

IMPUTATION AND APPLICATION OF OUR LORD'S HUMAN LIFE-RIGHTS

Apparently a great many of God's people have difficulty in discerning just what is signified in the expression, "Gave himself a ransom for all." They ask, If our Lord Jesus gave his human life a ransom for Adam and his race, where has he now any right to human life to give in justification to those who accept his favor, in view of the fact that we read, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"?—John 3:36.

To appreciate the answer to this question, we must realize that the giving of the ransom has various features. First of all, our Lord's consecration when he was thirty years of age, which he symbolized by water baptism, represents the giving up, the surrender, of his life to God. The life which he surrendered was a perfect human life, one to which he had a full right. St. Paul tells us that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Our Lord was not a member of the Adamic race in a direct sense—in the sense of having received his life from a human father; therefore his was not a condemned life, like that of the rest of the world. Nothing more was needed. He surrendered the full equivalent of Adam's life and perfection. But he did not surrender his life to Adam; he merely put it into the Father's hands without giving it to anybody.

During the three and a half years of his ministry our Redeemer laid down his life. He completed that work at Calvary, saying there, "It is finished!" He there finished his baptism into death; he continued his self-surrender to the end. But he has not yet made any application of this human life to Adam and his race. He has merely put it into the Father's hands. It was a life that had not been forfeited, that had not been mortgaged, that had not been embargoed. He simply surrendered his life in harmony with the Father's plan.—Luke 23:46.

RIGHT TO LIFE ON TWO PLANES

When the Father raised him up on the third day, he made Jesus a spirit being. He was put to death in the flesh and was raised a spirit—quickened in spirit. (1 Peter 3:18—Diaglott) This quickened One of the new nature had this new life as a reward for his obedience in permitting his earthly life to be taken from him. But he had not forfeited his right to the earthly life; hence as a new creature he still retained this right to perfect human life. Everything that belonged to a perfect life belonged to him. He had permitted the Jews to take away his life, but he had neither surrendered nor forfeited his right to life. So when he was raised to life by the Father, he had not only the right to the spirit nature, but also the right to the earthly nature—not that he would have use for this for himself; for any one having the divine nature would have neither use nor desire for the earthly nature. The specific right that he had was the right to give, to bestow freely upon Adam and his race, human life—the very object he had in mind when he came into the world.

So when the Lord Jesus arose from the dead and ascended up on high forty days later, he retained all the rights that he ever had. He had the right to human life, never having forfeited it; he also had the divine nature, the reward of his obedience—a superior right, a superior nature. But when he ascended up on high, he did not apply the merit of his sacrifice for the world of mankind; otherwise the whole world would not now lie in the wicked one. (1 John 5:19—Diaglott) 'If our Redeemer had made an application of his merit for the world when he ascended, it would have taken away the sin of the world; but he did not do this. The Scriptures tell us that the church alone has escaped from the condemnation upon the world. (Romans 8:1) Evidently, then, the world is still in the wicked one. The only ones who have escaped from this condemnation are those who have accepted the arrangement of this Gospel age. Nobody else except the consecrated class has had merit and justification from Christ.

RESTITUTION IMPUTED TO THE CHURCH

How, then, does our Lord apply the merit to the church? We answer, Not directly. If he were to apply his merit directly, it would give the church human life, human perfection. God has some better thing for the church—that the church might attain to the same divine nature to which Jesus attained. The church attains this by following in the footsteps of Jesus. This signifies that as he sacrificed his human life, and laid down his earthly rights according to the will of the Father, so all who would become members of his bride class must do the same, must surrender their earthly life, in order to be associated with him. Only if we suffer with him shall we reign with him.—2 Tim. 2:11, 12.

"If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) Then, "Where I am there shall my disciple be." (John 12:26) Who-

soever will so do during this Gospel age will attain to the same divine nature, the same glory, the same immortality—the difference being that our Lord will always be Head over all, the Chief over the church, which is his body, and that they will always be his members in particular, the church in glory.

The question, then, comes up, If it was necessary for Jesus to be pure, holy, how could the church be acceptable to the Father, when they are of the depraved human nature? The answer of the Bible is that to this class who become his disciples Jesus imputes the merit of his sacrifice to the extent of covering their blemishes, their imperfections. We are to discern between give and impute. He will give his merit to the world by and by. But now he is making an imputation to the church.

