

## HOW JESUS PREACHED TO SPIRITS IN PRISON

*"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, by which [two experiences—death and resurrection] he preached unto the spirits in prison."—1 Peter 3:18, 19.*

This text has been made the basis for some peculiar presentations. From it some have deduced an intermediate state lasting between death and the resurrection. Others have claimed it as an authority for the doctrine of purgatory. The difficulty in every case seems to be the failure to remember that the Bible always and everywhere teaches that the dead are really dead, that they knew nothing, and that, therefore, it would be impossible to do any preaching to the dead humans. Undoubtedly the theory that people are more alive after they die than when they were alive is responsible for nearly all of the foolish things which we have all at some time professed to believe.

Before dismissing the thought that these "spirits in prison" are human spirits, let us note the fact that to say, "human spirits," is an absurdity of itself, because human beings are not spirits and spirit beings are not humans. "Who maketh his angels spirits," is the Scriptural proposition. True, we do sometimes speak of humans as possessing a spirit of life, but by this we merely mean that they possess the power or energy of life, and the same would be equally true of the lower orders of creation, beasts, fish, fowl, etc.

Again, we sometimes speak of the church as spirit beings—begotten of the holy Spirit. Thus the Apostle speaks of the natural man in contrast with the new creature, a spirit being. To appreciate this statement we must remember that the church class receive the begetting of the holy Spirit to the end that, if faithful, they may attain unto a spirit resurrection and become spirit beings, like unto the angels and like to the Redeemer. But we are not spirits yet, except by faith—by hope. However, the context shows the Apostle had no reference to the church, either: we were not in prison; we received the message of salvation through the Apostles.

### SPIRITS ONCE DISOBEDIENT

The spirits to whom the message was given had proven themselves disobedient, says St. Peter. He even tells us the time of their disobedience, namely, that it was "in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." Surely, if noticing these particulars mentioned in the context, no one would be excusable for misunderstanding this Scripture and considering it in any way applicable to humanity of our day or to humanity in general. However, it is helpful to us to learn the full particulars of the matter. What was their disobedience, and when and how were they imprisoned?

Turning to Genesis 6:1-5, we find there the cause of the disobedience of those angels, who for a time had been permitted to see what they could do for the uplift of humanity, or, rather, permitted to demonstrate that the downward tendency of sin is incurable except in the manner which God has already arranged through Messiah and his glorious reign of a thousand years.

Instead of those angels helping mankind out of sin they helped themselves into sin, and by so doing they increased the depravity amongst humanity until the astounding record is that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually." The particular sin of those angels was that when they were granted the privilege of materializing—of taking human bodies for the sake of helping and instructing mankind—they misused this power and took to themselves the daughters of men for wives.

Thus these angels came gradually to prefer to live as men amongst men and to rear earthly families rather than to abide in the condition in which they were created—spirit beings, higher than humans. Not only was this wrong in the sense that it was taking a course in opposition to the divine arrangement, but it was wrong also because the thing was done for the cultivation and gratification of lust, and it led to their own moral defilement as well as having a baneful influence upon humanity; for we can readily see that for the angels, of superior powers and intelligence, to become leaders in lustful practices would mean a great influence upon mankind toward sin and defilement of mind and body.

We are particularly told that the offspring of this improper union between the angels and the daughters of men were giants, both physically and mentally superior to the fallen human family—"men of renown." And this statement, that they were "men of renown," was at a time when manhood's estate was reached at a hundred years, and implies that God did not inter-

fere to hinder or stop the progress of sin for perhaps several centuries. In the meantime the race had become so corrupt that apparently only Noah and his family were uncontaminated—all others had more or less come under the influence, directly or indirectly, of these fallen angels or their giant sons. Hence, of Noah it was written (not that he was a perfect man, but), "Now Noah was perfect in his generation" (uncontaminated) and his family apparently the same. Hence these alone were saved in the ark, while all the remainder, more or less contaminated, were destroyed by the flood.

### "IN CHAINS OF DARKNESS"

It was then and there that God imprisoned those spirits, angels, who kept not their first estate, and are therefore called fallen angels, devils, demons. They were not imprisoned in some far-off world called hell, nor are they engaged there in stoking fires for the torture of poor humanity. Following the leading of the Scriptures we find that when the flood came they were not destroyed because, while their fleshly bodies which they assumed might indeed perish, yet they would merely dematerialize, or assume their spirit conditions again.

The record is that God cast them down, that he condemned them to an overthrow—that they might not any longer associate with the holy angels, but must be reserved in tartarus—our earth's atmosphere. Here they were imprisoned, not in a special place, but in the sense of having their liberties restrained, "in chains of darkness." They were no longer permitted to materialize and thus to associate with humanity. These things are distinctly told us by St. Jude and St. Peter (Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4, 5)—an explanation in full harmony with the Genesis account of their fall.

### ONCE DISOBEDIENT—STILL DISOBEDIENT

We, of course, cannot know that all of those fallen angels are still in a disloyal condition of heart. On the contrary, in harmony with our text, we may suppose that some of these fallen angels have since repented of their wrong course and it would be none too strong a way to state the matter—that any such repentant ones would surely have terrible experiences as a result. To be obliged to be in close touch and relationship with the more evil and malignant ones and to have knowledge of all their evil designs and efforts would be a terrible experience and, besides this, we may be sure that the rebellious would not hesitate to persecute the repentant ones in every conceivable manner, as they would be lawless, regardless of the divine will.

On the other hand, the repentant ones would be obliged to restrain themselves and to not render evil for evil, knowing that this would be contrary to the divine will. In other words, repentant ones amongst those fallen spirits, influenced by the preaching of Jesus or otherwise, would have a kind of purgatorial experience, and the very thought calls forth our sympathy.

When imprisoned or cut off from the privilege of materialization, many of the fallen spirits, we know not what proportion, continued their active opposition to God, after the manner of Satan. Hence they are spoken of as his angels, his messengers, his servants and he is spoken of as Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Satan, who sinned much earlier than the others, and in a different way, the Scriptures tell us was an angel of a higher rank, or a higher nature, and this superiority of his has made him the prince or ruler over the hosts of fallen spirits.

### FIGHTING AGAINST GOD

The fight of Satan and his fallen angels is against God, against all who are in harmony with him, against all the regulations of righteousness, and against all the channels and servants whom the Lord may use. St. Paul's words along this line are forceful; he remarks that God's people contend not merely "with flesh and blood," but also "with wicked spirits in high positions," and the question arises, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The reply is that none is sufficient; without the aid of the Redeemer his church would be quite overcome and vanquished by evil.

Likewise, without the Redeemer's aid through his kingdom, without the binding of Satan, without our Lord's releasing of the world from the bondage of sin and death, there would be no hope of the world's recovery from its present bondage. But with the Apostle we exclaim, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"—Romans 8:31.

## THROUGH MEDIUMS AND OBSESSIONS

Satan's original plan of attack was to bring our race under his influence by misrepresentation—by putting darkness for light and light for darkness—for instance, the temptation under which Mother Eve fell. Satan there represented himself as Eve's friend, giving her sound advice. He represented God as having a selfish motive behind his command that our first parents should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan declared that God had told an untruth when he said that the penalty for sin would be death. Satan declared that man cannot die.

And has he not since kept up the same line of falsification? And has he not deceived the whole world upon this very subject? Do not all peoples in every land believe that when a man dies he does not die, but gets more alive—exactly Satan's lie of the first instance? How few have believed God, even amongst his people who truly love him, and who truly desire to believe the teachings of his Word! We have all been under a kind of "hoodoo." The god of this world [Satan] has blinded our minds on this subject. We are now coming to see that death is the penalty for sin and that the resurrection is the salvation which God has promised and will provide.

