

to know and to do the Lord's will; and finding myself taking the opposite view from the other elders and some of the other members of the class, I feel greatly concerned and ask your advice. Taking into consideration the present and future interests of the class, I feel that the matter is now too important to be in doubt about. I am,

Your brother in his blessed service, J. J. B.

OUR REPLY TO THE FOREGOING

We have endeavored to set forth in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. VI., what we believe to be the Scriptural teaching covering the queries of this letter. Repeating now, and seeking to make the matter applicable to the case in question, we would say:

Each spirit-begotten child of God, by virtue of his anointing, has a right to speak, to preach, to declare his heavenly Father's Word and message. The right to preach is not confined to bishops, nor to those upon whom they lay their hands, nor to elders and deacons chosen in the Scriptural manner by the stretching forth of the hands of the ecclesia. There are natural limitations, of course, such as lack of ability, from any cause, to hold the attention of an audience. Except the Apostle's restriction that the sisters are not to do public preaching, there are none.

With this broad view of the divine commission, the anointing or authorization of the holy Spirit, we perceive that none has a right to interfere with another. As Jesus said to the Apostle John, "Forbid him not."—Mark 9:39.

However, while none may interfere with or bind his brother, we may give over some of our own liberties. Recognizing that God is a God of order, and that every good work is prospered by order, and following the instructions of our Lord that his followers should assemble themselves together as one body, we realize that in taking our places in the body, we lose some of our own personal independence, liberties, privileges. We are glad to do this, for we believe it to be the Lord's will, because he instructs us: "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together." So all who thus become associates, or members, in a class of Bible students thereby surrender individual rights. They operate as a class, deciding which meetings are necessary and which are unnecessary, which of their number would best lead and serve the class, which render other service, etc.

From this viewpoint, it would not be proper for brethren

associated in a class to start new classes and still consider themselves members of the original class. For a member of a class to individually start another class separate from anything provided for by his class, would mean to ignore it, to break off his relationship with the older class and would indicate that he would no longer in any sense of the word recognize himself, either as a servant of that class, or as a member of it, or as a sharer in its privileges. In reassuming his own personal liberty he laid down his privileges as a member of the class.

Hence from this standpoint we would say, that the brethren and sisters who participated in the organizing of the new classes evidently had only the best intentions, and quite probably did not consider at the time the real force and meaning of their action in organizing the classes.

It would look, too, as though the parent class and its elders and deacons had not fully provided for all the desires and necessities of the class; otherwise there would have been no incentive or reason for the starting of new classes aside from their arrangements. A sharp look out by the servants of the class should always be maintained, to see that the spiritual needs of the interested are supplied; and a sufficient number of elders and deacons should be chosen and appointed.

While we sympathize with the sentiments of those who drew up the resolution, we incline to doubt the wisdom of the movement. We believe that the better way for all concerned would be for all parties to confess their error. The class and the elders might very properly say: "We regret, dear brethren and sisters, that we had not such a grasp of the situation as would have enabled us at the time properly to supply the needs of the class as respects meetings. We promise to do our duty more faithfully in the future."

Those who started the new classes would, we think, do well to say: "We regret, dear brethren and sisters, that we did not take a broad enough view of the subject and put in a request for the meeting, to the intent that the need might have been supplied through appointments by the class."

With such apologies and resignations, we believe the entire matter will adjust itself and everybody feel relieved of a tension, and quite probably the results will not be far different from what they are now, except that the new meetings will be under the appointment of the original class.

THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION

Answering various inquiries, we report that the DRAMA is not a mere statement of the divine plan—not a mere sermon. It therefore appeals to the public. We trust that its effect will be a broadening of human intelligence and interest in respect to the Bible and the plan of God therein set forth. It is in four parts of two hours each. All witnessing it, we believe, will have larger conceptions of God, of the universe and of humanity—everything. Freed from some of the shackles of error and superstition and ignorance, some, we hope, will be the better enabled to receive the knowledge of God which the Bible sets forth. Many who have witnessed the DRAMA and heard its lectures express great delight. One minister is reported to have said: "I have learned more in these two hours than I learned in the entire three years of my theological course in the U. B. College at Dayton, Ohio." Catholics, Protestants and Jews—all come, all are interested, and no ground for offense is given to any.

The DRAMA is exhibited in Cincinnati at Music Hall; in

Cleveland at The Temple, Prospect Ave. and E. 22nd Street; at Victoria Theatre in St. Louis, and at the American Theatre in Toledo—twice every day. In Boston it is shown in three parts every Sunday. Approximately twelve thousand people are now being reached daily in the cities mentioned.

Our pictures are very beautiful, very costly, and require a great deal of time for preparation. We are, therefore, limited as to the number of sets of the DRAMA we can put forth; we are limited also by the expense incidental to each presentation—for rent, light, operators, etc. We shall not be able to reach very far for some months.

Many more brethren have prepared themselves to be operators than we shall be able to employ for a good while. However, we have in mind something which we will mention as soon as it is ready, which may give opportunities of service to many more than are now employed. As for the sisters, we are relying upon the classes at the various cities where the exhibition is shown to supply the volunteers for ushers.

CONSECRATION AS RELATED TO PRESENT-DAY CONDITIONS

Consecration is another name for sanctification, and signifies a setting apart. Sanctification, consecration, is intimately related to justification, because, although there is a partial justification when one turns from sin to God, there could not be a full justification, a justification to life, until such time as the person had made a full consecration. It would appear, then, that from the time when one starts toward God, when he turns away from sin, and seeks to know and to do God's will, there is a certain degree of consecration, setting apart to God, as in contradistinction to following evil. Each step that he takes toward God is a step toward sanctification and toward justification.

Looking back to the picture in the type as illustrative of this, we see that a Levite or a priest when first approaching the Tabernacle, desiring to enter, would discern in the distance the wall of white surrounding the Court. With more or less knowledge of what was inside he would approach it. When he reached the gate, he would see that the court was a sacred

place, and that none would be received in any sense within its enclosure except as he recognized the sacrifice on the brazen altar just inside.

PROGRESSIVE STEPS OF JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

And so with a person who is in a semi-consecrated condition—a semi-justified condition. His first great lesson at the gate of the Court is that he is a sinner, that God accepts not sinners, and that only those who approach him through recognition of the great sacrifice will be received. Having recognized the sacrifice, having trusted in the death of Christ for justification from sin, his next step would be a deeper consecration, and thus a fuller justification. If he proceeds, this would bring him to the brazen laver of the Court, which would represent a washing away of the filth of the flesh—the becoming more and more clean in life, doing all in his power to free himself from sin. This also is acceptable to God.

But still he is neither justified completely nor sanctified

completely. As he presses on, earnestly desiring to come still nearer to God, he comes to the door of the Tabernacle. There he finds that he can go no further except by death—the death of his human will, the surrender of all human rights and interests. He recognizes, further, that this death must be a sacrificial death, and that he needs to be accepted of the High Priest, that the High Priest must make good for his imperfections by the imputation of his merit before the heavenly Father will accept his full consecration.

His consecration takes place, therefore, before his justification to life. He must present himself in sacrifice before Jesus can accept him, before he can present him to the Father, that he may become one of his members. It is to be a membership in the earthly body of Christ, for suffering and death, and a membership also in the spiritual body, for life and glory. The sealing of his consecration will be the divine acceptance of that consecration, which is indicated by a begetting of the holy Spirit. And begetting of the holy Spirit is indicated by his appreciation of the deep things of God, as represented in the altar of incense and the table of shew-bread; in experiences of chiseling and polishing, and by opportunities to serve. In some cases these various steps are taken almost simultaneously.

After acceptance on the part of God, the consecration must be persisted in, maintained. We must abide in Christ, in order to be sharers in the royal priesthood beyond the veil, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. If we in the present time suffer with him, then we shall also reign with him in glory.

AS TO THOSE CONSECRATING SINCE EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-ONE

Some have been concerned as to what evidence, if any, a person consecrating himself since 1881 would have that his consecration had been accepted of God. We would say regarding this that something would depend on how recently the person had made the consecration. If very recently, he would have no sure means of determining. If a year or two had passed, and he had not in the meantime received any evidences of the holy Spirit's begetting—if he had not received increased ability to understand and appreciate the truth; if he had not experienced a love for the truth and a desire to serve it; if he had not found some opportunity for serving the truth, and some experiences of trial—in such case he would have reason to doubt the divine acceptance of his consecration.

