difference between

the thought of prayer and that of thanksgiving. Prayer, as we have said, is the offering of petition. None may come to the Lord with recognition, except those who have come into Christ. Others are strangers and aliens. But any one may express thanks to God or render worship, adoration, homage.

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER NECESSARY

There is a difference also between prayer and supplication. Prayer would be any petition, great or small; whereas supplication would mean a special desire for a thing—an earnest entreaty. Whether it be ordinary prayer or be supplication—an intense form of prayer—we should always come in the spirit, with appreciation of the fact that we are coming into the presence of the great Jehovah, and that it is a privilege accorded to only a very few at this time.

And we are to "watch thereunto, with all perseverance." If we really believe that the Lord has indicated that we should pray, and that it is his will to give us the things we need, and above all his holy Spirit, then we should be alert to note when we receive the answer to our petition. If we pay no attention to our prayers after they are uttered, never look to see whether they are being answered, this would indicate that we have not really appreciated our need. It would seem that this is the reason why God does not answer many of our prayers more quickly. We should learn to watch for the answers to our prayers, and thus learn the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to him as we realize that he has granted us our request.

We are, then, to pray with perseverance, not watching merely for a few hours for the fulfilment, nor merely for a day or a week. The Lord might see best to defer the fulfilment of our petition, either to test our faith or to bring us into a better condition to receive the blessing. Perhaps we have all had these experiences, and were thus more hungry for the answer when it came. We are to be sure that the Lord is never indifferent to the pleading of his children, and will pursue the course which is best for us, just as would a faithful teacher with his pupil, and as would a loving parent with his child. Our Father in Heaven wishes to give us his best things, and will not withhold anything that is really good. (Psalm 84:11) But he requires sometimes that we shall wait for a considerable time. At other times, there may be a speedy answer to our petitions.

Whether we are on our knees or in the busy walks of life our hearts should go out continually to the Lord for his guidance in all our affairs and experiences, that we may serve him in a manner that will be pleasing and acceptable to him, that we may be shielded from temptations that without his aid would be beyond our endurance, and that he will in his own due time deliver us from all evil and imperfection and grant us a place in his heavenly kingdom. Dear brethren, let us constantly put into practice the injunction of our Master, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—Mark 14:38.

SHOULD WE WRESTLE IN PRAYER?

But although the Scriptures enjoin upon us persistency in prayer, and the parable of The Importunate Widow also teaches this, nothing in the Word of God, in our judgment, warrants us in doing what some people call "wrestling with God in prayer." We believe that our God is willing to give us the things that are best for us, and anything that God is not willing to give us we should not desire. We should not strive to induce the Lord to do anything that he is unwilling to do, but should wish that only his will be done. At the time when Jacob wrestled with the angel, we would understand that he did the right and proper thing. Any of us in the same position would have done well if we had followed his course. That was a rare occasion. Jacob was returning to his home for the first time since he had fled to Padan-Aram from his brother Esau, and he feared that Esau might still seek his life. And now the Lord had manifested himself to Jacob in the form of this angel. The angel could have broken away, but he permitted Jacob to get into that earnest attitude where he said: "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me!"

But we do not need to wrestle with God for his special blessing. We already have this blessing. We are not servants crying for a crumb. The Lord has put upon us his best robe; he has given us his holy Spirit. But he has promised us certain things conditional upon our asking, and he wishes us to continue to come to him in faith, in simple, earnest prayer—not wrestling in prayer.

THE KINGDOM AT THE DOOR

The world is full of woe and wretchedness because of sin. And our hearts cry out, How long, O Lord, how long until thou wilt deliver thy people and establish righteousness in the earth? So we pray day by day, "Thy kingdom come; thy

will be done on earth!" Should we grow tired of this? No; for the Lord has bidden us to continue to wish for it, to pray for it.

The kingdom will come! And the Lord wishes us to have this thought—The kingdom is coming! To give up praying would be to give up our faith. Continue to hope, continue to believe, continue to pray without ceasing! Continue to say: "Thy kingdom come!" Continue to long for the time when that kingdom will bless all the families of the earth. This is very different from wrestling, according to our view of the meaning of that word. This is importunity, this is persistency, this is continuance. And in everything we are to give thanks. But we would not want to hasten the Lord's time one minute. Even though we pray, "Thy kingdom come," this does not mean that we wish to have the kingdom come before the Father's time. But we whose eyes are anointed know that the time will not tarry long, but that it is nigh.

Whatever may be our natural inclinations as regards constancy and definiteness in prayer, we must take our instruc-

tions from the Word of God. We must overcome our natural tendencies along this line. Let us as true, obedient children conform our views and our conduct to the words of counsel which our Father has given us. Let us remember the promise of the Master, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—John 16:24.

"Breathe on us, Lord! Thy radiance pour
On all the wonders of the page
Where hidden lies the Heavenly lore
That blessed our youth and guides our age.
Grant faith, that treads the stormy deep,
If but Thy voice shall bid it come;
And zeal, that climbs the mountain steep,
To seek and bring the wanderer home.
Give strength, blest Savior; in Thy might
Illuminate our hearts, and we
Transformed into Thine image bright,
Shall teach and love and live like Thee!"

NATURAL ISRAEL NOT HEIRS TO SPIRITUAL PROMISES

"Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded . . . unto this day."—Romans 11:7, 8.

