

brood under her wings, so God will be as a mother-hen to his people, and will gladly gather them close to himself and give them the necessary protection—under his wings. They may fully trust that all things shall work together for their good, because they are his, abiding “under the shadow of the Almighty.”

The Almighty here represents himself as a mother-bird. The patience of the mother-bird with her young is remarkable, and she would sacrifice her own life for her little nestlings. So the Lord represents that he is ready to do anything for the protection of his own, who are under his care. Jesus would have received the Jews thus under his protecting care; but the people as a nation did not appreciate their need, and hence were overthrown in a great time of trouble. Jesus said to them, with weeping, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

OUR FATHER'S "WINGS" AND "FEATHERS"

We might exercise a particularity of inspection of our text, and say that the word feathers might carry a little further thought than the word wings. “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.” The soft, downy feathers under the mother-hen's wings serve to keep the little chicks warm and to shield and hide them from enemies that would attack them. Not only the strong sheltering wings,

but also the feathers of the hen-mother's breast are used to protect her young. We have seen alarm on the part of a mother-hen at the approach of danger, and heard her cluck to her little ones. Then they would run to her, nestle under her wings, and seem perfectly satisfied and free from fear in their place of safety. Presently you would see the little heads or eyes peeping out; but the chicks felt perfectly secure.

And so with us. Our heavenly Father's love and care and protection are his wings and his feathers, shielding us from all harm, keeping us warm and safe. He is able to make every experience in life work out for our good. We are, however, to remember that the promise that God will make all things work together for our good is a promise to the new creature, not to the old creature. Oftentimes the interests of the new creature and of the old creature are diverse. God has an interest in all that concerns us, but he overrules our temporal affairs for our best spiritual interests. If we were too prosperous, it might not be of advantage to us as new creatures.

Our temporal affairs may be permitted to go awry. We are not wise enough to know what is for our own best interests as new creatures, and what would help us the most in our fight against the world, the flesh and the devil. We are, therefore, to flee to the Lord and accept whatever experiences may come, as those which will be best for us; and we are to seek to get the designed lessons of faith and obedience from them.

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WHO COMMITS THE SIN UNTO DEATH?—PART I

“Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.”—1 John 3:9.

PRIVILEGES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DANGERS OF THE NEW CREATURE

There is a certain amount of complexity attaching itself to questions relative to the church's change of nature from human to spiritual. In order clearly to understand the initiatory process of that change, the begetting of the Spirit, we should have a proper understanding of what constitutes the human will; for it is that will which is changed.

We cannot think of anything better as an illustration of the subject than a legislative body, such as Congress or Parliament. In these assemblies, a large number of members sit in session; but they are divided into groups known as parties. Some members belong to one party, others to another. But the dominating party is in control.

So it is in the human brain. There we have numerous organs, representing variously religious sentiments, intellectuality, morality, the affections, etc. Then there are some that represent energy; others, acquisitiveness; others, combativeness. These different faculties, when called to consider a question, divide themselves into groups, the strongest of which is very apt to sway the others.

When, for instance, any matter involving the interests of self comes up for consideration, acquisitiveness being strong, may lead combativeness to fight for possession of the thing desired. It may also lead destructiveness to help in the fight. And it may to some extent drown the voice of justice, or conscience, and offset the quality of love; for acquisitiveness may have schemes which would interfere with the operation of love.

On the whole, the organs which dominate the world are the organs of self-protection, self-gratification, etc.—all the organs whose names begin with the word self. Even if the religious organs—veneration, hope, benevolence, spirituality, etc.—are strong, the selfish propensities generally overpower them, so that they co-operate with selfishness. For example, benevolence overpowered by the selfish propensities, will say, I will give some money to this project, in order that it may show a large return; but I will not give it unless it show such return. Thus the quality of acquisitiveness and others pertaining to self will go into agreement with benevolence, by bending it to the service of self.

It is the usual thing to see such combinations in worldly people today. There are generous men with naturally noble impulses which they like to gratify. But in all that they do, self has become the preponderating factor. Self gets in somewhere—self-esteem, self-interest, etc. This combination makes the selfish man; and though he may have considerable benevolence, veneration, etc., yet these noble qualities are under control of the selfish propensities.

To this selfish man the Gospel comes, and offers a proposition which is unique, peculiar. It appeals to him through a new

set of organs. It shows him that he should put God first, not self; that he should begin to see that the highest and noblest organs of the brain are those which recognize the Creator and man's responsibility as his creature. It shows him that he is thinking of self-aggrandisement, self-honor, self-everything!

Such a person, hearing the Gospel proposition, may be influenced to decide the matter either one way or the other. He may say, I do not like that thought. Selfishness may suggest that if he accepts the Gospel offer he must stop his questionable business methods. Then he concludes that he does not care to take such a step; for it would demand more than he is willing to give, and he might have trouble with his conscience. Later on, perhaps, something in the nature of adversity or calamity will awaken him to take a different view of matters, and he will see the subject in a different light and be glad to do God's will. Then he may say, I realize that my life must be different. I am God's creature. Therefore it is right that I should consecrate my all to him. But I see that consecration will work a great transformation in my life. I shall be obliged to change my course. I must drop certain habits.

This is the first step of true conversion. This is a turning from sin toward righteousness. It does not follow, however, that the person who takes this step will come up to the divine requirements of a disciple of Christ. The rich young ruler who asked Jesus what he should do to gain eternal life was told to keep God's commandments. He replied that he had done this all his life. And Jesus loved him! The young man was trying to do right in every way. Was he not all right then? No! Jesus said to him: “One thing thou lackest. Go and sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and then thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

The young ruler thought this strange advice; for he had all along been living a most exemplary life. He was correct in his estimate of himself; but he was merely doing his duty in so living. No one has a right to live a bad life; no one has a right to do wrong. That he was merely doing his duty—no more—was practically what Jesus told the young man.

Continuing, the Master said: I have only one offer to make, but it is a very high one—joint-heirship with Me in the Messianic kingdom. The life into which you may enter by becoming my disciple is a life of glory, honor and immortality—the divine nature. If you desire this high position, you must do more than merely avoid sin. God is now calling for sacrificers. If you do not sacrifice yourself, you cannot become my disciple; for those only who thus sacrifice are received of the Father and begotten of the holy Spirit, and can share my glory. Those only will be granted a part in the first resurrection. And the young ruler “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” Alas; how many are likeminded!

To turn away from sin is but a step toward conversion. That moment is an antitypical going toward the Tabernacle. "Draw nigh unto me, and I will draw nigh unto you," is the Father's proposition. The Word of God points out to the seeker that only through Christ who gave himself as our ransom, can any come to the Father.

He is also instructed that if he would retain God's favor he must become a disciple of Christ, by laying down his life in the service of the Lord and the brethren, doing good unto all men as he has opportunity. In this way he may become a member of Christ's body. Then, after a while, if faithful unto death, he will have a share in the glory and honor which the Father has given our Lord he will become a joint-heir with Jesus in the kingdom.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A NEW CREATURE?

So this one becomes a new creature when he has accepted the divine will in this sacrificial sense; or, as the Scriptures present it, when he has made a full consecration unto death. "Gather my saints together unto me," saith the Lord, "those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5) Those accepting this call to enter into sacrifice are received of the Father; then they are begotten of the holy Spirit. Thenceforth they are new creatures: To them "old things are passed away, and all things are become new."—2 Cor. 5:17.

The question may arise: What part of the individual becomes the new creature? It is the will that becomes new. The will is the determination, or decision, of the majority of those organs of the brain which form the mentality. The will considers the matter: Shall I continue to sin? No; I will abandon sin. Shall I go further and make a full consecration of myself to God? Yes; I will make this consecration.

When he does so, God accepts him and begets him of the holy Spirit, thus making him a new creature. He makes up his mind—he determines the matter. He changes the direction of his will. At one time his will was inclined to sin. That was wrong. Then his will turned toward righteousness. This was right, so far as it went; but it did not make him a new creature. Then he came to the place where he said, Lord, I consecrate my life to thee—myself, with all my aims, hopes and ambitions. Thenceforth he is counted as dead to the world, and reckoned alive toward God, as a spirit being. This new will, this new mind, then, with its heavenly hopes and aspirations, constitutes the new creature.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NEW CREATURE

To be begotten of one signifies to be a son of that father. The only begotten of the heavenly Father—the only one directly so begotten—was our Lord Jesus—God's Son. And all the church are also recognized as being sons of God; "and if sons, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." The first one of the spirit-begotten class was our Lord Jesus. When the holy Spirit was given him at Jordan, in this begetting sense, he was no longer counted of God as the Man Jesus. But he had this treasure of the new nature in an earthly body, an earthen vessel, until he finished his sacrifice at Calvary. Then, in the resurrection, God gave him a perfect spirit body of the divine nature.