But in such a case we would be inclined to wonder if the consecration had been properly made. Our thought would be that in one way or another God accepts every consecration, that a broken and contrite heart he will in no way despise. He did not despise those in ancient times who consecrated their lives to him—the prophets and the faithful Israelites of old. They were not despised nor rejected. They found opportunities for service and they had this testimony (Hebrews 11:5), that they pleased God; and they received a special blessing as a reward for their obedience and for all the sacrifices they had made. But this did not mean with them a begetting of the holy Spirit.

We have every reason at present to believe that the number of the elect is not yet completed, because of many crowns having been forfeited. We see coming in, day by day and week by week, some who give evidence of the Lord's acceptance, who evidence that the Lord is permitting them to lay down their lives in his service. But the time will undoubtedly come in the near future when the number of the elect will be complete. Then only such vacancies as might still occur by some falling out would remain. In that case there might be a number in the consecrated attitude, whom God would accept to take the places of some who would drop out. These would receive the begetting of the holy Spirit, and would find opportunities for serving the truth and for suffering for the truth's sake.

The evidences seem to be that there are still quite a number of vacancies in the elect number, because there are people coming into present truth and consecrating who have come directly from the world. This would seem to indicate that there are not at present a sufficient number fully consecrated to complete the 144,000. If there were, these would be given the preference over those not consecrated.

THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT POSITION

It would seem that throughout Christendom we can see today a great many who have taken the steps of consecration to a greater or less degree and more or less intelligently. Some recognize the Redeemer and the necessity for his work of salvation, and the fact that he gave his life as an offset for sin. Some have gone further, and with more or less intelligence have "washed at the laver."

But it seems that the great majority have not gone much

further—that they do not see the propriety of going further. The majority of professed Christian people today do not go any further than to live a moral life. They have not reached the point of consecration to God, and hence have not yet reached the point of vital justification. The majority have perhaps gotten to the laver, and are desiring to wash and be clean.

As such come to learn the message of the kingdom as it is now going forth—that a full consecration to death is the only condition upon which any may be followers of Jesus—some of them gladly avail themselves of this knowledge and offer. They gladly go forward to the extent of full consecration, full justification; and by reason of their surroundings, and the fact that the majority of professed Christian people in the various denominations are behind them as regards attainment, instead of being ahead of them, these are looked upon as peculiar. The majority do not discern that this peculiarity is the very thing that God requires of those who would be joint-heirs with Christ—of those who would follow in the path of devotion and faithfulness, that they may be accounted worthy of reigning with Christ in his glorious kingdom.

THE GREAT COMPANY

A class mentioned in the Scriptures as the great company, who will come up out of great tribulation and wash their robes and make them clean in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14), and who will eventually attain to the position of anti-typical Levites, is worthy of consideration. These have passed the various stages of full consecration and divine acceptance and the begetting of the holy Spirit. They became new creatures in Christ Jesus and entered into the Holy. But through an insufficiency in the matter of zeal, and a lack of stamina, because of their unfavorable environment in Babylon, these are failing to go on, failing to see that a full sacrifice of earthly things is the only condition upon which they can gain the heavenly things.

These are seeking to be followers of Christ and followers of Mammon, seeking to please the Lord and to please the world, having some of the Lord's spirit and some of the spirit of the world, and in general not making progress, and not putting off the things of the flesh—anger, hatred, malice and strife, envy and evil speaking, the works of the flesh and of the devil, and therefore are not putting on the fruits of the spirit—faith, fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, meekness, gentleness, love.

It must be admitted that these have not had the right instructors, and they have gotten wrong conceptions—misunderstandings of the Lord's Word. Nevertheless, we cannot but have faith that God will guide these who are really his children, and will, through suffering, lead them to take a positive stand.

We do not think we should understand the Scriptures to teach that the great company will attain to the same degree of spiritual development as the little flock. It is true that God has only the standard of perfection for any of his creatures; but there are many who demonstrate by their lives that, if everything were favorable, they would be very loyal to the Lord and very loyal to righteousness. It is merely because the narrow way is so steep, so up-hill and rugged, that they have not the courage to go on. They fail to display that love and zeal which the Lord has set as the mark for participation in the royal priesthood.

We believe that the Lord would probably expect no more from the great company class than he would expect from the angels—as though he would say of each of these, Doubtless this person, under favorable conditions, would prefer to be my child and to live in harmony with me, and he would not think of living in sin, and would even suffer death rather than deny my name. If such be the test of the great company class, there might be a million who have demonstrated this degree of loyalty in the past, during this Gospel age. Some of these probably have even suffered martyrdom, when they were put to the final test.

OPPOSITION OVERRULED FOR BLESSING

We think there is good reason to believe that a considerable number who have made consecration are still in Babylon. We do not know this, however. We are near to the battle of Armageddon, near the time of the overthrow of Babylon; and we are seeking to give the Message of the truth as wide a circulation as possible, to the intent that this class may hear and come out, even though too late to win the great prize. That they are considerable in number is intimated in the 19th chapter of Revelation, where we are told that when Babylon falls the number of those released at that time will be a great multitude, that the voices of these will be "as the voice of many waters."

We believe that at the present time there are a great many in the nominal churches whose minds are gradually becoming more and more awake to the truth. In various pulpits, where the truth is opposed, many things of the Gospel of the

kingdom are being proclaimed; and this will have the effect of awakening and informing some of this class. Even though those bringing forward these truths declare them in spite and envy, nevertheless the message of the Gospel is preached. (Philippians 1:15-18) Many thus have their attention called to certain truths, which we would never be able to give them—many whom we could not reach.

For instance, some of these ministers mention that we believe the nominal church to be Babylon; others say that we believe that our Lord is now present, in his second advent, and is gathering his jewels (Malachi 3:17); still others are telling that we believe the end of the Gentile times will come in October, 1914. All these truths are being stated in a slanderous way. But we should not be surprised if the Lord

will overrule for the good of his people many of these things.

Not long ago, to our great surprise, a brother told us that his first knowledge of the truth came to him through a Morehead tract. Another man heard his preacher say that we were the anti-Christ. He wanted to see what anti-Christ looked like, and he came to see and hear us, and got the truth, just on account of slanderous statements. So we have to be a target, that the Lord's message may go forth. We are not to think it strange, as though some strange thing happened unto us, that we are caused to be a gazing stock, and pass through fiery trials. Let us rejoice that we are accounted worthy to suffer with Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy.—1 Peter 4:12-14; Hebrews 10:32, 33.

THE SPIRIT OF HELPFULNESS

"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."—Romans 15:2.

The Apostle Paul does not say in our text, Let the younger ones please their neighbor, nor does he say, Let the older ones please their neighbor; but he says, "Let every one of us please his neighbor." All of the Lord's people should have such an interest in one another and in the Lord's cause, and should have so much of the spirit of the Master, that they would seek rather to sacrifice themselves than to gratify self, especially at the expense of others.

If we have the spirit of the Master, we shall find various ways in which we will sacrifice self without waiting for specific directions. The law of love will incite us to act contrary to our own natural preferences, if by so doing we shall help one another in the good way.

In his letter to the Corinthian church the Apostle illustrates this principle by a practical application re the Greek custom of offering their meat in their temples. After having been thus offered to the idols, the meat was considered to be especially sacred. Thus nearly all of the meat available was offered to idols, so that whenever one wished to have meat he could find none that had not been thus offered.

Those who had come out of idolatry into Christianity, knew that the worship of idols was wrong; for they had learned that there is only the one true God. They also knew that the meat itself had not been hurt by being offered to idols; for an idol is nothing. But they should have been willing to deny themselves meat rather than to injure the conscience of a weak brother who still thought that the meat thus offered was sacred, or who thought that it was contaminated. The Apostle declares that he would abstain altogether from eating meat rather than risk stumbling a brother who could not take the broader, truer view. To stumble such a one, might be to throw him out of the right way entirely.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR INFLUENCE

The Apostle did not say that it is not right to eat meat; but that he was willing to forego his rights and privileges in order to edify another. These others of whom he spoke had not come to appreciate fully the fact that meat offered to idols had not been hurt thereby. To set meat before a piece of stone would not injure it; and so to set it before an idol would not hurt it. But St. Paul could better afford to give up eating meat altogether than to stumble a brother.

The principle is obvious. We should, if necessary, be willing to deny ourselves some of our privileges if this course would be of any assistance to a brother and would avoid stumbling him. Some of the Lord's people have very sensitive consciences, others are less sensitive. The longer one has been in the school of Christ and the more ability he has, the more easily should he discern what would be pleasing to the Lord. As a Christian, he would not want to do anything to offend the Lord, even if he were to go without meat for the remainder of his life.

