

is symbolic. It may refer to social upheaval and combustion, political troubles, financial troubles, and also some great physical manifestations of divine power in connection with the time of trouble.

But all this is only suppositionary. We are expecting a change; and if this change shall be accompanied by physical disturbances, now is the time for them to be coming. For the Lord says, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain"—kingdom. The supposition that there would be catastrophe then would be out of harmony with this prophecy. Rather, the appropriate time, if there are to be

such calamities and changes, physical or electrical, would seem to be just now—just at the time when, as the Lord forewarned, there is to be "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation"—at the time, apparently, when the "four winds," the fallen angels, will become loose.

All of these things together will constitute the "time of trouble such as never was." And from this time of trouble, "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape." Watch that ye may "escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."—Luke 21:36.

## ARE SUICIDES MORALLY RESPONSIBLE?

Question.—Please give the correct idea as to the end of one who commits suicide. Will he be punished for it? Or is death his punishment?

Answer.—The theory that suicides are hopelessly lost was formulated during the dark ages. The thought was that self-murder, being a sin committed as a last act, indicated a mind and heart out of accord with God's arrangement to the last moment of life. The thought that death ends all hope clinched the theory that eternal torment is the wages of suicide. This, we believe, is thoroughly wrong in every way. The proper view according to the Bible is this:

(1) Adam was disobedient, was sentenced to death. Thus his race was born under unfavorable conditions, mental, moral and physical; in degeneracy, some more, some less; some in very poor physical health, some of very low moral status, some with very weak mental powers. A suicide often has all three of these inducing causes as provocations to such an act. Surely he was either mentally weak or uninformed, ignorant; else he would not take his own life. His trouble, then, was weakness of mind and judgment caused by Adam's transgression. He was a sharer of Adam's penalty—the death penalty; and when he died—no matter how—he came fully under the effect of that penalty—nothing more. Eternal torment is not in any way intimated in the death penalty. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

(2) God had mercy upon Adam, not in the way of abrogating the decision of the divine court and clearing the guilty one, but in another way—by providing redemption through the death of Christ. Jesus' death, by divine appointment, is to cover the sin of Adam—not only his original transgression and its penalty, but all the transgressions of his children, the world, which have resulted from his mental, moral and physical impairment.

(3) This provision of God includes not only mental sickness, but moral sickness and physical sickness. All mankind are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

(4) The redemption of the world implies its eventual release from the condemnation of death. The time divinely appointed for the release of all is the thousand years of Christ's reign—the Millennium. All mankind will then be liberated from the original condemnation, and will be granted a full opportunity for the recovery of all that was lost. The mentally sick, the morally sick, and the physically decrepit—all will have opportunity for a full return to human perfection.

(5) The only exceptions to this rule of restoration to Adam's original perfection will be those who during this Gospel age—from the death of Christ to his second coming—are called out of the world, invited to become new creatures in Christ, and made associates with Jesus, sharers in his exaltation to the divine nature and in his office. These are justified (reckoned perfect) by faith in Christ's redemptive sacrifice, and then given the opportunity to present themselves as living sacrifices.—Romans 12:1.

(6) As Christians, during this Gospel age, might sin willfully and thus forfeit all relationship to God and die the second death, so in the coming age, during the Millennium, the world in general, after having been brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth, may by wilful sin forfeit all relationship to God, and die the second death.

(7) In thus declaring that not only the sins of the church class, but the sins of the whole world, are covered by God's arrangement through the sacrifice of Christ, we are not to be understood as meaning that the sinner is exempted from all punishment. On the contrary, each one has a responsibility for his own actions, even if he has but imperfect knowledge. His responsibility, as Jesus pointed out, is in proportion to his knowledge.

The Master declared that he that knows his Master's will, and does it not, shall be punished with many stripes—severe punishment; and he who knows less of his Master's will, and does it not, shall be punished with fewer stripes—less punishment. Sometimes those stripes, or punishments, come in the present life. With the church class it is uniformly so. But often the punishments are not meted out in the present life; however, they will be administered justly in the life to come. So the Apostle declares, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some they follow after."—1 Timothy 5:24.

(8) Along the above lines, we would not be inclined to hope that any suicide could be a member of the glorified church of Christ, but, at most, a part of the world—to have trial with the remainder of the world for life or death everlasting under the favorable conditions of Messiah's kingdom. However, even upon this point we may not dogmatize, remembering that some, apparently saintly, have been permitted of the Lord to lose their reason to a greater extent than some of the world who have committed suicide.

## THE RACE-COURSE OF THE AGE—ITS "CLOUD OF WITNESSES"

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—Hebrews 12:1.

The opening words of this text direct our minds back to the preceding context, as though St. Paul were saying, In view of the great things accomplished by these faithful characters of the past, who manifested such faith and confidence in God that they were willing to deny themselves all earthly rights and privileges—seeing that we are thus encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses—martyrs—let the inspiration of their example spur us to the greatest faithfulness in running our race.

The Apostle speaks of the ancient worthies as a "cloud of witnesses." He does not use the word witnesses in the sense in which it is used often today—in the sense of on-lookers. Originally, the word witness was used in the sense of a witness to the truth, or a martyr. Therefore, the text would seem to mean: Seeing that you have many surrounding you of those whose lives testified to the truth—martyrs, who were cut off from home privileges and from life itself—

it should have a strong influence upon you. These ancient worthies, through the achievements of their lives, are looking down upon you.

The fact that the ancient worthies were even then dead need not detract from the Apostle's figure of speech. This style of expression is commonly used by us all. As an illustration, we recall that on one occasion Napoleon addressed his army saying, "My men, thirty centuries look down upon you!" While, strictly speaking, centuries cannot look down, yet in one sense of the word they can; for we can look back into the past and realize matters that are thirty centuries old and more.

The Apostle wishes us to remember that this "cloud of witnesses" is surrounding us, and that therefore we should run this race faithfully. While those noble characters will not obtain the prize for which we are running, they are, nevertheless, to have a prize. As we recall how faithfully they

endured and achieved what was set before them, how careful we should be in running the race set before us—a race for glory, honor and immortality!

This "cloud of witnesses" continually surrounds us. The experiences of the ancient worthies are our experiences. At every step of our journey we find encouragement, strength, from the contemplation of their course. The Apostle, in giving us the picture of our text, indicates that we are to consider ourselves as running a race. We are to view the affairs of the present life as from a race-course.

No doubt St. Paul had before his mind the popular Grecian games of his day, especially the races. So his suggestions to those in the race for glory, honor and immortality are based upon that mental picture. As the runners in those races would strip themselves of all that was not absolutely necessary, so the Christian should lay aside all possible weights and hindrances in his course, and run with patience the race set before him.

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES WEIGHTS?

The weights to be cast aside might differ in different persons. One person might have inherited titles, honor, position. St. Paul himself was one of these. He was born a Roman citizen—an honor of great distinction in his day. This prerogative he laid aside when he entered the Christian race-course. He did, however, refer to his Roman citizenship when the interests of the truth made it advantageous for him to do so. But he never tried to follow a middle course—to benefit himself and please worldly acquaintances a part of the time and then fellowship with the Lord's people at other times. One thing alone he did, as he tells us in these words: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:13, 14.

Another weight might be wealth. One possessing much money might be hindered in the race by fostering the thought that he must occupy a large house, keep many servants, and live as do others of his class, but that nevertheless he would attend the meetings of the Lord's people. Still another weight might be talent along some line. Another might be love of the approval of men, etc.

He who desires to win in the race for glory and honor eternal should lay aside all those weights and any others which he may recognize as such; otherwise he will be so handicapped that he will not run well. Some runners will be more than overcomers and will receive the prize. Others will barely be saved, because of handicaps, and will receive inferior positions.

St. Paul tells us how much he valued these earthly possessions—ambitions, honors, etc. He weighed them and compared them with the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. His judgment in regard to these earthly honors was that they are but loss and dross. Therefore he threw them all away.

Of those who retain their hold on earthly things the Lord declares, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?" These riches are not merely of gold, but may be of honor, position, power, approbation of men, etc. All these are likely to prove a hindrance in the race upon which we have been invited to enter for the prize.