Satan has had powerful allies and servants in the fallen angels, and it is through their persistence that his lie has seemingly triumphed over the divine Word—"Dying, thou shalt die." These fallen spirits have made various manifestations in every land for centuries, and thereby have apparently substantiated the theory that a dead man is more alive than when he was alive. Knowing that mankind would have nothing to do with them if their real personality were known they hide their personality and represent themselves as our dead friends who desire to speak with us, either directly or through mediums.

A further desire of these angels is to obsess or to get possession of a human being. Being chained or restrained from the privilege of materialization, the next most desirable thing in their estimation is to gain control over a human being and use his body instead of their own. This is styled obsession, and persons so afflicted today are sent to an insane asylum where, it is estimated, they constitute at least one half of the entire number. In the days of our Lord these were not mistakenly supposed to be insane, but rightly declared to be obsessed. All remember the New Testament account that our Savior and his apostles cast out legions of fallen spirits from humanity.

**"KNOW YE NOT THAT THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE ANGELS?"**

We need not discuss this question with Bible Students, for it is too well recognized to be disputed. We suggest a topical study of this subject by all of our readers. See how many times Jesus and the apostles cast out demons, and note the particulars. Although we still have with us spirit mediums and many obsessed, we cannot know whether the proportionate number is greater or less than in our Lord's day. Since the world's population today is so much larger, the same number of evil spirits (which do not increase) would show proportionately less.

But, however that may be, we may assume that some fruitage resulted from the great sermons preached to these in connection with the death and resurrection of our Lord, respecting which St. Peter tells us in our text. Additionally, St. Paul remarks, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:3) We do know that the holy angels need no judging, no trial, hence the Apostle must in some way refer to a trial or judgment or testing of these spirits in prison who were once disobedient, in the days of Noah. And if the judgment or testing is a part of the divine plan, it implies a hope for them, and in conjunction with St. Peter's statement in our text it gives the reasonable inference that the preaching which Jesus did to them was not wholly in vain.

**HOW JESUS PREACHED IN DEATH**

Here arises another question: If Jesus was really dead, as the Scriptures declare, if "he poured out his soul unto death," and "made his soul an offering for sin," and his soul was not raised from the dead until the third day after his crucifixion, how could he in the meantime preach to spirits in prison, or to anybody else? We reply that he could preach in the same way that the Apostle refers to in respect to Abel, saying, "He, being dead, yet speaketh." (Hebrews 11:4); and again, in the same way that the blood of Abel is said to have cried to God—figuratively. Of one thing we are sure, namely, that Jesus gave no oral address while he was dead. He preached in the way we sometimes refer to when we say, "Actions speak louder than words."

It was the great object lesson which the fallen angels saw that constituted to them the great sermon that gave them a ground for hope. On several occasions the fallen spirits, when commanded to come out of human beings, declared that they knew Jesus. In the long ago they had known him, when, as the Only Begotten of the Father and his representative, he had created them and all things that are made, and was also the mouthpiece for all divine orders and regulations.

The fallen angels realized that he had come into the world to be its Redeemer; they perceived the great stoop that he had made from his lofty position on the heavenly plane to the servant position on the human plane. They admired his loyalty and faithfulness to God, but doubtless believed him to be foolish; they never expected him to arise from the dead. But when they perceived his resurrection on the third day to glory, honor and immortality, "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named," his sermon to them was complete, namely, that "the wages of sin is death," but that "the gift of God is eternal life." (Romans 6:23) And as they realized thus the power of God and the love of God for his human creatures, the Apostle's words imply that this constituted to them a message of hope. Perhaps if they would show full contrition God eventually would have mercy upon them, even as he had had mercy and had provided for humanity.

The lesson is one for all. God's power is infinite, so is his love, his mercy, his goodness. Nevertheless, every wilful sin will have its punishment, a just recompense of reward, and only the willing and obedient shall have the divine favor and everlasting life. Let each apply the lesson to himself.

**"THIS ONE THING I DO"**

*"I determine not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."*—1 Cor. 2:2.

The talented Apostle Paul gives in another place his testimony as to the wisdom of shaking off some of our plans and arrangements and of relaxing our efforts in various directions in order to concentrate our energies upon those things which we can best bring to perfection, saying, "This one thing I do." (Phil. 3:13) The Apostle's one business in life was to be, so far as he was able, acceptable to the Lord, personally, and to do with his might what he could to assist others into the same condition.

In harmony with this, the thought of our text seems to be that whatever the Apostle knew respecting other matters prominent in his day—customs of the age, scientific questions, etc.—he would ignore. He would be a specialist. He would confine his thoughts, words and teachings along this one line; for he thought it was worthy. He had been at Corinth as an ambassador of Christ. He was not there to air his knowledge, but to tell the message of the kingdom. He would make preaching the Gospel his one business, to accomplish which he felt that all of his knowledge and energy were too little.

The Apostle did not determine to ignore all of his knowledge without having a good reason, or purpose therefor. It was because he wished to concentrate all of his attention and influence upon one great subject. That subject was Jesus Christ, Jesus the Anointed; Jesus the Messiah was the main thought of all his preaching. He realized that the great Messiah was a

part of the divine program which had been promised—the "Seed" which was to bless all the families of the earth; that Jesus was that great Messiah, and that all men should recognize him, should flock to his standard.

But St. Paul would preach, not only that Jesus was the Messiah, but that he was the crucified Messiah, for he would not be ashamed of the divine teaching. He would preach that God sent forth his Son; and that the Son had left the glory he had with the Father, had lived on the earth, and had "died, the just for the unjust," for this very purpose—that he might manifest his obedience to the divine arrangement. In thus preaching Christ and his crucifixion, the Apostle was not ignoring the fact that there was to be a church; Jesus was the Anointed Head over his body, the church. Hence, in preaching Jesus the Anointed One, St. Paul was showing how the divine plan was being outworked under divine supervision, and what the glorious results would be. To these things he had determined that all his time and attention should go.

How evident it is that today many ministers have lost something possessed by the Apostle, who thus recognized the importance of the Gospel of Christ! This loss very largely accounts for the various peculiar topics advertised for religious meetings: sometimes the topic is politics; sometimes temperance; sometimes woman-suffrage. The reason for this change from the old-time style of preaching is that during the dark

ages the Gospel became perverted, misrepresented; and that now people are ashamed of what was formerly preached—"Be good and go to heaven; be bad and go to hell!" It is not a great message. We cannot wonder that an astute mind grasps the whole thing in a few minutes. We are rather glad, indeed, that ministers are ashamed to preach what their creeds profess, and that, therefore, their creeds must be kept in the background.

#### "NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST"

For us, however, who see the importance of the Gospel, the case is different. We know that this Gospel of the kingdom, of which the Apostle was not ashamed, teaches that the elect church is to be the bride of Christ; that Messiah is to bless the whole world; that Jesus is the Messiah; that he was crucified, dead, buried, raised from the dead by his Father; that his crucifixion was a part of the great divine plan, and that without this very arrangement no salvation could be effected, either for the church, or for the world in the future. Therefore, as the Apostle did, we are preaching Jesus, the Crucified One, who died for our sins, who rose again for our justification, and who, coming in glory with his church, is the great Messiah, to bless the world through natural Israel.

Because we have found the truth we, like St. Paul, feel constrained to preach nothing but this message. The same truth that influenced him should influence us. If, therefore, any of the brethren feel disposed to go out after the manner of Babylon and preach something else, here is the reproof—"Not . . . anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified." This is the only subject. St. Paul would be as though he knew nothing else. This subject would be the one thing to which he would give his time and attention. Let it be so with us!