But if he could take the position that his own conscience would approve of a certain course, then the question would be, Would he allow his intelligence, his poise of mind, to work injury to a brother? Would he wish to stumble a brother, to make him weak, to lead him to violate his conscience? Or would he wish to lose all his influence for good over his brother? The Apostle answers this suggestion in the negative; he says, When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."—1 Cor. 8:1-13.

RE SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

Applying the above principle—our responsibility for our influence—to Sunday observance, we are not to feel a bondage, as the Jews did on their Sabbath day. But we should avoid driving tacks or making any unnecessary noises. We should avoid singing or playing on an instrument anything that would not generally be recognized as in keeping with things sacred.

We should avoid what would be considered by others as not observing the Sabbath. We should do this for the sake of our influence. To our understanding every day is a part of the great Sabbath into which we have entered—rest in Christ. We have a greater liberty. But we are not to use this liberty to the injury of others.

Many people think that any kind of labor is a violation of the Fourth Commandment. From our viewpoint we know that the Sabbath of the Jew was typical; and we see what the antitype is. We are enjoying the antitype of that Sabbath. But while we might have liberty to work on Sunday, our so doing might stumble our neighbor. We would not be violating any principle in not observing Sunday; but for the sake of not stumbling our neighbor, we are glad to rest from our work and to give ourselves to the study of God's Word.

Christian people generally do not observe Sunday in the way they think they should observe it. The conception of many is that they should observe it as rigidly as the Jewish law set forth; and that neither the ox nor the ass, the automobile, the street cars nor the steam cars should be used. Indeed, they would not think it right to go any great distance on the Sabbath.

As a matter of fact, the nominal church of today are not living up to their own conceptions of God's law. As we get opportunity, we would like to assist these people to get a truer meaning of the Sabbath, that their consciences be not hurt, but be free from uneasiness. Sunday should be a day that is quiet and reverential in every way, and devoted specially to the service of God—a day in which business is restricted, and as far as possible eliminated. But the interests of the Lord's work forbid our always refraining from the use of steam cars, street cars, etc., on Sunday.

Remembering that the word Sabbath signifies rest, as the Apostle used it (Heb. 4:9, margin), we can see that the church of Christ keeps the Sabbath, or rest, every day, and recognizes God's arrangement in connection with this matter. Those who keep every seventh day as a Sabbath, but who fail to enter into and keep the rest of faith, are not keeping the true Sabbath, but keeping another, so far as the church is concerned.

The Sabbath arrangement was for the Jews. We have the better arrangement under our covenant. We enter into rest, our Sabbath, every day; and we are hoping soon to enter into the still greater Sabbath. In that Sabbath, the Millennium, we shall have not only rest of heart, but also perfection; and we shall then not be beset by the trials and difficulties of life. During his ministry Jesus chose the Sabbath day in which to perform miracles, heal the sick, that he might show forth the kind of works which he will perform during the great Sabbath day, the seventh-thousand-year day—the Millennium.

HELPING, NOT HINDERING, OUR NEIGHBORS

We can apply this principle in a general way. We can apply it to our conversation with Christian people. There is a way of taunting people on their ignorance, etc. This is not love; for love does not delight to expose another's weaknesses. The more careful we become in our words and our actions, the more polite we shall be, the more helpful.

"Politeness is to do and say
The kindest thing in the kindest way."

One may be polite for the sake of policy or for the sake of principle. Our pleasing of our neighbors should be for their edification. We should be glad to do all that we can for their assistance, their edification, their uplift, their upbuilding. If we can speak a pleasant word, a kind word, it would be for upbuilding; and we should speak it, instead of speaking an unkind word.

In our desire for the upbuilding of others we are to have in mind primarily the upbuilding of the Lord's people in spirit.

ual things. As the Apostle says, we are "to provoke one another." We know that there are different ways of provoking others, and St. Paul shows us the right way. What the Apostle had in mind was the reverse of provoking to anger, hatred and strife. Some of the dear brethren who are evidently very sincere have not caught the spirit of the truth on this subject; and wherever they go, they are apt to stir up the evil mind of others, instead of stirring up their good mind and provoking to love and good works.

We are to please our neighbors so far as it would be for

their good, and according to right principles. But to upbuild one in injustice would not be right. We should not think it right to let our neighbor's chickens run all over our garden; and we think that he would thus be more edified by our firm stand for right. But we must not tell him how to manage his chickens. We must do our best to keep his chickens off our place; but we would make a mistake if we were to go in and order our neighbor's chickens, house and children. To do so would be busybodying. We shall have enough to do to look after the weaknesses of our own family.

THE END OF THE AGE A PERILOUS TIME

"In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be traitors, heady, . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."—2 Timothy 3:4.

The expression, "the last days," or the latter days, the closing days, refers, not to the end of the world in the sense that many expect this event, but is a Scriptural designation of the present time, the end of this age, when the reign of Righteousness is about to begin. We are glad to be living now in this harvest time! "The harvest is the end of the age." (Matthew 13:39—Diaglott) The warning given by the Apostle is that, instead of the world's being Christianized and converted to God at this time, the reverse condition will prevail. It will be a time of great peril—peril to the Lord's people—peril for those who have started out to follow Christ. However, it will not be so much a perilous time for the world.

The only ones who are on trial for life or death are those who have been released from the Adamic condemnation. To these the time described by St. Paul will be one of severe testing. The whole course of the world will be turned aside from the high standard that might have been expected. Men will be traitors. As long as it will be of advantage to them to perform a contract they will do so; when not advantageous they will not fulfil the contract. It will be a time when every man's hand will be lifted against his neighbor. Selfishness will be rampant. Each will do what will be to his own interest, regardless of obligation. There will be manifest headiness and selfishness and self-conceit. Men will be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." This condition is to be a sign of the end of the age.

Every thoughtful person must perceive that this condition of things is prevailing now. Whenever a contract is found to be unsatisfactory—whether it be a marriage contract or a business contract—the dissatisfied contractor is liable to break the agreement. This party to the contract then assumes the attitude of one who declares, Force me to keep it if you can. The Lord's people will keep their word and be firm for principle and true to their contracts, even when these prove disadvantageous to them. This attitude is pleasing to the Lord.

PREVALENCE OF THESE CONDITIONS UNIVERSAL

We find headiness of spirit in the world everywhere—a loss of respect for authority. No doubt there has been too much respect for authority in the past. Now the pendulum is swinging to the other side, and there is no respect for authority. This condition has been brought about by a lack of reverence for God—the inevitable result of loss of faith in the Bible as the Word of God. As people lose faith in the Bible, they lose faith in God, and become more selfish and more self-willed. This condition of affairs has been brought about by false doctrine, error. People think that God is their adversary, purposing to do them harm.

The higher critics have been seeking to put away what they have considered the absurdities of religious thought, and to this end have done away with the Bible. Bible students see that the absurdities have been brought about by the creeds and not by the Bible. But the world, losing confidence in God, are becoming more heady than ever before. Even the reverential fear which once held them is departing, and there is a disposition to doubt everything. People are in the condition of mind

where they say, "Let us eat, drink and be merry"; nobody knows about the future; the preachers are all confused. Everything has come about by evolutionary processes. Let us enjoy the present. Let pleasure be our aim in life. This would seem to be the attitude of the world. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

WORLDLY SPIRIT IN SOME OF THE CONSECRATED

These conditions of our day make it a perilous time for the church. Do you ask, Would not the church, on the contrary, be more than ever led to love God? And would this not guard them and keep them from danger? We answer that some of God's people are becoming more and more immersed in the world. The spirit of the world surges all around them. With great difficulty could these come to realize that the whole world is astray in their ideas and ways. The tendency of all such is to have the mind of the world, even though they be spirit-begotten.

This worldly spirit, the Apostle suggests, would affect the church to some extent. Consequently some of the Lord's people would thus come into special peril at this time, because of neglecting their covenant with the Lord. Others would remember that covenant, and watch and pray, and so make good progress. Those who are living close to the Lord are, for this reason, developing in mind and heart. But these are few.

The great company class, while still loving the Lord, are becoming immersed in the spirit of the world. Even those who are living nearest to the divine standard will be more or less imperiled through this spirit, unless they continue diligent in prayer and the study of God's Word. What we see going on about us seems natural to our minds. The way in which other people spend time and money is a temptation to the Lord's people which must be steadfastly resisted.

A SUBTLE TEST

The Lord's people spend and are being spent in his service—by volunteer work, by attending meetings, by holding meetings and in various ways, according to opportunity. They are living separate from the world—distinct lives, lives of consecration. The world now has an eight-hour day. The Lord's faithful people would, on the contrary, make theirs a sixteen-hour day. But all these present-day conditions constitute perils. For us to do what others do, and to devote to the Lord's service only what the world considers a reasonable day's work, would not be fulfilling our covenant of sacrifice at all. Those who seek merely to do right, and to put in eight hours or so a day faithfully, after the manner of the world, will be judged from this standpoint; and they will merely obtain a place in the great company. They are not fulfilling the conditions of the covenant of sacrifice.