So it is with all of Jesus' disciples: They are invited to surrender themselves to God, consecrating their earthly interests to become followers of the Master. Jesus states the conditions: First, faith in him as the Messiah, the Redeemer; and second, denial of self and the taking up of the cross and following him. These new creatures are all sons of God, though the world does not understand that they are in any way different from others in their relationship to God. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him [the Master] not." (1 John 3:1) This new mind must increase. This new creature must grow in knowledge and capacity.

All of this makes the individual now very different from what he was as the old creature. If by nature he was depraved, and had violent passions prevailing in his flesh, he will now, having a better mind, be guided in the way of the Lord, and gradually become a copy of God's dear Son. This copy is primarily a heart-copy, though the change by degrees affects his life, bringing his body more and more into conformity to the new mind.

THE NEW CREATURE ON TRIAL

Since this new mind, the new will, the spirit-begotten new creature, has its present residence in the old body, and since this body, the new creature's only instrument of operation, has still its old tendencies toward sin—its weaknesses, its depravities—therefore there is a continual struggle between the new creature and the old. It is a daily warfare, and either one or the other must perish. If the new creature be not alert, thoroughly active, thoroughly loyal to God, the weaknesses of the flesh will gradually assert themselves, and the new creature will be in danger of death.

If, on the contrary, the new creature remain loyal to God, the old creature will perish. The one or the other must die before the conflict is over. It is a fight to the finish. And this conflict is a test of the new creature—not of the old creature. The new creature has been called to glory, honor and immortality. In order to attain this state, it must prove unquestionably its loyalty to God. In proportion as the new mind controls, and we love righteousness and hate iniquity, in that same proportion shall we have strength in battling with the forces outside, with the conditions of the present time; and the greater success shall we have in battling with our own flesh.

In this warfare there may be sometimes more and sometimes less success. But not until the victory is won will the Lord grant the reward. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." The thing to be demonstrated is loyalty to God, loyalty to the principles of righteousness, and to our covenant. Those who are most loyal and most devoted to God will come off "more than conquerors" and will gain the highest reward, will sit with Jesus in his throne.

Some will come off overcomers, but not on so high a plane, needing the special tribulations to assist them. But even though they fail to come to the highest standard, they will, nevertheless, come off overcomers; else they would never get any share in the heavenly reward, nor life at all. These will form the great company, who come up out of the great tribulation and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14) They will be greatly favored in that they will be the honored servants of the glorified bride class, who are to constitute the "more than conquerors."

FALLING INTO TEMPTATION NOT SIN

During this time of battling between the new creature and the imperfections of the body in which the new creature resides, the new mind should be developing and growing gradually stronger. The will of the body was reckoned entirely dead before the individual could be counted a new creature. But the body has the old brain, which has the same tendencies as formerly. The work of the new mind is to bring this body into full subjection to the will of Christ. The child of God may, however, be attracted by business or pleasure, which may lead him as a new creature into more or less of stupor. In such stupid condition of the new creature, the flesh, wide awake, might get the advantage, not because the child of God has wilfully sinned, or because he has been intentionally negligent, but because he has yielded more or less to temptation. But it is one thing to yield thus under temptation, and another thing to go deliberately into sin. Whoever sins wilfully is counted a child of Satan, because he has Satan's spirit instead of God's spirit.

If any of those who were once begotten of God should get into that attitude where they would wilfully desire to commit sin, it would indicate that they had ceased to be sons of God and had become sons of Belial. It would signify that the spark of the new life to which they had been begotten had become extinguished. "He that is begotten of God sinneth not." If he sin—deliberately, wilfully—he ceases that moment to be a son of God. Sons of God do not love sin. Any one, therefore, who would thus intentionally go into sin would give evidence that his new mind had entirely passed away, and that he had become dead to God, even as previously in consecration he had become dead to the flesh.

We believe that not very many have ever taken this step of bold opposition to God, wilfully and intelligently; and we hope that there will not be a great many to go into the second death. However, it is for God's people to keep as far away as possible from this disastrous condition. This condition is reached by a gradual process, step by step. When we come to God we first repudiate sin. Later we come to the point of presenting our bodies living sacrifices, and are accepted. So, contrariwise, those who repudiate righteousness usually go back gradually. Step by step of indulgence in sin gradually leads away from God, until the new creature ceases to exist.

NEW CREATURE HANDICAPPED BY FLESH

When the Apostle John, in our text, says that those who are begotten of God sin not, he means that the sin is not wilful. Is there, then, any other way to sin than to sin wilfully? We answer, Yes. It is wilful sin that is unto death. The Scriptures tell us that "all have come short of the glory of God"—there is none perfect, "none righteous, no, not one." The righteousness which is imputed to the members of the church, is imputed to their flesh. The new creature itself is perfect. But as a new creature the disciple of Christ desires to put off from its flesh all the former things of sin and death and to be fully conformed to the image and likeness of God. Yet he is more or less handicapped, not only by the imperfections of his own fleshly body, but also by the imperfections of others. He has to contend with the evil tendencies in his fallen nature, and also with those around him.

The same Apostle declares that if any shall say he has no sin, the truth is not in him, and he is making God a liar. (1 John 1:8-10) And these two statements of the same writer are in harmony. The statement of our text applies to the new creature itself, and the other applies to his fleshly body. He cannot fully avoid sin in his flesh, on account of its weakness, and the deceptiveness and unfavorable conditions surrounding him.

These new creatures, however, can maintain themselves in the love of God and as sons of God. "We have an Advocate with God, Jesus Christ, the Righteous." (1 John 2:1) God knows our weaknesses, and has made this very provision for us. The Apostle says we may keep ourselves in the love of God by keeping ourselves clean. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Our daily trespasses are to be acknowledged to the Lord, and forgiveness sought and obtained. Thus we pray daily, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

STRIPES FOR PARTIALLY WILFUL SINS

If these trespasses are merely weaknesses of the flesh, or of ignorance or stupidity, they are sins which will be fully forgiven of the Lord on application. If they be sins in which the new mind has been slack, in which it has been more or less culpable, through lack of sufficient positiveness, then to that extent the new creature must be held responsible. And for all such trespasses, for which the new creature is in any way at fault, there will be stripes, or punishments. It is for this partially wilful portion of the sin that the new creature is responsible. This does not come under the head of original sin and its resulting imperfections.

A Christian might have a natural tendency to anger, and it might be impossible for him fully to control this tendency. Before he as a new creature would be able to realize the situation, his natural tendency to lose his temper would involve him in trouble. The new creature in such case should do everything possible to overcome this, through prayer and persistent effort, and if necessary, by imposing upon himself a penalty for every failure in this direction—some self-denial, perhaps. But if the new creature should say, Well, that is my flesh; I cannot help it, he might receive stripes, and an earthborn cloud might arise between him and the Lord; and that one would be spiritually sick until he should return to the Father and make proper amends and be re-instated. If this attitude continued, it would seem to make against his ever becoming a member of the little flock. He would have to decide positively for or against the right.

So, then, there are sins that are not forgivable, but punishable. If the transgression should come to the degree of full, wilful sin, it would be a sin unto death. This means that the new creature had ceased to be; for the Spirit of God, operating in the sons of God, always makes for righteousness and hates sin. Whoso loveth God "keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."—1 John 5:18.

"HIS LOVING-KINDNESS, O HOW GREAT!"

"Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee."—Psalm 63:3.

God has a kindness of nature and disposition, a loving-kindness, that is general, that goes out, in one sense of the word, to all of his creatures—not only the intelligent, but the unintelligent creatures of his hand. He bestows his kindness, his favors, upon the just and the unjust. He sends his sunshine and his rain upon the good and the evil. But there is a special loving-kindness, a special love which he reserves for those who have lovable qualities of heart—those who have such traits of character as permit him thus to love them—just as every good person loves every other person who is good and noble-hearted.

God has such a love for the holy angels. He had such a love for Adam before he sinned. And since the sin, he has a sentiment of loving-kindness toward those of Adam's race who, realizing their sin, desire to turn back to him and to do his will. His loving-kindness has led him to make a wonderful provision for these. He has provided that some shall be of the earthly nature, to receive the blessing of life everlasting here upon earth, after it has been brought to Edenic perfection. He has provided for others to be of the spiritual nature. Truly,

"There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea!"