The words of the Apostle Peter, "The promise is unto you and to your children" (Acts 2:39), are in full harmony with all of the Lord's dealings with Israel, and with his covenant with them as the posterity of his servant Abraham. The "Seed," promised by the Lord in his covenant with Abraham, was for many centuries supposed to mean only the natural seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—only those who were under the law of Moses—the Jewish nation. But there was a condition attached to this promise of heirship. When God entered into the covenant with Israel, the understanding was that if they would keep the law they should have everlasting life and should inherit the privilege of blessing all the families of the earth—all peoples. But that if they did not keep the law, then they would be cut off from all these favors.

God knew that not one of Israel could keep the law; and he had no thought that any of the natural Israelites living before our Lord's day would become members of the body of Christ spiritual. He knew that no one could come into the body of Christ until Jesus had first come and opened the way. Nevertheless, it was not an empty offer that was made to the Jewish nation. God did not promise that all Israel might become members of the spiritual seed—the church of Christ. He merely promised that on certain conditions they should bless all the nations of the earth. Since the spiritual seed was not mentioned, the natural seed were right in line for that which was specified—to be blessers of the world.

NO SPIRITUAL PROMISES BEFORE CHRIST

The keeping of the law was required, however, that Israel might have a right to life everlasting and to share in any of God's promises. But they could not keep the law; consequently none of them gained life. Yet there were some who manifested such heart loyalty to God that he declared that they were acceptable to him. These faithful, obedient ones met the conditions by which they might, through the Redeemer whom God would in due time provide, become a part of the "seed" who was to bless "all the families of the earth." As they had no knowledge of the purpose of God to have a spiritual seed, the attaining of a place in the natural seed to bless all mankind was all that they had hoped for. St. Paul points out that these Worthies of past ages will have a glorious place in the kingdom. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, . . . God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."—Hebrews 11:13, 40.

Jesus declared to the unfaithful Jews of his day, "Ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and ye yourselves thrust out." (Luke 13:28) The faithful saints who lived before Christ will be the human representatives of the kingdom. They will be "princes in all the earth," as declared by the Lord through the Prophet David. (Psalm 45:16) Thus they will receive a great blessing.

Until Christ came God never led the Jews to understand his plan for the spiritual seed. His time for bringing this feature of his plan to light and for calling candidates for places in this seed class, had not yet come. Those who lived prior to this call were not deceived in any manner nor defrauded of anything. God merely told them of the possibilities which were before them of becoming blessers of the world. Such as accepted the possibilities and rendered the

Lord full obedience to the best of their ability, became heirs of the earthly phase of the kingdom and the promises belonging thereto.

When our Lord Jesus came, his ministry and that of the apostles up to the time of the close of the "seventy weeks" (symbolic) yet remaining of Jewish favor, was, according to God's agreement with Israel, confined to the Jewish people. And as many of them as were of the right condition of heart undoubtedly received the message. As the Jews were the chosen people of God, because of being the natural seed of Abraham, his friend, when the time came for calling out the spiritual seed the opportunity of becoming of this seed must first go to Israel. Afterwards, the offer went to the Gentiles, to take out from them a sufficient number to complete the spiritual seed—the Gospel church.

After the glorification of the church, then will come the blessing of the earthly seed. As the chiefs of this earthly seed will be "princes in all the earth"—the Ancient Worthies—so later on, all who come in under the terms of the new covenant will be joined to Israel and will also become the seed of Abraham. Eventually, the seed of Abraham, as foretold by the Lord, shall be "as the sands upon the seashore" for multitude. "In becoming thy seed, shall all the families of the earth bless themselves," seems to be the literal rendering of one statement of God to Abraham in connection with the covenant made with him. But the blessing of all will come through the spiritual seed, the glorified church—Head and body. So God's plan seems to be one of giving more blessings to the spiritual seed, and less to the natural seed, though very great blessings will be the portion of all who will come into harmony with him.

CALLED BY GOD TO HIGHEST PLACE

Natural Israel never were heirs unconditionally of any part of the promise to Abraham nor heirs, as a nation, of the spiritual part of the promise—the chief, the principal part. They were on trial before the law of God, which was expressed in their Law Covenant, to see whether or not they would be worthy of eternal life. And so it was with our Lord Jesus when he was made flesh, born under the law—subordinate to the law. (Galatians 4:4) It was only because he was perfect and kept the law, that he was able in God's due time to present his body a living sacrifice as a substitute for Adam. His faithful keeping of the law proved his right to eternal life; and his sacrifice of that life as a man, under God's arrangement, raised him to the highest place in the universe next to Jehovah—the divine plane—with authority to execute Jehovah's program for the salvation of the world of mankind. He thus became the Head of the spiritual seed of Abraham.

When Jesus made his consecration, he was begotten of the spirit. He was born of the spirit, completed of the spirit, in his resurrection, and he was the first born to this condition. Afterward, those Jews who were in the right condition of heart were accepted on the same terms. But instead of God's making those called to be of the spiritual seed actually just, perfect—as our Lord Jesus was—he justifies them by faith. Jesus was absolutely without imperfection—the Apostle Paul speaks of him as being "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Hebrews 7:26) God imputes to the followers of Jesus a sufficiency of his merit that they may be reckoned just—counted as perfect.