But the little flock will serve the Lord with such delight that they will scarcely know how to cease their efforts. They recognize that their bodies are fully consecrated to the Lord, and they are daily putting them to death in a reasonable, rational manner. In view of these perilous times, let us each ask himself the question, To which class do I belong?

COURAGEOUS DEALING—PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

"Deal courageously, and the Lord will be with the good."—2 Chron. 19:11.

There is a divine oversight of the affairs of those who serve God recognized here, and a divine blessing may be expected eventually upon all who deal justly. All heathen religions, as well as the Christian religion—the religion of the Bible—incline to lead the devotee to expect divine blessing. But no other religion sets forth, as does the Bible, a just God. No other religions are founded on the principle of justice. This is one reason why the Bible has had potent influence for liberty. Wherever it has gone, it has been "Liberty enlightening the world."

There is no partiality with the Creator—no class distinction with him—neither high nor low, rich nor poor, noble nor peas-

ant. It is for this reason that when the teachings of the Lord were before the Israelites they were a liberty-loving people. In proportion as they fell into idolatry, they lost this spirit.

BIBLE BRINGS SPIRIT OF LIBERTY

With the spirit of liberty, of course, will go the spirit of heroism. Therefore the Bible is the source of the valiant qualities of the early church in their withstanding persecution. Later on, when human traditions and heathen philosophies were heeded instead of the writings of Jesus and the apostles and prophets, the spirit of subjection, the spirit of slavery, the spirit of fear, the spirit of ignorance, proportionately prevailed, and brought on the dark ages. With the blessed in-

fluence which comes from the Word of God, we see, since the time of the Reformation, the spirit of liberty more manifest. Wherever the Bible has gone, the spirit of liberty has gone. Wherever the Bible has not gone, the spirit of liberty has not prevailed.

Witness, too, the so-called Christian countries where the Bible has been ignored—Russia, Spain, Portugal and large districts of France, Poland, etc. Wherever the Bible is, liberty is more and more manifest. Even where the people do not recognize the Bible, the spirit of its teachings has had its effect. There is something of a realization that all are of one flesh and blood, one common brotherhood. God created of one blood all people that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. (Acts 17:26) There are, of course, advantages in the way of birth, education, etc. Various circumstances affect conditions. But all mankind are responsible to the Creator, who is the great Judge over all. He is to be looked to as the One who will give rewards and punishments.

SPECIAL DEALINGS UNDER LAW COVENANT

Our text gives the words of the great king of Judah who became a reformer. He found that various degrees of injustice had crept into the customs of the people under the previous kings. In appointing officers and judges, King Jehoshaphat exhorted them to give their opinion according to the principles of justice. He said, "Deal courageously, and the Lord will be with the good." The Lord would bless those who would be faithful. The Lord would be with the good work that they would do, if they would do it faithfully.

We are to remember that there was a special arrangement existing between God and the people of Israel. Under that arrangement the Lord was to bless them in proportion as they were loyal to him and to the principles of his government. We are not, therefore, to apply these words indiscriminately to other nations, if some in other nations had attempted some kind of reform. God was not undertaking to deal with other nations at that time. He was letting them get a general lesson under their own supervision.

TEXT NOT APPLICABLE TO NATIONS TODAY

God intervened only where it would be injurious to allow certain peoples to carry their evil course any further; as, for instance, in the case of the Ninevites, the Sodomites, and the Amalekites. We could not say that we could apply this text today; and that if some good people were in public office and should deal courageously and put down all the wrong and uplift the right, God would give them success in the work. God is not dealing with the nations at all.

His whole dealing at this time is with the church. The world today is still doing as it has always done, seeing what it can do for itself. In all probability these reformers today who would deal courageously would bring upon themselves great persecution if they should attempt to interfere with many of the entrenched vices. We have an example of this in New York City at the present time. Entrenched vice is hard to handle. Occasionally the world produces men who handle such things in a noble way. There are noble men inside and outside the church. But we cannot say that the Lord would be with all of them.

It is a mistake to say that the present governments are under the grace of God. The Bible says that the governments of this time are under the influence of the prince of this world, and that he has the upper hand at the present time. But when Messiah takes his great power and reigns, then Satan will be bound. Then all the evil influences will be brought under the control of the Messianic kingdom. From that time onward, the saints will deal courageously in Messiah's Millennial kingdom, and shall reign for the purpose of putting down sin, until eventually Christ shall have accomplished the work of causing God's will to be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven.

CHURCH TO JUDGE COURAGEOUSLY IN NEXT AGE

The point we notice, then, is that our text was applicable to the Jews, because they were a typical people of God. The king of Israel made use of these words to certain ones whom he appointed judges in his day. The church is now being prepared for the work of judging in the kingdom. The Lord distinctly tells us that we are not to judge before the time. In the kingdom we shall judge. Then it will be our business to judge. Then we shall be required to render righteous and courageous judgment, in full accord with the Lord's instructions.

As the Apostle Paul says, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2) We do know it. Our experiences now are fitting us to judge the world later, that we may do it successfully, courageously, lifting up all mankind who will to the glorious standard of perfection. All the evil doers shall be cut off. Then every knee will bow and every tongue will confess, to the glory of the Father and of the Son.

CHURCH NOW JUDGES ALONG CERTAIN LINES

The Scriptures instruct us that now the church should judge its members along certain lines. We are not to judge one another's hearts. On the contrary, we are to take one another's word for their heart condition. But we are to judge one another's conduct. If one should live immorally, it would be the duty of the church to deal with him according to the immorality of his conduct. The Apostle asks, Why should you go to law with the brethren before unbelievers? If you are unprepared to judge yourselves in small matters, how would you ever be prepared to judge in great matters?

In our judging, we are to remember the lines along which the Lord would have us judge. The Lord will be with the good, we may be sure of that fact. But we are to deal kindly, affectionately. "Be kindly affectioned one toward another, with brotherly love." In dealing with one another, in proportion as we lay down hard, inflexible lines of judgment, in that proportion we would be fixing the gauge of the Lord's judgment with us. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." With what allowance we mete out to others, the Lord will judge us. We are to be sympathetic with others, and to remember that all need mercy and forgiveness, even as we hope for these for ourselves.

Whoever has a duty to perform, let him not fear but be courageous; and in doing unpleasant tasks which are necessary, let us perform them in a kindly manner, both justly and lovingly. Let us not fear man, but rather fear the Lord, and be intent on pleasing him.

PROFITABLE TABLE TALKS

APRIL 5.—Luke 14:7-24.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—Verse 11.

A considerable number of advanced Christian people, Bible students, have in an informal way recently adopted the custom of having Bible talks during the meal hour. We know of many who are finding it profitable. To partake of heavenly food at the same time that we appropriate the natural is quite proper; the lifting of the mind from the things of the world to the consideration of heavenly things is advantageous in every way. We see that this was Jesus' custom.

Today's lesson shows the Master a guest at the table of a prominent Pharisee, speaking in a manner that would not be appropriate to any but himself. In a parable he criticised the gathering guests, because he noted that they selfishly chose the chief seats of honor, and because he would have them see that this selfish spirit would have to do with their character-building and with their fitness or unfitness for the honors of the kingdom for which they hoped.

When bidden to a public function, they should humbly take very lowly, inconspicuous places, not knowing how many might be more worthy than they in the estimation of the host. Then, if the host noticed them in a very humble place, and so desired, he might ask them forward to a more prominent place. Thus they would be honored and the honor would reach them in a proper manner; whereas, in taking a prominent place uninvited,

they at least ran the risk of displeasing the host or the possibility of being asked to take an inferior place, the more honorable one being given to one considered more worthy; and thus they would be, in a measure, disgraced.

The Master declared that this principle held with him and with the Father; namely, that "whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The apostles set forth the same proposition, saying, "God resisteth the proud, but showeth his favor to the humble"; "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:6.

The thought is that the self-seeking, the proud in spirit, could not be trusted by the Lord in a high position. They might do damage to themselves and to his cause, with such a spirit. On the contrary, he will seek those who are of humble mind and who would not be injured by the exaltation, nor in danger of deflecting in the future work to which all of the kingdom class are called.

Turning to his host, Jesus gave him something of a compliment, saying, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they bid thee again, and recompense be made

thee. But call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."

