

as we will explain. We read, "All his work is perfect." It is the divine method that every creature of God shall be so perfect as to need no forgiveness, no allowance. Then angels were created perfect, hence there was no need to provide forgiveness for them, because there would be no excuse for their sinning. Likewise man was thus created perfect, in the image and likeness of the Creator, and was without excuse, and therefore needed no provision for mercy so long as he was in relation with his God.

When temptation came, man fell from obedience into sin, and from divine favor and life into disfavor and under the death sentence. He was without excuse and justice made no provision. But another feature of the divine character, love, while not in control, was brought into exercise for man's relief. But divine love or mercy could not override or interfere with divine justice. In other words, God could not forgive a sinner whom He had sentenced to death. What He could do, and did do, was to provide in due time for man's redemption. All of divine mercy, therefore, flows through the channel of redemption.

Applying this principle to our Savior and to his teachings, we ask, How could he forgive sins when divine justice could not forgive sins, nor set aside the penalty of sin? The answer is, Jesus was the representative of divine mercy, and was at that time amongst men for the purpose of giving his life as a sacrifice on man's account, and therefore to him belonged the distinctive honor of forgiving sins. But someone answers that Jesus had not yet died for man's sins, that he had not yet risen for man's justification, that he had not even appeared in the presence of God for the "household of faith."

We answer that while it is true that he had not accomplished this work, and indeed has not yet fully accomplished his work (as the Redeemer and Restorer of men), nevertheless, he had begun the work, he had presented himself as man's Atonement price at Jordan, at the time of his baptism. According to the Scriptures and the type, he at that moment surrendered his earthly all on man's behalf.

However, his surrender of his all did not give him the authority to forgive sins. It was the heavenly Father's acceptance of his consecration—divine acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice that counted. God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice was manifested in his impartation of the holy Spirit, which lighted upon Jesus like a dove, as was testified by John the Baptist, and also testified by divine power which thereafter operated in and through Jesus for the healing of diseases. We see, then, that our Lord's words to the palsied man, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," were justified by the fact that he was in the position of making satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and that the Father had already indicated the acceptance of the sacrifice which was then in process.

"BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL"

The text for this study comes from the Psalms, and is most interesting. The Prophet David may have appropriated the words to himself as a Jew, and may have thought of his own physical healing and blessing as evidences of the Lord's favor under the Law Covenant. But the prophetic application of this Psalm to spiritual Israel is still more interesting. The spiritual Israelites are new creatures, and have this treasure in earthen vessels.

With these it is the new mind that recognizes his healing, his forgiveness, his reconciliation to God; and, according to God's promise, all things are working together for good to him, because he loves God and has been called according to the divine purpose. Continually the new creature has cause to exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases!" St. Paul, carrying out this same thought, declared that the great Redeemer will ultimately present his church before the Father faultless and perfect in love—"sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown an animal body, raised a spirit body." We shall be like him and see him as he is and share his glory.

THE GOSPEL ST. PAUL PREACHED

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."—Rom. 1:16.

There are many religions, and it is a mistake that we have perhaps said in the past that there is no religion but one. A religion would properly be considered "Any system of worship by which any people recognize the Almighty and seek to do him honor." We are, therefore, to recognize the various great religions that are in the world in the sense that we could not properly ignore them. We have, for instance, the Confucian teaching, the Brahmin teaching, the Buddhist teaching, the Mohammedan teaching, the Jewish teaching and the Christian teaching. These all present themselves to us as religious teachings. They all believe themselves more or less rational; they all believe themselves more or less reasonable. Every man tries to think that his own theory on any matter is a reasonable theory; and he is proper in so doing.

In harmony with our text, we propose to compare the religion of Jesus with all other religions. In the beginning, we state with the Apostle, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Whatever may be said of other gospels, we believe, as Christians, that in the Christian religion we have that of which no man need be ashamed. There may perhaps be certain features and forms of certain creeds of which we might be ashamed—that do not come up to our highest ideals. But the Christian religion, as presented in the Word of God, should be the standard of Christendom; and of that we are not ashamed. It will compare with all other religions in the world, and come off victorious, in every sense of the word. All of these various religions seem to recognize that man is in an imperfect, unsatisfactory, sinful condition; therefore, each of these religions seeks to present certain tenets, or teachings, that will help man up out of his imperfect condition, back into harmony with his God.

A COMPARISON OF RELIGIONS

If we consider the teachings of the Mohammedans, we find that they have certain qualities which are very advantageous, and other qualities which we could not so highly commend. Their endeavor is not to do injury, but to make men better. Their theory is that mankind are fallen and need lifting up out of their fallen condition. The same may be said of the teachings of the Brahmin, the Confucianist and the Buddhist. They are all more or less presentations of what are supposed to be cures for man's fallen condition, cures for his unsatisfactory attitude.

Some of these religions pronounce one kind of penalty for those who will not accept them, and others declare other kinds. Some offer one kind of reward for those who accept and follow their teachings, while others offer other kinds of rewards. But all agree that man needs to be elevated and lifted up out of his fallen condition, which is sinful and unsatisfactory. There seems to be in every man, naturally, without any education on the subject, something which tells him that he is not perfect; that he is not in full accord with his own conscience, not in accord with his own highest ideals of the divine mind.

All religions, therefore, recognize this principle of sin and propose remedies therefor. We see the evidence of this as manifested in their disciples everywhere. Many seek to crucify the flesh in one form or another—some by flagellations, some by restraints upon the various liberties of life, some by holding their hands in the air for days, seeking to become holy and thus appease their god.

But none of these things, in the light of the Gospel of Christ, seem to be the highest and noblest ideals. Doubtless all have done some good and uplifted some men out of the degradation in which they were. Mankind might have been worse off if it had not been for these religions.

But now, if we compare these with the religion of Jesus Christ, we believe everything is to be said in favor of the religion of Christ. In the first place, all these religions more or less resemble the Jewish religion, which is of God, and hence all these religions are more or less in harmony with God's proposition.

God's proposition to the Jews was, "Do these things and ye shall live," have everlasting life. That was the covenant made by God with them at Mount Sinai, at the hands of Moses. They thought at first that they would surely be lifted up out of sin, because God had given them a law, and by keeping it they would be perfect and be brought into harmony with God. In this they were mistaken, for, as they found out, as the centuries passed, none of them were able to keep the law, because it is the measure of a perfect man's ability; and none of them could measure up to the perfect man.

Israel found, therefore, as the Apostle states it, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." And they found also that the law, instead of perfecting, justi-

fying them, and giving them eternal life, brought to them a greater realization of sin than they ever had before. And this was the real blessing of the Law Covenant—it showed them their sinful condition and their inability to lift themselves out of it. But the Jews do not recognize that great fact today, for if they did they would be crying to God for mercy instead of hoping to keep the law and thus justify themselves.