As we look back to the faithful witnesses of the past, we find that they carried very few weights along with them. They cast their weights aside, and ran with patience the course before them.

Not all weights and hindrances are to be cast aside, how-

ever. A man who enters the race with a wife and children must not throw these aside. If he has a child on each shoulder, then he must run with them. But if one who is unmarried is thinking of engaging in this race, he will do well to consider carefully how many children he should have on each shoulder, or whether he should have a wife on his shoulders. Some would be hindered with a wife, while others might be hindered without a wife. Each must decide for himself what is best. We are not trying to lay down rules.

#### INHERITED WEAKNESSES AND BESETTING SINS

Let us now consider that part of our text which deals with besetting sins. Another translation says the close-girding sin—the sin which wraps itself closely around us. Some sins are like a loose-flying garment, and others wrap themselves tightly about us. With these hindrances the runner is obliged to stop now and then to disengage himself, and so loses time.

We are to avoid sin in every sense of the word. No one has the right to sin. If we cannot rid ourselves entirely of our close-girding sin, we must put it off to such an extent that it will not interfere with our running. If this sin be an inherited weakness, a part of one's very nature, what then? Then he shall run in the race—not walk, not sit, but run, bending all his energy to win, straining every muscle, every power of his being. This is what the Apostle sets before us in our text.

The Lord has set this subject clearly before us in the Bible. The race is not an imaginary race, but a real one. It is a race that the Lord has arranged, and he has definitely stated the terms, the assistance to be expected, and the prize at the end of the course. We thank God for the explicit information given in the Scriptures and for all the helps and encouragements of the way, as well as for this great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. And by the Lord's grace we will run with patience; for without this grace of the holy Spirit one would soon fall out by the way, would soon lose all.

#### CONSTANT VIGILANCE NECESSARY

Any one might run a few steps; but when some of these find all the affairs of human life hindering them, and realize that they must drop all unnecessary weights, they begin to think that there is no use to try—the sacrifice is too great. So the Apostle encourages us to have patience; for all these trials, difficulties, etc., rightly borne, are developing character. The Lord wants true, loyal characters, established in righteousness, and these cannot be developed and demonstrated except by just such experiences as he gives his people.

The Apostle well knew the terms and conditions of the race in which he had engaged, and that it would be impossible for him to win unless he lived up to those conditions. He knew that the closest attention and most untiring vigilance would be necessary to reach the goal on time, and during the race there would be more or less uncertainty as to whom would get the victory—the crown of life. In the Olympic and other Greek games it was always uncertain as to who would receive the much-coveted laurel crown.

The Christian is running a much greater race than any earthly course could ever exhibit. We know the goal toward which we run, and we have a sense of security—that if we run faithfully we shall gain the prize of our high calling. Ours is not a race merely to the strong, and a victory to the swift. It is a race in which each one, according to the earnestness of his effort, will be rewarded. If one runs with all his soul and strength he will surely gain the prize. And never before was there such a race! never one so remarkable! never one so glorious as this race set before us!

## THE TWO PARTS TO SANCTIFICATION

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth."—John 17:17.

The prayer recorded in the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel was offered while our Lord was on the way from the Memorial Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane. From the prayer we learn that it was offered for the Apostles and all those who through the Word of the Lord should become his disciples, or followers.

The word sanctify has the significance of set apart, made holy. There are two parts to this work of sanctification. The first is that which we do, in the very beginning, when we set ourselves apart, with the desire to know and to do the will of God. The second is that part which comes gradually—the teachings and instructions which set before us things that we did not perceive before—certain principles of righteousness which we did not previously recognize. This is a deeper setting apart, and is done by God, inasmuch as it is done by the Father's arrangement.

This deeper meaning of sanctification is the one signified in the text. Hence, our Lord prays the Father to do this work. The disciples had left all to follow Jesus, and were set apart in the sense that they desired to know and to do the will of the Father. Our Lord prayed that the work of divine instruction might go on in them, as it is written: "They shall all be taught of God." The Master desired that the disciples should come under divine, providential instruction, which he indicated would come through the Word of God.

At that time the Word was not the Bible as we have it now, for the New Testament had not then been written. The truth presented in the New Testament, however, is not God's Word in full, nor all of the truth, but merely a portion of it. Our Lord did not pray that truth in general along different lines should be the portion of his followers, but rather that they should have knowledge of the divine plan and purposes.

There may be more or less truth coming into a man's life, which will awaken his mind. It may be the truth concerning chemistry, or it may be other scientific knowledge. There is truth respecting geology, truth respecting the sun, etc. These may influence the mind and lift a man somewhat from his fallen condition. But these are not the truth, to which our Lord refers, and which is far more necessary than is the knowledge of the weight of the earth or the distance of the stars.

All the various truths which come to the world in general, which lead them to think, and which finally point some to their need of the Redeemer, are preparatory. But not only do these latter have such a drawing of God, but they must also set themselves apart. And these general truths, which are more or less clear, may bring the individual to the real school. These we may term a preparatory course. There must be such a preparation before the real course of the school of Christ is reached.

#### THE FIRST PART OF SANCTIFICATION

There is a sanctifying that takes place before the real sanctifying begins. The Lord said to the people of Israel, "Sanctify yourselves and I will sanctify you." This would be their setting of themselves apart by a certain hope. But the setting of one's self apart is one thing, and God's sanctifying him is another. Concerning the call of this age, no man cometh unto the Father but by the Son, and no man cometh unto the Son except the Father shall previously have drawn him.

First comes the drawing of the Father through the natural mind. Man's brain is so constituted that there is a natural drawing—a desire to know the Creator. This we see manifested in the heathen, who have never known God and have never had the Bible. These people have a natural inclination or desire to worship God. Those who have this natural inclination of the brain not too much perverted by the fall, are in our Lord's providence guided to the truth, the light, without which no man can come to him. Perhaps they find Jesus through a hymn or a tract or a book.

Willingness to receive God is merely the first step, as it were, in response to this natural drawing. As they come to enter the way, they learn that it is narrow, difficult, and that the "gate" is low. Of course, many are turned away. God is not seeking all. He is seeking a very special class; and therefore he is not seeking those who would be discouraged at the narrowness of the way and the lowness of the gate. These conditions are made so for the very purpose of turning such away.

Formerly, we thought that those who turned away because of the narrowness of the way and the lowness of the gate would go to eternal torment. Now we see that God is seeking a special class to do a good work—those who are seeking to do his will. Whoever does not manifest the proper degree of zeal would probably be injured if he endeavored to go on. Therefore, the Lord says, "Consider the terms, count the cost, weigh the matter, before you decide to be my disciple. Then, if you decide to be my disciple, come and follow me."

After one has become a disciple of the Lord, he comes into the condition of the class represented in our text by the word them. In this class were the twelve apostles, the five hundred other brethren whom St. Paul mentions, and all who throughout the Gospel age have accepted our Lord in sincerity and faithfulness of heart. To all such the prayer applies—"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth!"

Strange to say, this which we thought to be the end of the way is but the beginning of it. Formerly we thought that to accept Jesus was all that there was to do. Our friends said, "You have heard of Jesus; you have accepted him. That is all there is of it. Now tell some others about Jesus."

But after we come to know of the truth, we need to know more. If each of us were to cast his mind back and try to recall how much he understood at first, he would realize that he knew that he was a sinner and that if he came to Jesus the Father would set him apart. This is what St. Paul refers to when he says, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Ephesians 2:10) This setting apart the Father does through his truth, as before pointed out.

#### TRUTH THAT SANCTIFIES

This sanctifying truth is not to be viewed from the standpoint of general knowledge, for this truth is not for the world—is not intended for them. It is for the consecrated—for those who have become God's children. It is the kind of truth that God gives his family. The Apostle Paul says that God has called us according to his purpose, that in the end he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:7) God

has a purpose, which will be fully exhibited in future ages in the further development of his great plan.

God had a special purpose when he called and set apart a special class. The special truth which does that sanctifying work is the truth of his great plan of the ages. He does not make all this known at once. The revelation of his plan has been going on for centuries. Some of these revelations have come to us through the prophets, some through Jesus and some through the apostles. These revelations constitute the heavenly provision for sanctification.