By this term imputation is signified, that if the church had remained of the earthly nature the same as the world, they would by and by have the right, the same as the world, to come up out of degradation to human perfection. Jesus secured by his death the privilege of giving all those rights to the church as well as to the remainder of Adam's race. But this class, the church, forego all those rights to human perfection. When we consecrated ourselves to God, we gave up our right to become inheritors of the earth and earthly things; we gave up all our rights in the sense of merely surrendering them. By faith we believe that Jesus would in due time have given us those blessings of restitution the same as to the whole world of mankind. By faith we accept those blessings and by faith we surrender them. The only thing left for the church to do is to surrender their earthly lives. Some may have more vitality, and some may have less; some may have more talents, and some less; some may have more years, and some less; but whatever each has it is to be given up, surrendered.

So, then, at consecration the church class voluntarily surrender their earthly nature. They surrender all the earthly rights that they have of the present time, and also those rights that would have been theirs had they remained part and parcel of the world. Jesus does not give to the church at the present time any part of the ransom-sacrifice, but merely imputes to them, counts to them, that part which they might have had if they had remained a part of the world.

When Jesus died, he did not pay over a ransom as an offset for Adam. When Jesus was raised from the dead, he had not paid a ransom; and when he ascended to the Father he did not pay over a ransom for the world. But he laid in the Father's hands the merit of his sacrifice. He has been imputing of this merit down through the Gospel age to the church only, but now he has about finished the imputing to the church, and the work of giving to the world restitution is about to begin; and before it begins the merit imputed (loaned) to the church must be actually paid over to divine justice as the basis for human restitution.

WORK OF THE GOSPEL AGE TYPIFIED

On the Jewish Atonement day the High Priest, first of all, killed the bullock. That bullock represented our Lord Jesus, the perfect man, and the priest represented our Lord, the new creature. Thus he typified the consecration of the human nature and also the condition of the new creature, still in the fleshly body, typed by the priest in the first Holy.

Our Lord was in this condition of the Holy during the three and a half years of his ministry. During that time he had the privileges of the Golden Altar, and the light from the Golden Candlestick (representing the light of God's truth), and the blessings represented by the Table of Shewbread (the spiritual food). At the end of the three and a half years, having finished the work of sacrificing himself, having burned the antitypical incense, he passed under the second veil.

On the third day our Lord arose on the other side of the second veil—on the spirit plane—fully perfected as a new creature, no longer in any sense of the word a man. He could go and come like the wind. He remained with his disciples to convince them that he was no longer a man—going and coming like the wind, and appearing in various bodily forms. Then, when he ascended up on high, as the greatest antitypical High Priest he took with him the blood. The blood signifies the life of the sacrifice. He appeared in the presence of God, and there he sprinkled of the blood on the Mercy-Seat. This sprinkling of the blood on the Mercy-Seat was to make atonement for a certain class. That atonement we see was made only for the priests and the Levites—not for the world.—Leviticus 16:6.

After the High Priest had finished making the atonement for the priests and the Levites, he went out into the Court again and there began a different work. Our Lord made application of the blood for the antitypical priests and the Levites

during the ten days between his ascension and the descent of the holy Spirit at Pentecost. He made application of his merit for the church. We know this; for this satisfaction for sins was followed by the pouring out of the holy Spirit at Pentecost, the evidence that divine mercy had come to them.—Hebrews 9:24.

In the type, after the priest had offered the bullock, he then proceeded to the next part—the killing of the Lord's goat. A goat is inferior to a bullock. The Lord himself was typified by the bullock. The Lord's goat symbolized the faithful members of the church, his body. It has been the work of the Gospel age to offer up the church. Not that they were able to offer up themselves; for being naturally the members of the condemned Adamic race, they were not fit to be priests, and could not be priests until the great High Priest had made an imputation of his merit for them. Therefore, the great High Priest who offered the bullock also offered the goat.

Then we see the conclusion of the matter. In the type the blood of the goat was taken into the Most Holy and was applied, not for the priests, not for the Levites, but for the people. The blood of the bullock was applied only for the priests and the Levites; the blood of the goat, for the people. (Leviticus 16:6, 15) These two sacrifices represent all the sacrifices of the Gospel age; the superior sacrifice was that of the Lord Jesus, the inferior sacrifice was that of the church.