The same thing might be said to be true of all the heathen religions. All offer help by which mankind may make themselves perfect, but none are able to make themselves perfect, and they all realize that they are sinners and imperfect to the last degree. There is, therefore, nothing that is logical in any of these religions, because they all start out to claim that a man ought to be perfect, ought to be holy, and are agreed that he is not. As before called attention to this agrees with the words of God with respect to Israel, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." God's Word agrees with all of these—that man is a sinner, that he cannot do the things that he would, that his ideals are to be and are higher than his capacity and ability. And so St. Paul declares, "We cannot do the things which we would."

Christianity answers that the reason is that we are fallen creatures, sold under sin. Who sold us, when and where? The Bible answers that "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men." Death has passed upon the entire race and thus impoverished it mentally, morally and physically, so that now, because of the fall, we cannot do the things which we would like to do.

The Bible tells us that originally Adam was not in our condition, but was perfect and could keep the divine law perfectly, but that "we are sold under sin." And so the Prophet David expresses the same thought, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." So we behold that we are a race of sinners, imperfect mentally, morally and physically, and therefore unable to keep the divine standard or law. What, then, does Christianity offer us that no other religion offers us? Christianity offers us a Savior, and no other religion offers a Savior.

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE IS THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

Christianity recognizes that the condition came about by the disobedience of one man, Adam, and it sets forth Jesus as the one who redeems man from that death sentence that came upon our first parents: "As by a man came death, by a man comes also the resurrection of the dead"; "For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive," writes St. Paul—"every man in his own order." Here, then, Christianity has a logical superiority, in that it provides for a satisfaction of divine justice.

All religions say that it is divine justice that is opposed to sin, but Christianity offers a satisfaction for divine justice. "Christ died for our sins"; "He gave Himself a Ransom for all"; "He is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," writes the Apostle. So then, Christianity is not only more logical, but is more just—it recognizes divine justice.

We must recognize that if God condemned the world understandingly and truly, as the Great Judge of mankind, there must be some satisfaction of justice ere the Chief Justice of the universe could set aside the penalty and release the culprit. Man has sinned and the great Chief Justice has passed the sentence, and there is no way to revoke that sentence, except by meeting it. And so Christianity sets forth that our Lord Jesus came into the world to meet the penalty, and that he, "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man."—Heb. 2:9.

Christianity has another superiority over all other religions, and it is this: it recognizes a love and compassion upon the part of God that no other religion recognizes. All these religions do recognize a God, and we claim it makes very little difference whether they call him Allah, or Jehovah, or some other name. They recognize, we believe, the same, one God, but they do not recognize his real traits of character. They perceive his justice, and their own transgressions of divine justice, but they do not see the merciful provision that God has made. Their God is represented by the Chinese idol, which pictures to them the character of God.

We remember a Chinese banner we once saw. The figure on this banner represented a very demon-like character, and lightning was represented as flashing from his closed fist. He was a god to be feared, one who would take vengeance upon them.

The God of the Bible, however, while just, is not a vengeful God, not unkind; but, on the contrary, he is the God of All Grace, the Father of Mercies, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. And the great Gift that he gave is the greatest of all gifts, the Gift of his Son, for man's sin, that thus he might offer a satisfaction to his own justice. Nor was this arbitrarily at the expense of, or contrary to the will of the

Redeemer; because the Scriptures make clear that it was by virtue of the "prize" set before our Lord; as we read, "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame."—Heb. 12:2.

This love of God is not content with merely the provision of the Savior, and the arrangement that if anybody shall hear and believe he shall be blessed; but this love of God proposes to go still further, namely, that he who thus redeems the race shall become the King of earth; and his scepter, his rule, shall be "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," until "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess" to the glory of God; and "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep." Thus every creature shall come to know that there is a God, and that the way he proposes to be just and merciful is through his Son, who is to be the great deliverer of the race.

In what way will this great Deliverer come? This is a part of the Gospel, a part of the "good tidings." It will be through his great kingdom, which he will set up in his own due time. His kingdom will not be merely for the rich or powerful, but for the poor also: "He shall lift up the poor from the dung-hill," is a part of the prophecy. His power and influence will be the great moving principle that will level the whole world of mankind. As the Scriptures declare, all men are on a common level before God, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and all are recipients of divine mercy.

The blessing of the Lord will be that all may come back; and when thus brought back to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed by Christ, they will be able to keep the divine law perfectly, and will therefore to all eternity be in covenant-relationship with God. For those who refuse to enjoy that blessing prepared for them, the Scriptures clearly declare that God has provided the second death—not a place of torment—"The soul that sinneth it shall die"; "The wages of sin is death."

"But," someone may say, "what about the church? You have been speaking about the world and what Jesus will do for it; what about the church?" Those of us who have experienced this salvation know that as a power it has not lifted us physically to perfection, but it has a power that has come into our hearts, into our minds, through faith, transforming, renewing us—our minds, our wills. The Lord's true people were once aliens, strangers and foreigners to the Lord, but by a knowledge of the Savior have become transformed in their lives, so that now they are seeking to walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit, the spirit or mind of God, the divine will.

Here we see the difference between the Jew under his covenant of law and the Christian under the higher covenant that the Lord has made at the present time. The Apostle said that the Jew could not do the things that he would; but he declares equally strongly that "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—Rom. 8:1.

How is this possible? Are we better than the Jews? Are we of less fallen nature than the Jews, or made perfect? Nay, verily. The Apostle explains that for the class called out during this Gospel age there is a special arrangement in operation, and God deals with these according to their minds, their wills, their intentions, so that under this Covenant of Grace we are counted as fully keeping the divine law—the righteousness, the full meaning of the Law, is fulfilled in us who are walking not after the flesh but after the spirit—not up to the spirit, but after the spirit.

But how could we be fully justified if not able to walk up to the spirit? The answer is that the blood cleanses us and commutes our sins; Christ imputes his perfection and righteousness to us, so that our best endeavors are accepted in Jehovah's sight as perfect, for we are justified, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

Another way in which the Gospel of Christ is superior to all others is that this Gospel is world-wide. No other Gospel of which we have knowledge is world-wide. The Gospel of the Son of God is that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, every nation and people and kindred and tongue. "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea." We know of no other religion that is so unbiased, that recognizes no national lines, that has the thought that we are one race, which sprang from one man, condemned through one man, and redeemed through the Man Christ Jesus, and that all are to have a blessing—no other religion under the sun!

The religion of Christ, of which we are not ashamed, is best in this, that it is the most God-like religion, because of its breadth, because of its justice, because of its impartiality, because of its love, its goodness and merciful qualities. It shows forth, as does no other religion, the justice, wisdom, love and power of Jehovah, our God. To him be glory and honor and dominion forever!

THE PRAYERS OF THE NEW CREATION

JOHN 15:7.