It is necessary, however, that we have the plan, and something more than the plan also. Various other things are to be considered, although this truth is the channel of sanctification: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." If one were caring for a babe, for instance, she would think about its food, fresh air, exercise, etc. So it is with God's people. Truths are gradually opened up to their observation. Our Father leads us out into various experiences in order to have our senses exercised. Our experiences and providences cause us to think, to appreciate, to study, to inquire; and as we do so, we develop by means of these experiences and providences. We are led to consider, What does this experience mean, and what does that one teach?

While God's Word is the basis for all our instruction, yet it is not our only source of knowledge. There are various lessons to be learned through the varied experiences of life. The child that would merely receive food and then lie still—merely eating and sleeping, never having a chance to toddle around—would not know how to walk. So it is with God's child.

#### THE SECOND PART OF SANCTIFICATION

We see that God called us with a new call. We are to have a new nature. Ours is not to be an earthly nature. The real object and purpose of our call is to fit and prepare us to be his new creation, superior to men and to angels. We are to be divine channels of blessing to all creatures—angels and men—for the development of all God's universe, including other worlds, as they come to have inhabitants. As we come to see the scope of God's plan, we see a reason why God is giving us trials, experiences. Our Lord Jesus was to be a merciful High Priest; hence his experiences, his sufferings. And if it was necessary that our Lord Jesus, the Shepherd of the flock, should suffer, how much more is it necessary to our perfecting that we should suffer!

We should have a great deal of trial, suffering, temptation, and, being succored in these, we should know how to succor others. Those who are faithful amongst the Lord's people now, become especially developed in character-likeness to the Master. They are privileged to become elders, that they may feed the young, that they may instruct the flock, that these may grow in the fruits and graces of the Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness—love. Therefore, the chief qualification of those who would stand as monitors amongst the Lord's people is that they be faithful, loyal, and manifest, not a lordly spirit, but a humble spirit, a spirit of service.

Sanctification is a gradual work, lasting throughout the Christian's life. It is not a point which he reaches only at death, but which he should attain soon after consecration. Consecration opens the door and gives him the standing, gives him the relationship, gives him the backing and encouragement of the divine promises, and puts him in the way, therefore, to cultivate the various fruits of the Spirit, and finally to attain joint-heirship with our Lord in the heavenly glory. But to maintain this standing in the body of Christ, requires that fruits shall be produced, evidences of love and devotion.

Testings will come thereafter as to the degree of faithfulness in service, and to see how much of besetments he would endure—how strong a wind of false doctrine he could stand, how much of the assaults of the flesh and of the devil he could bear without being unsettled and driven away from the truth.

The Scriptures tell us that the Lord knows our frame, that he will, with each temptation, provide a way of escape. We shall all be tried. If the fire becomes so hot that to go any further would destroy us, the Lord will prevent this. By and by we become stronger. Then he may give us even greater testings. So "the Lord your God doth prove you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

#### TRIALS PROPORTIONATE TO STRENGTH

A metallurgist tries his metal—proves it. He tests it, to separate the dross from it. After he has separated some of the alloy, he puts in another flux, to remove other dross; and then another flux, etc. So the Lord is taking away our dross. He does not take away all of the dross of our flesh;

for it is the new creature that is being perfected. As the dross in our minds becomes apparent to us, we as new creatures will more and more co-operate with God in its elimination.

So the Lord's people are to be more and more sanctified through the truth. The word sanctify, then, conveys the thought of making saintly, holy. Every day of our lives should make us more sanctified—more fit for God's service in the future.

It is not necessarily true that the one having the most trying experiences would have the most dross. Our Lord Jesus had more trials than any of his followers, and he was perfect. As St. Paul intimates, these trials work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And the brightness of our future will depend upon the heart-development and character-development attained now. Our Lord Jesus will have the highest position because of greatest faithfulness under trials. Some of the Lord's brethren will

have high positions because of having proved faithful under great trials. These trials are to fit us for a high position, both in the present life and in that which is to come.

"Yes, in God's furnace are his children tried;

Thrice happy they who to the end endure!

But who the fiery trial may abide?

Who from the crucible comes forth so pure

That he whose eyes of flame look through the whole,  
May see his image perfect in the soul?

"Not with an evanescent glimpse alone,

As in that mirror, the Refiner's face;

But, stamped with heaven's signet, there be shown

Immanuel's features, full of truth and grace;

And round that seal of love this motto be—

'Not for a moment, but eternity!'

## ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—John 4:24.

Worship is that outward manifestation of reverence for holy things which is pleasing to God, if done in a proper manner and from the right motive. But it is possible to assume the attitude of worship, and yet not offer worship that would be acceptable to God. In his conversation with the Samaritan woman, our Lord is declaring the manner of worship which the Father would accept. One might worship and bow down, and yet not be acceptable to the Father. And so the Lord indicates here that acceptable worship is that which is offered to God in spirit and in truth.

Our Lord makes a distinction between worship in spirit and worship in truth. We might have the truth and know a great deal about the Lord; but if we did not go to him in spirit—in the right attitude of heart—our worship would not be acceptable, no matter how much we might know. On the other hand, a man might be a heathen and yet have a great deal of the spirit of worship, but he could not render acceptable worship unless he had the truth. Take, for example, Cornelius, the centurion. He prayed often and gave much alms to the poor, but he was a Gentile. He had the real heart intention to come near to God, but God did not accept him at that time. Why not? Because he did not have the truth, and could not receive it until the due time for the Gentiles. But we find that when the right time came, this Gentile was the first one to receive from God the knowledge of the truth, so that he might worship, not only in spirit, but in truth also. He received the assurance that his prayers were not accepted by God.

The Truth which was sent to Cornelius is the essential thing that we must all have to come near to God and be acceptable. This truth necessary to Cornelius was that though he was a sinner, God had provided in Jesus a Redeemer, a sanctification for sin. He learned that by becoming a follower of Jesus and seeking to do the will of God as expressed by Jesus, he would be in harmony with God's arrange-

ment. This was the great truth made known to Cornelius. He received the holy Spirit, and came into the family of God.

The same principle holds good today. There are people in heathen lands who have the spirit of worship, but they are without the truth respecting Jesus. And this truth must be known to the person before he can be a worshiper of God in the proper sense.

This was true also in respect to the Samaritans, to one of whom the words of our text were addressed. The Samaritans were a Gentile people, who worshiped God in Mount Gerizim, the mountain of Samaria. And they took delight in thinking that God was their God. When this woman of Samaria inquired of Jesus she said, 'We worship God in this mountain of Samaria, but you Jews say that the only place to worship God is in Jerusalem.'

Jesus explained to her, saying in substance, 'Ye worship ye know not what, but we Jews have the truth on this subject—we know what we worship. We Jews may worship God because, under the divine covenant made with our nation, we have the privilege of coming to God in prayer, and of having God hear and answer prayer. We are worshipping according to God's directions.' And he might have added, 'Many of you have the spirit of worship, but you do not have the truth on the subject.' It would have been possible for the Samaritans to become proselyte Jews. But they did not know the necessity for this; hence they did not come in.

During the Gospel age, we, through Christ, have the privilege of becoming joint-heirs with him. Some have thus come into God's family. If, however, we should come with this truth, but not in the proper spirit, our prayers would not rise above our heads. It is those only who have come into proper relationship with God as children of the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord, who can worship in spirit and in truth. These and these only will receive the fulfilment of the exceeding great and precious promises.

## THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE THE SPIRIT OF DISCIPLESHIP

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."—Matt. 20:27.

Proper aspirations are very beneficial, both to the person himself and to those with whom he comes in contact. Our Lord had an aspiration. We read of him that he "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. 12:2) There are worthy incentives; otherwise the Father would not have set one before his Son. The thought which should inspire us is that if we are faithful in the things of this present time, the Lord will make us ruler over many things. So the ardent desire to obtain these things which God has reserved for those who love him, is laudable; for these blessings are of God.

Every new creature has high aspirations. In fact, every one should have an ideal toward which he is striving; and having this wish to attain it indicates that there is a motive behind the desire. It is altogether proper to have incentives before the mind, and it is proper to know what kind are worthy of our efforts; otherwise wrong ones might lead us astray. In our text a most laudable aspiration is placed before us.