Beloved, as you value the glorious hope set before you, we beseech you that you give no heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, as the Apostle terms them (1 Tim. 4:1); but that with fixedness of purpose you apply yourselves to the one thing to which you are called, and which as prospective heirs of Messiah's kingdom you are privileged to do. Let us not forget that we are a "peculiar people," separate from the great body of nominal Christians, as well as from the world, having higher hopes, aims and ambitions, and favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God, having been called out of our former darkness into his marvelous light. Thus separate from the world and from Christians who partake largely of the spirit of the world, what wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us, and either ignoring or opposing us!

We expect such opposition; and we know that it will continue until our course has been finished in death. If we endure hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake, no matter how that hardness may come, in our efforts to do the Lord's will and to advance the interests of his kingdom, then we are presenting our bodies as living sacrifices in the divine service. To be really in his service includes both the careful and continual study of God's plan, and the imbibing of its spirit, leading to an enthusiastic zeal for its accomplishment, and to activity to the extent of ability in its service, whatever the cost or sacrifice it may require.

If faithful in this service we have neither time nor disposition to give heed to other themes having no bearing on the one thing to which we have solemnly dedicated our lives. If we have consecrated all to God our time is not our own; and consequently we have none to spare for the investigation of theories built upon any other foundation than that laid down in the Bible. Nor have we time to devote to the ideas and pursuits which engross the world's attention, many of which are harmless or even elevating in themselves, but which would be harmful and degrading to us if we allow them to occupy consecrated time and to divert our attention from the one thing we ought to be doing.

The Apostle warns us to "Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness"; but counsels, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth"; "Teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith."—2 Tim. 2:16, 15; 1 Tim. 1:3, 4.

#### HOW NARROW THIS WAY!

Is not this a very narrow way? Yes, so narrow that our Lord foretold respecting it, "Strait [difficult] is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto [the] life, and few there be that find it!" (Matt. 7:14) It is so narrow that it is wide enough to admit only the Lord's plan and those who are willing to discard all other plans, projects and questionings, and to devote themselves fully to its service; and who are quite willing to bear any reproach it may bring.

Are you endeavoring from day to day to vindicate the divine character and to make known God's righteous ways? Are you

diligently studying to make yourself thoroughly familiar with the truth, so that you may indeed be a living epistle known and read of all men within the circle of your influence? Are you indeed a workman that need not be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15)? Are you of those who have really given themselves to the Lord, saying truthfully to him:

"Take myself—I will to be  
Ever, only, all for Thee?"

If so, you are just narrow minded enough to say, "This one thing I do; and I make everything else bend to this one thing of showing forth God's praises and of helping others into his marvelous light; and to this end I cultivate and use what talents I possess as a wise steward of my heavenly Father."

Dearly beloved, we impose neither vows nor bondage upon each other, but the call has its own limitations; the Master has directed us to teach all nations (for the Gospel is no longer confined to the Jewish nation), not astronomy nor geology nor any of the vain philosophies about which the world speculate, but—"Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—Matt. 28:20.

This is what the Apostle Paul did. Hear him in his zeal for this one thing to which he had devoted his life: "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with the excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the mystery of God; for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. [I riveted your attention on this one thing! I kept this one thing continually before you] . . . And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power [of the truth], that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."—1 Cor. 2:1-5.

St. Paul was an outspoken, uncompromising teacher. When he knew that he had the truth, he spoke it with confidence, and boldly declared that everything contrary to it is false doctrine. He also taught believers that it was not only their privilege, but their duty to be established in the faith, to know on the evidence of God's Word, why they believed, and to be able to give to every man that inquired a reason for the hope that was in them.

Let it be so with us also. Each consecrated believer should ask himself, "How carefully have I studied that which I recognize as divine truth? How fully capable am I of handling the Sword of the Spirit?" Few indeed are those who can say they have fully digested and assimilated all they have received; and that they have let none of these things slip from memory; and that they have so treasured it up in their hearts that it is their meditation by day and by night; that they have a ready answer—a "Thus saith the Lord"—for every man that asks them a reason for the hope that is in them, concerning any point of doctrine; that they can clearly and intelligently portray the divine plan, quote the divine authority for each successive step of it, and, if need be, point out its place in the divine system of types. To gain such proficiency in the Word is the work of a lifetime; but every day should see a closer approximation to that proficiency, and will if we are faithful students and faithful servants of the Truth.

If all the consecrated were thus busily engaged in putting on the armor of God, and in proving it by actual use in zealous endeavor to herald the truth and to help others to stand, there would be no time left for even good temperance reform work, nor for work among the slums of the great cities, nor for the doctrine of healing, nor any such things. We have no consecrated time for these matters, which are only side issues and not harmful in themselves, except as they divert attention and consume time which has been consecrated to another and higher use. All these works will be effectually accomplished in the "times of restitution" (Acts 3:19-22), now in the near future. Besides, there are others engaged in these works; we recognize and seek to accomplish the work set before us in the divine plan.

In all the history of the church there has never been a time in which the great adversary has been so active in diverting attention from the truth by introducing unprofitable and irrelevant questions as at present. Just now, when the exaltation and glory of the church are soon to be accomplished, and when the faithful are about to be received into the joy of their Lord, Satan is resorting to every device in order to beguile them of their reward and to frustrate this feature of the divine plan.

But really to frustrate any part of the divine plan is impossible. God has purposed to take out from among men a "little flock," "a people for his name"; and such a company is assuredly being gathered. Yet whether all those now in the race for the prize will surely be of that company, is still an open question. Take heed, beloved, that no man take thy crown. (Rev. 3:11) If any come short of their privileges and prove

unworthy of the rich inheritance, there are others who will quickly fill their places.

Our observation of those consecrated ones who have permitted other themes than this "Gospel of the kingdom" to engross time and attention, leads us to advise such to be very jealous in husbanding time and talent for the ministry of the Gospel, leaving all subjects outside of this, however interesting they may be, to those who prefer to devote time to them now; and to the future life for ourselves, when all knowledge shall be ours. We have invariably observed that those who, for any avoidable

cause, have turned aside from the true and only Gospel, are quickly turned out of the way or greatly hindered in their course toward the "prize" of our "high calling."

May we, dear brethren, be able truthfully to express our position in the words of the Apostle: "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"; "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—Phil. 3:13, 14; 1 Cor. 2:2.

## CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR ISRAEL

It has escaped the attention of many Bible Students that, while the Israelites had many advantages every way under their Law Covenant (Rom. 3:1, 2), yet each one who failed to meet all the requirements of that Law Covenant came under a curse, or sentence, not upon individuals of other nations. Thus it is written, "Cursed is every one [every Israelite] that continueth not in all the words of the Law [Covenant] to do them."—Gal. 3:10.

The Apostle shows that this curse was upon only those who were under that covenant, saying, "What things soever the Law [Covenant] saith, it saith unto them who are under the Law [Covenant]" (Rom. 3:19) Moses also made the same statement—"The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us who are all of us here alive this day." (Deut. 5:2, 3) Indeed, no other arrangement would have been just, for the blessings of that covenant and its promises of life were to the one nation. (Rom. 9:4) How, then, could its curse extend beyond the nation which enjoyed its favor and privileges?

The blessings of that Law Covenant were earthly, and so also were its curses; with one exception, noted further along, neither blessings nor curses related to the everlasting future. The future had already been determined for them and for all the race of Adam, in the death sentence pronounced in Eden. Nothing short of the ransom price—the corresponding price—which our Lord gave long afterwards, could set aside that original sentence, and secure for mankind a complete release from the sentence of death. The sin-offerings of Israel's Day of Atonement were not of permanent value, but only for a year in advance, and were, therefore, repeated yearly.