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Prayer to God, communion with him, is a great privilege and an evidence of his favor. God does not grant us this privilege, however, in order that he might be informed of our desires, for since we are imperfect ourselves our desires cannot be perfect: "We know not what things to ask for as we ought;" and he does for us better than we know how to ask or think. Nor does God permit us to pray to him that we may inform him regarding matters here; for he knoweth the end from the beginning, as well as every intervening step. But he has instituted prayer for our benefit and comfort and instruction.

The object of prayer is to bring the heart and the mind of the child of God into contact with the heart of God, that he may be enabled thus most fully to realize the Fatherhood of God, his love and his deep interest in every item of our welfare; that in deep affliction we may unburden our hearts to God and thus have forcibly brought to our attention his love and care and wisdom—for our encouragement, not his; for our strengthening, not his, and for our joy.

This opportunity is not for us to instruct Jehovah how to arrange matters for the best, but to bring our hearts to realize him as the center of wisdom and power, that having unburdened our hearts, we may be prepared to listen for his answer and advice through his Word. And he whose knowledge of prayer is confined to the meager information he has imparted to God with "much speaking," and who has never learned to listen for the answer to his prayer from the Word of God, has, as yet, measurably failed to appreciate the object of prayer.

Earnestness in God's service will bring his children to him frequently, to realize at his feet his sympathy with them in the difficulties, discouragements and trials of life, as well as to ask his guidance and overruling of every affair of life, and through his Word to hearken to his wisdom, which will enable them to serve him acceptably.

The province of prayer is to ask for only such things as God has already declared himself well pleased to grant. And while we may freely speak to him as a Father, and tell him how we understand his Word, and the confidence and trust we have in its ultimate fulfillment, yet we must not only avoid telling the Lord of our will and our plans, and what we would like, but we must avoid and put far from us any such spirit, and must recognize, and bring ourselves into full accord with his will and his plan for accomplishing it. If this thought were appreciated, it would cut short some of the "long prayers," "much speaking," and "vain repetitions" by which some endeavor to instruct the Lord in their wishes regarding every matter under heaven. It would send them speedily to the Word of God to search diligently the plan of God that they might labor as well as pray in harmony with it.

While assuring us that the Father cares for us, and is well pleased to have us come to him with sincere hearts, the Master informs us of the conditions upon which we may expect an answer. He says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John 15:7.

"ABIDE IN ME"

The conditions of the above statement, or promise, are two; the first is, abiding in Christ. But what is it to abide in Christ? Only those can abide in Christ who are in Christ, who have come into him by faith, repentance and consecration; and to abide in him means that the faith will abide, the repentance for sin and the opposition to it will abide, and the consecration to the Lord and his service will abide, and it will be manifest that our will has been wholly consecrated—swallowed up in the will of Christ.

The other condition is also a weighty one: "If my Word abide in you." Ah! how evident it is that our Lord meant to associate himself and his Word, the Scriptures, in the minds, in the hearts, in the lives of all who are truly his! They must search the Scriptures to know the will of the Lord; to know what he has promised and what he has not promised; to know what they may ask and what they may not ask; and, ascertaining these, one fully consecrated—one controlled entirely by the will of God—will not want to be, to have, or to do anything except that which will be pleasing to the Lord in respect to himself.

When this position has been reached, the will of Christ governing him, the words of Christ abiding in him, we can readily see that whatever would be asked by one thus well informed with respect to the divine promises and fully submis-

sive to the divine will would be things which the Father would be pleased to grant in answer to his requests.

These requests would probably be as simple as was the Master's petition when he prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done!" (Luke 22:42) In such a condition prayers are always answered; but in such a condition the prayers would be very modest. One's prayers under such circumstances would be more a thanksgiving for blessings, an expression of confidence and trust, and the committal of his way unto the Lord, confidently realizing the promise that to him under such conditions, all things (even seeming disasters and troubles) shall work together for good. Hence, whatever came, such a one could realize his prayer answered. He could rejoice evermore because he is prepared to rejoice in tribulation as well as in prosperity, in the path of service. He has no will to oppose whatever God permits, knowing that it will work out good.

Such, amongst the Lord's people, could not pray that their own will be done; for they have no will except God's. Those who abide in Christ, and in whom his Word abides, can pray for their enemies and those who despitely use them and persecute them, though they cannot pray God to open the blinded eyes of their enemies at once, nor in their way. Realizing from the indwelling Word of God's promise that the blinded eyes shall all be opened to the truth, they can abide his time. Going to God in prayer they may express their forgiveness of their persecutor, their interest in him, and their patient waiting for the day when "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea"—ocean deep—and his will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.

ANSWERS OFTEN DELAYED

The answer to our prayer is not always granted immediately; but after we have made sure that our requests are in accord with the promises, those things which lie very close to our hearts become our continual prayer, associating in our minds with all of life's duties and interests, the heart gravitating continually toward the thing we have desired of the Lord, and on suitable opportunities repeating to him the request. This is the kind of prayer which the Lord commended, saying, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." (Luke 18:1) The Lord's people ought to continue asking for the right things with some degree of persistency, and should not grow weary, hopeless, faithless, faint in their hearts.

Doubtless there are many reasons why the Lord does not promptly grant all of our requests which are in accordance with his will, in harmony with his Word. We may not know all of these reasons; but some of them are apparent. Undoubtedly one reason for the Lord's delay in answering us is often to test the strength and the depth of our desires for the good things that we request of him.

For instance, he informs us that he is more willing to give his holy Spirit to us who ask than are earthly parents to give good things to their children. Yet the giving of his holy Spirit is a gradual process; and we are enabled to receive it only in proportion as we are emptied of the worldly or selfish spirit. It requires time to become thus emptied of self and prepared for the mind of Christ; in some it requires longer for this than in others; but all need emptying in order to receive the refilling.

He that seeketh findeth, but the more he seeketh the more he findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened, but his continual knocking and his increasing interest in the knocking means his increasing desire to enter, so that as the door of privilege, of opportunity, swings slowly open before him, his courage and his strength increase as he seeks to avail himself of the opening. Thus every way the blessing is greater than if the Lord were to answer the petitions hastily.

We are to think of our heavenly Father as rich and benevolent, kind and generous, yet wise as well as loving. We are to suppose that he will have pleasure in giving us the desires of our hearts if those desires are in harmony with his plan, which he has already framed on such lines as to include not only our very highest and best interests, but the highest and best interests of all his creatures. Then, whatever comes, his well-informed children can have all the desires of their hearts, because their hearts are in full accord with the Lord; and they desire nothing of the Lord except the good things of his purpose and promise.