The church, which is the representative of Christ, is the body of our Lord in the flesh. And the Apostle Paul, speaking of ambitions, advised the church that they should have the more profitable aspirations, that they might be teachers,

instructors of the flock; for this is the most useful office in the church. It is known that one gift of St. Paul's time was speaking in an unknown tongue. It was a very remarkable gift. But the Apostle pointed out that to speak in an unknown tongue was not so much to be sought after as some gift that would be useful in the church.

We do not have these miraculous gifts in the present time, but we have the Word of God, and the desire to be able to make known the truth of the Lord. Therefore the gift of oratory is still a desirable one. The Apostle proceeded to point out that we should desire to have the fruits of the Spirit—that they may have a controlling influence upon us.

### RESPONSIBILITY UPON EACH ECCLESIA

As respects positions in the church, the Lord indicated that he would do the setting. "Now God hath set the various members in the body as it hath pleased him." God ordained that there should be in the body this setting; for instance, the service of the eye. As the eye member assists the human body, so the eye member in the church may be very assistful to the body of Christ. Also there are ear members, foot members, hand members and tongue members. These different members have unlike services to perform for the welfare of the whole

body. The hand is not to say to the foot, "I have no need of thee," or vice versa.—1 Corinthians 12:14-31.

If the body tries to walk on the hands, it is not the divine order. The body should walk on the feet. So it is in a congregation. But if the congregation lays too much on the feet members, it is depriving the hand members of their use. The various members should be in the positions where they can render the most efficient service. In other words, the congregation should seek to know the service God has evidently prepared each individual to perform. They are to seek to use their best judgment, to place the right person in the right position.

We see congregations occasionally where they try to make all walk on the hands and not on the feet. That congregation loses in not putting every member into the place for which divine providence has especially qualified him. To do so is the responsibility of the congregation. However, if it tries to make the body walk on the hands instead of the feet, it will learn in time, probably, to get the hands to exercise themselves in their own position, and likewise the feet in theirs; and each member will finally do the service for which he is fitted.

#### HUMILITY INDISPENSABLE TO GOD'S SERVICE

Not only is it to the disadvantage of the congregation for the members to be in the wrong positions, but it is also wrong for the members to try to do other services than those which they should be doing. It is not in our power to change ourselves from what we are by nature. Only divine power could prepare us for service in another part of the body. Our proper attitude should be to really serve the body of Christ, to serve the Lord. We should notice wherever there is a service to be rendered which we can do. "Do with thy might what thy hands find to do."

The difficulty with many in the church is that they desire to do what somebody else is doing—something that they admire. They are not looking around to see what they can always do—do good unto all men, as they have opportunity, but especially unto those who are of the household of faith. They have not the proper spirit of discipleship. Therefore the injunction of our text should lead them to say to themselves, "My highest ambition should be to serve the Lord acceptably, and let him take care of the place where I may serve. Here is a little place; there is a little corner. I will try to do the thing which is needful in my position. If the Lord shall open the way, and show me something else which seems to be more important, I will take that. But I will do with my might what it is my duty to do—whether it is sweeping, or engaging

a hall for a meeting. Whatever comes as an opportunity to me, that I will do."

This does not mean that we have no aspirations. The controlling impulse is to serve the church. Here we have a laudable motive, a proper desire. But it seems that some are ambitious—seek to be chief. Our own ambition (and we believe it would also be the spirit of the Lord) is not to help one who aspires to the chief place, into the position which he seeks. To assist him in such a course would do injury both to him and the cause. But if we find any one seeking to do with his might what his hands find to do, we may be sure that this will be approved of the Lord; and perhaps the Lord will later give him some more important work in recognition of his faithful service to Him.

#### SELF-SEEKING TO BE DEPRECATED

Each is to be content with what the Lord's providence opens up to him. He is not to be self-seeking. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:14) He that exalteth himself is not to be exalted by the church; for he will not be exalted by the Lord. He that humbleth himself will be exalted, either by the vote of the congregation, or by the Lord's will.

As the matter is stated in our text, we think the Lord meant this: There will be some of you who necessarily will be recognized as chief. There are various kinds of service, and it is necessary to have a chief in connection with the services of each congregation. God has recognized this himself. He made Jesus a chief. He passed by Satan, who was self-seeking. He chose Jesus, and made the road very narrow to him! But after Jesus had proved his humility, then the Father gave him the high exaltation, gave him the great reward promised.

The Father is seeking now those who will have the same spirit of humility, the same spirit of service, that the Lord Jesus manifested. We look at him, and we see that, while the Father held out the condition of being chief, He also held out the condition of being servant. Jesus, we see, was the servant of all. Therefore God exalted him and gave him a name above every name.

So it should be with each little congregation of the church. It is the Lord's will that not every one who would be its chief servant should be recognized as the chief. But the Lord will recognize the one who will show himself humble-minded, as he has shown himself to be, in doing anything for the brethren. Let such be your servant. Each should consider that the chief honor amongst you, amongst the Lord's brethren, is to be servant. And the one who is most faithful should be given opportunity to serve. In that sense he would be your chief.

## A GOD-FEARING BAD MAN

NOVEMBER 2.—Numbers 22:1 to 23:10.

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."—James 1:8.

After the Israelites had entered Canaan and were fully recognized as God's holy nation, it would appear that all dealings between God and the Gentiles were discontinued. Before that, apparently men of faith in God were more or less recognized by him—for instance, Abraham, Job, Melchizedec and Balaam—the latter constituting the central figure of today's lesson. Balaam lived on the Euphrates river, in the country which Abraham left when he came to Canaan. He was known far and near as one whose messages either for good or for evil were sure to come to pass. In other words, he was considered an oracle.

When the king of the Moabites perceived the Israelites conquering all with whom they battled, he greatly feared them, even though they had not molested the Moabites. He conferred with the ruler of the Midianites, and then sent messages four hundred miles to the Euphrates to get Balaam to come to pronounce a curse against the Israelites. A considerable reward was offered.

The Prophet Balaam inquired of the Lord whether or not he should go on this mission. The reply was, No; Israel was blessed of the Lord, not cursed. Balaam gave the decision, and the messengers returned. Balak was all the more insistent and sent fresh messengers of higher station, intimating higher rewards. Balaam knew the mind of the Lord on the subject, but was a money-lover and somehow hoped for a chance to get some of the rewards of unrighteousness. In response to this second inquiry, whether or not he could go with the men, he obtained permission to go.

It was on this journey that Balaam was reproved by his ass. An angel of the Lord stood in the pathway, in a narrow place, where the ass, seeing the angel, could not pass him. Balaam's eyes not being opened, he saw not the angel. The ass, being beaten, remonstrated. Even this miracle did not

stop Balaam's money-lust. He coveted the wealth, and would do anything in his power to obtain it—merely stopping where he must.

Balaam was received by Balak, king of Moab, with honor. He directed that altars be built and sacrifices be offered to God. He would have a form of godliness, even while desiring to do contrary to the divine will, which he already knew. The sacrifices offered, he began his prophecy, which the king hoped would be a curse, but which was really a blessing, the words being divinely inspired. As wrote St. Peter, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21) The king complained that instead of a curse would come a blessing. Balaam remonstrated that he had said from the beginning that he would be powerless to utter anything except the divine message.

The disappointed king, fearful of Israel, sought the exercise of black art in some manner against them. He took the prophet to another viewpoint and urged the curse of at least this many of the host. Altars were built again; sacrifices were offered again. And again the hoped-for curse instead of blessing did not come. Getting desperate and angry, the king insisted that at least a portion must be cursed, and led the prophet to another standpoint, from which a still smaller wing of the host of Israel was visible. But here again the results were blessings, not curses—for the third time.

#### A DOUBLE-MINDED MAN

The double-mindedness of the prophet Balaam was abundantly manifested by his course, as we have examined it. He wished to be a prophet of the Lord and to speak his Word in his name; but he also wished riches, and the honor which would accompany them. He wished for what God's providence had not seen best to give him. Right and wrong—God's



way and the way of riches—both were before him. Which would he choose with all his heart? He chose neither one. He tried to have both—to be a servant and mouthpiece of God, and to gain the rewards of an opposite course.