### THE LAW COVENANT GUARANTEED LIFE TO ONLY ONE MAN

The blessings and curses of the Law Covenant were very particularly explained to Israel. (See Deut. 28, entire chapter.) This covenant included every member of the nation of Israel, so that they shared in common the blessings or the curses. There was one provision, however, for an individual, namely, that the man who would fully obey all the requirements of the law should live—be guaranteed lasting life. (Lev. 18:5) Even if Israel may have imagined it possible for all or for many of the nation to thus gain life everlasting, we can see that God never had any such expectation concerning them. He knew from the beginning what he has taught us by experience, as well as by the inspired words of the Apostles, that "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh [i. e., none of the fallen race, needing justification] be justified in God's sight."—Rom. 3:20.

The Man Christ Jesus, who obeyed the law absolutely, was the one in the divine purpose for whom the provision was made, that "He that doeth these things shall live." Consequently, he had a right to life everlasting, and therefore might have asked for more than twelve legions of angels to defend him from those who sought his life. Had he done so, he would have received them. (Matt. 26:53) But he laid down his life. The one death, begun at Jordan and "finished" three and a half years later at Calvary, accomplished two things: one for Israel only, the other for the whole world.

Since the children of Israel, as well as the other nations, were Adam's posterity, they in common with others shared his sentence of death, and were redeemed by our Lord's offering of himself a sin-offering and corresponding price for Adam and those who lost life in Adam. (Rom. 5:12, 18) But since Israel alone, and no other nation or family or people of earth, had been brought under the terms of the Law Covenant made with them at Mt. Sinai, therefore only Israelites needed to be "redeemed from the curse of the Law [Covenant]."—Gal. 3:13.

That the one Man, Christ Jesus, could justly redeem our race is stated by the Apostle, and is clearly evident when we see that all men were sentenced in the one man Adam; but how could one man redeem the multitudinous nation of Israel from the curse of their Law Covenant?

### MOSES THE TYPICAL FATHER OF ISRAEL

We answer that in connection with Israel's covenant there is a point that few have noticed. It is that God dealt with only

one man in connection with the making of that Law Covenant; and that man was Moses, who stood in the position of a father to the whole nation, the nation being regarded and treated as children under age.

See Moses' own words regarding the matter: "And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father bearing the sucking child, unto the land which thou swearst unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."—Num. 11:11-15.

The Lord talked with Moses in the Mount. The Lord gave the tables of the Law to Moses. And Moses spoke to the people, gave them the law and bound them by the terms of the Law Covenant.

"Moses alone shall come near the Lord."—Exod. 24:2.

"As the Lord spoke unto Moses, so did the children of Israel."—Num. 5:4.

"The people cried unto Moses; and Moses prayed unto the Lord."—Num. 11:2.

God "sent Moses his servant."—Psa. 105:26.

"They envied Moses also in the camp."—Psa. 106:16.

"He [God] said that he would destroy them, had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach."—Psa. 106:23.

"Remember ye the Law of Moses my servant."—Mal. 4:4.

"Moses . . . hath in every city them that preach him."—Acts 15:21.

"Did not Moses give you the law?"—John 7:19.

"What did Moses command you?"—Mark 10:3.

"One accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust."—John 5:45.

All Israel were "baptized unto [into] Moses, in the cloud and in the sea."—1 Cor. 10:2.

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy."—Heb. 10:28.

"The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."—John 1:17.

So thoroughly was the one man Moses the representative and typical father of the nation of Israel that God could and did propose its destruction and the fulfilment of all his engagements with Moses' family instead. (Exod. 32:10, 31, 32) It was thus, as God's representative on the one hand, and as Israel's representative on the other, that Moses could be and was the mediator of the Law Covenant between God and that nation.

### CHRIST THE "EVERLASTING FATHER"

When the Man Christ Jesus, by full obedience to the Law Covenant, became entitled to life everlasting under its provisions, he had attained the right to "Moses' seat," the right to supersede Moses as the lawgiver and representative of the nation. Of him Moses bore witness, saying, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things."—Acts 3:22; Deut. 18:18, 19.

By fulfilling the requirements of the Law Covenant and by his obedience even unto death, Christ became the heir of its promise of life, and the prospective Mediator of the prospective New Covenant, based upon that better and everlasting sacrifice for sins, which, therefore, needed not to be repeated yearly, and was effective, not for Israel only, but for all the families of the earth, for "this Man." "The Man Christ Jesus, gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:6) Hence this Gospel of the New Covenant was for the Jew first and also for the Greek (or Gentile). Thus the one sacrifice, finished at Calvary, did not only a special work for Israel, but also a general work of redemption for the world, including Israel, which suretied the New Cove-

nant and in due time will make it operative for all of mankind.

Thus seen, the expression, "Christ is the end [fulfilment] of the Law [Covenant] for righteousness [justification] to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4), can apply only to Jews who have by faith accepted Christ. It cannot apply to others—either to those who never were Jews and who consequently were never under that covenant, or to those who still trust in Moses' covenant and who are still vainly seeking life by obedience to its provisions, law, etc.

#### ISRAEL NOW UNDER THE CURSES OF THE LAW

It is a common mistake to suppose the Scriptures to teach that the Law Covenant died, or was destroyed by our Lord. It became dead in the sense that its proffer of life ceased when our Lord Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Law Covenant, and inherited all of its blessings and life-rights; but it lives in the sense that its blessings and curses still cling to Israel, as so many assets and liabilities. Hence all the children of Jacob are still bound by this Law Covenant, unless they have died to it.

Only those who realize that they cannot gain everlasting life through their union with Moses (the Law Covenant) are ready to abandon all hope of saving their life by that union with Moses and to become dead to all such expectations, and to accept the death of Christ, the ransom price for Adam and all his race, as the basis of a new hope of a new life. Hence, only those Israelites who by faith reckoned themselves as hopelessly dead under the Law Covenant, and as risen with Christ to a new life secured by his sacrifice, and who in will are dead to sin—only such could be united to Christ as members of the "seed" of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Thus, according to the Apostle's reasoning, the idea of so blending the two covenants that Christians are united to both Moses and Christ, is wholly out of the question. Gentiles, who never were under the Law Covenant, could not, of course, be released from it; and in order for a Jew to be released from that Covenant he must by faith recognize that Jesus Christ fulfilled the terms of the Law Covenant, and then must consecrate his flesh to death with Christ as reckonedly a member of Christ's flesh, that so doing he might be reckoned as a "new creature," united to the Lord as a member of his spiritual body.

The text, "Christ is the end [or fulfilment] of the Law [Covenant] for righteousness to every one [under it] that believeth" (Rom. 10:4), does not conflict with the above; for only believers are specified. Eph. 2:15, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity of the law of commandments contained in ordinances," and Col. 2:14, refer to Jewish believers, for whom the handwriting of ordinances is blotted out, while Col. 2:20 refers to the Gentile converts who must become dead to the "rudiments of the world," before entering upon the Covenant of sacrifice, even as the Jews must become dead to the rudiments of their Law Covenant.

#### ISRAEL'S PRESENT EXPERIENCE A PART OF THEIR COVENANT

That the Law Covenant with Israel is still binding upon that nation is further evident from the fact that upon their national rejection of Christ they were nationally blinded until the end of the Gospel age (Rom. 11:7, 25), and that God declares that he has not cast away his people of that covenant, but that under the New Covenant he will open their eyes to see Christ as the only door of hope, that of a new life purchased with his own blood.—Rom. 11:27, 29; compare Deut. 30:1-9.

Meanwhile, we have the evidence that their covenant continues in force in the fact that, as a nation, they have for centuries been receiving the very "curses" specified under their covenant. (See Deut. 28:15-67) Verses 49-53 describe the Roman siege, etc.; verses 64-67 describe the condition of Israel since. As shown in previous writings the Lord (Lev. 26:18-45) declared the symbolical "seven times," 2,520 years, of Israel's subjection to the Gentiles, and their deliverance—A. D. 1914. Thus their present experience was foretold as a part of their covenant.