The Pharisee had done something of the very kind in inviting Jesus and probably his disciples to dinner. He well knew that they were poor and would be unable to ask him in return. The Master's words may have been comforting to him. At all events, they set forth a grand principle, which should be recognized by all, rich and poor alike. If we get our rewards for good deeds in the present life, how will there be anything coming to us in the future?

Let us therefore follow the Master's instruction and seek to do kindnesses to those who cannot return the favor, assured that God will appreciate such things as done for mercy's sake, for righteousness' sake, and will give a proper reward. We do not understand the Master to mean that it would be wrong to invite friends or neighbors or kinsman who might invite us in turn, but that we are not to think that in so doing we are laying up any treasure in heaven.

There was more reason for the calling of the poor, the lame, the maimed, in Jesus' day than now. Today, by common consent, civilized people recognize a duty toward the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. Homes are provided for them out of the public purse, by general taxation. Whoever enters into this matter of paying for the support of the poor in a proper spirit is doing something that in the sight of God is meritorious; but whoever pays such taxes from compulsion merely, without appreciation, evidently would not be deserving of any credit. However, all such institutions should be conducted in such a manner as would afford reasonable comfort and be good enough for ourselves or for our relatives, were we or they the persons in need.

Under such conditions it would be almost wrong to fail to co-operate with these provisions, to refuse such provisions and to expect private support from friends and relatives, at an additional cost over and above the taxes they pay. Everything in God's Word seems to inculcate the spirit of justice first, and the spirit of love, kindness and sympathy beyond justice. But it should be voluntary and not enforced, and an indication of the measure of the holy Spirit which we possess.

GOD'S GREAT FEAST

A person at the supper, after hearing Jesus' comments, remarked that it would be a blessed thing to have a share in the great feast with which the kingdom of God will be inaugurated. Jesus seized upon this as a text, and preached another sermon in a parable. As usual, his parable-sermon was in respect to the kingdom of God:

A man made a great supper and bade many guests. When the time for the supper arrived, he sent his servants to inform them, saying, "Come; for all things are now ready." But these with one accord began to make excuse. One said, I have bought a field; I must go and take a look at it; please excuse me. Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must be proving them; please excuse me. Another said, I have recently married; therefore I cannot come. When the servant returned and told his experience the Master of the house was provoked, and said to the servant, Go out quickly into the streets and the lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, the maimed, the blind and the lame.

The meaning of the parable is not far to seek. God had indeed provided a great feast. Long years before he had sent word to the Jewish nation that in due time such a great blessing would be open to them—the privilege of becoming members of the kingdom of God—sharers of it with Messiah. Yet, when Jesus appeared and the time came for the feast to be spread, those who had been bidden were careless.

Jesus and his disciples had been going about for some time declaring that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and that all who believed should make haste to associate themselves with it—to come to the feast—should be getting a part of the blessing. But the invited ones were full, covetous, money-lovers. When they heard the message of the kingdom they said, I am

too busy with my worldly prospects. And so they slighted God's invitation, extended to them through Jesus and the Apostles.

The ones especially invited were the ones who specifically claimed to be the "holiness people"—the Pharisees and the Doctors of the Law. In the parable, the rejection of the ones originally invited led to the invitation's being sent to others, in the streets and the lanes of the city. This meant that the poor had the Gospel preached to them. Publicans and sinners were received by our Lord, told about the kingdom, and invited to leave all their sinful and injurious practices, to accept forgiveness of sins, and to come in and participate as heirs of God's promise of joint-heirship with Jesus Christ their Redeemer.

Nearly all the preaching of Jesus and of his disciples, up to Pentecost and after, was to the poor of Israel—the publicans and sinners. The charge made against our Lord by the Pharisees who rejected him was that he received sinners, and that he ate with them.

GREAT FEAST REPRESENTS RICH BLESSINGS

The great feast of the parable figuratively represents rich blessings of God's providence for the church—the knowledge of the truth, justification from sin, the begetting of the holy Spirit, the privilege of appropriating the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word. All this is the feast which the Lord has spread for now eighteen hundred years, and to which he has been inviting, or calling, certain ones. First the Pharisees, the "religious lights," representatives of Moses, and secondly the poor, the sinful, the weak, the outcasts of Israel, the prodigal son class, were invited.

Some of the latter class came, but not enough to fill the places already provided. In other words, not enough of the Jews were "Israelites indeed," acceptable to God, to fill the foreordained number of the elect church. Hence the Master sent out his servants the third time, saying that they should go outside the city, into the highways and hedges, and urge the people to come in, that his house might be filled—not a seat left vacant.

This applies, evidently, to the sending of the Gospel to the Gentiles. For eighteen hundred years the Message has been going up and down through the highways and hedges, calling and inviting, drawing, such as have hearing ears and responsive hearts. In all, they will not be a great company. In all, they will not represent very many of the lights of the world. The Apostle writes, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," hath God chosen, but chiefly "the poor of this world, rich in faith," to be heirs of the kingdom.—1 Corinthians 1:26, 27; James 2:5.

Ultimately the full number purposed by the great Householder will have been called, accepted, and found worthy through Christ to have a place at that table—to share in that great feast. It will be the nuptial feast, in honor of the marriage of the Lamb, after his wife hath made herself ready. (Revelation 19:7-9) At that feast, we are assured, will be a secondary company, not worthy to be of the bride class. These may be figuratively styled the bridesmaids, the great company class; for after the account of the gathering of the bride we have the Lord's message to these subsequently delivered from Babylon, saying, "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

You can imagine the honors and joys of that great banquet! The aroma of the good things coming, already reaches us in the anteroom, before we enter the banquet hall. These odors come to us through the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word, assuring us of his faithfulness and of his provision of the things which "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," but which "God hath provided for them that love him" supremely.

Those originally bidden will not taste of that supper, though, thank God! divine provision has arranged for another banquet, which through the kingdom will be spread for all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples—"a feast of fat things."—Isa. 25:6-8.

"JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR"

APRIL 12.—Luke 24:13-35.

"It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that was raised from the dead."—Romans 8:34.

We are to study today one of the most striking manifestations of Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection. Early in the morning of the day of his resurrection he had appeared to the women who came with spices to embalm his body. They had communicated to St. Peter and St. John that the Lord had been with them. These two most energetic apostles vied with each other to get to the sepulcher with speed. But they saw merely the empty tomb.

The disciples of Jesus were dazed, perplexed. Although he

had told them that he would be crucified, and that he would rise from the dead on the third day, they had not comprehended the teaching. Even after hearing of his resurrection they were seemingly slow to connect it with what he had previously told them.

In the afternoon, two of the company were walking home, discussing their disappointment in Jesus—how, instead of becoming a great king, he had been crucified, and their hopes of associating with him in dignity and honor had all been dashed.

Jesus had been proven a fraud, to the satisfaction of their rulers. The fact that he was crucified seemed to settle the matter that he could not have been the Messiah, as he had declared and as they had believed.

THAT JESUS IS STILL FLESH IS UNSUPPOSABLE

While they thus talked, Jesus overtook them. They knew him not, because of his resurrection change. The Apostle Peter tells us that he was "put to death in flesh, but quickened in spirit." We understand this in the light of the explanation given of the resurrection change of the church. The Apostle Paul declares: "Sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in an animal body, raised a spirit body." (1 Corinthians 15:42-44) And, of course, if the church is to experience such a resurrection change in order to be like her Lord, he must have experienced just such a change.

The same thought is impressed again by the Apostle's statement: "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The change which the church is to experience, in order to be fitted for the kingdom of God is the same change which Jesus experienced when he was raised from the dead, a life-giving Spirit—no longer a man.

Our Lord's title, "the Son of Man," still belongs to him, just as the title, "the Word of God," the Logos, still belongs to him. When the Logos was made flesh, the identity was not lost. Respecting our Lord's human experiences, we read: "A body hast thou prepared me"—for the suffering of death. (Hebrews 10:5-10) When he had accomplished that purpose, he no longer had need of human nature; but, as he had foretold his disciples, he ascended up where he was before—to the spirit plane, to the spirit nature, as well as, later on, to heaven itself.

To assume that Jesus is a fleshly being in heaven, bearing wounds and scars to all eternity and surrounded by spirit beings on a higher plane than the human, is to suppose that the Father never really exalted him again to the glory which he had with God before the world was (John 17:5), and is unsupposable. We must bear in mind, therefore, the Scriptures, which show that the Father highly exalted the Redeemer, not only restoring him to spirit-being, higher than human, but exalting him "far above angels, principalities, powers and every name that is named."—Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:20-23.