Alas, how many in every age have had the Balaam spirit! Jesus warned against this spirit, saying, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." How many have found the Master's words true! How many have found that the Lord would reject from his counsels and his fellowship those who regard iniquity in their hearts; and who, if they have not love to serve it, at least would love its rewards. Let us remember that God looketh upon the inward parts—the heart. Let us remember how it was written of Jesus: "Because thou hast loved righteousness and hast hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."—*Psalm 45:7*.

In God's dealings with our Redeemer, he has exemplified the principles of his righteous government. A double-minded man is unreliable in every way—not pleasing to God, not acceptable to him.

#### THE HEART WITH THE TREASURE

The Master said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Those who set their affection chiefly upon earthly things can with difficulty avoid the snares that go with them. Balaam's only safe course was in heart loyalty to God. Knowing the mind of the Lord on the subject, he should have delighted himself therein, and should to the fullest have rejected every overture looking in an opposite direction. The nobles who took King Balak's second proposition should have been kindly, but firmly, told that the divine will was the law of Balaam, the prophet; that he would not for a moment consider anything to the contrary of the divine will; that money, wealth and honors as inducements to a course of opposition to God's will would be an insult. Let us each apply this lesson in life's affairs. Let God be first in our hearts, as well as in our words and acts.

But if, overtaken in a fault, Balaam had gone so far as to start on the journey with the hope of somehow gaining the evil reward, he should have been thoroughly aroused by the incident of the ass. Even an ass knew better than to attempt to go contrary to the Higher Power. Evidently the greater reasoning power and courage of humanity above that of the brute may be used to great advantage.

We see that Balaam's heart was wrong. He still continued to be a prophet, but was ceasing to be a holy prophet every minute that he toyed with the tempting wealth, the reward of unrighteousness. Alas, how his mind was debased, debauched, by the love of money! While outwardly he still remained loyal to God in that he would not utter a false message, yet inwardly his harmony with God was gone. The infection, from being a mere speck of a wish for the money, spread rapidly until it swallowed up everything noble and true in the man. The rot or blight which started in his heart, like the blight at the core of a beautiful apple, spread until nothing remained but the outward form.

The professed man of God groveled in the mire of sin in his desire to obtain Balak's proffered wealth. He said to the king, The reason I am not permitted to curse Israel is that they are blessed of the Lord; but I will explain to you that the Lord's blessing is with them because they are his consecrated people, in covenant relationship with him, seeking to obey his law. The only way in which you could bring a curse upon Israel would be by tempting them to disobedience to God.

Guided by Balaam, King Balak communicated with the leading people of the Midianites, and urged that their wives and daughters should apparently fall in love with the Israelites, and introduce them to the sensuous religious rites practised by Midian. In proportion as they would succeed in ensnaring the Israelites into sin and idolatry, in that proportion the curse of Israel's law would fall upon Israel. How sad it is, and yet how true, that knowledge is a dangerous thing to those who misuse it! How true it is today that none can make so successful tools of Satan as those who have some knowledge of God!

#### GOD PERMITTED THE LESSON

God could have hindered all those evil machinations, as he could hinder evil deeds and evil plans today. But he allowed matters to take their course, and a great lesson thus to be taught—for then as well as for now and immediately. The scheme was successful. Some of the leading wives and daughters of the Midianites attracted some of the leading men of Israel to adultery, and to idol worship and orgies. Forthwith a plague started amongst the Israelites, according to their covenant with God at Sinai, Ebal and Gerizim.

God's covenant with Israel was that while they would be loyal to him and his law, their enemies could not prevail against them. They should be his people. They should be blessed in their every temporal interest. But if they would neglect his statutes and engage in idolatry, he would bring upon their various plagues. This course not only would punish them for their wrong doings, but serve as a lesson, a warning, to restrain them from excesses such as were common amongst the heathen.

We must remember that the death of thousands of Israelites on such occasions was the whole penalty for their sin. They did not drop into a hell of eternal torment, but merely fell asleep, to await the better day of Messiah, the anti-type of Moses, when they will be awakened from the sleep of death and be brought to full, clear knowledge of those things which, at very most, they then enjoyed only in a typical way.

Not only did God punish the Israelites according to the terms of their Law Covenant, but he also punished the Midianites and Balaam. Under divine direction Moses called for a thousand armed men out of each of the tribes. This army completely wiped out the Midianites as a nation, including Balaam, the prophet, who, to secure the rewards of his nefarious advice, had evidently remained to oversee the work of iniquity.

Our glorified Redeemer, in his last message to the church, foretold that some of his followers would imitate Balaam and, for earthly advantage, put a stumbling-block in the path of the brethren. The intimation is that the harlotry and false worship would be on a higher plane than that which stumbled natural Israel—even as everything in this Christian dispensation is antitypical.

#### BALAAM'S WONDERFUL PROPHECY

Several passages in Balaam's prophecy are very striking in their fulfilment. For instance:

"For from the top of the rocks I see him,  
And from the hills I behold him;  
Lo, it is a people that dwell alone  
And shall not be reckoned amongst the nations."

\* \* \*  
"Blessed be every one that blesseth thee  
And cursed be every one that curseth thee."

\* \* \*  
"I behold him, but not nigh;  
There shall come forth a Star out of Jacob,  
And the Sceptre shall rise out of Israel,  
And One out of Jacob shall have dominion."

Surely we see fulfilled the declaration that Israel shall be separate from all other nations. What other nation of that day remains a people of preserved identity?

How true the statement that those who have cursed, or injured, Israel have brought injury, upon themselves! As we scan the whole field of the world, we find that every nation which has dealt harshly with Israel has received severe chastisement or blight. On the contrary, Great Britain and the United States, nations which have blessed the Jew, have in turn received great blessings.

The lines referring to Messiah's kingdom are equally true. The sceptre did rise out of Israel. The One who is to have the dominion of earth is of Jacob's posterity, according to the flesh. As the bright and morning Star, he is leading on to a glorious sunrise—the dawning of the Messianic day, which is to scatter earth's night and to bring blessings instead of the curse.

#### CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER

NOVEMBER 9.—Romans 14:7-21.

"It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth."—Romans 14:21.—Diaglott.

This lesson makes, perhaps, the strongest appeal of anything in the Bible in favor of total abstinence from the use of intoxicating liquors. True, it is addressed only to Christians, as is the entire New Testament. Nevertheless, many who have not become followers of Jesus can appreciate the argument

here, and to many such it will appeal—not along the highest Christian lines, but along the lines of the Golden Rule.

To make a distinction between the Golden Rule, the acknowledged standard for all mankind, and a Christian's rule of life will be considered by many, doubtless, as a distinction

without a difference. But this is not true. The Golden Rule, that one should do to others as he would be done by, is a simple rule of justice. All should recognize it. All should follow it, as none will dispute it.

The rule for Christian living, as taught by the Master and exemplified by him, is far more exacting than the Golden Rule, which is applicable to all men. Those who become followers of Christ are, of course, subject to the Golden Rule, but they voluntarily place themselves under a far more stringent rule. Their covenant with the Lord is that in the doing of his will—the doing of righteousness—they will ever stand ready to sacrifice everything, even life itself. This is what the Apostle meant when he declared that Christ pleased not himself. Even though his will was a perfect one, he renounced his rights, privileges, liberties, that he might serve humanity, and thus lay the foundation for carrying out the heavenly Father's glorious purposes respecting our race.

The present call of the church is for those who have the "same mind which was also in Christ Jesus." It is a call for sacrificers. As St. Paul declares, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1) This sacrificing is not to be done in a foolish or aimless way. We are not to sacrifice the things that are right and proper, simply that we may suffer. Right and proper things we may enjoy, except as God shall open our eyes to see privileges and opportunities for self-denial which would enable us to forward his cause, and to minister grace and truth to those for whom Christ died.

#### "NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF"

Let us first consider our lesson from the standpoint of the consecrated people of God, and afterwards from the standpoint of others who love righteousness, but who have not, as yet, joined the Lord and his faithful, self-sacrificing band of followers.