Israel as a nation is still bound by that covenant which they at first supposed would bring life, but which experience proved could bring them only death, because of the weakness of their flesh and their inability to fulfil its requirements expressed in its law of Ten Commandments. There is only one door of escape from it, viz., Christ, and the New [Law] Covenant which is soon to be made with Israel. God shut them up to this one and only hope (Gal. 3:23), and he promises that by and by, when the Gospel church, the body of Christ, has been selected, he will open their blind eyes and cause them to see Christ in his true character—as their Redeemer from sin and their Deliverer from death and their covenant of death.—Rom. 11:25-29.

#### CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR ISRAEL ONLY

As to the significance of the statement, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13), the Apostle in this text is speaking, not to Christians in general, but to those Christians who had passed from Moses into Christ—out of the Law Covenant into the Covenant of sacrifice with Christ, as members of his body. It would not be true to say that Christ redeemed us Gentiles from the curse of the law, for we were never under the law. Those, therefore, who were under the curse of the law were Jews. The Apostle classifies himself with Israel, some of whom were in Galatia, some in Palestine, etc. "Christ hath been made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

The particular sense in which Christ redeemed the Jews was as a nation and not as individuals. The whole nation was involved in the contract made at Sinai. Consequently, in order to meet all the requirements of the people as a whole, the one who would redeem Israel from the baneful effects of the Law Covenant must suffer the extreme penalty imposed by that Covenant. Therefore to redeem Israel from that condemnation our Lord had to be crucified.

As for the remainder of mankind, they suffer from the sentence of death that came upon Adam, but no particular form of death was implied. The Jews alone needed this particular form of death for their release. The whole nation was under this Law Covenant because the contract was made with them as a nation and through one mediator, Moses. Our Lord will redeem the whole nation from their failure to keep that law, from the condemnation of that law, by instituting the New Covenant, by taking over into the New Covenant all those who were under the old Law Covenant.

The New Covenant will go into operation in due time. Christ has already redeemed the Jews and all mankind in the sense that he has laid down the ransom price; but he has not yet redeemed them in the sense of recovering them nor even in the sense of applying that price. At the end of this age he will apply the price for Israel and the world; and then the New Covenant arrangements will go into effect for the blessing of all who come under its regulations.

## THE KINGDOM A PRIZE

MATTHEW 13:44-53.—AUGUST 4.

TEXT:—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt. 6:33.

Today we have further precious lessons from the Great Teacher respecting his kingdom. The parable of the treasure hid in the field, and the parable of the pearl of great price, both picture to us the great value of the kingdom of glory which is ultimately to be established amongst men for the blessing of the world. These parables also furnish lessons of what it will cost to secure a share, a place in that kingdom. A third parable of the lesson treats of the embryo kingdom; that is to say, the parable of the net cast into the sea, pictures the condition of this present age, during which the elect, or kingdom class, the bride, is being found and gathered by the Lord's providences.

#### "TREASURE HID IN THE FIELD"

This is not one of the parables which Jesus expounded. His people, therefore, are left to exercise their judgment of its meaning, under the guidance of the holy Spirit and the light shed upon it by other Scriptures. Indeed, there might be more than one application of it correct. For instance, we might apply the parable to our Lord Jesus and say that he bought the whole

world at the cost of all he had, and that he purchased the world because of the "treasure" which it contained. And that treasure might consist of a variety of treasures of different values—for instance, the church, the bride class, the Lord's special "treasure," and such of the world as will ultimately receive and be blessed by the Messianic kingdom.

But our preference of thought is that the Great Teacher referred, not to himself at all, but to those whom he instructed. By virtue of his own covenant of sacrifice, the kingdom was already promised to him, and he, in turn, in the Father's name, was inviting those who had the ears to hear, and hearts to appreciate, to become members of his bride class—members of his kingdom class.

He recommends that these should view the kingdom after the illustration of this parable. Suppose in their journeying they saw a field for sale at a certain price, and suppose, upon examination of it, they found it to contain a great treasure. The treasure might consist of very excellent soil, especially



suit to their purpose, or it might consist of a valuable vein of precious metal, or it might consist of money buried long centuries ago and forgotten, and not belonging to the owner of the field more than to others who might find it. In such a case, the parable suggests, any one of ordinary intelligence would be willing to invest everything that he possessed to acquire the title.

So the Master declared to those who heard him then, and to us who receive his words now, that he has information to give respecting a great treasure, a priceless treasure, which can be obtained, but only by the expenditure of great energy and the investment of everything of value. The great treasure is the share in the Messianic kingdom—that by accepting the terms of discipleship we may become not only sons of God, but, if children, then heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord to his heavenly inheritance. This inheritance was the same as was promised to the seed of Abraham, and we acquired an interest or share in it, not by being the actual seed of Abraham and the actual heirs to the kingdom, but by becoming Messiah's bride and joint-heir.

When we think how much time and energy are put forth, and how much money and influence are expended to obtain some little, petty earthly honor of worldly renown and glory, and when we reflect that these at most will last but a few years and be unsatisfactory at best, then we can appreciate the better the glory, honor and immortality which God has in reservation for the "called and chosen and faithful," the bride, the Lamb's wife.

#### A PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

In the days of our Savior pearls were represented amongst the most precious and most desirable of jewels, and the larger and more nearly perfect the pearl the greater its value. The Great Teacher used this familiar matter as the basis for a lesson on the value of the kingdom. The merchant of the parable found a pearl so superior in every respect to all other pearls that he considered it cheap to give everything that he possessed to become the owner of that pearl.

This, said the Master, illustrates the value of the kingdom, with its glory, honor and immortality, which I am inviting an elect, saintly little flock to share with me. Those who prize it properly will show their appreciation by the amount they will be willing and glad to pay for it. Whether a man be wealthy or poor, learned or ignorant, influential or otherwise, the cost of this kingdom pearl of great value will be—his all. It cannot be had for less.

The wealthiest or most talented person in the world could not obtain a share in that kingdom if he kept back one single atom of his possessions; the price of the kingdom is self-sacrifice, even unto death, and nothing less will secure it. Nor would any sacrifice that we could make secure a share in this kingdom for us, except as our sacrifice would first be made acceptable in God's sight through the precious merit of our Redeemer's sacrifice, which he finished at Calvary.

#### THE PARABLE OF A FISH NET

We are not to think of the kingdom as like a net, but to understand that the embryo kingdom resembles a fishing experi-

ence with a net, in which were gathered all kinds of fish, which were brought to shore and sorted. This is a parable of the embryo kingdom because it relates to a work done in this age, in connection with the finding of the "little flock" who will constitute the kingdom in glory. The Lord during this age has not been fishing for all kinds of fish; he has not been seeking for all kinds of people. He has been calling, drawing especially, and dealing with only the elect, only the saintly.

But, incidentally, a variety of other kinds of fish have gotten into the Gospel net, some from worldly ambitions, some because religious systems are a good matrimonial field, others because of social privileges and standing, others because they desire to breathe a moral atmosphere, others because they would use religion as a cloak for business enterprises, etc. But the suitable fish, which the Lord is seeking, which alone will constitute the kingdom class, are those who hear his message with joy and count the cost and appreciate the situation and desire to be "bond servants of the Lord Jesus Christ." They are willing to suffer with him now that they may be glorified together with him in his kingdom.

The parable tells us that "when the net was full it was drawn ashore" and the fish sorted. This evidently signifies that there will come a time in the end of this age when the Lord will have gathered a sufficient number of saintly ones to serve his purpose—to complete the number foreordained by the Father to be members of the elect church in glory. Then the fishing will cease. Who can say that the opportunity for entering the "net" as one of the true "fish" of the kind the Lord is seeking may not be almost at an end? Who can say that the Gospel net, with its full assortment of churchianity of every style, will not soon be drawn ashore that the suitable, the elect, may be gathered into the kingdom?