"DESIRE, UTTERED OR UNEXPRESSED"

When thus considered, not as a begging arrangement, nor as an occasion of instructing the Lord as to our wills, but as

a season of union and communion of heart with the Father, in which we may relieve our burdened or perplexed hearts and realize divine sympathy, calling to mind divine promises, reviewing divine care, and expressing our confidence in God's many promises, thus bringing those promises afresh and close to our hearts, as though God now audibly uttered them in our hearing—thus considered, how proper, yea, how necessary is prayer to the true child of God! He cannot live without it. To break off this communion would be like stripping a tree of its leaves; their removal would stunt and hinder its development.

But to suppose that Christian life depends solely upon prayer without earnest study of God's Word, is like supposing that a tree could flourish from its leaves only, without roots and soil. Both are needful. As good soil and roots will produce leaves and fruitage, so, likewise, the promises of God's Word absorbed by us will naturally lead to good works and to communion with God in prayer, without which the fruits of the Spirit would soon wither and disappear.

No wonder, then, that Jesus both by precept and by example said, "Watch and pray" (Matt. 26:41), uniting the conditions necessary to our development. Some pray and neglect to watch; others watch and neglect to pray. Both these errors are serious; and it is not possible for us to decide which is the more serious neglect, since either would work disastrous loss of the great "prize" for which we are running.

THE SCRIPTURAL RULE FOR ADJUSTING MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Matt. 18:15-17.

We cannot imagine a case in which a brother with average intelligence would need comfort and counsel in a misunderstanding other than that for which the Lord has provided in our text. If he has been in the habit of seeking sympathy in a busy-bodying manner, the sooner he knows that his course is wrong the better. He should learn to use his own mind along lines where there is positive instruction in the Scriptures. The Lord says to any one who has aught against his brother, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." If the matter is too small to mention to the brother, it is too small to notice and should be forgotten.

There are no exceptions to the rule laid down in Matt. 18:15-17; but there might be, under some circumstances, an interpretation of the rule. For instance, if the matter were in a family, there might be circumstances in which it would be proper to go to the head of the family. If it were in an institution, where the individual might be merely a representative of the Society, it would be proper to go to the head of the Society. Such a course would result from following Matt. 18:15, in its logical trend. But these are minor applications of the rule, which is neither voided nor avoided, but in applying which wisdom is being used in determining how the matter may be carried out.

There is no doubt that much of the trouble in the world is the result of misunderstanding. It therefore behooves every one of the Lord's people to "put on love, which is the bond of perfectness," and to overlook much of what others do. (Col. 3:14) And yet it would be proper for one who thinks that he has been wronged to go to the offending brother and have a clear understanding. To do so would result favorably in nearly every case.

The instruction in Matt. 18:15-17 is given, of course, only to the brethren, the church, and is not, therefore, to be applied outside. But whoever learns to apply this rule to the brethren will find that it commends itself to his best judgment as a wise course of conduct in all the affairs of life. Thus his natural inclination will be to apply the same principles in connection with worldly matters and worldly people. He must, however, use wisdom in considering which would be the wise way to deal with the world. Some of the deep and precious things which belong to the church the world would resent. So the Lord admonishes that we should not "cast our pearls before swine."

While we are endeavoring to do good to all men, yet in the case of the brethren there should be no discrimination in this matter. We might say, however, that some of the Lord's people seem to be unduly and unreasonably exercised along some lines. For instance, if a brother should find another brother in the truth who seemed to discriminate in his feelings and apparently to be more appreciative of another than of himself, he should not take offense. He should say, "There are differences of character and temperament; and Brother B. might commend himself to Brother A. more than would another. All that I may ask is that Brother A. shall love me; that he shall not hate me; that he shall not do me injury." Nothing in the

Nowhere is prayer defined as a duty, though its necessity is stated. The Father desireth such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23); and it would be contrary to this principle to define prayer as a duty, and to stipulate a set time or place or a formal manner. The earnestness of the service and the peculiarity of the circumstance will regulate the frequency and the subject matter of prayer.

No form of prayer is furnished in the Scriptures. Even the Master, when asked by the disciples for instruction on the subject, gave them, not a form to repeat, but merely an idea or example of how to arrange their prayers to God. He did not say, Pray this prayer, but, "After this manner pray ye." Our prayers, then, should be after this manner—not an assortment of extravagant demands, but the simple expression of the earnest heart: first, acknowledging and paying homage to God as our Father, the Almighty and Hallowed One; second, expressing our expectation and trust that his kingdom is coming according to promise, and our eagerness for it, and for the time when his will shall be done on earth as in heaven; third, our reliance upon him for "daily bread," which he has promised us; fourth, our acknowledgment that our ways are not perfect and of our reliance upon his favor (granted through Christ Jesus) for forgiveness; and our willingness to exercise forgiveness toward our debtors, toward those who trespass against us.

Word of God indicates that the brethren are all to be esteemed alike!

Our Lord himself showed just such a discrimination in his love. He did it, however, "without partiality and without hypocrisy." But because of the differences in our fallen human nature some of the brethren are more congenial to us than are others. We should, therefore, be content to have the love of the brethren, and should endeavor to merit more of it—and to have our words and conduct such as to become more lovable to the brethren and thus to draw more of their esteem. The way to do this is, not by finding fault with those who do not love us up to the highest degree, but by trying to develop that character which would merit a fuller measure of love.

If such a question as this be raised and is not treated along the lines of Matt. 18:15, one should advise thus: "Brother A. seems to have none but the kindest feelings toward you, dear brother." Then if Brother B. says that he does not receive Brother A.'s love and companionship as does Brother C., one might reply, "Well, my dear brother, have we not the right to have a special fellowship with one if we do no injury to another? I think that we have, and that we have the Lord's example in this direction. This does not mean that I should treat you unkindly. It is not wrong for a brother to have more or less of a preference, providing that he does not use this preference to offend another intentionally."

VARYING DEGREES OF LOVE

Love is not justice. Love cannot be commanded; it must be induced; and there must be a cause for the love. It would be thoroughly out of order for any one to tell us that we should love God if he were not a lovable being. Similarly, how could we love any creature who is unlovely? We love the brethren because we see something of God-likeness in their good intentions, and in the fact that they have given their hearts to the Lord.

In a case where the brother's flesh is much fallen, we have largely a compassionate love, rather than a loving admiration; for only in proportion as we see character-likeness to Christ can we truly love his followers. But we should regard every brother and every sister with a sincere desire to do them good; and the same love, of course, should extend, as we have opportunity, to the world in general.

The great difficulty in cases of misunderstanding is that the Lord's counsel is not accurately followed. Good, honorable brethren, anxious to do right, who apparently would be quite competent to advise others, seem to think that theirs is a different case—seem not to exercise the proper judgment. Instead of going to the brother and saying, kindly, "Brother, I have come to see you in reference to a little matter, following the advice of Matt. 18:15," he, on the contrary, meets the brother and says, "Brother, you have done so and so." He goes to the brother, not to be reconciled, but rather, dictatorially, to show him that there is something wrong. This is not the right way to go about a matter. As surely as justice is the foundation of God's throne, just so surely are those who pursue this course failing to follow the principles of justice; they are

failing to develop the Lord's character and will fail to win the prize.