THE CHURCH NO PART OF THE RANSOM

There was a sufficiency of merit in the antitypical bullock to have been applied for the sins of the whole world. But it was God's arrangement that the church might be permitted to share in the sacrifice. Only those who have the privilege of sharing in the sacrifice have the privilege of sharing in the glory. It was not necessary for the satisfaction of justice that any of the church should die; but it was necessary in order for them to partake of the promised glory. Therefore, while it was a sacrifice for our sins on the Lord's part, it was necessary on our part, in order to share in his glory. He makes the sacrifice; it is not our sacrifice. As the Apostle Paul points out, we merely present our bodies. (Romans 12:1) God would not accept our sacrifice through Christ; we are accepted only in the Beloved One. (Ephesians 1:3-6) Thus by virtue of our Lord's acceptance of us it is that we have any privilege of sharing with him in the sacrifice and in the glory.

Our Lord, therefore, has still a human life ungiven away. He does not give to the church human life. He does not part with even a particle of the right to human life which he had. The Lord does not need an earthly body; neither will his church need earthly bodies. What use would Jesus make of earthly rights, or what use would we make of them? We never intend to become men again; nor does he intend to become a man again. The merit of Christ was imputed to us only for the purpose of making us acceptable sacrifices; and this merit becomes released again when the last member of the church is glorified. Then the whole value of Christ's sacrifice will be ready for appropriation for the world of mankind; for at that time the church will have ceased to be of Adam's race, having become of the divine nature.—2 Peter 1:4.

This work, then, of appropriating the merit of Jesus on behalf of the world is left until the Millennial age; when the Redeemer's kingdom will make man's restitution privileges a real boon. Therefore, as soon as the merit of Christ is appropriated for the world, he will immediately take charge of his purchased possession. He will then take his great power and reign. Then to all those redeemed ones for whom he will appropriate the merit of his sacrifice he will be ready to give the long-promised restitution blessings.

Through the Prophet David, Jehovah God said to his Son, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen [Gentiles, nations, people] for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psalm 2:8) This, we believe, is at the door. The Lord is about to take possession of the church, which is the jewel class of the whole world. The blessings which he then will give are human restitution to the race of Adam and the bringing of the whole earth, their earthly home, up to the grandeur of the Garden of Eden. This work he will share with his body, his bride.

From this Scriptural standpoint the ransom-price that Jesus gives has been a progressive matter, and is not yet completed. He began to give it when he became a man; he progressed in giving during the three and a half years of his earthly ministry; he finished the giving at Calvary. He has since been using that to which he had a right on behalf of the church, by imputation. He will have all of this merit of his sacrifice to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world—not a single individual omitted. During the thousand years he will be giving to mankind that which he has secured by his death, and which he will make applicable to them by sealing the New Covenant. That New Covenant will be sealed as soon as the church

shall have been completed, as soon as the church shall have passed beyond the veil.

SPIRITUAL AND HUMAN NATURE NOT THE SAME

The views of Christian people seem to be very confused. They acknowledge that Jesus was a spirit being before he came into the world, and that he experienced some kind of change of nature in becoming a man. But very inconsistently they seem erroneously and unscripturally to reason that, having become a man, he must stay a man to all eternity—"a little lower than the angels." We should remember that the Logos was "made flesh," "humbled himself," not for all eternity, but merely "for the suffering of death, . . . that he . . . might taste death for every man."—Hebrews 2:9.

The Scriptures indicate that there is a difference in natures. As St. Paul points out, there is one flesh of man, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes and another of birds. And so on the spiritual plane—there are angels, cherubim and seraphim, just as there are beasts and birds, fishes and men, on the earthly plane. (1 Corinthians 15:39-41) Our Lord distinctly told that he left the glory that he had with the Father. He said to his disciples, "What and if you should see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?"—John 6:62.

The expression, "Where he was before," refers to a difference in nature, in condition, from that he then had. Jesus had been in the world many times before, but never before was made flesh. Jesus perhaps was the Representative of God in the Garden of Eden with Adam. Very certain it is, he was the one who gave the law to Moses as the Representative of the Father. And most assuredly he was the one who communicated with Abraham at the time when the Lord and two angels went down to Sodom, and stopped on the way to tell Abraham about the matter. Incidentally Abraham remembered that they appeared like men, ate like men, talked like men, but he knew not till afterward that they were angels. When our Lord was made flesh, it was not the first time he was on earth. On his previous visits he was a spirit being who merely assumed a flesh body as a convenience in communicating with men as the Father's Representative.