The unsuitable "fish" of this parable correspond with the "tares" of the parable considered a week ago. The "furnace of fire" will be the same "time of trouble" which will come upon the whole world of mankind very shortly. The unsuitable fish in the net are all church members—the unprofessing world are not represented in the parable at all.

Jesus asked his disciples if they understood the parable. They answered, yes, and he told them to consider his parables as a householder would consider his reserve of food supplies, from which from time to time truths "both new and old" would be brought.

Our text emphasizes this study. If the kingdom is the pearl, and the treasure, which the Master indicated—if we believe his testimony, then by all means let us show our faith, not merely by professions, but in every act and word. Let us seek the kingdom as the pre-eminent matter of our lives, in comparison with which all other things are inferior, and, as St. Paul declared, "not worthy to be compared." If seeking the kingdom seems to hinder some of our earthly prospects, so much the better. The Master said it must cost us our all. Our earthly considerations we have left in his hands. Let him apportion our earthly blessings according to his wisdom of what will be most helpful to us in making our "calling and election sure" to a place in the kingdom.

## GOD'S WHEAT FIELD

MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43.—JULY 28.

TEXT:—"Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into My Garner."—Verse 30.

Our International Sunday School Lessons are specially helpful this year. We are glad that the selection contains so many lessons on the kingdom. This topic heretofore has not had sufficient consideration, considering its prominence in the Bible—from the promise made to Abraham, recorded in Genesis, to the records of Revelation, representing the full establishment of the kingdom, its binding of Satan, and its thousand years of prosperity, resulting in the bringing of "every creature in heaven and in earth" to worship and praise the Almighty, and in the abolishment of sin, tears and death.—Gen. 22:18; Rev. 20:2; 21:4; 5:13.

Today's study is another of the kingdom parables, and one of the few which the Master particularly explained, and in harmony with which all the other parables are to be interpreted. Again it is the embryo kingdom that is pictured, and not the kingdom in glory; in other words, this parable also relates to this Gospel age, and the work of selecting the church. It therefore pictures the entire age from start to finish.

#### "THE FIELD IS THE WORLD"

Our Lord's personal ministry was to the Jews only, and likewise his disciples labored only with the Jews for the fixed period of time—until the end of "the seventy weeks" of the promise of divine favor to that nation. Those symbolic weeks

ended three and a half years after Jesus' crucifixion. Then the door was thrown open to the Gentiles also, Cornelius being the first convert.—Acts 10.

This parable also shows us the very commencement of the Lord's call for his bride from amongst all nations, and not from the Jews alone, although in the divine plan it was necessary that they should have the first opportunity. So St. Paul declares, saying to the Jews, "It was necessary that the Gospel should be preached first unto you, but seeing ye reject it, . . . lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46) The entire world constituted the "field" for the sowing of the "good seed," and the "good seed" is not any and every kind of a message, but is strictly defined, "the Gospel of the kingdom."

Jesus and the Apostles sowed this "good seed," and all his true followers since have been authorized to continue the work in his name, and have more or less done so. But the adversary, Satan, as pointed out here in the parable, brought in false doctrines, false teachings, a different kind of seed from the kingdom "seed," and sowed this everywhere over the wheat field. The result is that today the "tares" are so plentiful, and so conspicuous that they think they are the "wheat," and the world in general so considers them.

The wheat class are considered "a peculiar people." Their

hopes and ambitions in life are toward bearing good fruit, and "showing forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness." Of their good fruits the Apostle mentions meekness and humility, and these tend to bow their heads, while the "tares" stand proudly up, erect, in the display of their "form of godliness," which, however, lacks the power.

#### "LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER"

The Lord knew all the time what Satan would do in the way of perverting the truth through false doctrines, which would tend to make void and belittle the Gospel of the kingdom and the children of the kingdom; but he allowed the matter to go on, fully assured that he would have in the end the crop which he desired, and very content to allow a great lesson to be taught by the presence of the "tares" and the ultimate treatment accorded the "wheat."

The Lord could have hindered the adversary from bringing in the false doctrines in the early centuries, or he could have separated centuries ago between the wheat and tare classes, but this was not according to his intention, as the parable shows. He purposed to "let both grow together until the harvest." So it has been true that Christians and imitation Christians have lived side by side in the same city, in the same house, and oftentimes in the same family—the one the result of the true Gospel message of the kingdom, leading to a full consecration and begetting of the holy Spirit, and to the entrance upon a new life; the other with merely "a form of godliness," intermixed with worldly wisdom, earthly ambition and selfish desires.

But the tares are not to grow on forever. Just so surely as there was a beginning of this age, there will be an ending. As surely as there was a sowing time for the good seed, there will be a reaping time, a harvest time. In the Common Version the words, "The harvest is the end of the world," have been seriously misunderstood. It does not mean the end of time, nor the end of the earth—its destruction—nor the end of divine favor. It merely means the end of the present age—the close of the present dispensation. This age will close when it has accomplished its intended work—when the full number of God's elect shall have been found faithful and ready for the "garner."

#### "IN THE TIME OF THE HARVEST"

This expression signifies that the harvest of this age will not be an instantaneous work, but a gradual one, requiring time. There is good reason for believing that the harvest of this age is a period of forty years, as the harvest of the Jewish age was of that length. In this time of the harvest two things will be accomplished: (1) The tares will be gathered into bundles, ready for the burning—destruction. (2) The wheat, at the same time, will be gathered into the garner—the heavenly

garner. This gathering into the heavenly garner is elsewhere represented as being the change from earthly to heavenly conditions, which will be accomplished for the bride class in the end of the harvest, by the first resurrection. These will "all die like men." At the appointed time their resurrection change will take place and be invisible to men—"sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown an animal body, raised a spirit body"; "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."—1 Cor. 15:42-44; Rev. 20:6.

#### BURNING OF THE TARES

"They shall gather out of his kingdom all things which offend, and them which do iniquity; . . . there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Let us remember that these tares are not all the world of mankind, but merely that portion of them associated with the kingdom class—that portion which now verily believe that they are God's people, as the Pharisees considered themselves in the harvest of the Jewish age. There will be two classes amongst these tares: one class, "doers of iniquity (inequity, unrighteousness)," the other class, those that have caused others to stumble. Doubtless this will include many teachers and preachers, and many doers of wonderful works.

But we must not forget that we are considering a parable, and that the "tares" are symbolical, and likewise the "furnace" and the "fire." The interpretation is that, in the end of this age, the harvest time, there will be a great "time of trouble" for all nations, society, governments, financial institutions, etc. The wheat class will be saved from that "time of trouble" by the resurrection change. But the tares will not be saved from it; they will be cast into the trouble and have their portion with the hypocrites.

That trouble will not last forever. Many Scriptures seem to show that it will be terrific but of very short duration. It will be on the earth, and not in some far-off place. When the fire of that great day of anarchy and trouble shall cease to burn, there will be no more tares, there will be no more people having mere forms of godliness and pretensions for the kingdom, begotten of error. All humanity will be greatly humbled, and, according to the Scriptures, ready and anxious for Messiah's kingdom, which will then be established. It will be "the desire of all nations." (Hag. 2:7) Those formerly tares, as well as the remainder of the groaning creation, will welcome it and its blessings. In that kingdom the righteous, the garnered, glorified wheat class "shall shine forth as the sun" for the blessing of all the families of the earth.—Matt. 13:43; Gal. 3:29.

## EMBRYO KINGDOM PARABLES

MARK 4:26-32; MATTHEW 13:33.—JULY 21.

TEXT:—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."—Matt. 6:10.