"JESUS SHOWED HIMSELF"

St. Luke declares that Jesus showed himself alive after his resurrection. (Acts 1:3) Again he speaks of him as appearing. The narrative shows both terms are justified by the facts. He appeared and disappeared. He showed himself to some and not to others, and in every way manifested the fact that some great change had taken place in him after those three days. Not only did he appear and show himself in different forms, in different bodies, unlike each other, but also in different clothing. Then, too, when he suddenly disappeared, the clothing disappeared also.

When we say that Jesus, a spirit being, materialized, we are not to be understood as in any way sympathizing with the class called Spiritualists, who produce materializations of the dead. If we desire an illustration, let us go back to the Bible account of how Jesus, when he was the Logos—before his nature was changed from Spirit to human—appeared to Abraham, in company with two angels. We read that the Lord and two angels did eat and talk with Abraham, who knew them not, but "entertained angels unawares" until, eventually, their identity was revealed.

Just so it was with the two disciples en route to Emmaus: The stranger who overtook them sympathetically inquired, Why look and talk so sadly? They opened their hearts to him, astonished that he did not know. They told of Jesus the Nazarene, a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and they explained to him how the chief priests and rulers had delivered him up and crucified him. They explained that theirs was a double disappointment, in that not only had they lost a friend, but their hope that he was the Messiah, who would have redeemed Israel, had been crushed. They proceeded to tell him of the events of the very morning—that some of the women of their company had found the tomb empty and had seen angels, who said that he was alive, etc.

This gave Jesus the opportunity he sought—to explain to his disciples quietly, without any excitement, that the experiences they had had were part of the divine plan. He said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" He declared that it was necessary that he should thus suffer in order to enter into his glory—that without such suffering he never could be the King of Glory, with power to bless and restore humanity, by and bye. —Acts 3:19-21.

Then he began to point out from the writings of Moses and

all the prophets what God had foretold respecting Messiah's experiences. He probably reminded them of how Isaac had been offered up by Abraham, explaining that Abraham typified the heavenly Father and Isaac typified himself; and that the offering, even though not fully carried out, represented the death of himself as it had taken place, the subsequent life of Isaac representing the resurrection of Jesus, to be with his Father again.

He doubtless told them about the smitten rock, from which gushed the waters—that that rock represented himself, who must be smitten in order to give the water of life to the dying world. He doubtless told them how Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and explained that the serpent represented sin; and that he, in being crucified, was made to take the place of the sinner, that the sinner might, through faith, be made righteous in God's sight through the Redeemer's sacrifice.

He doubtless explained to them the sacrifice of the Atonement Day, in which the bullock, which died, represented himself in the flesh; and in which the high priest, who lived, and who entered into the Most Holy and sprinkled the blood for the forgiveness of the people, also represented himself, a spirit being, who after resurrection would go into heaven itself and eventually offer up full sin-atonement on behalf of the world, and would come forth again at his second advent to bless those for whom he had died.

"HE OPENED THE SCRIPTURES"

He doubtless explained to them respecting the passover-lamb—that it typified himself, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." We may assume that he proceeded to the Psalms, Isaiah and the other prophets, explaining all the prophetic passages relating to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow. No wonder those disciples afterward declared that their hearts had burned within them while he opened to them the Scriptures!

As the early disciples were refreshed by the message of God's grace and the fulfilment of his promises, so it is sure to be with all the followers of Jesus. The Lord prophetically declared, "My people perish for lack of knowledge." Evidently there can be only a dwarfed Christian life and experience except as the Word of God is understood and assimilated. Hence we have the frequent exhortations of Jesus and the apostles that the people of God should grow in grace and knowledge, should search the Scriptures, etc. Let those who are cold and indifferent unite with those who are dejected and despondent, in coming to the Master for the "meat in due season." Such surely will not be turned away empty by him who said, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And in proportion as they find their hearts also burning within them, as they realize the fulfilment of God's promises in the past, so shall they develop faith in the fulfilment of those promises which relate to the future.

Jesus could have manifested himself to his disciples otherwise than he did. Instead of appearing as the gardener and as the traveler, etc., in different forms, and then vanishing after communicating with his disciples, he could have done just as he did with Saul of Tarsus, the last one to whom he appeared. As we read, "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born before the time." (1 Corinthians 15:8) Those begotten of the holy Spirit now are to be born of the spirit in the resurrection. Then they will be spirit beings, like the Redeemer, see him as he is and share his glory. That will be the due time for all of his followers to see him as he is—not as he was.—1 John 3:2.

But Saul of Tarsus saw him thus as a spirit being, "shining above the brightness of the sun" at noonday—saw him before the time. The effect upon him was disastrous to his eyes, and required a miracle for his recovery of sight. And even then apparently a certain blemish was allowed to be a thorn in his flesh to his dying day, as a reminder of God's great mercy toward him, and to keep him humble in connection with his powerful ministry.—2 Corinthians 12:7.

"THEY KNEW HIM—HE VANISHED"

When the travelers arrived in Emmaus, Jesus, after being urged, accepted their hospitality. We have every reason to suppose that if they had not urged, he would not have stopped with them; for "he made as if he would have gone farther." And so it is still; he does not intrude upon his disciples. Rather, he encourages us to recognize our need of him and to ask, that we may receive, that our joy may be full. So it was with those brethren at Emmaus. They were appreciative of what they had learned. "Never man spake like this Man." If he had ministered to them so much spiritual joy, they would delight in showing him every courtesy in their power; and perhaps this might give further opportunities for conversation.

And so it was. When they sat down to supper, their guest

assumed something of the manner of Jesus; and the way in which he asked a blessing upon the food reminded them, evidently, of Jesus. Their eyes of understanding began to open. Immediately they realized that no one but their own Master could have given them the lessons just enjoyed on the journey. And thus having fulfilled the purpose of his materialization, he immediately vanished out of their sight—clothes and all—instantaneously.

Their joy was too great to permit them to sleep. They must hasten to carry the good tidings to the other disciples. So they journeyed back to Jerusalem, and there found the others rejoicing in the fact that the Lord had manifested himself to Simon Peter. Then the two told the story of their experiences; and faith, hope and joy began to grow in all their hearts.

Who cannot see that the Lord's way of manifesting himself after his resurrection was in every way the best! Had he appeared to many of them, or to all of them, as he appeared to Saul of Tarsus later, they would have been bewildered,

shocked. They would not have been so well able to identify "the light shining above the sun at noonday" with their Master, Jesus. Even if a voice from heaven had declared the fact of his resurrection, Jesus would not have had the same opportunity of explaining to their minds the prophecies; and they, perturbed and excited, would not so well have been able to receive the instruction.

It should be remembered that out of fewer than ten appearances during the forty days between our Lord's resurrection and ascension, he only twice appeared in a form similar to that which they had seen, and bearing the marks of crucifixion; and that on both of these occasions he appeared while the doors were shut, and later vanished while the doors were still shut, in order that his followers might learn a double lesson:

- (1) That he was no longer dead, but alive, resurrected;
- (2) That he was no longer flesh, but spirit—"Now the Lord is that Spirit."

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTAINING BALANCE OF MIND

"Let all your deeds be done in love."—1 Corinthians 16:14.—Diaglott.

God is the very personification of sympathy and love. As the Scriptures declare, "God is Love." And all who will be God's children, developed in his likeness, will be loving children. As St. John says, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16) In proportion as we develop strength of character as new creatures, this quality of love increases. In addition, we should find our judgment also becoming more accurate. Those who are developed in the spirit of the Lord have better judgment than they formerly had. As the days go by, they know better how to sympathize with the world; how to deal with mankind; they are getting more and more of the wisdom which cometh from above.

CAREFUL PREPARATION FOR KINGDOM NECESSARY

Before we became Christians at all, we may have been under-balanced, or over-balanced—we may not have known how to deal properly with our families or our friends. Out of kindness and sympathy we may have been inclined to give them money, or to yield to their wishes in a way that was injurious to them; or we may have been too severe and unyielding. But as we grow in the spirit of a sound mind, we learn better how to deal with others, so as to be in harmony with the divine will, the divine spirit.

When we shall have experienced our change and have become like our Redeemer, all of our powers will be perfect. Our love, our conception of justice, and also our conception of how to deal with others, will then be perfect. Every one who does not develop this character of love, mercy, justice, etc., will be unprepared for the kingdom work.

The next age is to be a time of purification, of purgation, to the world; and those of the Lord's people who do not now have character enough to give necessary stripes are not worthy of a position in which authority must be exercised. On the other hand, those who would give too many stripes would not be fit to deal with mankind. Therefore we all need this balance of mind in order to be ready for the work of the next age.