The whole object of this reckoning is to give us the privilege of becoming spiritual Israelites by sacrificing. So the Father's arrangement is that if we desire to be the disciples of Jesus we must take up our cross and follow him, becoming dead to the flesh, dead to self, dead to everything worldly. Then Christ becomes our Advocate. The Father accepts all such as his sons. The Apostle Paul exhorts all who have accepted the redemption that is in Christ, saying, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Romans 12:1.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND CALLED

The holiness of our offering is not of ourselves, but is ours only through the imputed virtue of the sacrifice of our Savior. All our imperfection is set aside, nullified by his merit. And those only can become members of spiritual Israel who offer themselves as sacrifices. As for others, if the whole world were to keep the law they would not belong to the spiritual seed, for God wants only 144,000. (Revelation 14:1, 3) So this privilege of becoming one of the spiritual seed was not a thing that the Jew inherited as heir to the promise. St. Paul said that the offer was "to the Jew first." We think the Apostle meant that the Gospel call for spiritual Israelites was sent to the Jew first—not a command that he keep the law, but a proclamation of the Gospel and an invitation to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The offer was first made to the Jews who were living when the Gospel privileges were opened up. If any of these were willing to enter into a covenant of Sacrifice with Christ, he would accept them as his disciples.

The picture that God gives through the Apostle Paul in the 11th chapter of Romans represents Israel as the trunk and the branches of the olive tree, and the root of the tree as the promise which God made to Abraham, which was to bless the world. God had not explained his plan to them, but had merely said: "Do you wish to enter into a covenant with me—to be my peculiar people?" "Yes," was the answer. "When will you be ready?" "We are ready now," they replied. And so this covenant was made, which constituted them the nation, or tree, growing out of the root of promise. The promise was primarily spiritual, though this fact was long kept hidden.

God never purposes to do anything except through the spiritual seed, but natural Israel did not know this. They declared that they would be all that God wished them to be, if only they might have the promise made to Abraham their Father. What it was they did not know, although they thought they knew. They were anxious to have the best at any rate. And they still had this thought and this hope in Jesus' day; as St. Paul said: "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come."

(Acts 26:7) And again the Apostle says: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded"; that is, those of the Jews who came into Christ became of the elect.—Rom. 11:7.

ISRAEL'S FAILURE IN THEIR TESTING TIME

What was the condition on which the Jews might inherit that blessing? It was that they would lay down their lives sacrificially. And they would be tested as to their sincerity in claiming that they would obey God in order that they might win that promise. But the message came to them, and they were called upon to answer the question, Will you accept Jesus of Nazareth as your Messiah, and take up your cross and follow him? Then the test was upon them. They were brought face to face with the proposition which would prove how much they meant in their professions of loyalty to God as his special people. But the great majority failed in the testing. "They all with one consent began to make excuse." (Luke 14:18) When the point was reached of making a positive decision as to whether they would accept God's conditions and his way of accomplishing his plan, but few were ready. They listened and then went, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. The cost was too much!

Those who were found in that condition of mind were none of them living up to their profession. But God did not make that promise for nothing. When the Israelites were proven unworthy of becoming heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant, they were broken off and Gentiles were grafted in to take their places and become partakers of "the root and fatness of the olive tree." (Romans 11:17) Only those Jews who were desirous of doing God's will in the fullest sense of the word were allowed to remain as branches of the olive tree. Only those who accepted Christ were made heirs of the promise, as members of the spiritual seed. After all the "Israelites indeed" of the natural seed were gathered in, the message went to the Gentiles, that the full number of the elect might be found. But the Lord tells us through the Apostle Paul, in Romans 11, that God's ancient people may yet be grafted into the olive tree from which they were broken off, "if they abide not still in unbelief." "And so all Israel shall be saved," after "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." O the riches of the love and goodness of God!

TAKEN LONG TIME TO DEVELOP 144,000

If all the Jews living in Jesus' day had loved God with all their heart, with all their being, with all their strength, and had made a full consecration, we understand that God would have accepted that sacrifice on their part. We do not know how many there would have been in the body of Christ in that event. God might have increased the number of the elect. But as it is, it has taken a long time—nearly nineteen hundred years—to find a sufficient number to complete that body. The Lord has limited the number of these to 144,000.

"AND SITTING DOWN, THEY WATCHED HIM THERE"

(MATTHEW 27:36.)

Sitting down, they watched Him there,
Watched Him, fairest of the fair,
Gazed with cold, un pitying eye,
While the jeering crowd passed by;
For His vesture cast a lot
(Seamless robe, without a spot);
Watched the "Man of Sorrows" there,
Who the world's great sin must bear;
Watched while darkness veiled the sun,
Watched until He cried, "'Tis done!"

God of Heaven! forbid that I
Thus should gaze with pitiless eye
On a suffering child of Thine,
Watch him while his foes malign,
Watch him while his life-blood flows,
Watch until the dark day's close;
Grant me, Lord, a heart of love,
Make me like a tender dove;
Let me bring him strength and peace,
Until death shall send release!

G. W. SEIBERT.

THE SONS OF GOD

JANUARY 23—ROMANS 8:12-30.

DIVINE SONSHIP LOST BY ADAM—JEWS NOT A HOUSE OF SONS, BUT OF SERVANTS—CHRIST A SON—THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE OF SONS—THE STRAIT GATE AND NARROW WAY BY WHICH THE CALLED MAY BE ACCEPTED INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD—EVIDENCES OF OUR BEGETTING—THE PREDESTINATION OF THE ELECT—TO WHAT ELECTED.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Verse 14.

Today we have another wonderful lesson from the inspired Apostle St. Paul. It points out that the church is a new creation, begotten of the holy Spirit, now being gestated in preparation for the glorious resurrection birth to the spirit plane. There is no more important lesson than this.

According to the Bible, Father Adam was created a son of God—in the image of God and only a little lower than the angels—on the earthly plane, instead of the heavenly. (Psalm 8:5) When Adam sinned, his blessed relationship with God

as a son was forfeited. Forthwith he was a sinner and under the sentence which God had foretold—not an eternal torment sentence, but a death sentence, with an accompaniment of mental, moral and physical degeneracy. There have been no human sons of God since Adam's time—except Jesus. The Jews, received by the Lord under the Law Covenant, were not a house of sons, and never understood themselves to be sons of God. Instead, they threatened to stone Jesus to death because he declared himself a Son of God. As St. Paul de-

clares, "Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house [of servants], but Christ as a Son [the Head] over his own house," a house of sons—the spirit-begotten church.