Many of us in the past have overlooked the fact that nearly all of the teachings of the Redeemer appertain to the kingdom—his Messianic kingdom. Some of us indeed had gotten the unscriptural thought that Messiah's kingdom would consist merely of a sovereignty in the hearts of his followers and in the present life.

Now we see the real import and connection of the Great Teacher's numerous utterances on this subject. As he taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven," he meant that we should have in mind God's glorious promise that eventually, through Messiah's kingdom, ignorance, sin and death will all be overthrown, and the willing and obedient of mankind will be released from these until "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess" to the glory of God.

Our Lord meant that we should connect this kingdom with the great promise made to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The Master's teachings and the message which he commissioned us to give in his name is the Gospel of the kingdom—the message of coming glory, and the message that now God is selecting a "little flock" to be the spiritual seed of Abraham, joint-heirs with Jesus in the throne of that kingdom. Paul refers to this in Galatians 3:29: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Today's study sets before us a number of Jesus' parables respecting the kingdom. The majority of these refer to the kingdom class of the present time rather than to the kingdom in its fully developed state during the thousand years of his glory. All of God's consecrated people, begotten of the holy Spirit during this age—since Pentecost—constitute together the kingdom class, the kingdom in embryo—unfinished, undeveloped, incomplete. Some of these embryo members of the

kingdom may yet fail to make their calling and election sure, and they may become "castaways" as respects the glory and honor to which they have been called.

#### THE KINGDOM DEVELOPMENT SLOW

The first illustration of our lesson is that God's kingdom in its present embryonic condition is of slow, gradual, methodical development, covering the entire period of this Gospel age. It is like seed cast into the ground, which brings its maturity after many days and varied experiences—when it is finally harvested. Jesus and the Apostles did the seed sowing, not only for their own day but for the whole wheat class developed throughout this age. And as Jesus explained in another parable, "The harvest is the end of the age." The gathering for the heavenly garner will be accomplished by the first resurrection.

#### LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

The different parables do not view the embryo kingdom from the same standpoint. It is because it may be viewed from such a variety of angles that so many parables are given us. Just so we might take various photographs of a building. One might show the eastern side, another the western, another the front elevation, another the floor-plan, and another show it with its scaffolding. Or, if a concrete building, the frame work might be pictured, inside of which the concrete is cast.

The parable of the mustard seed appears to represent the kingdom from the viewpoint of the world—as the nominal church, developed from the original little seed of the true Gospel. From that little seed we have a great institution today with many denominational branches. But alas! its thrifty development has invited into its branches the fowls of the air, which the Lord elsewhere describes as representing the wicked one and his angels—Satan and his representatives—who of course should have no place in the church; and they would have

no place in it if the church were loyal and zealous enough to proclaim only the true Gospel and the narrow way of self-denial.

Indeed, it is the neglect to preach this Gospel of the "narrow way" that has brought such prosperity to nominal Christianity and made it a desirable place for the fowls of the air—Satan and his deluded ones—to lodge in its branches, to be the real life of ecclesiasticism. This seems to be the same picture which the same Great Teacher gives us in Revelation 18:2. There we read that the nominal systems are represented symbolically as Babylon; and there we read, "She hath become the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

The word "cage" would seem to imply that these unclean birds are considered very desirable, and are held on to by nominal Christianity—probably because regarded as being amongst their best paying members and because of having the most attractions.

#### PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

Throughout the Scriptures leaven is used as the symbol of sin. Thus when Jesus in his purity was to be symbolized as the "bread from heaven," the Jews were directed to use unleavened bread. Again, at their annual Passover season, the Jews were directed to cleanse their houses of leaven, to burn it up, to destroy it. Here again leaven was a symbol of sin, corruption. St. Paul, commenting on this, writes to the church, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven [sin, malice, hatred, strife, etc.], that you may be a new lump"—that you may be, with Christ, the one unleavened loaf. It is of this loaf that he declares, "For we, being many, are one loaf, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf."—1 Cor. 10:17.

It is true that in one of the official sacrifices bread was to be baked with leaven; but this, we believe, was for the very purpose of symbolizing or representing us, the church, and the fact

that we were by nature sinners, children of wrath, even as others, and that the baking would arrest the corrupting influences of the leaven; and this baking represented symbolically the experiences through which the church must pass in order that sinful and corrupting tendencies might be completely destroyed in us.

In this parable our Lord represents a woman mixing leaven with a family baking of meal, with the result that the whole mass was leavened. Consequently, if any of the family desired pure, unleavened bread, it would be unobtainable, because the leaven pervaded the entire baking. What does this represent? We reply that in Scriptural symbolism a woman represents an ecclesiastical system. The woman in the parable represents a system organized and in power at an early date, and possessed of the pure meal—the pure food provided by the Lord for the household of faith.

The woman mixed leaven, error, false doctrine, with all the meal, with all the food supplied. Not a particle of it was left uncontaminated. The result has been indigestion. The Word of God, originally pure, is no longer accepted. The leaven, or fermentation, has spread so that today the entire mass of theological doctrine is putrid and offensive to all Christian people of all denominations.

The parable was a prophecy of what has occurred. It is time all true Christians were hearkening back from the creeds of the dark ages to the Words of Jesus, the apostles and the prophets. We are glad to note that "his Holiness, the Pope," is prominent amongst those who are pointing back again to the teachings of the Bible, as being the unadulterated Word of God, which alone "is able to make us wise unto salvation," and by which alone "the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work."—2 Tim. 3:15-17.

### BEYOND THE VEIL

These stammering lips, that now  
So vainly strive to speak thy praise—

Beyond the veil

Shall make the heaven of heavens resound  
Through endless days.

These yearning eyes, that strain  
To catch by faith a glimpse of thee—

Beyond the veil

Shall see thee as thou art through all  
Eternity.

These trembling hands, these feet,  
That seek to serve so earnestly—

Beyond the veil

Shall for thy kingdom's glorious work  
Empowered be.

And this poor, throbbing heart,  
That cannot now unfold its love—

Beyond the veil

Shall bloom and shower its fragrance through  
The heaven above.

My soul, that neither seeks  
Nor findeth here its perfect rest—

Beyond the veil

Shall in thy likeness wake and be  
Forever blest!

GERTRUDE W. SEIBERT.

### SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS

#### RELATIVE TO ANSWERING A FOOL

Question.—Please explain: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit."—Prov. 26:4, 5.

Answer.—When talking to any one who speaks foolishly, do not talk foolishly in return. You dishonor yourself. In the second case: "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit," would signify that you do him a service if you show him the folly of his position, thereby kindly helping him to a proper attitude of mind.

#### ARCHANGEL SIGNIFIES HIGHEST ANGEL

Question.—Is there, or will there be more than one Archangel?

Answer.—To speak of Archangels (plural) would be contrary to the Scriptures. The word archangel signifies highest angel, the prefix arch meaning the same as chief; for instance, the chief of the fire department. In the twelfth chapter of Daniel we read (vs. 1), "And at that time shall Michael [the Archangel] stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people." In the Hebrew the name Michael signifies One who as God, or like God. That One who is "like God," we understand to be the great Messiah, the Lord Jesus himself. "Michael will stand up"—that is, Messiah will stand up, "Who standeth for the children of thy people"—that is, he will stand up for Israel. But he will also stand up for the church, which is his body, and for all who are in harmony with God, and all who will be in harmony with God. This will include all mankind during the Millennial age. "In due time" they may be released from the bondage of corruption and death, and brought into full harmony with God.

#### RANSOM AND SIN-OFFERING

Question.—May we have a concise statement in which you differentiate between "ransom" and "sin-offering"?

Answer.—The word "ransom" signifies "corresponding price," and indicates one feature of the divine arrangement for man's recovery. As by a man sin entered into the world, so the recovery would be by a man's redemptive work.—1 Cor. 15:21, 22.