As for the world, they do live to themselves and die to themselves. That is to say, their own personal interests stand first with them. Only to Christ and the church could these words apply; for none others than these have entered into such a covenant of self-renunciation, giving up the present with all of its privileges and interests in exchange for a promise of a spiritual life hereafter, in the resurrection.

All these, by the terms of their covenant, are to live unto the Lord—to do his will and not their own will, to serve him and not to serve self, to lay down their lives in fighting a good fight against sin. All these, when they die, will be dying unto the Lord, in the sense that they are counted as members of the body of Christ, every member of which must die to the flesh before the entire body complete can be glorified beyond the veil. To these, therefore, apply the words, "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

This being true, the Christian is to have no will of his own as respects his living or his dying, or any of his affairs. Everything is to be fully committed and submitted to the great Head of the church. Christ's death on behalf of all is efficacious, not only for the dead, but also for the living. All who recognize him, and are fully consecrated to his service, trust him fully, in life and in death.

The Apostle proceeds to show that we who constitute the church which is the body of Christ are not judges one of another, that all judgment is vested in the Head, the Redeemer of all. Each one now accepted as a member of the church must ultimately stand the inspection of the Head of the church; for our present membership in his body is a probationary one. Loyalty, faithfulness to the head of the church now, will bring to us eventually membership in his glorious body, the church beyond the veil—his joint-heirs in the kingdom—his bride.

The Apostle's argument, then, is that we should avoid condemning one another, and content ourselves with encouraging each other in the good way. Since it is written that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to God, this proves that our final accounting as members of the church of Christ will be to God, or to our Lord Jesus as his representative.

#### LET US, THEN, JUDGE OURSELVES

The Apostle's argument also is that, instead of judging, condemning, fellow-members of the consecrated body, we should be full of sympathy for them. We should realize that we do not know thoroughly their trials, their difficulties, their environments, their heredities. This should make us very sympathetic towards all the brethren. Our keen sense of justice, our love of righteousness, our hatred of iniquity, should find its principal exercise in self-criticism, and in watchfulness not to do anything that would stumble a brother—not to do anything that would discourage a brother or cause him to fall away from the faith and the works which the Lord requires.

What a wonderful lesson is this in battling against self, rather than against enemies! How many find it easy to excuse their own weaknesses while they are very captious and critical as respects the shortcomings of others! How the Lord warned his people against such an attitude saying, "With what [soever kind of] judgment ye judge [a brother], ye shall be judged" [yourself of the Lord].—Matthew 7:2.

If you are hypercritical and wish to measure others up to the full standard of perfection, you are thus recognizing a high standard, and that recognition on your part will make it proper for the Lord to measure you by that high standard. If we could but remember this—that the merciful will obtain mercy—how glad we all would be to be extremely merciful to others, extremely lenient in our judgments and reproofs, hoping that the Lord would be correspondingly lenient with us!—James 2:13.

The Lord is not in this establishing a low standard, and wishing his people to think lightly of their own weaknesses and failures, and those of others. He is, on the contrary, setting up a high standard of love, sympathy, and kindness. Love is the principal thing, in God's sight. Whoever, therefore, has love and sympathy most highly developed, the Lord may well esteem as highly developed along the lines most essential in his sight, most essential for a place in his mediatorial kingdom.

#### NOTHING UNCLEAN OF ITSELF

"I know and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean [unholy] of itself," writes the Apostle. The Apostle is referring not to filthiness of clothing or person, but to foods which were to the Jew made improper, ceremonially unclean. In other words, while the Jew was forbidden the use of swine, rabbits, oysters, etc., it was not that these foods would make him actually impure or evil in God's sight, but that the restrictions were imposed as tests of his loyalty and obedience to God, just as the forbidden fruit of Eden was thereafter unclean to Adam and Eve.

The Apostle's argument is that to the Jew who died to all hope of attaining eternal life through keeping the Law Covenant, and who became united to Christ, the restrictions of the Law Covenant would no longer be binding. And, of course, to the Gentile, who never was under the Law Covenant, its restrictions would have no application when he accepted Christ.

Having stated this broad ground, the Apostle admits that if any man had his reasoning faculties so twisted on the subject that he thought himself under obligations, he would be responsible according to his mind or judgment on the subject. If, for instance, a Christian thought that he was obliged to avoid eating pork, that thought in his mind would constitute an obligation; for for him to violate his conscience would mean that he had willingly, knowingly, committed sin; for he would be wrong in doing what he thought was wrong, however harmless the matter might be in itself.

But now comes the final argument: Anybody realizing his own liberty, as the Apostle did, might eat freely, according to his convenience, without any reproof from his conscience or in the sight of God. But the brother still in the dark respecting his liberty should have consideration—should not be urged to violate his conscience. Rather, the brother of enlightened mind should yield to the other, and abstain from using his liberty, lest he should tempt his brother to violate his conscience.

This question of eating ceremonially unclean meat, or meat theoretically unclean because it had been first waved before an idol, is a question which no longer is a live issue among Christians; for general intelligence on the subject has gained the mastery everywhere.

The special application of this lesson to Christians is along a still different line. For instance, suppose that one brother had from childhood been accustomed to drinking beer, ale, etc., and that in his estimation it did him no injury. But suppose a number of brethren, less strong than he, physically and mentally, could not touch intoxicants without harming themselves; and suppose that the example of the drinking brother would continue to be a temptation to the others. What should be his course?

The argument of the Apostle would seem to be that the brother who is strong, mentally, morally and physically, should gladly abstain from anything that would stumble his brother, or anybody else upon whom he exercised an influence. "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." (Romans 14:15) If Christ loved the world so much as to leave his heavenly riches and glory to die for sinners, should not we, in proportion as we have his Spirit, be glad to lay down our lives for the brethren, as the Apostle elsewhere exhorts

us? And if so, should we not be much more ready to abstain from the use of comparatively trifling liberties for the sake of our weaker brother, for whom Christ died? This is a strong argument. Who can deny it?

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of." Your knowledge, your appreciation, of your liberties is a good thing, a desirable thing; nevertheless, you should so govern your exercise of that liberty that none will misunderstand it, and think you an evil-doer. Rather restrain yourself of your liberties, preserve others from the temptation too strong for them, and increase your own influence by faithfully abstaining from everything that might appear to be an evil in the sight of others, however right it might be in your own sight, and however correct your own judgment of the divine law on the subject might be.

#### 'NOT MEAT AND DRINK'

The Apostle adds another argument (v. 17). He remarks, For the advantages connected with our membership in the

embryo kingdom of God consist not in the greater privileges and liberties we have in eating and drinking, but consist rather in the righteousness and peace and joy in the holy Spirit which are ours because we are probationary members of this kingdom class. He who thus serves Christ is well pleasing to God and is approved of men. "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace and things whereby we may edify one another. Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; but evil for that man who eateth with offense. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth."

The application of the Golden Rule on the part of the world would seem to be a settlement of many questions of the present time. Do unto others weaker than yourself, in precept and example, what you would have them do for you in precept and example, if you were the weaker and they the stronger.

## ARE WE ACTUAL OR RECKONED NEW CREATURES?

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

—2 Corinthians 5:17.

Our information on this subject of the new creature comes from the Word of God. It is the Spirit of the truth that bears the witness. "If any one be in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold! they have become new." [*Diaglott translation.*] Apparently, then, if old things have passed away from us, and we are new creatures in Christ, we are now receiving the blessings. There is nothing said about being reckoned new creatures. The change is actual, bona-fide. When God accepts the human will, he does not hold the new creature responsible for any of the deeds done previous to consecration. The whole account is a new one.

We are new creatures in the sense that God has begotten us of the holy Spirit. God has given us heavenly promises instead of earthly promises. We are no longer striving to see whether we can attain a higher position in the world. We have new ambitions. Our aim is to live pleasing to God. And in every way this change of sentiment indicates a transformation of mind.

Transformation means to form over again, across, different, in an opposite way. So we have been changed by reason of this change of our will. God has made us the promise that, if we make this change, or transformation, He will no longer count sin to us, that we shall have standing henceforth no longer as sinners, but as holy ones. The world does not know that we are children of God. They do not realize how fully we have given up the earthly hopes and are seeking a different prize from that which the world seeks.