We see that this same power of materialization was used by other angels. For instance, at the time of our Lord's ascension the angels said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go." We remember also that the fallen angels had the power to assume human bodies. As the Scriptures point out, they desired to be men, to live on the earthly plane and in the earthly condition, for sensual reasons. Thus they abandoned their own habitation, lived as men and sought to bring forth a new race.

A MUCH MISUNDERSTOOD SUBJECT

If Jesus during his first advent had merely appeared as a man, but had all the while been really a spirit being veiled in flesh—"incarnate"—he could not have been the Redeemer at all. The Scriptures say that Jesus was a man, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)—not that he pretended to be a man. To be the Redeemer of man is was necessary for him to become a man, not to pretend to be one. He must be really a man; otherwise he could not have been a ransom-price for Adam; for the divine law required like for like—"life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."—Deuteronomy 19:21.

The word ransom (antilutron in the Greek) signifies a corresponding price. And so Jesus actually left the heavenly glory—not merely pretended to leave it. He who was rich for our sakes became poor, so that he was truly that which he appeared to be—the man. He was the perfect man who presented himself at Jordan—the only one who could be the corresponding price for Adam. The Scriptures represent our Lord as saying to the Father, "A body hast thou prepared me" for the suffering of death. (Hebrews 10:5) Many of us have overlooked the fact that this body was divinely prepared for a purpose—for the suffering of death, and not, as many think, a body for placing the Lord Jesus in a state of permanent humiliation before all the holy angels, as expressed in the old hymn,

"Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary."

Our Lord is not parading heaven under the disadvantages of a body and a nature all out of accord with his surroundings. He has already accomplished the work of sacrifice, and the merit of his sacrifice is in the hands of God. God has accepted the sacrifice that was made more than eighteen centuries ago; and on the books of justice there are to our Redeemer's credit those earthly life-rights to which, as a perfect man, he was entitled.

When God conferred upon Father Adam human life and human life-rights, he immediately became the great king of earth. And so when Jesus became the natural man he became the natural ruler. He was the One to whom the earth belonged; and the perfect man would have had the right to earth and all the fulness thereof. Instead of keeping these rights and becoming the grand earthly Potentate, Jesus surrendered all these earthly rights and received the reward of obedience—not the reward of sacrifice, but the reward of obedience. He still has these human life rights, and is about to give them to the world of mankind, upon condition that they shall desire to come into harmony with God, that they shall enter into a covenant of obedience. By his own blood Jesus makes them eligible to full restitution to all that was lost in Eden and to all that was redeemed at Calvary.

The appearance of our Lord in the flesh after his resurrection was only similar to the appearance that was made by himself and the angels long centuries before, and does not indicate that he was still a man. As a man he never went into a room, the door being shut; as a spirit being he could enter, the door being shut. As a spirit being he could materialize, and then dematerialize, vanish out of their sight. This materialization, dematerialization and vanishing appertain not only to the flesh, but also to the clothing. Once he appeared as a wayfarer, and once as a gardener; and then he appeared as his former self in the upper room, the doors being shut. At these

various times he appeared in different garments, each time dressed suitably to the occasion. It was just as easy for him to create one style of clothing as another, and one form of body as another. It is hard to tell just where the misconceptions held by many Christian people have come in. It behooves us to be very kind and sympathetic in reproving the error, and to remember that we ourselves once had the errors and held them just as tenaciously as do others.

OUR LORD NO LONGER HUMAN

Our Lord was put to death in the flesh and quickened in spirit, or made alive in spirit; and he has been a spirit being ever since. This Spirit Being, Saul of Tarsus saw on his way to Damascus. He tells us that what he saw was gloriously bright. It was not the flesh of Jesus that was shining. The Apostle says that he caught a glimpse of Jesus in his personality—"Last of all he was seen by me also, as of one born out of due time"; that is to say, born before the time, referring to the church, the resurrection birth.