The term "Sin-Offering" is used to represent the modus operandi by which this ransom price will be used for the recovery of mankind. It shows the actual application of the ransom price on behalf of mankind in securing their release from condemnation and in permitting the glorious New Covenant arrangement to go into effect.

The ransom price has nothing whatever to do with the method by which that price will be applied. When our Lord Jesus died, he laid down a sufficient price, but the application of that price is not yet completed. The grand outcome of the redemptive work will be seen in the end of the Millennial age, when as a result of the application of the ransom price there will be Christ and the bride on the divine plane, the "great company" on the spirit plane, the "ancient worthies" in their perfected condition and the whole world of mankind restored to the perfection lost in Eden.

#### RE TERM "NEW CREATION"

Question.—Why is the term "new creation" applied to the church?

Answer.—The Scriptures tell us that our Lord was the beginning of the creation, the first-born of every creature, the first and the last; that the Heavenly Father never created any other being; and that by our Lord all things else were made. In other words, the Father's power was exercised through his Only Begotten Son. According to the Scriptures, man was the last of the creations in God's image. But the Heavenly Father has purposed the creation of an order of beings higher than any that has been made, and has arranged that his Only Begotten



Son shall be the one to occupy the highest position in that new creation.

"For the joy that was set before him" our Lord endured the cross, despised the shame, and then sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Originally, he was the first creation. Now he was the second creation—the new creation, in contradistinction. And the entire church has been invited to come up to this highest place, to be associated with Christ, to be part-takers of the divine nature. But in order to attain to this high position, to be with him, they must become dead to the earthly nature and its interests, its aims and its projects, and alive with him beyond the veil. Jesus is the Head of this new creation, of which the church is the body. We do not understand that the "great company" will be a part of the new creation. Only the "little flock" will have the honor of being members of Christ's body.

Eventually, when the divine plan shall have reached its consummation, there will be Jehovah, the Head over all things and the Head over Christ; next will come our Lord and the church which is his body; then will come the various orders of angels, and lastly mankind. As the Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians tells us, "In the dispensation of the fulness of times, God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."—Eph. 1:9, 10.

#### SIN-OFFERING AND SIN-ATONEMENT

Question.—What is the difference between sin-offering and sin-atonement?

Answer.—The term "sin-offering" relates to the presentation of something sacrificially, as an offering or sacrifice, on account of sin and on behalf of the sinner. It thus relates, not only

to the work of the Lord Jesus in his own person during the work of his ministry of three and a half years, when he offered up himself, but also to him as the High Priest when he offers up the members of his body, during this Gospel age. The entire work is sacrificial; and since this offering is on account of sin, it is, therefore, a sin-offering. The sin-offering must be complete before the result can be applied.

When our Lord ascended up on high, he completed his own personal work; and on account of the merit which he possessed he was enabled to become the Advocate of the church—those who become the members of his prospective body. Since he intends to make application of that merit for the sins of the whole world, after he has offered in sacrifice the members of the church, he therefore delays the matter of the presentation of the sin-offering merit until the entire offering has been completed—until the church shall be with him in glory; for "if we suffer [with him] we shall also reign with him."—2 Tim. 2:12.

The expression "sin-atonement" may be used in respect to any part of the work of making satisfaction on account of sin. Strictly speaking, however, the term sin-atonement applies to the satisfaction of justice on behalf of mankind. Man has been condemned; justice executed a sentence, and in order that man may be released, justice must be satisfied.

Let us not in any sense of the word confound sin-atonement with sin. After sin has been atoned for, then the sinner will be given an opportunity to return to the original perfection in which Adam was created and from which he fell. The sin-atonement, therefore, will be completed when Christ shall have presented his merit on account of the entire world. But the results of sin will not be fully removed until the end of the thousand years of the reign of Messiah.

## SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

### "THE JOY OF THE LORD OUR STRENGTH"

DEAR PASTOR AND BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Please accept my hearty "Welcome Home." If I can guess by my own experience, I would think you are very happy to be home again, but O! so glad to have had the opportunity to take the glorious Gospel around the world. How happy and blessed must be your heart in the great work you have been chosen to accomplish in this grand harvest time! May our dear Heavenly Father give you strength and continued grace to finish it.

Dear Brother Russell, my own experiences on my trip to Europe were at times very interesting and brought great blessings to me. I can say in truth that I am glad I was able to go out there; but how happy I was when the time came to come back! I was away just three months.

I intended to send some little report to you on your trip, but thought you will get so much mail all the time that so many letters might bother you. I myself did not get any. Even though the children wrote, the letters never came.

I found very many hungry Christians in Germany who were glad to hear the good news. I spent many half nights telling the glad story. It was very strange to my relatives. Seven years ago I sent them each the three volumes, but not one of them had read, but had loaned them all. Some of the books traveled a long distance, to Munich, and were read by a Catholic priest, a Protestant minister and others. Some of them went to Colmar, and others were loaned and not returned. Strange to say, my friends were consecrated Christians and praying for more light all the time. When they heard that I was coming they hoped I would bring them some truth, and when they heard the glad tidings they accepted it. They seemed to me to be quite able to grasp the truth. My dear brother, who knew nothing but Catholicism, cried for joy. Five of my relatives have now accepted the truth.

And now, praying that grace and peace may be multiplied unto you, I remain,

Your sister in Christ,

F. MUNTZER.

BELoved BROTHER RUSSELL:—

After our enjoyable visit to Brooklyn, Sister Thorn and I returned home more than ever encouraged to take up the cross daily and follow our Master faithfully, unto death.

We especially enjoyed being at "Bethel" and the privilege of sitting at your table, listening to the helpful discussions and table-talks. Our interview with you in your study was also very helpful and drew us nearer to you. It was truly a "holy week" to us.

Last Sunday, at the close of the afternoon service at Lynn, I told the friends of our intention to re-unite with the Boston Class, I. B. S. A. At the conclusion of my remarks prayer was offered and we sang, "Blest be the tie," etc. We believe we left with the good will of the entire class.

We then proceeded to Boston, arriving there in time for the evening meeting. After a few testimonies had been given I gave mine, reminding the friends that if we had any differences to settle with one another—not hereafter, but right here, these things must be adjusted.

I then confessed having made some unintentional mistakes which I feared had caused them unnecessary pain, and that I was truly repentant and asked their forgiveness, also requesting that we might have closer fellowship with the dear Boston class.

We were assured of their forgiveness, and after several had expressed their joy in hearing our words (for I assured them that I spoke for Sister Thorn as well as for myself), the whole class by a rising vote expressed their love and a hearty welcome.

Both at Lynn and at Boston it was a heart-mellowing time—a most blessed day to us all. Many tears of joy were shed as the dear friends shook hands with us. We feel sure that you, too, will rejoice with us. Kindly remember us both in your prayers.

With much Christian love from Sister Thorn and myself, I am as ever,

Your brother and fellow-servant in Christ,

WALTER J. THORN.—MASS.

## PASTOR RUSSELL'S FOREIGN ITINERARY

Liverpool, England.....	July 23
Oldham, ".....	" 24
Carlisle, ".....	" 25
Glasgow, Scotland.....	" 26-28
Aberdeen, ".....	" 29
Kirkcaldy, ".....	" 30
New Castle on Tyne, England.....	" 31
Leeds, England.....	Aug. 1
Coventry, ".....	" 2
London, ".....	" 3, 4
— France .....	" 6

— France .....	Aug. 7
— " .....	" 8
— " .....	" 9
Paris, " .....	" 11
Geneva, Switzerland.....	" 12
Mülhausen, Germany.....	" 13
Basle, Switzerland.....	" 14
Zürich, " .....	" 15
St. Gallen, " .....	" 16
Berlin, Germany.....	" 18
Dresden, " .....	" 19