But God does not love the wilful sinner. This is in harmony with righteousness. We may love the ignorant, who violate the

THE PURPOSE SERVED BY TRIALS

But, as the Apostle states, we have this treasure of a new mind in an earthen vessel. We are a combination of the heavenly and the earthly—a heavenly will and an earthly body. Sometimes the body will put the new creature to the test, urging it to give up this matter of consecration. So he has trouble; for the earthly body is merely reckoned dead. But God, in harmony with his promises, ignores the old nature—the earthly—and recognizes only the heavenly, so long as the will is loyal; and he has promised grace sufficient for every time of need.

As before stated, there may come a time when the new will temporarily becomes drowsy, dormant. This is a cause for serious concern; for then the new creature is in grave danger. There must be a determined will, a positive will for God, which will keenly regret any temporary deflection; otherwise there is no new creature. As the battling goes on between the new will and the old body, the new will becomes stronger and stronger, if it is properly awake to the situation. Yet God may permit the flesh to have more and more severe temptations. He allows the world and the adversary to bring pressure to bear upon the flesh, so that he may test, prove, the loyalty of the new creature. It was because our Lord was found faithful "unto death, even the death of the cross," that he was counted worthy of the divine nature. So it is to be with his footstep followers. The Father knows just how much we can stand, and will never suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but with every temptation will provide a way of escape.—1 Corinthians 10:13.

WHY SOME FAIL TO OVERCOME

So the experiences of the way go on. As the Apostle suggests we are risen to walk in newness of life—our resurrection is already begun. (Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1) And this new walk will become more and more courageous, more and more successful, in proportion as we respond to the Lord's touch—the disciplinary experiences. And if we allow him to mould us as he wills, we shall finally finish our course and be brought forth in full resurrection from earthly, human nature to heavenly, divine nature. Then the new will that has all along been progressing in an earthly body will thereafter make progress in a spiritual home; it will have a body like unto that of the risen and glorified Jesus.—1 John 3:1, 2.

In the case of those not overcoming fully, we find this condition; they yield more or less to the besetments of the adversary, and strive to avoid being too peculiar, to avoid giving any offense to their friends. Thus they become more or less overcharged with the cares of this life, or with the deceitfulness of riches, pleasures, etc. The Apostle urges that these lay aside all such weights, and run with patience the race set before them. Such a class never for a moment think of giving up the race; but in due time they will be put through fiery tribulations, which will destroy their flesh. Nevertheless, they will fail of the reward of the high calling, which the more faithful will receive.

(To be concluded in our next issue.)

law of God because of a lack of knowledge, of proper information; but we could not rightly love one who is wicked, whose intention of heart, of will, is to do wrong. God has no love for the incorrigibly wicked. "All the wicked will he destroy." He has arranged that only those who shall come into accord with his righteousness may enjoy the blessing of eternal life. These shall have an eternity of happiness; they shall be the recipients of his loving favor everlastingly.

The Psalmist had a taste of the loving-kindness of God in his own experiences. When he was anointed to be king of Israel, he knew that he had found favor in God's sight. And later, when he did things that were wrong, God chastised him, punished him in love, because David was a man after the Lord's own heart—had a desire to do right—to do God's will. As the needle of a compass may under certain circumstances be detracted from its normal condition of pointing toward the pole, just so some attraction at times influenced David and led him into a wrong course. But as soon as the besetment was past, or he was led of the Lord to see his sin, his heart returned fully to Jehovah, as the needle of the compass returns and again points to the pole. Therefore King David declared that life without God's loving-kindness would be worth nothing to him; he would not appreciate his life if cut off from the favor of the Lord. This being the case, his lips would always confess the Lord—tell forth his loving-kindness, show forth his praises.

OUR ANOINTING FAR SUPERIOR

And this is still more true of us who are now the Lord's truly consecrated children, who are daily striving to serve him and to follow the Master. We who by the grace of God have come into covenant relationship with him since the Atonement for sin has been made have become sons of God, and have been begotten of the holy Spirit. We have come thus into the anointed body of Christ. We have not been anointed to an earthly throne, as was David, but our anointing does more: it anoints us to a heavenly throne, to share in the rulership of the entire earth.

No king or emperor on any earthly throne can hope to reign for more than a few brief years. But those who shall be accounted worthy to reign with Messiah, to share his throne, shall reign for a thousand years. And this is only the beginning of their glory. Our Father in heaven, who is now training and preparing us for this glorious exaltation through his only begotten Son, with whom we are to reign, gives us the assurance that he will be with us to guide our way; that all things shall work together for good to us, because we love him and are called according to his purpose.

So we, above all other people in the world's history, have the loving-kindness of God manifested toward us. We have his exceeding great and precious promises. We are the recipients of his special love. And the more we appreciate this love and these glorious promises and the bountiful provisions of his grace, the more our hearts respond in gratitude, the more his loving-kindness becomes a reality to us, and the more are we ready to lay down our lives in his service.

It was thus with Jesus. He preferred the Father's favor above all else. And he, through the Father's arrangement, opened up this new and living way for us, that we, by becoming his disciples, may share with him God's special loving-kindness and matchless promises, granted only to those "who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Surely our lips shall praise our God! And not only so, but our pocketbooks, our bank accounts, and our influence shall praise him! All that we have shall praise the Lord; and all that we ever hope to have!

"I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY!"

We who have come to realize our Father's unspeakable favor to us as better than this present life with all it could have to give, we who have joyfully laid upon his altar every earthly good thing, every hope and ambition, every power of our being, rejoice to tell the good tidings of salvation to others. We rejoice to sound forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. The message is too good to keep! If we could not proclaim it, it would be as a burning fire shut up in our bones; so we must tell it. And we are willing that the telling of it shall cost us trouble, cost us money, cost us the misunderstanding and persecution of former friends, and possibly the breaking of home ties. We are willing that it shall cost us the frown of the world and of organized churchianity.

TEXT APPLICABLE ONLY TO SAINTS

The Prophet David in our text spoke prophetically of the church of Christ. These words could apply to none other than saints of God. None but those who walk and talk with God would esteem his favor more precious and desirable than their earthly life. If we ask the average nominal Christian to weigh this matter, and tell us if he would exchange this life for the favor of the Lord—putting in one side of the balance all the good things, hopes, ambitions, family ties, social position, churchianity, esteem of men, and putting in the other side of the scale God's favor—he will hesitate, and will eventually decide in favor of the things of this life.

The reason for this is that such do not highly appreciate divine favor. They have heard and believed certain things about the Almighty, some of them true and some false; but the misrepresentation of God's character and plan, together with the worldly influences surrounding them, have largely neutralized and offset and made noneffective the truths which they have learned, and they lack confidence in the things unseen. Hence worldly interests outweigh their appreciation of divine favor—ten to one.

Those who have, through the plan of the ages, come to see the loving-kindness and mercy of the Lord are, if they are children of God at all, being put to the test. If they are merely glad to find out that there is no place of eternal torture, and that God's loving plan includes the whole human race, their hearts are not touched to responsiveness by this manifestation of his great love. They will go on their way, rejoicing that

they have been delivered from the bondage of error, but will be like the nine lepers who were healed by the Master, yet did not return to give him the glory, nor to offer themselves in service to him. And these, alas, are the majority! We are now in the great day of proving. Who will be able to stand the test in this evil time?

GOD THE SUN OF OUR SOUL

This loving favor of God, which is so appreciated by the true saints, is not a favor respecting future prospects and hopes merely, but it is the blessed possession also of the present life. Gradually these come to prize the communion and fellowship of the Lord to such a degree that any interruption of this communion produces misery of soul. It brings an aching void that nothing else can fill. This sentiment is beautifully expressed in the hymn we often sing:

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when thou art near;
O, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes!"

The true child of God will walk so closely with him that nothing, however sweet or precious to the natural man, will be permitted to shut from him his Father's face. This would be esteemed a calamity with which nothing else could compare. He would rather cut off anything as dear as a right hand, or pluck out of his life anything as precious as an eye, than that it should come between himself and his heavenly Friend, whom he has come to love above all else beside. God is truly to these the Sun of their soul, without whom life would become the blackness of night.

"THE DARKNESS HATETH THE LIGHT"

Some professed disciples of Christ may say that a Christian life will not cost earthly friendships; that such an idea is an exaggeration; that it is an extreme view of what is required of a Christian; that a course which produces such a result is an unreasonable one. But no! Our Master's words are as true today as when they were spoken: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19) The declaration of the Apostle still holds good: "Yea, and all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."—2 Tim. 3:12.