The fact that this change is merely in the mind and not in the body does not alter this matter at all. According to science, every seven years a complete change takes place in our bodies, the new matter coming on as the old matter sloughs off. But one is not a new man because his body has changed. If this were so, we would have had several changes by this time. So far as the mind is concerned, personality is not changed. If we had lost a hand, we would still be the same personality; or if we were to lose a hand and a foot, the loss would not change our personality.

Our personality would not change in this event, because the personality is the mind, the ego. And so when the ego, the mind, is changed, that new creature is distinctly separated from the other. The fact that it does not yet have a spirit body does not matter. The new creature is the new creature, only now he is the new creature under adverse conditions; whereas by and by he will be the new creature who has entered into that condition which God has promised—the divine nature and everlasting joy—and in which he will abide forever.

#### OUR STANDING FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT

We are now spirit beings in human bodies. The Apostle says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." It is not the body that is risen, but the new creature. It was not the new creature that died, but the old creature. It is not the life of the old creature that "is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3), but the life of the new creature. The Apostle declares, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." He says also that we are not only to reckon ourselves dead, but to reckon ourselves as though we had been raised from the dead. "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"—Romans 6:11.

The body is not the new creature, but it belongs to the new creature. It is the servant of the new creature. The new creature is the only one that God recognizes at all; for He knows us not after the flesh. And we should live in the Spirit, and view ourselves and all of our affairs from this standpoint. We should "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:4) Our viewpoint should be this: As new creatures, we merely inhabit these bodies for awhile.

These bodies are our slaves and we are to use them as our slaves. The environment is unfavorable for the new creature at the present time. But it is the new creature that God is looking at. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, they have become new." If he now fails to make good his consecration, fails to be an overcomer, he will have no resurrection; for all his earthly rights have been abrogated.

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." We do, as new creatures, have the fleshly bodies. But the flesh is not we; that is, not our kind, not our nature. It is only as the new creature that we can inherit the promise. Jesus was put to death in the flesh; that is to say, he sacrificed the flesh—He gave up his claim on the flesh at his consecration. And it was on the basis of his giving up his rights that the Father begat him to the new nature. Therefore he said, My will is to do my Father's will. The cup that my Father hath poured for me, I will drink!—John 18:11.

Jesus would not stand for his earthly rights. His dying was not merely at Calvary. It was begun at Jordan three and a half years before. In the type, the high priest slew the bullock, which represented the man Jesus. Our Lord gave up his life completely—his human life. The High Priest was another person. He went inside and ministered in the Holy while his human nature was sacrificed upon the altar, and his body burned outside the camp, but in sight of the camp.

#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND NEW CREATURE

Every new creature is a soul. The word soul is used in the Scriptures, in a very broad manner indeed, as signifying any sentient being, any being that has sensibility, intelligence. A fish has intelligence; therefore the Bible describes a fish as being a soul (See Genesis 1:20, margin). A dog, a cow, a horse, is each a soul. An angel is a soul, or being. God is a soul, or being—the Bible says so. The Scriptures say that "If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:38)—this means God's soul.

This broad use of the word, therefore, in connection with any kind of sentient being, assures us that as new creatures all of us are souls—intelligent beings. We might be understood to be double souls in the sense that we were human souls to begin with, but that God has through Christ made a special arrangement for us whereby we are begotten again to be new creatures. This begetting is of the mind; and only in this way are we new creatures now.

This new creature is not yet perfected. This new soul has not yet reached that condition which God intends that it shall have. The Apostle tells us that we have this treasure of the new mind in the old body—the earthen vessel. The new mind must do the Father's will, irrespective of the will of the body, or of the friends of the body, and what they might desire it to do. The new mind is to do God's will under all circumstances.

A spirit-begotten child of God may speak of himself as already possessing eternal life, which he does possess by faith.



But the new creature, the new soul, is not yet completed. God's promise is that when this new soul shall have been completed, we shall have a body like Christ. We shall be like him. We shall see him as he is and share his glory. We shall be souls on the divine plane, whereas formerly we were souls on the human plane; now we are reckoned as in the transitional state.

#### DUAL SOULS—NOT DUAL MINDS

When we speak of being dual souls, we do not mean that we are dual-minded; for that would be a reprehensible condition. We are single-minded. Our duality consists in the fact that we have the mind of one nature and the body of another. A perfect soul results from the union of life-principle with an organism. It is thus with a fish, a dog, a horse. There is an organism, and there is vitality, a spark of life, before there can be a soul. The Lord's people were human souls, or had the powers common to all mankind, to begin with. Then they were begotten again. And the new will, the new mind, has at present an organism not adapted to its needs.

In the resurrection the new creature will have an organism fully adapted to its requirements. But now it is a soul that is neither perfect in the flesh nor perfect on the spirit plane. And since the nature goes properly with the mind, the will, therefore the flesh is counted as being that of the new creature, and the new creature is held responsible for this flesh.

The Apostle suggests to us that not only our old minds, or wills, are dead, and that we reckon also our bodies dead, but that we go further, and reckon our bodies quickened, or made alive, from their dead and sin-disposed condition, that they

may be fully our servants as new creatures, that they may serve our purposes—"quickened by the Spirit of God that dwelleth in you." That is to say, so long as the indwelling power of the holy Spirit is ruling in our hearts and minds, it controls and energizes the physical body.

#### THE SECRET OF SELF-CONTROL

God deals with us as new creatures from the time we are begotten of the holy Spirit. He has no dealings with the flesh. The flesh is under condemnation. God dealt with the flesh of Father Adam, condemning it to destruction. Then he provided a way in Christ by which the race may be rescued from destruction. The church's relationship to God is purely as new creatures. From the time, then, that we become new creatures, accepted of God, he takes these mortal bodies of ours, which are consecrated to his service, as a part of the new creature. So if we suffer, it is the new creature that suffers. And in this sense God takes cognizance of our flesh from the time of our consecration. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Because our human bodies are vehicles for his service, God takes note of them. In proportion as we become strong in the Spirit of the Lord, we have the power to make the mortal body do what the new mind wills. But we are weak in ourselves. We cannot properly control our mortal bodies. God, therefore, gives us of his truth. And the more we receive of the truth, of the Spirit, the more fully sanctified we should be, the more fully in harmony with the Father's will, and the greater control we should have of our mortal bodies.

### STILL THERE IS ROOM

Day is declining and the sun is low;  
The shadows lengthen, light makes haste to go;  
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!

The bridal hall is filling for the feast;  
Pass in, pass in, and be the Bridegroom's guest.  
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!

It fills, it fills, that hall of jubilee!  
Make haste, make haste; 'tis not too full for thee.  
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!

Pass in, pass in! That banquet is for thee;  
That cup of everlasting Love is free.  
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!

Louder and sweeter sounds the loving call—  
Come, lingerer, come; enter that festal hall!  
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!—*H. Bonar.*

### ACQUAINT YOURSELF WITH GOD

"Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."—Heb. 5:14.

In this text the Apostle uses a well-known physical truth to illustrate an important spiritual truth. As human babes would be choked or have their digestion ruined by the stronger kinds of food which they could when older use to advantage, so, as the Apostle says, spiritual babes have need of the simpler truths, that they may grow thereby and develop character, as well as learn to appreciate the divine plan. That strong meat belongs to them that are of full age is an unquestionable fact. Adults may exercise discretion as to which foods would be expedient for their use—which would be palatable, which would be productive of the best results—that they may choose wisely. We all find that certain foods that agree with one do not agree with another. The food that is palatable to one would not be palatable to another.

In proportion as one appreciates and uses the food that is best for him, he will find development and gain strength. So with those in Christ. There is such abundance spread on the table of the Lord that when we come to the table each may find the food adapted to his particular need at the time. Some may need faith; some, patience, some perseverance, etc. As each one comes to a considerable development in Christian knowledge and Christian experience, he should be able to determine which features of the Word of Truth are necessary for the supplying of the deficiencies of his own character. At the beginning of his Christian experience one is unable to discern clearly good and evil. A childish mind might misinterpret Scripture, or might combine texts so as to arrive at erroneous conclusions, separating them from their respective contexts. But a mature mind would see that such putting together of Scriptures would do harm.