THE HOUSE OF SONS

St. Paul points out to us that the natural man, no matter how wise or educated or talented, cannot understand and appreciate fully the deep things of the Bible, because God has caused them to be so written that only the spirit-begotten can fully comprehend them. "They are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14) Thus the church of Christ is a company of regenerated beings. Once they were members of the Adamic race and, through sin, "were children of wrath, even as others." (Ephesians 2:3) Now they are reckoning themselves as dead to the divine sentence upon Father Adam. They have accepted Jesus as their Redeemer, and the sacrifice of his life as the atonement-price for their sins.

When they accept the invitation to become followers of Jesus, he becomes their Advocate with the Father; and by the arrangement of the divine plan his meritorious sacrifice is applicable to them as a covering for sins past and imperfections future, and affords them opportunity to be accepted of the Father, begotten of the holy Spirit and eventually to attain joint-heirship with himself in the kingdom, "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Verse 17.

These regenerated, spirit-begotten children of God are not yet perfected; but if they continue in the school of Christ, the faithful will eventually reach perfection on the spirit plane as sons of God, led by the spirit. These, on the authority of the Scriptures, exercising faith, are enabled to call upon God as their Father—"Abba, Father." Through the Word and through their own experience these receive the witness of the spirit of the Lord that they are God's children and joint-heirs with Jesus—the grand perfection being dependent upon their suffering with him. These have no obligation any longer to the flesh; for they are new creatures. These are no longer to live after the flesh, but in harmony with the Spirit of God as revealed to them through the Word of God.

These new creatures, sons of God, in their weakness and ignorance might ask amiss. But the Lord would not deal with them according to their imperfection of asking; he would accept the spirit of their request. The groanings and desires of our spirits, our minds, will be taken by the Lord as instead of our imperfect utterances in prayer; for God, who knoweth all things, yea, the thoughts of our minds (spirits), accepts these. All such may know that "all things work together for good to them"—because they love God—because they have been called according to his purpose.—Verse 28.

EXPLANATION OF THE GOSPEL CALL

Verses 28-31 make plain to us that God has a special purpose in the special Gospel high calling of this present age. Other Scriptures show that this calling of this present age is to joint-heirship with Jesus in the Messianic Kingdom which is shortly to grant restitution blessings to all the families of the earth. To get a suitable class to be the teachers, blessers, rulers and judges of the world in the future has been the object of this Gospel call. Jesus, the Head of the church, was the first to respond and has been glorified and honored, and through all eternity will be honored. His followers, called during this Gospel age, will have a similar blessing at the hands of God—glorification on the spirit plane, if faithful.

Our study concludes with an explanation of God's call. God foreknew, or purposed in advance, that he would have such a church as the Apostle describes, to accomplish the work mentioned. All that was predestinated or arranged in advance. But in order to be of that predestinated and glorified class, certain things were necessary; i. e., that all those who would be finally accounted worthy of a share in the kingdom, must be copies of God's dear Son—in heart, in character, and like him also in the resurrection, spirit beings. This is a glorious predestination. It assures us that God will have none others in the kingdom than those who are character-likenesses of Jesus.

Then the Apostle points out the procedure by which God has selected this predestinated or foreknown class to be copies of his Son. They were called in the sense that the Lord brought to their attention the glorious opportunity, and we may safely say that such a call was extended only to the honest-hearted who were feeling after God, desirous of knowing him and serving him. These called ones needed first to be justified before they could accept the call, and this justification must come through repentance and through acceptance of Jesus as the Redeemer. It was those who accepted Jesus and were justified by him through faith, whom God also glorified (honored) by begetting them with the holy Spirit, bringing them into his family as children, joint-heirs with Jesus, to the privilege of suffering for the truth and being glorified in connection with the kingdom.

"Think it not strange, beloved,
When fiercely burns the fiery flame!
Think it not strange, but praise His name,
Who counts thee worthy to partake
Of painful sufferings for His sake.
Nor think it strange
When loved ones scornful from thee turn,
The Truth reject, the Message spurn;
Consider Him who thus endured,
And Immortality secured!"

ST. PETER'S SERMON ON RESTITUTION

JANUARY 30—ACTS 3.

HEALING A LAME MAN—THE APOSTLES IGNORED THEMSELVES AND ASCRIBED THE POWER AND HONOR TO JESUS—THE PEOPLE WERE IMPRESSED—ST. PETER IMPROVED THE OPPORTUNITY TO POINT OUT THE SIN COMMITTED BY THE NATION WHO CRUCIFIED JESUS, AND ALSO THE MERCY OF GOD AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE THEM AND BLESS THEM—THEY SHOULD REPENT IMMEDIATELY TO GET THE CHIEFEST BLESSING—AFTERWARD WOULD FOLLOW "TIMES OF RESTITUTION"—ALL THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF THOSE TIMES—THE CHURCH OFFICIALS WERE OFFENDED.

"Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Verses 19-21.

The apostles at Pentecost, in receiving the holy Spirit, received not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of courage and of a sound mind. They had been commissioned by their Redeemer to preach the Gospel Message which was to gather from the Jews and from every nation a consecrated class of people to become the spirit-begotten sons of God and eventually to be the bride, the Lamb's wife and joint-heir in his kingdom.