Why did the Master suffer the loss of social position and of favor with the churchianity of his day? Why did the Doctors of Divinity and the notables among the religionists hide their faces from him? Why did they finally become so embittered against him that they crucified him? Was it because of evil-doing on his part? Nay; for he went about doing good. It was because he told the truth. He declared truths which they themselves recognized as such, but with which they had so mixed the "traditions of the elders" that they were too stupefied, drunken and blinded to take anything but a perverted view of our Lord's work and teachings. Their hearts were not in the right attitude before God. "The darkness hateth the light."

The Master's persecutions came not from the outside world, but from the professed holy people of his time. So has it ever been since, and so is it today. Those who now oppose the truth are not worldly people outside of the churches, with but few exceptions; but they are zealous sectarians, whom Satan has blinded with his false doctrines and misrepresentations. We are not to be surprised, therefore, that wherever the truth goes it will be a sword to separate, as our Lord declared. These conditions prove a test to the followers of Jesus. Are we willing to bear the hatred, the scorn, the contumely, which loyalty to the truth brings? Is our Father's loving favor more, far more, to us than the favor and smiles of the whole world—even more, far more to us than life itself?

THE GLORIOUS HARP OF THE AGES

If so, we can go forth in his name, rejoicing as we go, praising him with our lips, singing the new song which he hath put into our mouths, "even the loving kindness of our God." It costs something to sing this song. Only those who have learned to play upon the harp of God, who have all its strings attuned to perfect harmony, can properly render this "Song of Moses and the Lamb." Never until today has it been possible to produce such melody from this wonderful harp; for never before have all its chords been properly placed and attuned. Now its music is entrancing! Then let us take this wonderful harp of the ages, and as we sweep its chords, let us sing with the spirit and with the understanding this wondrous, glad new song.

THE GREAT DAY OF JUDGMENT—ITS NATURE AND OBJECT

“Behold, the Lord cometh with myriads of his saints, to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed.” “Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with his truth.”—Jude 14, 15; Psalm 98:7-9.

The above texts relate to the great day of judgment, which is to end the Gospel age and inaugurate the Millennium. We should notice first of all what these texts do not say. They do not say that our Lord Jesus will come to destroy the earth, to burn up the world. They do not say that there will be a partial judgment at death, and that later all will be brought out of heaven and purgatory and a hell of torment, which are their proper places, only to be sent back to these same places again. Not so. But this is supposed to be stated in the Scriptures, and is what we have thought. Our prejudices and misunderstandings have attached to the words of Holy Writ a wrong meaning. It is the love of God which brings judgment to the world.

The first judgment, or sentence for sin, was a sentence of death. Under that sentence the whole world was to perish, to be cut off from life, because of Adam's sin. But God had mercy, compassion on humanity, and has provided that mankind shall have another trial, with experiences granted to enable them to realize the nature and results of sin. The first trial was a trial of Adam and Eve alone. Every member of the human family, however, will be given an individual trial for life everlasting, to demonstrate whether he will under favorable conditions come into harmony with God.

CHARACTER THE BASIS OF JUDGMENT

All hopes of eternal life for the race, therefore, hinge upon the results of that future trial. Men and women are in this life forming character—they are either improving or degrading themselves. Whoever is trying to do his best under present unfavorable conditions will enter upon that individual trial, or judgment, in a very much better condition than otherwise, and will progress more rapidly to perfection in that day.

The church of Christ is an exception to this arrangement for the world. They will not have a part in that trial, because the church is a special, called-out class, and will receive their trial in advance of the world. They are now on trial for life or death everlasting. But their trial is for life on the divine plane. Those who are now being dealt with by the Lord will, if faithful, be with the Lord the judges of the world in the next age; as we read: “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?” (1 Corinthians 6:2) It will be a time when punishments and rewards shall be meted out.

Every evil-doer shall then be dealt with and receive punishment for his evil intent, and stripes for his correction. Every well-doer shall receive a reward. The work of that thousand-year judgment day will show men to what extent they are out of harmony with God, and will show them how to come into harmony with him. By the conclusion of the Millennial age none will be in ignorance. As it is written: “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9) Furthermore, the Scriptures tell us that the judgments will be graded according to the light previously had and sinned against. The wilful sinner, after a hundred years' trial, will be cut off in the second death.

All who shall make use of the opportunities of that time, making progress in character, will gradually go up the highway of holiness. They will be blessed more and more until they shall attain the full perfection of the earthly image and likeness of God which was lost in Adam. This will be the glorious outcome of the redeeming work of Christ. Then every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God. All who continue to prefer sin shall eventually be utterly destroyed in the second death. Then God will have a clean universe.

GREAT DAY OF THE LORD NOW PRESENT

We are now in the beginning of this great day of the Lord. All the forces which are to play a part in this mighty upheaval which is to introduce the reign of Messiah are rapidly gathering. The nations of earth and all the various elements which form society as at present organized—political institutions, financial institutions, ecclesiastical systems, etc.—are now before the bar of judgment, and are being found wanting. All Christendom is trembling before the mighty forces that are coming in today. Morals are at a low ebb. As the glorious Messenger of the Covenant is now present to sit as the great Judge, we may well ask the question propounded by God's Prophet of old: “Who may abide the day [now present] of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the

sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.”—Malachi 3:1-6.

Ah, the world is longing for the blessing! Men are realizing more and more every day their great need of a strong arm to deliver them as they face the grave crisis which they feel is drawing very near; but they see not to what extent the inbred sin of man is incompatible with a reign of righteousness which is desired and so sorely needed. Before the help and the blessing can be realized the day of wrath must come; the “fire of God's jealousy” must burn fiercely, and consume all the giant evils so entrenched in the world and in the hearts and minds of men. It is not to be a fire merely of destruction, but, thank God, also of purification! It will not be a literal fire, but a symbolic fire, following which the Lord will turn unto the people a pure language, a pure Message, and a clear declaration of the divine will and plan of salvation.

SONS OF LEVI JUDGED FIRST

The earlier part of the judgment upon Christendom will be especially upon the antitypical sons of Levi, the silver class. These made a consecration of themselves to the Lord, as did the gold class, the faithful overcomers, “more than conquerors.” This silver class we understand to be the great company, who are to “come up” out of the great tribulation, and to “wash their robes [which have become spotted and soiled] and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:9-17) These will be dealt with by the great Messenger of the Covenant, not with a view to their destruction or injury as individuals, but with a view to the destruction of their flesh, which they have failed to sacrifice in harmony with their covenant—“that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

The fire of this great day shall “try every man's work, of what sort it is.” It will prove who of the professed disciples of Christ have built upon him as their foundation with the gold, silver, and precious stones of divine truth, and thus have constructed a true, strong, worthy character, unswervingly loyal to the Lord; and it will prove who have built with wood, hay and stubble. It will likewise discover who have built upon a foundation of sand.—1 Corinthians 3:11-15.

FLESHLY ISRAEL'S SHARE IN THE JUDGMENT

A part of the prophecy of Malachi 3 seems to have an application to fleshly Israel. The Lord reproves them, showing that his course toward them as a people had been in conformity to his covenant with them at Mt. Sinai. But they had been unfaithful to their part of the covenant. At the appearing of this great Messenger of the New Covenant, which is to supersede the old Covenant, he will purge God's ancient people. The time is now due for favor to begin to be restored to them; but before their full restoration they must experience further chastisement for their purification and preparation for the great Messiah.

In the “time of Jacob's trouble,” now near at hand, Israel will come to see and recognize their King, whom they refused when he offered himself to them at his first advent. “They shall look upon him [with the eye of faith] whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.” (Zechariah 12:10) He will then receive them back to favor, under the terms of the New Law Covenant. “Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.” (Malachi 3:4) They shall then be used of Messiah as a channel of blessing to all the world.

BLINDED TO THE REAL DIFFICULTY

In this great time of trouble, the Lord will be a swift witness against every evil thing and will rebuke it, and thus all men will be taught of him in the ways of righteousness. But as yet the poor, blinded world, bound by the shackles of Satan, do not know themselves. They do not yet see that selfishness is the basis of their every move and ambition; that the number who are not thus moved and controlled are so insignificantly small as to be without weight and influence.

It is not our thought to deride any efforts toward righteousness, even though inspired by selfishness. We merely point out that the true, Christian view of matters is a much different one. It is the Bible view. It recognizes God, the divine will, purpose, plan, revelation, as having to do with all this world's affairs. It sees in the present upheaval of politics, the present uncovering of financial and social scandals, etc., another force

making ready for the great trouble time, the great "earthquake" predicted in prophecy, the great cataclysm, now about to be precipitated upon the whole world. The Scriptures indicate that this time of trouble will be upon us in 1915, and will be gradually approaching in the meantime.