#### DEFICIENT APPRECIATION OF GOOD AND EVIL

Some Christian people stumble over Bible truths, and make evil out of them. For instance, our good Brother Calvin evidently did not have a sufficiently clear appreciation of good and evil. As a result, instead of getting good out of the doctrine of the election of the church, he brought out of it a very evil doctrine, namely, that all those who are not elected

are damned. His new mind was not sufficiently developed to rightly divide the Word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15) Any one who appreciates God's character sufficiently would have known, in spite of wrong teachings, that God would not deliberately doom our race to eternal torture before they were created.

Many people of today have not their senses sufficiently exercised by reason of use. They charge the Almighty with something that no human being would even think of doing. This expression, "have their senses exercised," does not refer merely to minds, but includes the heart also. Brother Calvin had a very able mind, apparently; but the thing lacking was a proper heart-fellowship with the Lord; for if he had known the character of the Lord, he would have known that the doctrine of everlasting torture was contrary to every element of the divine character.—See Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5.

So far as we can judge, Brother Wesley must have been considerably developed along the line of spiritual appreciation of the Lord's character. We doubt whether Wesley was any more logical than Calvin—perhaps less so—but evidently he was in heart-harmony with God. Wesley very properly concluded that it would be impossible for God to make any such plan as that set forth by Calvin. In our own cases, we know that we might have a surface knowledge, and yet not have this spiritual development—the heart knowledge of God. We are to seek not only to have an intellectual knowledge of the Bible, or a familiarity with the words of the Bible, but also to appreciate the sentiment, the spirit, that lies behind the words—the character of our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ—the spirit that they are of, and that we also would be of.

#### DEEP STUDY PROFITABLE

When the people of our day speak of Bible study, they very rarely mean a study and appreciation of the deeper spiritual truths there presented. Rather, they seem to be content with a study of the geography, the history, the psychology, etc. As we see these conditions, we are forced

to the conclusion that the majority of Christian people of today, just as in the apostles' day, have need that some one teach them again what are the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

The Apostle Peter (1 Peter 2:2) says also, along the same line, "Desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." We all have need of the simple things. But the spiritual babe that does not grow will never reach man-

hood's estate. He will never be a king and priest. We need a real acquaintance with God. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent!—not merely know about God, and know about Jesus Christ, but that they might know them in the sense of being personally acquainted with them—know them by having the same holy Spirit, and growing therein—know them by a study of "the deep things of God."

## OBLIVION NOT ANNIHILATION

Question.—Is it correct to speak of the condition in hades as being a condition of oblivion, or of annihilation?

Answer.—The word annihilation would be a very improper one to use in respect to the condition of a man in death, except it be the second death. The thought connected with annihilation is that of being absolutely wiped out of existence. Hence annihilation would be an improper term in respect to the hades condition. The word oblivion is not the same as annihilation. Oblivion means the condition of absolute unconsciousness; for instance, when a man falls into a sound sleep he goes into oblivion. He might say, I was wholly oblivious for an hour. He was ignorant of the things taking place.

It is well for us, so far as possible, especially in speaking along the lines of the Bible, to use the right term, to avoid any possible confusion. The Bible is written in very good form. Our Common Version contains very beautiful language. It is a marvel in the purity of its English. We do well to keep ourselves within the terms of the Bible and to use the language which the Bible uses, and thus we shall not be in danger of misunderstanding or of being misunderstood. And if any one thinks we have not a wide enough range, we shall know at least that we are avoiding misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the Word of the Lord. In the case of hades, sheol, these words are not in the Common Version Bible, but they have been brought into the English language dur-

ing the past few decades. Therefore it is proper that we should use these words, because they have become naturalized.

Question.—What would be the difference between the expressions used in the Old Testament: "They shall be as though they had not been," and "They shall be utterly destroyed," and the word annihilation?

Answer.—We would understand them to have the same meaning. These Scriptures have reference to the second death only. They might be used as showing what the first death would have been, had there been no redemption from it. But God's proposition was otherwise from the beginning; and the redemption-price has been given. But the expression, "They shall be as though they had not been," is used in connection with certain systems of the present time, which shall utterly fall, shall go down completely. The same expression might be applicable to humanity. Those who sin wilfully now and die the second death, and those who will sin wilfully during the Millennium and die the second death—these will be blotted out of existence, annihilated.

But to use any of these terms in respect to the first death is a mistake. The most we can say is, that as it is with the brute, so would it be with man, if God had not provided something better. God assured our first parents that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Thus early he gave a vague promise of a future redemption. There is no recovery from annihilation; it is the end of all hope.

## THE EDITOR'S FOREIGN TOUR

(CONCLUDED.)

The evening following the close of the London convention found us at Plymouth, where we had the pleasure of addressing an assemblage of eleven hundred, who manifested deep interest in the message.

The next evening (Wednesday, August 6) we were at Exeter, and addressed an audience numbering about six hundred and fifty. Of these, seventy-two handed in their addresses for further literature, and otherwise manifested an interest in the Gospel of the kingdom.

Next came Cheltenham (Thursday, August 7), eight hundred being present at the public meeting, seventy-four of whom gave their addresses for additional literature along the lines of our discourse.

The following Sunday (August 10) found us again with the London Tabernacle congregation, morning and evening. The attendance was good and the interest deep, as usual. No attempt was made to reach the public, as the capacity of the Tabernacle is only about twelve hundred. During this trip abroad the efforts for the public were in the smaller cities.

Lincoln was our next appointment for a public service. A large auditorium had been secured, and the number present was estimated at fifteen hundred. Of these, one hundred and sixty-eight handed in their addresses for further literature.

Next came Hull, where the public meeting drew out one thousand, of whom one hundred and seventy-nine left their addresses for further reading matter.

On Wednesday evening, August 13, a public meeting was held at Wakefield, the attendance being estimated at nine hundred. Seventy-eight gave their addresses for further literature.

Next came York, Thursday, August 14—attendance fifteen hundred; addresses for further literature, two hundred and seventy-two.

Friday, August 15, we visited Tunbridge Wells. There we were greeted by an audience of six hundred, seventy-four of whom handed in their addresses after meeting, requesting further literature.

Sunday, August 17, we again had the pleasure of meeting the London congregation at the Tabernacle, and again had two enjoyable services, breaking to them, to the best of our ability, the Bread of Life.

Monday, August 18, found us at Walsall. Here a public

gathering to the number of nine hundred and fifty gave earnest heed to the message of the kingdom. One hundred and forty-one of the audience gave their addresses after the service for further literature.

Chester was next on the list, Tuesday, August 19. The hall was small; but about five hundred were present, one hundred of whom left their addresses for literature.

Blackburn came next, August 20—a larger hall, eleven hundred present, and one hundred and ninety-six addresses given in for further literature.

Bolton came next, the splendid Town Hall of which was secured. A deeply interested and intelligent audience of six hundred were present. Of these, four hundred and twelve left their addresses and requests for further literature.

We visited Preston Friday, August 22. Again we had a good hall and an attentive audience of fifteen hundred, four hundred and fourteen addresses being left, requesting further literature.

The Glasgow Three-Days' convention opened August 23. It was a fine crowd, numbering about eight hundred to nine hundred—chiefly from Scotland, with visitors also from Ireland and England. We always enjoy our visits to Glasgow. Our Scotch brethren and sisters manifest a warmth and zeal of Christian love, which is impressive and inspiring. We addressed the convention four times on things pertaining to the kingdom—how we shall make our calling and election sure to a share therein; also respecting the value of Bible study as an aid to character-building, etc., etc.

The Sunday evening meeting at Glasgow was for the public. St. Andrews Hall, the largest in the city, had been obtained. It is said to seat forty-five hundred. Every seat was taken and some stood. In a nearby hall an overflow meeting, addressed by Brother Hemery, had an attendance of about nine hundred. The amount of interest may be judged to some extent by the fact that seven hundred and fifty-nine addresses were handed in at the larger meeting and sixty-nine at the overflow meeting.

Following the Glasgow convention, we visited Sterling, there addressing an audience estimated at one thousand. Two hundred and two requests for literature were handed in.

Next came Coatbridge, with an audience of about one thousand, and one hundred and seventy-eight requests for literature—Wednesday, August 27.