Full of this courage St. Peter and St. John, the leaders amongst the apostles, went up to the Temple to pray—not because they any longer thought the Temple the proper place where prayer should be offered to God, but because they knew that it would be a good place to meet the people. Probably they expected that the Lord would there bring them in contact with the most devout Jews so as to give them an opportunity of testifying the good tidings to these.

The opportunity was soon found. They beheld a poor, lame beggar and perceived him to be a man of faith and trust in God. Looking upon him, St. Peter said, "Look on us"; and he looked, expecting to get money. But St. Peter continued, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, that give I unto thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." (Verse 6) The lame man, astonished at such an offer of blessing, made an effort to obey the command,

because he had faith. As he struggled to obey, St. Peter took him by the hand and assisted him in the exercise of faith. God's blessing attended. His feet and his ankle bones, long withered became strong; and he went with the apostles through the Temple, holding on to them and shouting his praises to God and his acknowledgment that God's mercy had come to him through these men.

A NOTABLE RESTITUTION SERMON

A concourse of the holy Jews immediately gathered about. Now came St. Peter's opportunity for a great sermon—a witness to the Lord. He was not filled with pride and boastfulness, saying, "You may well look at us, for we are especially favored of God. None of your scribes or Pharisees could have healed this man as we have done;" etc. St. Peter did nothing of this kind. In meekness and humility he said, Why should you look at us as though we had done anything of ourselves, or that any special holiness of ours had accomplished this miracle? We are merely the instruments of God, and this is a manifestation of God's mercy through Jesus. This miracle is done in Jesus' name—in the name of the Redeemer who has died for the sins of the world.

St. Peter proceeded to tell his hearers that the nation had wickedly crucified the Savior, but he assured them also of

God's mercy, and declared that they might still repent and come back to God's favor, but only by renouncing their relationship with those who had done this evil deed and by taking their stand with and for the Lord. Very briefly and comprehensively he stated the divine plan as a reason why his hearers should consecrate themselves to God. (Verses 13-26) They should repent of sins personal, as well as national, and be fully converted, or turned around—to know the Lord, to obey him, to be followers of Jesus whom they had crucified. The result of this would be the coveting of their sins by the Lord, permitting them to be accepted through Jesus as children of God; and ultimately this would mean that their sins would be blotted out completely with the glorious change of the first resurrection—"sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in animal body, raised a spiritual body."—1 Corinthians 15:43, 44.

Following this blotting out of their sins and the giving to them the new bodies, free from sin and all its blemishes and imperfections, would come the glorious times of restitution of all things, which God had foretold through all the holy prophets of the past. These would be times, or years of refreshing, as well as of restitution—a thousand years. Therein would be fulfilled all the promises of God to Abraham and to all the prophets and to Israel; namely, that in Messiah's glorious kingdom the earth would be brought to Edenic conditions, "God's footstool would be made glorious." (Isaiah 60:13; 66:1) The curse would be rolled away, and the blessing of the Lord rolled on to humanity instead.

Any prophet that had not mentioned these restitution years could not have been a holy prophet, St. Peter assures us; for restitution is the message of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. The Master himself, the Redeemer of the world, declares: "Behold, I make all things new." "There shall be no more curse." Eventually there shall be no more sighing or crying or dying. All things will be made new by Messiah's Kingdom, although it will require the entire thousand years for the full accomplishment of all these glorious things.

OBEYING GOD RATHER THAN MEN

FEBRUARY 6.—ACTS 4:1-31.

THE COURAGE OF GOD'S SERVANTS—ST. PETER THE SPOKESMAN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN—THE WISE MEN MARVELED—THE APOSTLES IGNORANT AND UNLEARNED—NOT THE SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF A SOUND MIND AND OF COURAGE—TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOL OF JESUS—WONDERFUL RESULTS—WHEN TO OBEY AND WHEN TO DISOBEY.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."—1 Corinthians 16:13.

St. Peter and St. John, arrested for preaching Christ as the healer of the lame man in the Temple, were called to answer before the Jewish High Court—the Sanhedrin, composed of seventy learned Jews. These sat in a circle, and had their prisoners before them. When we remember that the apostles were illiterate fishermen, unaccustomed to public speaking and to contact with the great and learned, we may well be amazed at their courage and at the straight-forward presentation of the Gospel given there by St. Peter. It astonished the Sanhedrin, too. They wished to arraign the apostles, not for the good deed of healing the lame man, but rather for their preaching of Jesus.

However, under the guidance of the holy Spirit, St. Peter wisely and properly drew attention to the fact that they were on trial really for the healing of the sick. Again he disowned any power on the part of himself and his companions. Admitting that they were merely ordinary men, he credited the miracle wholly to Jesus. What a lesson is here for all who would represent the Lord as his ambassadors! As St. Paul said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus."—2 Corinthians 4:5.

Under any circumstances, how courageous indeed were the Apostle's words: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole!" St. Peter was not only preaching that Jesus was not a deceiver but the real Messiah, whom the Jews had long expected, but, additionally, he was declaring that the Sanhedrin had murdered the Messiah. It was the truth; and it was necessary to utter the truth. To have evaded the point would have shown fear; and the Apostle would have failed to make a right and proper impression on the Sanhedrin and the auditors.