In the providence of God the gross superstition and ignorance of the dark ages has been gradually dissipated to a considerable extent, that the minds of the people might be set free, not only from religious superstition, but also from superstition respecting the divine right of certain families to inherit the kingdoms, the dominions of the world, and to live on a higher plane of social privilege than others. All these matters are now coming in review before the world, and Socialism is rapidly coming to the fore as the world's savior, their deliverer from priestcraft and superstition, and from political and financial autocracy. The world is being invited to look, not to him who redeemed us with his precious blood, and who promised to come again and establish his kingdom in righteousness, but it is being called to look to itself, to its own affairs and selfish interests, as the only hope, thus ignoring God and his overruling providences, and ignoring divine Revelation respecting the future outcome of present conditions, in the glorious Millennial kingdom for the blessing of all the world.

CHURCH FEDERATION NOW FORMING

From our standpoint, the present gathering of the churches into a great Federation is the fulfilment of Scriptural prediction; and the Lord's intelligent, faithful, consecrated people are warned against having any part in any such Church Federation. The Word of the Lord regarding the matter is, "Say ye not, A Confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A Confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and let him be your fear."—Isaiah 8:11-16.

Dread to displease him, but fear not men. It is the tares which have all along associated themselves with the wheat that are to be bundled, to be gathered together for a great trouble time. This is in the mighty revolution of society shortly to set fire to all the social, religious, and financial institutions and arrangements of this present time, eventuating in anarchy, which, through God's overruling providence, will overthrow all things incompatible with righteousness and prepare for the kingdom of God, which will be manifested in power and great glory, for the deliverance and blessing of all the human family.

We remember that as the Jewish age drew near its close, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Messiah, declared to the Jews: "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the holy Spirit and with fire." (Luke 3:16) We remember the fulfilment of this. The "Israelites indeed" were gathered into the garner of the Christian church, and baptized with the holy Spirit at Pentecost. The remainder of the Jewish nation, who "knew not the time of their visitation," were burned as "chaff," in a great time of trouble, which overthrew their nation. This great trouble is shown in Scripture to be a picture on a small scale of the conditions which will prevail in the closing days of this Gospel age.

In that trouble time which came to the Jews, though various steps were taken to hinder the destruction of the nation of Israel, all efforts failed. Even the Roman Emperor was desirous of preserving the nation and of establishing order; and the Roman army was sent, not to destroy them, but to establish peace in their midst. But the Lord had declared that the fire of trouble which he enkindled should not be quenched by any power, that it should do its work to the full; and it did.

Likewise it will be with the great fire of trouble with which this present age will end, and into which the "tare" class of Christendom will be cast. It will not be an utter destruction of life (although many lives will be lost in the awful trouble of this day of wrath), but it will completely consume all earthly governments and institutions and will overthrow churchianity. These will be consumed in the fire of anarchy. Nothing shall be permitted to quench that fire, or hinder the utter destruction of present systems. But, praise God, when the fire shall have devoured the stubble and the falsities and deceptions of the present order, it will but have prepared the way for the great blessing which God has designed and provided, in his coming kingdom. "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isaiah 26:9) It will be a terrible chastisement, but it will be the necessary work of the skilful surgeon, who wounds but to heal.

"REFUGE OF LIES" SWEEP AWAY

In our Lord's parable of building a house upon the rock or upon the sand, he gives a forceful picture particularly of the tests to come upon Christendom at the close of this age. Here his figure is that of a fierce storm, a flood, with mighty winds beating upon the faith structure of his professed followers, overthrowing the faith of those not built upon Christ, the Rock, but built upon the sand. And so we see it today. A mighty downpour of truth is now in progress throughout Christendom. The great storm is now raging. The denominations of churchianity are trembling under the shock. Their foundations of human tradition, man-made theories, ignorance, "doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1), are realized to be unsatisfactory. They are unable to stand before the great searchlight of truth now being turned upon them. Ere long the storm of truth will wash out the quicksand foundation upon which nominal Christianity is built, and her utter wreck will follow. Only the true people of God will be able to stand the test of this great day—now upon us!

This is the same storm and flood mentioned by the Lord through the Prophet Isaiah: "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding places. When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall ye [false teachers] be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by night; and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report [the message, the truth]."—Isaiah 28:17-19.

This overwhelming trouble will soon reach the entire world. Indeed, it has already begun among all nations to some extent. All men must be awakened by the judgments of the Lord and brought to a realization of their need of the Arm of Jehovah, to deliver them and to uplift and save. The whole world is to be judged by the Messiah. All will witness that this judgment, trial, could not come before the great Judge takes his seat and authority: hence none of all those who died before our Lord's first advent could have been judged by him. All should likewise be aware of the fact that the world in general has not been on trial since our Redeemer was appointed the Judge, that the world has not been on trial previous to the present time. Indeed, the great mass of mankind neither know the Judge nor understand his law, nor have they any conception of the conditions and requirements necessary to life everlasting. This is in harmony with the presentations of Scripture on this subject.

JUDGMENT DAY A TIME OF BLESSING

The Apostle Paul declares (Acts 17:31), that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained [The Christ, Head and body]; where he hath given assurance unto all, in that he hath raised him from the dead." That appointed day was future in the Apostle's time, and is still future, though now about to dawn. The Gospel of Christ, good tidings, is to the effect that he who bought the world with his own precious blood is to become the Judge of all men, the living and the dead. "All in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth," "and they that hear shall live."—John 5:28, 29, 25.

A new trial is to be granted to Adam and all his race. It will be an individual trial, under the enlightenment and uplifting influence of the great Messianic kingdom. Truly, this is "good tidings of great joy" to the world, the "groaning creation." Even though the great adversary has succeeded in deceiving the vast majority, even of Christians, into thinking to the contrary, this trial day, the day of judgment, is to come to all the sons and daughters of Adam for their deliverance and blessing, if they will. This great day, which will be "the desire of all nations," is forcefully depicted by the Prophet David. (Psalms 96-98) The saints of the Lord, the faithful followers of Christ, those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," shall be associated with their great Head as assistant judges, in his glorious work of human uplift and restitution to all that was lost in Adam.

How glad we are that our eyes have been anointed to see all these wonderful arrangements of our God! How glad we are that we can understand the significance of the dark clouds now hovering over the world and soon to break! How we rejoice that we can discern the silver lining to these clouds of trouble, and know that the end will be glorious—that beyond the yawning chasm just before us, beyond the blood and tears of the coming whirlwind and tempest, the blessed Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing and blessing in his wings, and mankind, broken and helpless and despairing, shall be led into the light and glory of the kingdom of God's dear Son!

RICH TO HELL—POOR TO HEAVEN

MAY 17.—Luke 16:19-31.

“Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.”—Proverbs 21:13.

Did our Lord mean that all rich men and all rich women are to spend eternity in misery because of faring sumptuously every day, and wearing purple and fine linen? Can it be true that in order to get to heaven we must be poor beggars, covered with sores, and have them licked by dogs, and must eat crumbs from a rich man's table? Has character nothing to do with future rewards and punishments? Again, will it be so that for all eternity the rich, tormented in fire, will see the poor in bliss, and the honored poor see the rich in eternal misery? Can this be the arrangement of an all-wise, all-loving Creator—one who knew the end from the beginning?

For many years this parable has caused distress of mind to the more saintly of God's people; both heart and head have rebelled. We remembered that Abraham was very rich, likewise Isaac, Jacob, King David, King Solomon, etc. We remembered that God himself is very rich. Then we looked up the subject in the Hebrew and the Greek, and found that Abraham did not go to Gehenna, the hopeless condition, the second death, but to sheol, hades, the tomb, the grave, the state of death, where there is no fire.

Our greater knowledge increased the mystery; for the Scriptures declare that sheol, hades, the tomb, is to be destroyed, that all are to be brought forth from it in the resurrection. No other Scripture seemed to agree with this parable. It stands in a class by itself, except as we might use for its support one text in Revelation which speaks of a symbolic beast and a symbolic false prophet in torment. Thus have the thinking people of the church been stumbled and perplexed by the story of this lesson.

NOW ALL IS CLEAR, PLAIN

Now we see that our lesson is a parable. It is not to be taken literally, any more than are the other parables and dark sayings of our Savior; such as, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you”; or again, “If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out . . . ; if thine hand offend thee, cut it off.” Indeed, we find that Jesus spoke to the people only with parables (Matthew 13:34). None were ready for the depth of his teaching until after the holy Spirit at Pentecost began to give qualification.

How simple it all seems now! how beautiful! Many of God's people are rejoicing that in the light of the present understanding of the Bible the divine character is shining forth, beautiful in its justice, wisdom, love and power.