The spirit of the Lord's injunction is to help a brother, not to twit him, nor to anger him, nor to tease him; not to entrap him into saying what he did not intend to say, nor to distort the meaning of what he has said. Such is not the right spirit. No brother should be approached in this manner. But the matter should be considered in the most kindly way; and if then—in spite of all that one can do—the wrong is continued, we should have nothing more to say. Some might say, "He did not apologize." The Lord did not say anything about his apology. But if he recognizes that he is wrong and fails to apologize, he is doing himself injury.

LET US BEWARE OF BUSYBODYING

If the second step in Matt. 18:15-17 be found necessary, it should be taken only after very deliberate thought and prayer, with the desire to make sure of doing the Lord's will. First of all, one should make sure that the matter is of sufficient importance to ask the brethren to go along! and that it is something against us, not against another; that it is not busybodying; that it is something that is being done now. If this is the case, take two others along. Do not say, "If I ask you to go along, be sure to stand by me." We may be the ones in error; and if we are we should be more anxious to be corrected ourselves than to have the other brother corrected.

If we make sure that the matter is important, we should select two that we think would be friends of the brother injuring us—fair-minded, honorable people in the church. Then, after the party has met with the offending brother and discussed the case, it would be proper for these brethren to advise us. If the advice were something that we could follow, we should do so and bring peace and harmony.

But if this course should avail nothing and the injurious actions should continue, then it would be proper for us to bring the matter to the attention of the church. The two brethren who went with us, and decided with us that it was impossible to persuade the evil-doer to alter his course, should say to the elders of the church that they had a case to present for a hearing; but they should not make charges. The church is merely to hear the matter, to see whether there is any real cause of complaint. But at this stage of the affair they know merely that there is a case to be heard. Then the elders should call a special meeting for such a purpose, saying to the church that there is a case to be brought before the class, and asking what time would be convenient for them to hear the matter. Then the church should decide when to call a meeting to consider the case.

This would be the time for the one against whom the complaint lodges to say to the elders, "It is true that there were charges made against me by the brother, and that two others afterward came with him. But I claim, brethren, that the charges are not true, that the matter is one of my private concern, and that others have nothing to do with it;" or whatever he wishes to say. Then there must be brought evidence to show that there is really a matter to come before the church, that it is not merely a case of busybodying; for the church must not meet together to take part in busybodying.

Then it would be proper for the elders to learn enough to decide whether or not the church would be busybodying in this man's affairs—merely enough to inform themselves whether it were a matter to come before the church. If they thought that it was not, they should say to the offended one, "This brother is not doing you an injury." But if either of the parties still thought that it should be brought before the church—that Matt. 18:15-17 had been followed as far as possible to this point—and if the elders of the class were unwilling to bring it before the congregation, then it would be proper for the congregation to determine whether or not they would hear the case, and their hearing should be final.

HOW TO CONDUCT A CHURCH TRIAL

In any matter heard before the congregation there should be an opportunity for each one interested to present his side of the case—the one to state his trouble and the other to answer. At no stage of the proceedings should unkind words be permitted. The person who attempted to use them should be considered reprehensible on that account, and his conduct worthy of being judged a misdemeanor. This course is the one which the Lord evidently intended should be followed. The point, however, always to be borne in mind is whether people are really busybodying in other men's matters—a course which should not be encouraged, either by the class or by the elders. People waste a great deal of time in evil counsels, in a manner quite contrary to the Golden Rule and to Matt. 18:15.

If the congregation, after patiently hearing definite, positive charges of sufficient importance, finds that notwithstanding these various steps the brother against whom complaint is made has really been doing wrong and is continuing to do so, they should decide that he is guilty as charged. The vote of the church should be unanimous, if possible; all partisanship should be ignored. Since they are not condemning any one to eternal torment, nor judging him in any way, their advice must not carry with it any penalty whatever. They are merely advising the brother that his conduct is contrary to the Scriptures; and that if he does not change his course, they cannot longer treat him as one of the Lord's people.

In disfellowshipping him, they are not to ill-treat him; for we do not act so with publicans and sinners. But we would not ask a publican or a sinner to take part in the service, either as an elder or as a deacon or in any other capacity; so the offending brother is not to be asked to offer prayer, or to do anything that an outsider would not be asked to do. Thus the congregation would withdraw their fellowship. He is a brother still, but not in the best of standing; for he has neglected to hear the voice of the brethren in the way that the Lord has directed.

It might be possible, however, for a whole class to go astray in its judgment in a matter, and to decide against a brother who was in the right. This brother might then say, "My dear brethren, I appreciate your view in this matter; and I am sorry that anything in my course should seem to be worthy of condemnation. I promise you that I will modify the matter as best I am able. Although in justice to myself I cannot alter my view, nevertheless, in respect to your united voices I will not in the matter follow my judgment, which I feel is the correct one. And if, therefore, I suffer some injustice, the Lord will count it to me in the nature of a sacrifice for the sake of his body, the church. So, then, dear brethren, while thanking you for your kindly expressed sentiment, I still wish you to know that it does not do me justice. And I think that you will inform me of your change of mind on the subject if you ever should change."

If the brother were really in the wrong, he might say, "Well, then, put me out!" The class might say, "We are not putting you out. Do not say that you will withdraw from us. We will not take your remark for your answer. We hope that the Lord will have you see that our action has been most kindly, brotherly, and that it is a part of our duty now to conform to the views of the class. If the Lord shows us that we are wrong, we shall be very glad to acknowledge it. But in the meantime, dear brother, we do not wish to offend you, but merely desire to do our duty to the Lord and to his Word."

This course would be the proper one; we should not erect a barricade between brethren. But it would be very easy to do injury to such a brother by saying, "Well, never show your face here again unless you take back every word you have said." The majority of people have so much self-esteem that they would not go back after such a statement; whereas they might do so if the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of love and justice is manifested.

PERFECTION OF ORGANISM NOT NECESSARY TO TRIAL FOR LIFE

"He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—1 Cor. 15:25, 26.

The divine arrangement respecting Messiah's kingdom seems very clearly stated in the Scriptures. Our text above, if no other, proves that Messiah's kingdom will not be dealing with perfect conditions. By the sealing of the New Covenant he will make satisfaction for the sins of the world; and those of the world who prove worthy have God's assurance of attaining eternal life. The great work will be that of uplifting mankind out of sin and death conditions. For this reason he will rule as king and will officiate as the great Priest. The basis for this is the fact that our Lord Jesus purchased the world through the merit of his sacrifice.