We are begotten of the Spirit, and the birth will be in the first resurrection. As it was said of Jesus, he was the first-born from the dead; just so we, the church, will be born to spirit conditions. Then "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2) We will not be in the flesh then, and it will not hurt our eyes to see our glorified Lord. We shall see him as he is! We shall be with him! And the Apostle explains that before this we shall be "changed," because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

"YOUR FATHER KNOWETH"

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of."—Matthew 6:8.

Shortly after the beginning of our Lord's ministry, he gave the discourse commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount. The disciples had not yet become sons of God in the full, proper sense of the word; indeed, they could not be received into sonship until Pentecost. They were members of the fallen race, under the same condemnation as other men. The very highest claim that they could make was that which the Jews made—that of being servants of God. But now, as recorded in John 1:12, "As many as received him, to them gave he power [privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; who were begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

This spirit-begetting was not possible in its full, proper sense until Jesus had made reconciliation for the sins of the world, or, at least, had prepared the way for reconciliation by his own death. In one sense of the word, however, his death had already occurred; namely, in that he had presented himself a living sacrifice, and that the Father had accepted that sacrifice. But that death must be finished, and Jesus must ascend into the presence of God and present the merit of his sacrifice, before the divine blessing would descend upon any, permitting them to be the sons of God.

THE FATHER OF THE CHURCH

We see, therefore, that Jesus spoke in an anticipatory or prophetic sense as to their relationship to God. Because they believed in him and were seeking to do his will, they were in full line with God's arrangement for their becoming sons. Just as after a person has adopted a child and while the papers are in process of being drawn up in legal form, the child might be spoken of as a son, or he might address the one adopting him as Father or Mother; so these would have the privilege of addressing God as their Father and their privilege would depend on their faith. The majority of the Jews did not have this faith, and when Jesus said that he was the Son of God, they were about to take up stones to stone him for blasphemy. But Jesus said that not only was he the Son of God, but that he would bring many sons to God; and he quoted from the Psalms in support of this assertion.—John 10:31-40; Psalm 82:6.

Thus our Lord spoke to his disciples as if they were already new creatures, had already become sons of God and had already received the holy Spirit, even though both he and they knew that this was not to be completely accomplished, until, as he told them, "not many days hence" they should actually and personally have received it—at Pentecost. Addressing the disciples from this standpoint the Master said, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of." These words are part of his Sermon on the Mount. As we read, "When he was set, his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth and taught them." The multitude were not to call God Father, but they were to understand that those who had become the followers of the Lord Jesus could call him Father.

The word Father implies a great deal when taken in conjunction with other Scriptures. God was the Father of Adam

in the sense that he gave Adam his life. Jesus was not Adam's Father, although, as the Logos, he was the one particularly active in giving Adam life. By Adam's disobedience, this life was lost for himself and for all of his children. Not only life was lost, but the Spirit of the Lord was lost, and that included the relationship of sons.

THE EVERLASTING FATHER OF HUMANITY

After Adam, we find none called sons of God down to the time of Jesus. Jesus was the first Son of God after Adam; and since our Lord's time the church have been called sons of God. (1 John 3:2) The fact that we are called sons of God implies the beginning of a new life; for the old life which we inherited from Father Adam is gone. This new life which we have received is not from Jesus, but from the Father, Jesus being the channel through which this life comes to us. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . hath begotten us." (1 Peter 1:3) We see that the arrangement for the world is somewhat different. God does not purpose to beget the world of the holy Spirit, as he has the church. On the contrary, we see that Jesus is to become the Everlasting Father of the world, in due time. (Isaiah 9:6) That due time will be the great thousand-year day of the Messianic kingdom.

In that thousand-year day Christ, as the great King, Mediator between God and men, will give life to humanity. We see that the life he will give will be human life. He will be the Father of humanity, because that human life which he will give them will be something that is his own. By his obedience to God's plan he bought the right to give human life. Hence, in giving that life at his own cost, he is styled the Father of the human family. This will not mean that the world will not be considered sons of God, any more than a grandson would not be a son of the father and of the grandfather. Mankind will not receive their life directly from God, but indirectly through Christ—Christ is the Father and God the Grandfather. God does not speak in random terms, but with great exactness. This being true, we have great confidence in his Word.