It is not difficult for us to understand that our lesson is a parable. To take it literally, as we have seen, would involve the absurdity of supposing that all beggars go to heaven, and that all wealthy go to hell; for the parable says nothing about character—either that the poor man was good or that the rich man was bad. Viewed as a parable, we see that the thing said is not the thing meant. Thus in other parables wheat and sheep represent children of God; tares and goats represent those dominated by the adversary, the god of this world.

THE RICH MAN OF THE PARABLE

In the parable under consideration, the rich man represents a class, and the poor man, Lazarus, another class. Let us see: The rich man was the Jewish nation, which had been in God's favor for more than sixteen centuries. To the Jew had been given the promises, the prophets, the blessings and privileges of the Law Covenant. These symbolically were their purple, fine linen and sumptuous table. The fine linen symbolized their typical justification through typical sacrifices. Their purple raiment symbolized royalty; for they were the typical kingdom. Their sumptuous fare represented the divine promises, as St. Paul's words imply.—Romans 11:9.

In Jesus' day Jewish favor began to wane. They were completely cut off in A. D. 70, as all Jews will admit. During the interim of forty years the rich man, the Jewish nation, sickened, died and was buried. Nationally, they went to hades, to the tomb; and their resurrection has not yet been accomplished, although Zionism is the beginning of it.

But although nationally dead and buried, the Jews individually have been very much alive during the last nineteen centuries. They have had anguish of soul, as they have received persecutions—sometimes, alas! from those who profess the name of Jesus, but who deny him in their practises. For all these centuries the Jews have cried out to God, who in the parable is represented as Abraham, the father of the faithful. The only answer that they have had is that there is a gulf of separation between them and God. Thank God, this cannot much longer be the case! The new dispensation dawns, in which the rich man will return from hades. Israel will be

nationally rehabilitated, and God's favor will again come to those of them who shall learn needed lessons.

THE POOR MAN OF THE PARABLE

The poor man of the parable represents an outcast class. It included publicans and sinners, who had alienated themselves from God's favor. It also included Gentiles, to whom divine favor had never been extended—“aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel.” (Ephesians 2:12) These had no fine linen of typical justification, and no purple, representing a share in God's favor as part of his kingdom. None of the promises belonged to them. All that they could have would be merely such crumbs as would fall from the rich man's table.

The Scriptures illustrate two such crumbs given to this class by Jesus. When he healed the Roman centurion's servant, it was a concession at the request of the Jews, who declared that this man was a friend and had done them good, by building a synagogue, etc. The healing of this servant was a crumb. Similarly, the Syro-Phoenician woman got a crumb when she came to Jesus entreating the recovery of her daughter, who was possessed of a demon. The Master answered, “It is not proper to take the children's bread and give it unto dogs.” He here used the customary Jewish phraseology respecting Gentiles—Gentile dogs. The Syro-Phoenician woman was not a Jewess and had no claim on God's favor, but she replied: “Yea, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the children's table.” Jesus noted her faith and gave her the crumb which she desired.

As the Jews died to their favor, so the outcast publicans, sinners and Gentiles died to their disfavor; such of them as desired the favors of God, hungering and thirsting for his Word of promise, were received by him. The early church was made up of this Lazarus class, rejected by the Pharisees as publicans, sinners and Gentiles. Instead of being any longer alienated from God, these became the children of God and heirs of his promises. In the parable they are represented as children of Abraham—in his arms. In the type, Isaac was the beloved son of promise to the literal Abraham. In the antitype, Jesus and his followers are the spiritual seed of Abraham, received to God's bosom and favor. Thus St. Paul writes, “If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise”—made to Abraham.—Galatians 3:29.

“A GREAT GULF FIXED”

The great gulf between Judaism and Christianity has been fixed for more than eighteen centuries. During all this period no Jew has been permitted to come near to God, and no Gentile permitted to take the former position of the Jew, or in any manner to claim favor aside from Christ. In the divine plan the gulf was fixed unalterably. “There is none other name given under heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved”—whereby we may come into heart relationship with God. This gulf dates from the time that Christ came and offered himself to Israel, and was repect and crucified.

Thank God, his Word points us to another change of dispensation at the second coming of Christ! Then the Lazarus class, now children of God by faith, will be made actually and gloriously his children beyond the veil. In association with Jesus their Lord, they will take control of the world; for they will be his bride and joint-heir in the kingdom. What will happen to the rich man then? Oh, he is to have a resurrection from hades!

While God's kingdom will be represented on the spiritual plane by the Lazarus class, it will be represented on the earthly plane by another class, which will be Jewish. The Jews who crucified Jesus will not be made princes in the earth in association with Messiah's spiritual empire, but some of their brethren will be—a class whom they have been accustomed to call fathers will be made princes. These Scripturally are known as “Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets,” and all who during the Jewish epoch proved themselves loyal to God and faithful, described by St. Paul in Hebrews 11:32-40.

St. Paul refers to this recovery of the Jews to divine favor in Romans 11:25-33. He there points out that as we who are now the people of God were not always so, but were received to divine favor when Israel was broken off from God's favor, so in due time those Israelites cut off from the favor of God will receive favor through our favor. That is to say, when the church shall have attained the prize of glory, honor and immortality, as spiritual Israel, then the gulf separating natural Israel from God's favor will have been passed. Then favor will return to natural Israel. Coming to them through

the glorified spiritual Israel, it will extend through them to all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues of humanity, during the Millennial age.

This is the divine promise, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The spiritual seed of Abraham, the church, gets the first share in this promise, and the natural seed of Abraham gets the second part; but both together will be used by the Lord in rolling away the curse and pouring out, instead, favors and blessings upon humanity, upon whosoever will accept them.

DIVES' FIVE BRETHREN

The parable represents Dives as praying for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. Symbolically, parabolically, this represents the Jewish people in great distress, asking God to allow Christians to give them some help from their troubles. Have the Jews ever appealed to God for help? Have they prayed for relief from the persecutions which have come to them in the past and which to some extent still continue in Russia? Surely they have! Moreover, they have appealed to representatives of the Lazarus class—representatives of Christianity—desiring that their release and relief should come through them.

An illustration of this prayer for relief in our own day was afforded in the appeal of the Jews to President Roosevelt that he would use his influence with the government of Russia for the amelioration of Jewish persecutions. Did they get this drop of water? Nay! Mr. Roosevelt replied that the comity of nations would not permit such a communication from a friendly nation.

The parable goes further and develops the fact that the rich man had five brethren in danger of joining him in the trouble that was upon him. Who were his five brethren? We reply that the Jews of Palestine in Jesus' day represented chiefly the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, while the majority of the other ten tribes were scattered abroad in various lands. The question raised is, Did this trying experience affect merely the Jews of Palestine, who had enjoyed most of God's favors, or did it include also the Jews scattered abroad? The answer is given in the parable, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." This proves that Jews only were referred to; for no Gentile had Moses and the prophets. The number five is in full accord, also. Whereas two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were represented by the one rich man, so proportionately the other ten tribes would be represented by five brethren.

And so it was. The message of the Gospel, which began with the Jews in Palestine, was extended to every land; and the Apostle Paul, in going to any cities amongst the Gentiles, preached first to the Jews, saying, It is expedient that the Gospel should be preached first to you; but seeing you reject the grace of God, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. (Acts 13:46, 47) In other words, the test upon all Israelites was the same.

Thus we are finding a depth of wisdom in Jesus' teachings beyond anything we could even have dreamed. We are finding, too, that the horrible nightmare doctrines of the dark ages poisoned our judgments, crossed our spiritual eyesight, and hindered us from seeing the beauty of the Lord's Word. Thank God for the new day and the light that it is shedding upon the Bible!

WE ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS

MAY 24.—Luke 17:1-10.

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—1 Corinthians 1:31.

Today's lesson is in four sections, each apparently distinct and separate. Even the connection in which these words were uttered is not given. Nevertheless, they manifest the wisdom from above. We shall consider them in their order.

"It is impossible but that offenses will come." The word offenses more particularly signifies stumblings, or still more literally, ensnarement. The consecrated followers of Jesus are called little ones, because they are new creatures who have only started in the new way of full consecration to God's will. "Babes in Christ," St. Paul styles these. (1 Corinthians 3:1) "Little children," writes St. John. This infantile condition, however, should not continue. There should be growth in grace, knowledge, love. Strength of character should be attained, which would not only be wise, strong and difficult to ensnare, but able also to assist others less developed.