"Where a tree falleth, there shall it be." (Eccl. 11:3) So, as mankind go down into death, there they remain. In the awakening from death there will be a resuscitation to practically the same conditions—mentally, morally and physically—which they had before they went into the tomb. If mankind came back from the tomb perfect, no one would have any way of identifying himself. If one were raised perfect in every thought and word and act, he would not know himself; for all those things composing his identity would be gone. Hence, he would have no way to distinguish himself from the rest of mankind! The world will be resuscitated with the same kind of in-

telligence in which they went down into death. But theirs is a death condition, and the very object of Messiah's kingdom is to uplift out of that condition, and to raise up that which was lost to the perfection of man's nature.

The Scriptures show us that at the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign the whole world will be turned over to the Father; and the race will then have a trial time, a testing, just as Adam had when he was in Eden. For "a little season" Satan will have the power to tempt mankind as he tempted mother Eve. But the world should then be so thoroughly established in righteousness of heart that nothing which Satan or any other being could bring upon them in the way of temptation would make them sin; and those who will not have learned to hate sin and to love righteousness will not be fit for eternal life. We read that fire [judgments] will come down from heaven and destroy such.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF TRIAL

But we are to remember that there is another trial which precedes that occurring at the end of the Millennial age. From the very time when the kingdom shall have been established, the world will be on trial. Under The Christ's beneficent rule some will avail themselves of the opportunity to rise gradually back to the perfection of human nature, lost in Eden; others, apparently, according to the Scriptures, will still maintain an attitude of rebellion, loving sin and hating righteousness. These will be granted a hundred years (Isa. 65:17-25) of trial, even though they do not come to perfection of mind and body, because of their rebellious attitude of heart.

Such are spoken of as children, in comparison with others of that day who will live on and become perfect. Messiah, as the great Judge, will cause such to die accursed, condemned, cut off from further opportunity of attaining life; for such will not have benefited by the merit of Christ and the kingdom of Christ. And if this would be true of their condition after one hundred years, we may infer that if any, who during the first hundred years had proved faithful, should during the second hundred years assume a position against righteousness, such would then be cut off from life.

"THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD"

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2) We certainly know it. The work of giving mankind the necessary knowledge and assistance will be in the hands of Christ and the church. The final sentence against sinners will be destruction, death, as is clearly shown in the parable (Matt. 25:31-46) where Jesus (with the church) is pictured in power and great glory judging the world, "For God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31—the day of the great Messiah, the antitypical Moses—Jesus, the Head, and the church, his body. The parable shows that the work of the Millennial age will completely separate the "sheep" class from the "goats"—the "sheep" being on the right hand (place of favor) and the "goats" at the left (place

of disfavor). At the end of the age Messiah will destroy the goat class and, in the Father's name, bless all the sheep class. But nothing is more evident than that the trial for life or death will proceed during all the Millennial age—throughout all that thousand-year judgment day.

MERIT IMPUTED BY THE GREAT ADVOCATE

Now the church is on trial for life or death, and Christ gives us an imputation of his merit and thus covers our weaknesses and shortcomings. By and by, he will give the world actual perfection on condition of perfect obedience. But now, under the great Advocate's imputation of righteousness, the decision regarding the church comes in a few years from the time when we reach the point of consecration unto death. If this time is sufficient for the accomplishing of the trial of the church, then we can see that a hundred years is ample time for the world to see whether they will make even a little progress upward on the highway of holiness.

The testing of the church we recognize as a fact; for the Apostle points it out to us. If those who are now consecrated should fall away into sin, there remains no more sacrifice for sins. (Heb. 10:26, 27) Why? Because the imputation of Christ's merit will not be repeated to any. If we get the imputation of Christ's merit in this present life, then there will be no further imputation for us. Those who do not get the imputation of Christ's merit now, as the church, will never get it; but instead they will get the benefit of the New Covenant. The effect, however, in either event, will be a life or death trial and a life or death sentence.

"BE THOU FAITHFUL"

In the case of the church, if we were faithful until the very last day of our experience and on that day proved unfaithful, it would certainly settle the matter as to our future. Similarly, we may say of the world that, if any should prove unfaithful during their trial in the next age, their trial would end immediately and, undoubtedly, the sentence would be to the second death. In other words, the trial continues until each individual has been either rewarded or punished; and every act down to the last has to do with the sentence of that trial.

In Ezekiel there is an intimation along this line, where God says, "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. . . . But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, . . . shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." (Ezek. 18:21-24) This seems to be the principle of divine justice, and one to which we can all readily assent, and which we can recognize as just and righteous altogether. "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

THE GOSPEL ONLY FOR SINNERS

MARK 2:13-22.—MARCH 24.

TEXT:—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."—Verse 17.

The term "Publican" in Jesus' day was applied to Jews who served the Roman Government as tax collectors in Palestine. The name was a reproach because the Jews held to the Abrahamic promise that the whole world should be blessed by them as God's peculiar people. They held that this meant that they should not only be free from all other governments, but that they should be the masters of the world. And if so, all other nations should be paying them tribute and they should pay tribute to none. The most public-spirited Jews, therefore, declined to be the agents of the Roman government in the matter of collecting tribute or taxes, and the tribute-takers or publicans were looked upon with disdain as being unfaithful to their religion and to their nation.

The term "sinner," as frequently used in this study and elsewhere in the Gospels, was applied to all Jews who were careless in respect to the orthodoxy of their day, for the orthodox Jew of that time (and today) took pride in his religion and boasted of his holiness—as, for instance, the word "Pharisee" signifies "holy person"—one scrupulously careful in observing the smallest details of the law. There was a wide breach between these zealous followers of Moses' law and the mass of the nation who, because of not making special profession, were altogether classed as "sinners," or persons not up to the orthodox standard of carefulness of form, ceremonies, etc.

The Pharisees would tolerate and eat with the Sadducees, although the latter were practically unbelievers, because they

were of the wealthier and therefore more respectable class; but they entirely ignored and would not eat with their less particular brethren, whom they in general styled "sinners," regardless of their having true moral status.

Our Lord's disciples were nearly all gathered from this lower or less orthodox and less educated class of Jews. Because of our Lord's talents the Pharisees would have been glad to have him as one of their number, provided, of course, that he would side with them and uphold them in their more or less hypocritical pretensions of perfection and holiness. But Jesus denounced the claims of the Pharisees as hypocritical, and told the common people plainly that there were "none righteous, no, not one"—that all needed divine mercy, and that really the humble and contrite would be much more acceptable to God than the boastful, the proud, the self-conceited.

MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN

Today's study tells of the call of Matthew to be one of the twelve Apostles. His original name was Levi, just as Peter's original name was Simon. He belonged to the Levitical tribe, but his acceptance of service under the Romans as a tax collector socially degraded him and classed him as a "publican." Perhaps the quality of independence and humble-mindedness which influenced this man to become a tax collector and to brave the scorn of his fellow-countrymen were qualities which really favored him in respect to the divine invitation to become a disciple of Jesus. We may be sure this was true from

the fact that Jesus gave him a special invitation to become his disciple, and from the fact that he was in the heart condition to forsake all of his earthly goods that he might be a member of the Messianic class. We cannot suppose that the Master would call to discipleship any but a noble character, nor can we suppose that any others would have accepted the call as did Matthew.