PROPER AND IMPROPER OCCASIONS FOR ANGER

As we come to see that the whole race of Adam is fallen—some more, some less—we develop a broad sympathy for mankind. We grow compassionate. We desire to lift them up out of their degradation. We would like to help them as much as opportunity affords. Hence we are far from wishing to

render evil for evil. We wish to be peacemakers as far as possible. Therefore, unless it would be injustice to refrain from speaking sharply, we should be careful that our words are kind and loving. However, even though our words might not be angry, there are times when sharp utterances might be helpful, but even these should be tempered with love; tempered with the spirit of the Master.

"BE YE ANGRY AND SIN NOT"

There is a difference between anger that would be righteous indignation and anger that would be unloving, unkind, unjust. We know that God is angry with the wicked, for the Scriptures so tell us. (Psalm 7:11) This fact shows us that anger of itself does not necessarily imply a sinful condition; for God has no sin, and he judges himself by the same regulations under which he judges his creatures. Therefore anger in itself is not sin.

In God's case there is no danger that he will make a mistake and be angry with the right or approve the wrong, or that he will be lenient with the wrong and thus oppose the right. His knowledge is perfect; therefore his conduct is perfect. In our case, however, if we feel that anger is proper for us, we should use a great deal of discretion. As the Apostle Paul says: "Be ye angry and sin not."—Ephesians 4:26.

In a case where an innocent person is suffering wrong, and we have full knowledge of the matter, then it might be our duty to manifest anger, righteous indignation. It would be proper to manifest a certain degree of anger if we saw even a dumb brute mistreated. If we saw the principles of righteousness being outraged, it might become necessary to manifest some anger, some indignation.

But these cases would probably be very rare, for the circumstances would not often be a matter of our business. As St. Peter remarks, we are none of us to suffer as busybodies in other men's affairs.—1 Peter 4:15.

If we see a parent doing to his child something that is not right, we should not interfere unless the child's life is endangered. If it is merely a case of switching or a box on the ear, we must not interfere. It is not our business. Let us as the Lord's children, ambassadors of the King of heaven, seek more and more to exercise the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of love and reasonableness.

"NAUGHT THAT I HAVE MY OWN I CALL"

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."—Job 1:21.

All that we have should be regarded as a gift from God, whether it be much or little. God's gift to our first parents was a very munificent one—perfection of life. They were made in the image and likeness of God in the flesh—only "a little lower than the angels." Because of disobedience this perfection was forfeited. Obedience was the condition on which Adam would be permitted to remain in the Garden of Eden. If he was obedient he might live and enjoy it, might fill the earth with posterity and gradually bring the whole world to the blessed conditions which he himself found in the Garden.

It was when Adam sinned that God rejected him from being a son. After that time no man was ever called a son of God until Jesus came. And no man since Jesus has been called a son of God, except those who have come to God through Jesus, and have been accepted by him. Adam was cast out of his Eden home for the very purpose of bringing upon him the penalty of sin—death. The angel of the Lord drove Adam out. We remember God's expression on this: "In the day that thou

eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) The dying process began at once and continued until completed after 930 years.

Since the penalty of sin was death, it was of God's mercy that he allowed our first parents to live at all after their disobedience. While it was a curse he inflicted on our race when he drove Adam and Eve out of Eden, nevertheless there was a blessing connected with that curse. When God drove them out of the Garden, He said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground whence thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Here was the curse. They were to die by gradual processes.

ALL OUR BLESSINGS OF GOD'S MERCY

Adam and Eve might do all in their power to prolong their lives, but it was not possible for them to live out the full thousand years, which constitute one of the Lord's Days. Adam

lived out nearly an entire Day, but he was gradually going down to the tomb all the while. His mental, moral and physical powers were waning. And so all of his race are a groaning creation.

It was not an unjust sentence, nor an unfair sentence. It is a favor from God that we have life at all. The privilege he gives us of living even a few years is a great boon. And so it is true of all of us, as described by the Prophet Job in relating his experience, that naked came we into the world. We have nothing that is really our own. It is of God's providence that we enjoy the privileges that we have.

It was true of Job that it was of God's permission and mercy that he had his flocks and herds and children. Then fire came down from heaven and burned up his sheep and the attending servants. Enemies killed his camels and oxen and asses, and still other servants. The hurricane came and killed his children. But Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Job had no claim on everlasting life, although he had a hope of it. He realized that all he had possessed belonged to God; they were not his own.

Life and immortality were not brought to light until Jesus came. (2 Tim. 1:10) The great message of salvation which before was only hinted at was in due time clearly stated by Jesus. He came to give his life a ransom-price, to give a life that corresponded to the life that Adam lost. We see the beauty of the whole arrangement, that as by a man came death, by a man also should come the resurrection of the dead. Whereas "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19)—made free from the death penalty—and ultimately shall have a resurrection.

Those who get the first benefit of this provision in Christ are the church. The Apostle says that we are risen with him to walk in newness of life. And we have faith that God is able to fully complete this resurrection as he has promised. We do not claim that we do not die, which is contrary to all the facts and to the Scriptures. We, on the contrary, admit that we die. But we believe that he who raised up Jesus from

the dead will raise us up also by him. Jesus has effected an atonement for the sins of the whole world, upon the basis of which those who believe now may have reconciliation with God. And by and by the world will have the benefit of Christ's atoning work, and opportunity for reconciliation.

LIFE RIGHTS LOST TO MANKIND

The hope of the church is that she shall reign with Christ for a thousand years, bind Satan, uplift mankind from sin and pain and death, and, as the Scriptures declare, "wipe away the tears from off all faces." (Isaiah 25:8) And this is the work of God in that he planned, designed, the whole matter. It is the work of Christ in that he purchased the race and is the Father's Agent—who is "the beginning of the creation of God," "the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence," not pre-eminence over the Father, but above all others.—Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:18.

We can see more clearly than did Job, that all our blessings are of God, not of ourselves. We can see more clearly because we are spirit-begotten. We know that we have no rights whatever. All we can do is to call upon God's mercy. But all are not able as yet to hear the message of mercy. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."—2 Corinthians 4:4.

And so only those whose eyes are especially anointed can see. As Jesus said in his day, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." (Matt. 13:16) And so St. Peter confirms the same thought of blindness, respecting those who crucified the Lord: "Brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."—Acts 3:17.

So then from our favored vantage ground we, still more than Job, can take in perfect submission whatever experiences God in his wisdom and love sees fit to allow to come upon us. If we are his children, we are bound to accept all our experiences as being of his providence and order and arrangement.

"Naught that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver;
My heart, my strength, my life, my all
Are his and his forever."

THE SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN IN THE HOLY

Our ears and our tongue bring us many blessings and in general are grand servants. Nevertheless, sometimes they are difficult so to manage as not to be misleading. Fully half the difficulties everywhere are, apparently, the results of misunderstanding. God has been misunderstood, the Bible is misunderstood and preaching is misunderstood. We cannot wonder, then, that STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and TABERNACLE SHADOWS and THE WATCH TOWER have been misunderstood. All that we can do is to restate matters afresh, hoping that our tongue or pen will serve us better, or that the eyes and the ears of our readers will serve them better.

BEGETTING THE TRANSFORMING POWER

Repeatedly we have endeavored to show that the begetting of the Holy Spirit, in the case of each individual Christian, is the transforming power by which he passes from the human nature to the new nature. This transfer is beautifully pictured in the Tabernacle types by the priest passing from the Court into the Holy. The Court represents, in the present time, the earthly condition of those who are approaching God, but have not yet made a full consecration of their lives to him and his service.

When the step of consecration is taken, Jesus, acting as our great High Priest, imputes his merit to cover our deficiencies of the flesh, and forthwith presents us to the Father. Our

consecration of the earthly nature is thus made acceptable, and in the divine reckoning we are from that moment dead according to the flesh, but alive according to the spirit—begotten again, not with corruptible seed, but by the spirit of God. All thus begotten are in the Holy in their relationship to God—that is to say, they are children of God, heirs of God. Thereafter they have the enlightenment of the truth as represented by the golden lamp-stand with the seven burners; the spiritual food as represented in the table of shewbread, and the privileges of worship and prayer as represented in the incense altar.

This condition continues until the end of this age, when a judgment, or testing, or distinction, will be made as between the most faithful, the little flock, the royal priesthood class, and the less faithful class of the great company—the latter thereafter being typed by the tribe of Levi.

In the new order of things, after the establishment of Messiah's kingdom, this distinction between the church proper, joint-heirs with Christ, and the larger company of antitypical Levites, will be perpetual, and the services of the two will be different. The former will be a priesthood corresponding to that of Melchizedek—a priest upon his throne. The work of the latter will correspond more to that accomplished by the Levites; namely, teaching the people, etc., as servants of the priests, from whom they will receive their directions.