Thus in the church the more developed ones are styled elders—literally, elder brothers. Such more particularly represent the Lord amongst the brethren; and heavenly comfort and advice, reproofs, etc., may at times be sent through these to their younger fellows. The dangers of ensnarement exist because Satan is the prince of this age, and because he has the majority of mankind more or less under his influence—blinded by error, superstition, sin, etc. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of all those who believe not." (2 Corinthians 4:4) That Jesus did not refer to infants is manifest from the words, "one of these little ones which believe in me."

We may not suppose that Jesus would unjustly condemn or punish anybody for ignorantly or unintentionally offending his followers, his little ones. We must suppose that he meant to caution those who would deliberately attempt to deceive and ensnare, entrap, discourage, his followers, his little ones. We all have heard of instances of deliberate, intelligent plotting against the followers of the Lord; and to whatever extent this may prevail, it has indicated the Satanic spirit.

Sometimes true people of God have been thus ensnared into the service of Satan, as intimated by the words, "his servants ye are to whom ye render service." Saul of Tarsus was thus ensnared and used for a time by the adversary; and he explains that God had mercy upon him because he did this ignorantly. Had he done it with wilful intelligence, we may assume that God would not have had mercy upon him to the extent of rescuing him by a miracle, but that he would have continued in his intelligently wicked way and that it would have been better for him that a millstone had been hung around his neck and he had been drowned in the sea.

This would be because a person thus drowned in the sea would lose merely the present life, and not the future life during the Millennium, after he had been awakened from the sleep of death. He would then have full opportunity for enlightenment through obedience and for recovery from sin and death.

But those who intelligently persecute the followers of Jesus and seek to turn them aside from the way of righteousness, pervert their own conscience and so degrade themselves that it will be much more difficult for them to come into accord with the conditions of the new dispensation beyond the grave. In a word, whoever sins against light and knowledge is endangering his own opportunities for everlasting life.

A FORGIVING SPIRIT NECESSARY

Verses 3 and 4 are apparently a part of the same discourse recorded in Matthew 18:15-22. The lesson is addressed to the followers of Jesus, not to the world. It relates primarily to their duty toward the brethren of the household of faith, but secondarily it has a broader application. It may at times be given this broader application; but the injunction in Matthew 18, that the counsel of brethren be brought in and that ultimately, if necessary, the matter come before the church, proves to us that it is in reality not intended for any but the church.

The lesson is mercy—boundless mercy. The basis of the argument is that all need mercy, divine mercy, because all are imperfect; and in order to assist us in the cultivation of this grace, the Lord has arranged that his blessings to us, his favor, shall be dependent upon our endeavor to exercise this Godlike quality. "Be ye like unto your Father; for he is kind to the unthankful."

It seems strange that our forefathers and ourselves were so deceived by the false doctrines which St. Paul styles "doctrines of devils." (1 Timothy 4:1) Once we thought of the heavenly Father as absolutely unforgiving—full of hate for his human creatures, because they had sinned—instead of forgiving their sin. We insisted that the wage, or penalty, of sin must be torment, and that to all eternity. How little we understood the real character of the God of all grace, the Father of mercies!

Some of us, perhaps, endeavored to justify our error by assuming that God himself was all goodness, kindness and love, but had behind him an inexorable law demanding the torture of his creatures—a law from which he could not escape, and which bound him to the doing of things which his own law condemned in humanity.

Others of us deluded ourselves into thinking that all mankind enjoyed at some time between birth and death a full opportunity for turning from sin to righteousness and of becoming saints. Only of late years are Bible students becoming aware of how absurd is this position. Now we are realizing that, for four thousand years, only the one little nation of the Jews had any knowledge of God, or any promise of eternal life held out to them, or any instruction respecting sin and its penalty. And even the Jews, to whom the law was given, Jesus and his apostles declared were blinded by Satan. Jesus, ad-

dressings his apostles, said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." The great nation of the Jews neither saw nor heard. The same is true of nine-tenths of the population of Christendom, not to mention heathendom.

Without the least warrant of Scripture, but in contradiction of it, many of us upheld the terrible theory that all who do not hear of Christ in the present lifetime and also all those who do not become saintly followers in his steps will be eternally tortured at the hands of devils. We now see that the Bible teaches that only a comparatively small class, who now have the hearing ear and the seeing eye and who enter into covenant relationship with God through Christ, can walk in Jesus' steps. For these only does the present life end all opportunity of attaining eternal life. For the remainder of mankind God purposes a future life by a resurrection of judgment.

The resurrection is not merely for the church class—the first, or chief resurrection—but it is for "the just and the unjust." (Acts 24:15) The church class will come forth to glory, honor and immortality. The unjust will come forth from the tomb to judgments, disciplines, rewards and punishments. It is in order to give them these judgments and opportunities to obtain everlasting life that Messiah's kingdom will be inaugurated; and it is in order that he may appoint proper judges to assist the people and to reward and punish justly that he is now calling out the church in the flesh. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"—1 Corinthians 6:2.

FAITH POWER—CREDULITY POWER

A great deal passes for faith which is merely credulity. If some one were to swear to us that the moon is made of green cheese, it would be credulity to believe him—not faith. We should inquire, "Who is it that says this thing, and what does he know on the subject more than we may know?" The faith commended in the Bible is that which relates to things which God has promised. We are encouraged to be full of such faith in God—nothing doubting—not questioning that he is able to accomplish all his good promises.

Our forefathers had too much confidence in men. What they thought was faith was mere credulity. They swallowed the creeds of the dark ages; and the more absurd the proposition, the more faith they thought they had. On the contrary, they should have said, "Where is the proof? Where has God declared such things?" Those who defended the creeds cried out incredulously against sober faith, branded it heresy, and many times burned the truly faithful at the stake. The lesson is that we should accept by faith only that of which the Lord has assured us in his Word; and this means that we should be particularly careful that we have the pure Word of God, sifting out mistranslations and interpolations.

In our lesson, the disciples of Jesus were evidently impressed with the grandeur of his teachings, and the difficulties that must lie in the way of the accomplishment of all the wonderful things recorded in the law and the prophets, and told by Jesus—respecting his Messianic kingdom, etc. They therefore asked the Lord to increase their faith. Jesus replied in words that are greatly misunderstood in our day. He said, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say to this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." On two other

occasions Jesus made similar remarks respecting mountains, saying that the word of faith would have been sufficient to remove them to the midst of the sea.

WHAT DID HE MEAN?

Evidently the Master did not mean to encourage the Jews to attempt to command the mountain to be carried into the sea; but rather he wished them to realize that if they had proper faith in the power of God, and should receive a command from God to move the mountain into the sea, and should give the command with faith, the results would follow. But God gave no such command in respect to the mountains nor in respect to the tree. Hence faith would have no basis for operation in such cases.

The colored brother had the proper thought. When asked what he would do if God told him to jump through a stone wall, he replied, "I would jump at it." In a word, we are to have absolute confidence in the Word of God, not merely to make sure that we have heard and understood his message. Then we may go forward with mountain-moving faith to accomplish his commands. But God does not command foolish or unnecessary changes. He leaves it for human ingenuity to uproot the trees and to tunnel the mountains, and never gives commands of this kind. And if some human being told us something of the kind, we would be credulous if we believed him. God is not working that way.

NOT PROFITABLE TO OUR MASTER

Some amongst the followers of Christ, naturally progressive, are sometimes too aggressive, self-conceited. Becoming his disciples does not change these traits instantly. The old things pass away gradually, and the new take their place. A lesson for all of his disciples to remember, but especially forceful to the classes mentioned, is taught in this Study. They must remember that the work of God's grace, of which they are subjects, is his favor toward them; and that their obedience to his commands is primarily for their correction and development, and a future life of blessing. They should remember that even their service for the Lord is a privilege—that God is not profited by their services.

We are all unprofitable servants in the sense that God could just as easily do without us, indeed, could more easily do his work otherwise than through us. He could use as his messengers the angels or the various providences of life. None of us is indispensable to his work and to his glory. Quite to the contrary, the opportunity for entering into the Lord's vineyard and laboring therein is chiefly for our own advantage. The service brings us certain joys which we could not otherwise have. It brings us certain experiences necessary to our own development and qualification for higher services beyond the veil.

As the Apostle declares, "By grace [divine favor] are ye saved through faith." To some extent the faith is a matter of our own development. However, the Apostle hastens to add that the faith is not of ourselves, that even it is the gift of God—we have not the opportunity of glorying even in our faith. What have we that we have not received of the Lord? The elemental faith was based upon certain knowledge that God's providences brought to us, and possibly we were prepared for even that by a favorable parentage.

CHRISTLIKENESS THE EVIDENCE OF SONSHIP

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked."—1 John 2:6.