Some one might suggest that St. Peter did not use gentlemanly language—that he should not have made such a home-thrust at the Sanhedrin. Mr. Benson, in *The North American Review*, gives a definition of the term gentleman which seems to fit this case. We quote:

THE GREAT ANTITYPICAL MOSES

St. Peter pointed out how Moses had foretold the calling out of a special Messianic class. (Deuteronomy 18:17-19) Jesus is Head of this class; and all now received into God's family by the begetting of the holy Spirit are counted members of the body of Christ, the church. Moses was a type of this great Christ, and said to the fathers, "A [greater] Prophet [than I—an antitype] shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren." (Verse 22) God raised up Jesus first, says the Apostle; and since Pentecost he has been raising up brethren of Jesus—the apostles first, then all the saintly characters of these past eighteen hundred years, called according to God's purpose to be the members of the body of Christ, otherwise styled the bride class. The full raising up of these will not be accomplished until the resurrection of the church is completed.

When this great Antitype of Moses (Christ and the church, his body) shall have been lifted up, glorified, then will come the time for the blessing of the world, by the opening of the eyes of their understanding and through all the restitution privileges of that time. During the Millennium, whoever will hear that great Prophet may come into a great blessing of perfection, of restitution—physically, mentally, morally—and thus to everlasting life. But whoever rejects that great Prophet, the glorified Messiah, will be destroyed from amongst the people—will meet the fate of the intelligently wicked. "All the wicked will God destroy."—Psalm 145:20.

The Apostle explains that the Lord's blessing was to begin with the Israelites, the natural children of Abraham. It did gather the "Israelites indeed." Then the Jewish nation was set aside from God's favor; and the door of opportunity was thrown open to the Gentiles, who have received the Lord's blessing of opportunity for eighteen hundred years. As soon as the foreordained number of the elect are glorified, the present age and its objects will have ended. Then the restitution work will begin; and Israel according to the flesh will again take first rank in divine favor, as explained in Romans 11:25-32.

"How do you define a gentleman, then?" said the lawyer, leaning forward at a certain point of the conversation. 'The gentleman, it has been said, is a man who is never offensive unintentionally,' said the parson. Two of the guests murmured 'intentionally,' by way of correction; and the parson smiled. 'No,' he said, 'a gentleman is sometimes offensive when honor and reason demand it, but then he means to be. The man who is not a gentleman is often offensive when he does not mean to be.' 'But is he always a gentleman when he is intentionally offensive?' asked the lawyer. 'The gentleman is,' said the parson with a smile."

In St. Peter's case it was not a time for quibbling. It was a time when a gentleman was in duty bound to use his opportunity, in no unkindly way, in placing the truth before his hearers. And how much St. Peter crowded into a few words, according to this record! He identified Jesus the Nazarene, the one who had been crucified, as the Messiah, the One whom God had approved, as was manifested in the raising of him from the dead.

THE SANHEDRIN PERPLEXED

Next the Apostle quoted to them from the prophecy of David (Psalm 118:22), saying, "This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." If there was a force, a sting, in these words to his hearers, it was because they were so seriously in the wrong. How fortunate it would have been for them if they had been humble-hearted, like those who heard St. Peter on the day of Pentecost! Then they also would have cried out in consternation, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" But, alas! education, honor of men, high station, often put the possessors of these at a disadvantage.

The Sanhedrin were rich, not only financially, intellectually and in honors of men, but also in education. To them forcefully belong the words of Jesus, "Woe unto you rich!"—you are at a disadvantage. Pride, honor of men, self-conceit, hinder many such from receiving the simple message of the

Gospel. Thus we perceive that there are compensations in the divine arrangement, and that in some respects poverty is a blessing in disguise. Hence the assurance of the Word that not many rich, not many great, not many learned, not many noble would be among the chosen of the Lord or would receive position in the bride class and in the heavenly kingdom.—1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

Perceiving the boldness of St. Peter and St. John, and noting that they were unlearned and ignorant, the Sanhedrin marveled, and "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Ah, yes! of Jesus also some one had said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"—in any of our schools. (John 7:15) They knew of his power with the people through the spirit of the Lord and of his straightforward presentation of the truth. They recognized these men as of the same character—filled with Jesus' Spirit. And to this day this is true of the followers of Jesus. As the Apostle wrote, "God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7) All of the Lord's people should remember this point and should cultivate such a spirit and be copies of the Lord Jesus and of the faithful apostles, so that of all such people might take knowledge that they have been with Jesus and have learned of him.

But let no one forget that there is only one way of coming into relationship with God—through the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Apostle indicates in this discourse, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." We must have faith in Jesus. We must understand that he died for the sin of the world. We must make a personal acceptance of him as our Savior. We must consecrate our little all to follow in his steps faithfully, even unto death. On these conditions we become his disciples; and having become disciples, learners in the school of Christ, and having been begotten of the holy Spirit, we are privileged to show forth more and more his praises and to let our light shine before men, that they, seeing our good works and our likeness to the Master, may glorify God on our behalf.

The Sanhedrin were perplexed as they perceived that the disciples had so strong a case, and had really turned the tables upon them, charging them before the people with being the real culprits—murderers of the Son of God, the Messiah. As they looked at the man who had been healed, they perceived a great miracle. They could say nothing. So they put forth the apostles from their midst, that they might discuss the case privately. They could not deny the miracle, and they were afraid of what it might lead to if talk of this kind about Jesus and about their being his murderers should spread amongst the people to any degree. They thought best to let the disciples go, charging them, threatening them, not to preach any more in the name of Jesus.

COURAGE IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL

Then was shown the marvelous courage of the apostles. They replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

The Bible directs the followers of Jesus to be subject to the powers that be. (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17) But while seeking to be thus law-abiding in every respect, Christians are to recognize that there is a still higher law and a still higher Ruler, and are to be subject to the worldly powers only in the absence of a contrary admonition from the Higher Power—from God.