GOD'S USE OF THINGS IN OUR HAND

"And the Lord said unto Moses, What is that in thine hand?"—Exodus 4:2.

Moses had been called of the Lord to the great and honorable work of delivering his people from the bondage of Egypt. He was now eighty years of age. His long experience in the Egyptian court had given him an insight into the affairs of government. Stephen tells us (Acts 7:22) that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in word and in deed." Tradition says that he was also an able general in the Egyptian army.

Yet he relinquished all these earthly advantages to cast in his lot with the despised people of God. (Heb. 11:24-26) "Moses . . . refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward"—he preferred to share with God's chosen people, Israel, in their

affliction, and to have part with them in the promise made to their fathers.

How appropriate it was that the man whom God called to be the leader of Israel out of bondage should be a learned man, and one well equipped to be at the head of such a people and under such circumstances! We cannot doubt that his wandering as a shepherd in the wilderness for forty years, tending the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, made him thoroughly familiar with every road, every hill, every stream; and that this was subsequently of great advantage to him, when, under the Lord's direction, he became leader of Israel through this wilderness en route to Canaan.

MEEKNESS TAUGHT BY EXPERIENCE

But this forty years' experience in Midian had taught Moses another important lesson—the lesson of meekness. And his long isolation had made him reserved. Furthermore, soon

after severing his connection with the royal house of Egypt, he had made an attempt to deliver his people; but they had not wished his services, and had rather resented his interference. So now, when the Lord would send him to do this great work, he was distrustful of his ability to lead the people of Israel out of bondage into the land of Canaan, and was fearful and reluctant.

The Lord had appeared to Moses in the burning bush which was not consumed, had given him his commission, and had assured him that he, Jehovah, would certainly be with him. Moses, however, very properly felt the magnitude of the undertaking and his own insufficiency. He urged that he was incompetent, that it would require some one more powerful than he to influence the heart of the king of Egypt. He knew that it would be entirely contrary to the purpose and policy of the Egyptians to let the Israelites go from their service. He said to the Lord, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" But the Lord assured him that he would himself be responsible; that he would direct in the matter.

"WHAT IS THAT IN THINE HAND?"

Still Moses wanted some demonstration of God's approval and power. He asked, How shall I make Israel know that thou hast sent me? for they will not believe. Then the Lord asked, "What is that in thine hand?" Moses answered, "A rod." And the Lord said to him, "Cast it upon the ground." Moses did so, and the rod became a serpent, and Moses fled from it. If he had not particularly noticed what he had in his hand, he might have thought that possibly it had been a serpent before. But he had looked, and was sure that it was a staff which had been changed into a serpent. Then God told him to take up the serpent by the tail. He did so, and it again became a rod in his hand.

THE LESSONS FOR US

From this we would take the lesson that if the Lord sends us on any mission, we should not have the feeling that we could conquer the world, but should realize our own littleness and should properly feel wholly insufficient of ourselves. We should realize that without his assisting grace we could accomplish nothing. We should be very sure that he has commissioned us, and that our mission is not some foolish thought of our own. We should be very sure that the Lord is back of the whole arrangement. Then we should have full confidence in him.

We should feel like saying with Moses, "I cannot do anything." But if we wish to serve the Lord, we are to look to what we have in our hands, whether it be one talent or another. God is so wise that he can use our humblest talent to his praise. What he wants us to use may be right in our hands, and we may not have noticed it. No matter how ordinary our lives may be, God is able to use us, and to give us also the needed lessons in connection with our experiences.

Another lesson that we could draw from the Lord's dealings with Moses is that the things which we have in our hand, those things closest to us, might become injurious to us, if it were not that the power of God is able to make everything work together for our good. If we have the spirit of service, the Lord can and will use things right at our hand—not necessarily things afar from us; and the divine power over evil can make all things work out good to those who love him. More and more we are learning these lessons. If, then, we would serve, we should look to see what we have in our possession; what things we can make use of.

FAITHFUL IN LEAST—FAITHFUL IN MUCH

A great many people would like to serve the Lord with a thousand tongues. If they had a thousand tongues, they feel sure they would sing with them all. How do we know that we would use a thousand tongues, if we do not faithfully use the one we have? "He that is faithful in that which is least" will be faithful in the greater things.

There are plenty of people who like to address thousands. But if we cannot address thousands, it is all the more necessary to address one. Some say that if they had a million of dollars they would give it to the Lord. But the Lord is not likely to ever give them the chance of giving large sums if they do not manifest a disposition to give of the small amounts already in their possession. "To him that hath [through use of his talents] shall be given, . . . and from him that hath not [from neglect of his talent] shall be taken away even that which he hath."—Matthew 25:29.

The mountains may depart, the hills remove;
His kindness shall not leave thee, or his love
E'er fail: the covenant of his peace is sure.
"Thus saith the Lord," doth make our hope secure.

So the lesson to us of Moses' experiences would seem to be—the use of things we have in our hands. The same lesson is taught in another way in the case of the poor widow who cried to the Prophet Elisha for help. She was in poverty, and her creditors were about to take her two sons for debt. "What hast thou in the house?" asked Elisha. The woman replied, "Not anything in the house save a pot of oil." Then the Prophet told her to go and borrow empty vessels from her neighbors—"not a few"—and to then begin to pour out the oil into the vessels. The woman obeyed, and all the vessels were filled with oil, and she had oil to sell and thus pay her debt. The Lord used what she had in her hand.

It was the same way with the Lord's miracle in feeding the thousands. He asked, What have you on hand? He did not say, How far is it to town? And he did not tell the Apostles to get wagons and go to town for bread and meat. But he said, Use what you have. And he blessed the five loaves of bread and the two small fishes, to the abundant feeding of the five thousand; they all ate "as much as they would," and of what remained the disciples gathered up twelve baskets full. (John 6:5-13) So we should use all our talents and opportunities. The Lord is looking for us to use what we have, and we shall receive blessing therefrom; and the more faithful we are in the performance of our privileges, the greater will be our blessings from him.

MOSES' EXPERIENCES TYPICAL

In addition to the lessons just noted, we believe there is a further significance in the experiences of Moses, and the deliverance of Israel. We are to see something representative of conditions in our day. Moses was acting under divine instruction. Many things connected with this mission of Moses to the Israelites seem typical of the deliverance of God's people from the power of evil. Pharaoh was typical of Satan. We are living in the corresponding time, when God purposes to deliver all from the power of Satan. Jesus and the church will be the agent of Jehovah—the deliverance will be the work of Messiah as God's Representative.

The rod represents authority. This was illustrated at the time when the Lord instructed that Aaron should represent him as the head of the tribe of Levi. There had been murmurings in Israel, and the principal men of the twelve tribes were instructed by the Lord through Moses to take each man his rod, write upon it his name and send it into the Tabernacle. (Num. 17:1-9) Aaron's rod was to go in with the others, because it was the rod of his father's family. And when they examined the rods in the morning, Aaron's rod had budded, blossomed and brought forth almonds.

This would give us to understand that a rod might generally be considered to represent authority. As the hand is power, so the rod is authority. Thus the rod would seem to be a special manifestation of divine power and rule. We may not speak too positively of the antitypical fulfilment of this experience of Moses. But we might think that in some way or other the power of God would appear to be evil—the serpent was evil. Evil has seemed to triumph for these six thousand years. When Moses and Aaron went into the presence of Pharaoh, Moses' rod became a serpent there also. Then the magicians cast down their rods, and they became serpents. But Moses' rod swallowed up all the rods of the magicians.

RESUMING THE ROD OF POWER

We would very much like to know just what these things signify—just how God will permit the world under the power of Satan to have an hour of triumph. There is to be permitted a great time of trouble, and it will be because of the casting down, for a time, of divine authority and rule.

We think this condition is present now. People are losing confidence in God. They are feeling, for the time, as though there were no God. The tendency of Higher Criticism and Evolution is to give humanity the impression that there is no God but nature. And as mankind get this idea of a nature-god that is ruthless, relentless, impersonal, it is very likely to efface all thought of a living God of justice and love. "There is no fear of God before their eyes," the Scriptures say. So we may expect a great time of trouble, when the power of God will seem to be a further manifestation of evil—as the power of evil. The taking up of the rod of power again, a little later, will be the resuming of divine authority.

O height, and depth, and breadth of love divine!
O gift unspeakable! this hope be mine.
Then, though these works dissolve, yet in that day
I shall be found in him, safe, safe for aye.