To abide in Christ implies that one has first come into him. This gives us the thought of a body. The Scriptures everywhere represent the church as being this body, with Jesus as the Head. "God gave him to be Head over the church, which is his body." During the Gospel age an invitation has been given to certain persons to be of this body of Christ. There is only one door by which these may come into the body. It is the door of sacrifice, baptism into Christ's death. We are accepted only by giving up our own will, and taking instead the will of God. We pledge ourselves to walk in Jesus' steps, to become his followers, his disciples. We are buried with him and rise to walk in newness of life.—Romans 6:4.

But it is not sufficient that we take these steps, not sufficient that we have received the holy Spirit, and have been accepted of the Father. We should be sure that we continue to abide in Christ. Let us ask ourselves, Are we having the experiences common to all who are associated with Jesus? One of the ways to be sure that we are abiding in him is to realize that we still love him. Another is to know that we are still in harmony with God's Word. A third way is that we have no will but the Lord's will. Still another is to have his peace in our hearts and lives as the ruling and controlling influence.

PROFESSION ALONE INSUFFICIENT

Many have made a profession of being members of the body of Christ who do not give evidence of being his. Our text says that any one who professes to be in Christ ought so to walk even as the Master walked. And how did the Master walk? He lived daily in harmony with the will of the heavenly Father. He was fully submissive to the Father's will. And this meant sacrifice unto death—the cruel death of the cross.

Whoever has our Lord's spirit, and is controlled by the same will, is a member of the body of Christ, and will seek to walk after this fashion, to do the will of God in all things. This will mean a walk of holiness, of full devotion to God, and of opposition to sin. Whoever is consecrated to God is opposed to every sinful thing; for God and sin are in antagonism. God stands for his own righteousness, and sin is a violation of that righteousness. (1 John 3:4) Whoever walks as Jesus walked is in harmony with the divine Word and will. We are not to trust to our impressions, our own conceptions of what is right and advantageous, as many others do; but the Word of the Lord is to abide in us, and to govern our lives. Jesus said, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"—"everything written in the Book." And so it is to be with

us. We must abide in him, walk in him, and be willing to do "everything written in the Book"—not merely forcing ourselves to it, saying, I will take this course; but saying, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is written in my heart."—Psa. 40:7, 8.

PROOFS OF SONSHIP

All who have accepted Christ claim, in a general way at least, to be sons of God, that Christ is their Elder Brother, and that they belong to this great family that God is selecting from the sons of men. They consider themselves heirs with Christ to the great kingdom to come. But not all who claim to be sons of God are such. A great many are making this claim. Statistics tell us that there are four hundred millions of professed Christians; but we cannot think that many of these four hundred millions are sons of God. The Apostle Paul calls our attention to the fact that since we cannot read the hearts we must go by the professions which others make by mouth and by conduct. But professions of the mouth are not to be taken as final. We know that those who are sons of God will be led by his Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

But what is the Spirit of God? Primarily it is the spirit of Truth, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of justice, the spirit of love. And as many as are God's children, begotten of his holy Spirit, will make some manifestation of their harmony with this general Spirit of God. If they are, therefore, walking in unrighteousness, making no endeavor to stem the tendencies of sin in themselves, if they prefer error rather than truth, their fruits condemn them; for God stands for truth, and was exemplified in our Lord Jesus.

Whoever, therefore, has the Spirit of God, is willing to sacrifice himself that he may serve the truth. He loves the truth, and will manifest this fact by the spirit of love and zeal. Satan is the personification of sin, envy, hatred, malice, strife. Righteousness, love, joy, peace, are fruits of the holy Spirit. Wherever we see the works of the devil manifested we have reason to question that such a one is a child of God. The spirit of envy, the spirit of hatred, the spirit of malice, the spirit of opposition to the truth, the spirit of unrighteousness—these are to be repudiated and overcome by all who would be sons of God.

Yet despite one's best efforts, he might still find in his flesh tendencies to sin which would give him a great deal of

trouble. He may take courage from the assurances of the Scriptures that the Lord looketh on the heart. Likewise in regard to others, we should judge according to the endeavor, the intention. Wherever the Spirit of God is, there is the spirit of love. And this spirit will make one wish to make reparation, if he has done wrong or been in error. To do so shows that it was not his spirit, his will to do wrong, but that he was merely entrapped for a time. But one who continues to do according to his natural tendencies, with no evidence of going in the right direction and of serving the truth, has reason to doubt that he is a child of God.

HOW WE CAN WALK AS HE WALKED

The Apostle's thought seems to be that those who profess to be the Lord's followers, profess to be Christians, should see to it that their walk in life is in harmony with their profession. The word disciple signifies one who follows—as a pupil follows his teacher. We recognize Christ as our Redeemer and also as our Pattern, our Instructor, in the glorious things which the Father has invited us to share with our Savior. If, therefore, we say that we are in him, this profession should be borne out by our walk in life. We should walk as he walked.

But we are not perfect—how can this be done? The answer is that we "are not in the flesh, but in the spirit." God does not look upon our imperfect flesh. As New Creatures we are not fleshly beings, but spiritual. The Apostle is in our text speaking of that walk that the Master had after he made consecration. He walked in this way three and a half years. It was a walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And so with us. We are walking, not according to the flesh, but according to the new creature. We reckon ourselves dead according to the flesh, and the Lord so reckons us. If, then, we are dead to the flesh, we are not to walk according to the desires of the flesh.

We are to walk as our Lord walked, in our general deportment. We are to love everything that is good and to avoid everything that is evil. We are to walk as nearly as possible in the footsteps of our Lord and Exemplar. We cannot in an imperfect body walk up to all the perfection of Jesus, who was perfect in his flesh as well as in his spirit. But we are to walk as he walked—in the same path, in the same direction, toward the same glorious goal toward which he walked. And so doing, faithful day by day, we shall by his grace attain the same exceeding great reward.

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

ORDAINED A MINISTER OF CHRIST

Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society,

Dear Brethren:—

In view of the fact that on every hand our enemies are opposing us on the ground that our public speakers are not ordained, and that more opposition may be aroused along this line in the future, might it not be well for the Society to give some formal recognition of the Lord's ordination of the brothers who speak in public?

The majority of our pilgrims, when asked, "When were you ordained?" do not have a ready answer. They may give the date of their consecration, but while we understand the matter to our own satisfaction, this is not satisfactory to the inquirer, who usually entertains the thought that since we have not been regularly (?) ordained, we are not safe teachers for them to listen to.

We realize that here at Bethel, we have by far the strongest Theological School, with daily studies and recitations, in the whole world. I read only today in the *Christian Herald*, a challenging query as to how many of us were regularly ordained, where we got our education, how many of us had any understanding of Greek or Latin, etc. Now, all of us understand Greek better than most orthodox (?) ministers; and if we could have some formal recognition of our ordination, perhaps referring it to the date of our individual consecration, I believe it would serve to stop the mouths of many, and would give the truth much impetus in the public opinion, which would well serve the purpose in gathering the Lord's wheat. Even in our newspaper advertising it would be a telling point to state the time when our more prominent speakers were ordained. It seems to be a question which the public mind is always asking, and will never be satisfied till answered. In my colporteur work I sold the books twice as easily when known to be a minister. Others have had the same experience.

I submit this merely as a suggestion, dear friends, and shall

know that your decision, whether pro or con, is the Lord's will. With continued love and prayers, I am,

Your brother in the glorious harvest work, which we all love so much,

R. G. JOLLY.

THINKS PHOTO-DRAMA WONDERFUL

My Dear Brother Russell:—

My purpose in writing is to let you know of my strong appreciation of the Photo-Drama of Creation. Throughout it is a wonderful production; surpassing even my most sanguine expectations.

I have met many truth friends who have seen the Drama—at Cincinnati, Toledo, and Indianapolis—all of whom were delighted with and benefited by it. They expressed the opinion that the Drama will edify the truth friends, as well as greatly enlighten and favorably influence others. The writer fully shares their opinion.

I wish all who are interested in the cause we so much love could see the production. I feel sure it would increase their love for the truth, and also their interest in the work generally. I was very much in favor of the project before seeing the exhibition; but I am much more so since.

It is marvelous to think of the thousands of people who are, through the Photo-Drama, hearing the precious Gospel preached, every day and night. I never heard the Gospel preached more plainly and impressively than it is for at least an hour, at each exhibition of the Photo-Drama. I presume that while the slide pictures are being exhibited, and the lecturing is in progress, at least an hour is occupied. And the motion pictures are so beautiful, realistic and instructive!

Apparently, a large majority of those who witness the production are very favorably impressed thereby. In my humble judgment, the Photo-Drama is the most successful project the Society has ever inaugurated.

Yours in Christian love and service, FRANK DRAPER.