God had commanded the disciples through Jesus that they should be God's mouthpieces to preach the Gospel Message that the death of Jesus was efficacious for the cancellation of sins; and that he who was slain was by and by to come and set up his kingdom, and to bless the world by releasing it from the bondage of sin and death. They were also to invite all who had faith to believe this message to associate themselves as disciples of Jesus, loyal and faithful to the Prince of that kingdom which is not yet set up. By such faithfulness they would manifest the faith that was in them and their loyalty to God; and on account of this they were promised a share with Messiah in the kingdom which he would establish.

It was therefore the duty of the apostles, as it is the duty of all the followers of Jesus, to make known the Gospel Message wherever there are hearing ears, and not to fear what man may do—although it would be our duty not to offend against the laws by holding a meeting where the crowds would interfere with traffic, or otherwise be in conflict with legal regulations. The apostles were not interfering with the regulations of the Jewish Law in speaking in public, as they did in the Temple. Their courage was really authorized by the law; and the Sanhedrin, in forbidding them, went beyond its bounds.

The church, young in faith, had no doubt been greatly distressed by the imprisonment of the leading disciples; and when they were released, then a general meeting for rejoicing and praise to God was held, thanking the Lord for the courage given to the apostles, for the promises of his Word, and for the miracle which had led up to all this. As a consequence, we read that all were so encouraged that "they spake the Word of God with boldness"; and that "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all."

Our Golden Text, in full accord with the lesson, is properly an exhortation to all of God's people everywhere to be faithful and loyal to God and his cause. Let us each apply it to himself: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

THE VALUE OF MODERATION

"Let your moderation be known unto all men."

Question.—The Apostle Paul says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." What is the particular thought here in the word "moderation," and what is the connection between these words and the sentence, "The Lord is at hand," which follows?

Answer.—The spirit of the Lord is said to be a spirit of wisdom, a spirit of justice, a spirit of love, a spirit of a sound mind. Whoever, therefore, receives the spirit of the Lord, in proportion as he receives it, has these qualities of mind and heart. At the beginning of a Christian's experience, the measure of this moderation, or reasonableness, or gentleness, is of course, comparatively small. But he gradually gets a greater appreciation of the value of this quality. His ideas become more reasonable as he becomes sanctified by the spirit. He will have more and more of the spirit of a sound mind, of gentleness, meekness, and will become more and more prepared for the kingdom soon to be established.

This attitude of mind comes in large measure as a result of knowledge. As he comes to know more about God and his plans, more about the origin of sin in the world, how it came about and how its penalty has passed upon all men by a process of heredity, the true disciple of Christ feels more of the spirit of moderation and acts with more consideration and charity toward others than if men were perfect. As we realize that these imperfections vary in number and in degree in different persons, so in our dealings we must be moderate toward all, wise in our dealings with all, patient toward all, having the spirit of justice, of reasonableness, of mercy.

This injunction of the Apostle does not refer to the exercise of this quality toward the church only, but toward all

The Lord is at hand.—Philippians 4:5.

men. Properly, of course, this moderation would begin at home, and would be more particularly manifest in good works in the church, as in opposition to the evil sentiment—anger, malice, evil-surmising, hatred, strife—works of the flesh and of the devil. But the spirit of moderation should not be confined to the home, but should be manifested toward all with whom we have intercourse or dealings. It was said of the apostles that people "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and learned of him." We should so live before all, both the brethren and the world, that they would thus take knowledge of us. We should see to it that our conduct is a credit to the great and noble cause with which we are identified.

The connection between letting our moderation be known and the statement, "The Lord is at hand," seems to be that the Lord's people are to have in mind their expectation based upon the promises of God's Word, that Messiah's Kingdom is shortly to be established, and that this should help them in living an exemplary life. Whether the passage should be considered from the viewpoint that the church of the apostles' time were living in the latter part of the great seven-thousand-year week, and that the great Sabbath was at hand, when the Lord was about to come and set up his kingdom and set things straight in the world, and that hence they could well be patient and considerate, or whether it should be from the viewpoint of time—that the Lord's children should exercise the grace of moderation because they had little time left in which to manifest it—we do not know. At any rate, knowing that the opposition of sin will not last very much longer, we may have the greater patience and exercise this patience with

the greater ease when we have this thought before our minds.

The Apostle gives a similar thought when he says that the tribulations which the Lord's people undergo are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them. This should make us very moderate, very forbearing, under

circumstances which would make others very rude, very angry, very immoderate. We can be very gentle, not only because of our knowledge of the nearness of the kingdom, but also because of our knowledge of the weaknesses of others, which cause them to impinge upon our rights.

SOME INTERESTING ITEMS

PARIS BRETHREN MEET REGULARLY

Extracts from a Letter of Brother Joseph Lefèvre, main Elder of the I. B. S. A. Class in Paris, France, to Brother Louis F. Ruel, of New York.—Translated.

Please, Brother Louis, openly tell our Beloved Pastor Russell, and through him all the dear brethren over there, of the cheerfulness and perfect peace which I derive daily from "My Morning Resolve" (especially the last part of it), in my long exile from my home in Denain (invaded territory), and from separation of my wife and other dear ones there. Also, the added blessing that I find, when at times my courage would fail me, in recalling the words:

"Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may,"

and then, softly repeating them, I regain greater comfort and joy! Yes; I desire of you the favor to thank the Lord for the precious help I have received from this "Resolve" counseled by the "faithful servant." I deeply appreciate the service, and must give vent to the feelings it suggests.