Matthew was a householder and promptly invited Jesus and his followers to dinner. He invited in also numbers of his friends, and these, like himself, were of the ostracised class—publicans and sinners. The scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus closely, and when they perceived that he ate and mingled with the less respectable and less orthodox, they disesteemed him also, and put the question squarely to Jesus' disciples: "How is it that your Master eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners, and yet claims to be holy?"

This afforded Jesus the opportunity which he desired of giving a great lesson in a few words. He replied to them, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick; I came to call, not the righteous, but sinners." Here we have the key to much of the misunderstanding of the Gospel in that day and now. The first lesson that all must learn is that all sin is condemned of God—the little and the large—and that all unrighteousness is sin, and that there is "none righteous, no, not one."

In other words, each must learn that he himself is a sinner, and under divine sentence and needing forgiveness, before he can come into fellowship with God or become partaker of God's provision for eternal life. The publicans and sinners were indeed condemned of God, and the scribes and Pharisees, members of the same imperfect race, were also under divine sentence; but the latter did not admit their sinfulness and imperfection nor seek divine forgiveness, while the former, admitting their sins, were the more ready to accept forgiveness. Jesus illustrated this matter in one of his parables saying, A certain Pharisee went to the temple to pray and, full of self-confidence, thanked God that he was not as other men, nor even like the poor Publican near him. The Publican also prayed; but in humility, feeling that he was a sinner, besought divine forgiveness. Jesus declared that the less moral man, the less scrupulously careful man, the Publican, was nearer to divine justice than the more careful, more upright, more orthodox Pharisee, because the latter failed to acknowledge his sins, his imperfections, which could be forgiven only through their acknowledgment. Hence the declaration of Jesus that he "came not to call the righteous, but sinners." There were none righteous to call, for all are sinners, and those who thought themselves righteous had a barrier before them which hindered their coming to the Lord under the call of this age.

"THY DISCIPLES FAST NOT"

About that time a fasting season was observed by the Pharisees, and also by those who had accepted the teachings of John the Baptist; but Jesus had said nothing to his disciples about fasting up to that time. Now the question arose, Why was this? The Savior's explanation was that while he was with

them it should properly be considered a time of rejoicing and feasting rather than a time of fasting and sorrow. Would a betrothed woman sorrow and weep and fast while her betrothed was present? Nay. Yet, in subsequent days, after his departure, in her loneliness, and especially if she thought of the long delay in his coming to receive her to become his wife, she would sorrow. So Jesus intimated it would be with his followers. They would have plenty of opportunity to weep and fast after he would be gone and while waiting for his return.

Fasting should not be considered a matter of obligation or command, but rather a voluntary sacrifice of present and temporal good things that the mind and heart might go out the more earnestly after the things not seen as yet, but hoped for. Thus for eighteen centuries God's people have been fasting and praying and waiting and longing for the Bridegroom's return. But in the time of his presence, their fellowship with him, their joy in the realization of the completed promises, will wipe away their tears and "give them beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for . . . the spirit of heaviness."

THE CHURCH A NEW CREATION

It was difficult for the Savior's hearers to get a proper focus upon his teachings. They could understand John the Baptist's preaching of repentance and reformation; but when Jesus declared, "The law and the prophets were until John, and since then the kingdom of heaven is preached"—this was so radical a proposition as to be difficult for the masses to grasp. What could be higher than the Law and the Prophets? What door could be opened to the followers of Jesus which had not been open to their forefathers? Was not their Jewish nation God's kingdom? Did not King David sit "upon the throne of the Lord"? Was it not promised that Messiah should sit upon David's throne?

Sympathetically we must concede that it was difficult for the Jews to understand that before the blessing could come to natural Israel, another, spiritual Israel, must be selected. By way of emphasizing this thought, our Lord gave two parabolical illustrations, saying, No man sews a piece of unshrunk cloth upon an old garment, because the shrinking of the new cloth would pull away the old and increase the difficulty. Likewise, no one would think of putting new wine which had not yet finished its fermentation into old wineskins, whose elasticity had been exhausted, for the old wineskins would be burst by the fermentation of the new wine.

These illustrations show that the Gospel teaching is not a patch upon the Jewish law, but is a new proposition. And the new wine of the Gospel dispensation must be put into new wineskins that will be able to stand the stress of the fermentation sure to come. Thus our Lord did not attempt to engraft his teachings upon the Jews, but called out of Judaism a special class, which the Scriptures denote as "new creatures in Christ." It is to these that the new wine of the Gospel message is committed, and these are to experience the fermentation incidental to the preparation for the kingdom—trials, disciplines and testings.

"MILLENNIAL BEAN" SEED SUPPLY EXHAUSTED

The requests for five of the prolific beans for seed by far exceed the supply donated by Sister Smith.

In reply to various inquiries from those who requested these seed beans, we are informed by Sister Smith that there are advantages in planting them in an onion bed or row—at a distance of six feet. An insect, which proves destructive to the bean plant, seems to dislike the onions, and is thus kept away. After the onions are harvested, the beans grow very

fast, if the ground is kept loose on the surface. It is also suggested that great care should be exercised in gathering the pods, not to injure the bushes, by pulling, or breaking off the leaves. If the first crop of beans is allowed to remain on the bushes until fully ripened, there will be no additional yield and the bush will die. If they are to bear repeatedly, the pods must be removed as soon as large enough to eat, we are told, and then new blossoms take the place of the first crop.

"THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

QR. REVIEW.—MARCH 31.

TEXT:—"The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."—Matthew 4:16.

In the Bible symbols light stands as the representative of God, of Christ, of the church, of truth, of influences for righteousness, which by and by as the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in its beams for the cure of all the masses of the earth. It will scatter the darkness of sin, ignorance and superstition—the works of the prince of darkness, who will then "be bound for a thousand years that he may deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are finished." Of the heavenly Father we read, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

Of Jesus we read, "I am the light of the world." Of the church in her present condition we read, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glo-

rify your Father which is in heaven." "Hide not your light under a bushel, but set it on a candlestick that it may give light unto all that are in the house." Nevertheless, "The darkness hateth the light, neither cometh to the light," and "the whole world lieth in the wicked one"—in darkness. Notwithstanding the faithfulness of Jesus and the few light-bearers enlightened with the holy Spirit of which they are begotten, still "darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the heathen."

This same thought pervades the Scriptures from first to last, namely, that for six thousand years, from the time of the entrance of sin to the second coming of Jesus, the world will be subject to a reign of sin and death—it will be under a pall

of darkness, ignorance, superstition, sin, etc. The only ones who will see the path of righteousness distinctly will be those guided by the "lantern"—God's Word. They are represented as saying, "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a lantern to my footsteps." St. Peter, writing to the church from the same standpoint, declares, "We (the church) have a more sure Word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn."—Psa. 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19.