I do not write to the dear Pastor, because being unable to express myself properly in English, I think better to sacrifice my own satisfaction than to divert otherwise too much of his attention from the interests of the many. However, I know how much he loves also the brethren of Northern France—and these, too, know it. Therefore, daily, from every heart of our people, ascends to the heavenly throne a fervent prayer beseeching for Brother Russell, our Pastor, an ever-increasing measure of the spirit of grace, wisdom and understanding. Be sure and tell him that despite the keenly hard and long trial they are undergoing, all our French brethren and sisters, whose sentiments I am here voicing, are his "glory and joy" (1 Thessalonians 2:20), by their faithfulness, faith and perseverance.

The Lord has made his truth known here to some new hearts by my humble voice and despite my poor health. We have a class now of about forty-five, and every week new, thirsty souls come to the spring of the new life. A number have known the beauty and privilege of consecration, and they are making large strides in spiritual progress. Nearly all the members attend the weekly testimony meeting. Three evenings during the week there are meetings (one at the other end of Paris), for Berean Studies or to discuss the Epistle to the Romans, with an average attendance of twenty.

Until lately I have had to take personal charge of all the meetings, with the preparatory study that each entailed, which fortunately could be done owing to some leisure left by my working only eight hours daily at the office [an insurance company]. By now the Lord has given me a competent assistant in my dear Brother Theophile Leguime [formerly a Deacon at Denain], also physically weak, but strong in faith, who since the invasion was living with the friends at Auchel, Pas-de-Calais [a few miles from the battle front], and who has just been compelled to leave that place because the military authority became suspicious of his large correspondence with the brethren at the front and elsewhere in the interest of the truth and for their edification and comfort. The experience and ability of this brother will much avail, so that several things will be thus better cared for, under God's providence, answering my prayers that "He would send forth laborers into his harvest."—Matthew 9:38.

SHARP P. O. CENSORSHIP

An Exchange asks: How far can a government department go in censoring printed matter committed to the mails?

Will the Postmaster-General bar the following extract from a speech made by Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany in 1891 to recruits?

"Recruits! before the altar and the servant of God, you have given me the oath of allegiance. . . . Only one enemy can exist for you—my enemy.

"With the present Socialist machinations, it may happen that I shall order you to shoot your brothers or even your parents—which God forbid—and then you are bound in duty implicitly to obey my orders!"

If the Postmaster-General permits the above to go through the mails, why should be object to the little article by Jack London, reading in part:

"Young man, the lowest aim in your life is to be a good soldier. The good soldier never tries to distinguish right from wrong. He never thinks; never reasons; he only obeys. If he is ordered to fire on his fellow citizens, on his friends, on his neighbors, on his relatives, he obeys without hesitation.

"A good soldier is a blind, heartless, soulless, murderous machine. He is not a man. He is not even a brute, for brutes kill only in self-defense. No man can fall lower than a soldier—it is a depth beneath which he cannot go."

Postmaster-General Burleson does object to the above. When it appeared on post-cards circulated by a peace society, he issued an order barring such post-cards from the mails.

THE NEXT POSSIBLE STEP.

To say that a newspaper carrying this text should be barred from the mails would be the next logical step. The distinction by the department is that such matter on a post-card is "openly displayed." In a newspaper it is not.

The censorship is based on section 212 of the criminal code, which excludes from the mails all matter which carries openly any reflection on the character or conduct of any person. The department, however, has construed this to mean any class of persons.

Leaders of the various peace societies are indignant over what they call this usurpation of power on the part of the department.

EUREKA DRAMA WORK

DEAR ONE IN CHRIST:—

With the closing of the year 1915 we find that our activity in the EUREKA DRAMA work must close also.

We have been working continually nearly all summer, showing almost every night. We traveled by wagon, and camped out, making our expenses very light; but as the cold weather came we found that the rental of halls and board and lodging were more than we could handle, so we have decided to discontinue our efforts until spring, except in a few towns we can easily reach by rail.

We have the DRAMA on the loan plan, and would like to keep it, hoping to start again as soon as the weather permits. We completed four counties in the past year. We showed, on an average, to one hundred and fifty persons each evening, and much interest was aroused.

We did not specially encourage the signing of the cards, but merely mentioned it, and we think by so doing we received the names of those most interested. When we first started with the DRAMA we would pass pencils and encourage the people to sign, but we found that we could get those most interested by merely drawing their attention to the subject of the free booklet. All of us were blessed in the service and by the experience we passed through, some of which were not the most pleasant, but we believe they were for our good.

We have shown in many churches, and on two occasions we showed on Sunday evening after the preaching service. We also found some towns bitterly opposed, and the ministers would write articles for the local papers condemning Brother R. and the DRAMA. This only helped to increase interest, and two of these articles we were privileged to answer through the same columns. We did this in as kindly a way as possible.

Please let us know if it will be all right to keep the DRAMA here and use it during the winter, as we have opportunity. If the work does not close by spring, we hope to become active again in the service for the King of kings,

Your Brother in Him,

L. E. EDWARDS.

FRENCH LETTERS FROM TERRITORY INVADED BY GERMANS (From the French Watch Tower.)

I have been happy to receive word that you can again send us "LA TOUR DE GARDE" with the precious teachings of the faithful and wise servant. What a joy and comfort we find in having our eyes opened and being able to understand the divine plan! The Lord is permitting evils, mourning and sufferings for a little while still, but soon he will heal every wound, wipe away all tears and reign in righteousness. This is indeed "the vision of glory presented to our faith," in which glory we shall share if we are faithful to the end. And this is the time for us to realize in part Psalm 46, and wait patiently for the fulfilment of the rest.

J. B. and J. TILMANT.—Belgium.