The prince of darkness has been in command for centuries. The only lights of the past were the noble prophets of the Jewish line whose lights affected few in their own nation, and were not discernible at all amongst the heathen world. John the Baptist, we are told, was a burning and shining light, and Jesus was a still more brilliant light, and his faithful few during the past eighteen centuries have shined forth, reflecting their Master's light. But all of these have had comparatively little influence in the world. It still lies in the wicked one—in darkness, seeing not, neither understanding divine things; it is still "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God."

A BETTER DAY COMING

Our text tells of a better day sure to come. It is not sure to come because of the operation of the evolutionary law, for the natural law would seem to contradict such a thought. Darkness leads on to darkness more intense, and while light begets light, darkness begets darkness, and the masses are in the darkness, and in the wicked one, the prince of darkness. Never, then, might we hope for the abolishment of darkness except in the way in which God has foretold it—through the establishment of Messiah's kingdom—through the shining forth of the Son of Righteousness—the church in glory.—Matt. 13:43.

Our text is a quotation from the Old Testament; it had a beginning of its fulfilment in our Savior and in the Apostles. The people of Palestine, long in doubt, uncertainty, etc., saw a great light in Jesus and his teachings. And throughout this Gospel age, for more than eighteen centuries, this great light has been exercising a feeble influence amongst men. The Light itself has been pure—the divine Word and the principles of divine righteousness. But, alas! few have been faithful in receiving the light in its purity and in reflecting it forth upon others.

In general the light has been corrupted by human selfishness, by sin. As a consequence the name Christian today does not stand for all the blessed light and truth and grace and faithfulness to God and to the principles of love which the Master showed forth and inculcated. Instead the name Christian today is borne by about four hundred millions of humanity, many of whom, judged by the divine standard of their "fruits," are children of the wicked one, children of darkness, who merely use the garment of light, the name Christian, as a heavenly livery whereby to appease their own consciences and to increase their opportunity for selfishness and acquisition, quite contrary to the Leader whom they profess to be following, "the true Light."

"WHICH LIGHTETH EVERY MAN"

The Apostle declares that Jesus "is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9) The expression, "true light," implies that there are false or imitation lights, and of these we know that there are many—lights of heathendom and lights of Christendom. The only true light, however, is that which shone forth in our Savior's teachings and example.

It has thus far enlightened only a few, a "little flock." These, like their Master, are urged to let their light shine before men that others may take knowledge that they have been with Jesus and learned of him—that they are his disciples, his followers, bearing, in his footsteps, the same light which shone forth from him.

After eighteen centuries of experience of the light battling with the darkness, and at times being almost quenched thereby, we might well ask, what hope is there that this prophecy will ever be fulfilled—that Jesus, as the Light of the world, will enlighten every man born into the world? The Bible answers that God will fulfil this very matter in his own time, but that God's time cannot be hastened—that before the world will be enlightened, a saintly class, the church, the bride of Christ, must be enlightened, and must be completed and glorified together with her Lord.

FOR ONE THOUSAND YEARS THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL SHINE FORTH

Then, and not until then, will the Savior and his church in glory be the great Sun of Righteousness which will arise over the earth, and shine forth for the healing of the people, for the scattering of the darkness of sin and the lies of error—the bringing of life, peace, joy and blessing to all who will accept the favor in harmony with the divine requirements; but to smite down and utterly destroy the night, and those who will still love darkness, and would corrupt the earth.

For a thousand years the glorious Sun of Righteousness (Christ and the church, his bride), will shine out. The work will be thorough and complete. Adam and his every child will be fully brought to a knowledge of the truth, and will enjoy the blessed opportunity of coming back into harmony with God, by the restitution process, of which St. Peter tells us in Acts 3:19-23. This will not mean that the world will ever become members of the Bride class, or ever attain the spirit nature. It means restitution to the condition first enjoyed by Adam, lost by sin, but redeemed by the sacrifice finished at Calvary. It means human perfection to all the willing and obedient of Adam's race through the heavenly Second Adam and the heavenly Second Eve.

It means a world-wide paradise, filled with the blessings of the Lord, who has promised that the earth, as his footstool, shall be made glorious. It means that, with the destruction of the wilfully disobedient, this earth will be like heaven. The Savior's prayer will reach fulfilment; God's will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. This in turn will mean that "every knee will bow and every tongue confess," both of the things in heaven and of the things on earth, to the glory of God. And this signifies that there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying on earth, even as none of these things are in heaven.

Then our text will have most ample fulfilment—all mankind shall see the great Light which God has provided; even those "in the shadow of death" must come forth, that all may be enlightened by this "true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." O the happy day that is coming to our poor, sin-cursed earth! There shall be no more curse, thank God! Instead of the curse shall be the divine blessing; "and every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth shall be heard saying, 'Praise and glory and honor and dominion and might be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever'!"

SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS

FEAR THE ADVERSARY'S TACTICS

Question.—"Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith." (1 Pet. 5:8) In what sense does the adversary go about as a roaring lion?

Answer.—The Scriptures give us various illustrations of Satan, the "angel of light." He is compared to a serpent, a roaring lion, etc. Of course, he does not fill all of these pictures at one moment, nor does he go about as a roaring lion all the time. It is the custom of the lion to roar when in pursuit of food. The roar of the lion makes his prey—including human beings—semi-paralyzed. From personal observation, we see that fear is one of the most disastrous things for the Lord's people to have—except "fear of the Lord," which is proper fear. As God incites by love, so Satan incites through fear, through false doctrines, the root of error, which so terrorizes mankind as to the future. This kind of influence from the adversary is what is meant by the Apostle. But we are to resist Satan.

Once the Apostles were under threat from the Jewish Sanhedrin; and they prayed, "Now, Lord, behold their threatenings." This statement, however, does not prove that the men

of the Sanhedrin were devils, nor that they were viciously inclined of themselves. So today there are some people more or less beclouded by the threatenings of those who are seeking to intimidate the Lord's people. We are to be of good courage. When we hear the roaring of the lion we are to remember that the Lord is on our part and that he does not cause us to fear. The thought that Satan opposes us and that we are contending not merely with the fallen flesh, but also with wicked spirits in high positions of power, would appal us if we did not, by positiveness of decision, acquire great help from other unseen powers. From the instant that we resist temptation and stand up for the Lord and his cause we become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

LIGHT INCREASES RESPONSIBILITY

Question.—"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin."—John 15:22. Please explain.

Answer.—Our Lord explained to the scribes and Pharisees that the light of his teaching gave a greater responsibility to those who heard it than to those who had not heard it. If they had never come in contact with the light, they would