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL

When Adam and his family became sinners, some of them went further than merely neglecting God. It was no fault of theirs that they were cut off from him. But they did not retain God in their minds, and so God gave them over to a reprobate mind. They became children of Satan in the sense that they became obedient to him. He adopted them into his family, they willingly accepting him and becoming obedient to him. Of course, Satan did not give life actually to the world, but they adopted him as their father by accepting his terms and becoming members of his family. To some of the human family our Lord said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."—John 8:44.

When Adam was rejected, he came under the sentence of death. He was left to shift for himself. The statement, "You are under a curse of death, would mean. You cannot avoid dying—"Dying thou shalt die." There will be pestilences, earth-

quakes and famines. You will be subject to these because you are sinners. Mankind could not expect God to do anything for them when they were under death sentence; yet God has done much for them, even though they are sinners. He causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and upon the unjust.—Matthew 5:45.

When the Jews were called of God under the Law Covenant, it brought them under a special relationship to him as servants. "Moses was faithful over his own house," a servant over the House of Israel. These servants were subject to some care, even as a caretaker in a great house would look after all the servants as well as the sons. While the son would have the more particular care, yet the servant would be cared for also.

Thus the Jews were invited to have a share in God's care. They were promised that everything would work together for their good. God would bless their flocks and herds, and would do them good if they would obey his statutes. They did not do so, and thus brought upon themselves chastisements. As we read the record of the people of Israel, we find that they were the most chastened people of history, passing through the most wonderful experiences and disciplines, through which they were brought to a high religious attitude. So when our Lord came into the world, they were of the highest religious sentiment, of the most devoted sentiment of all mankind. Many of them were prepared to have the special favor that Jesus came to give; namely, the privilege of becoming sons of God.

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE CHURCH

The sons of God during this Gospel age are similarly under special favor of God and under special covenant with him. He has engaged to treat them as sons, not as servants; not as opposers or enemies, but as children. "God dealeth with you as with sons." (Hebrews 12:7) With this assurance that God will deal with his people as with sons, we might be surprised that the saintly people have not been blessed, as those who are unsaintly, with money, health, temporal prosperity. We inquire how this is. Is God neglecting his part when he has promised that he will deal with these as with sons? We are not sons of God according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. Having been begotten of the Spirit, we are sons of God according to the new creation, the interests of which are often best served by experiences which are not favorable to the flesh.

With these sons of God, the new creature is the special thing in God's sight. The flesh matters little. And God wishes these sons to have the proper experiences that will bring them to the required development as sons of God on the spirit plane. This means that they must ultimately die according to the flesh. There is no other way of entering into the spirit nature than by dying according to the flesh. We must all follow in the footsteps of the Master.

The trials of the narrow way are special tests of the new creature. How will the new creature act under these trials and difficulties? Will he prove loyal to God when things seem unfavorable to him according to the flesh? If so, the new creature will grow strong; and the warfare between the two, the spirit and the flesh, will finally result in the victory of the new creature, and in his birth in the first resurrection, or chief resurrection, to the spirit nature, the divine nature.

PROPER MENTAL ATTITUDE FOR PRAYER

The words of our text apply only to the new creatures. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of." It is not necessary for us to use vain repetitions as the heathen do, asking God over and over again for blessings of a temporal kind. He knoweth what things we have need of; that is to say, whether we as new creatures will be most profited in the abundance of wealth or in the absence of wealth; whether we as new creatures will be most profited in the possession of health or otherwise. We are not to tell God what we wish. We are to

give up our will in order that his will may be done. We are to pray, therefore, as Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but thine be done"; for "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of." The heathen do not have God as their Father, and he is not supervising their affairs. They get certain common blessings that God is providing for all—sunshine and rain.

The prayer of God's people should not be for temporal things. We know of no Scriptural illustration where the spiritual sons of God asked definitely for temporal things and received an answer. We remember that St. Paul prayed three times very earnestly for the restoration of his eyesight. God would not give him the thing he asked for, but would give him that which would be better for him as a new creature. And this affliction of poor eyesight, watery eyes, would help to keep him in remembrance of the fact that he was once a persecutor of the Lord's people. The Lord would not take away his affliction, but would give him the grace necessary. Presumably, when the Apostle learned that lesson, he did not pray for such things again; but doubtless it was to our benefit that he did not find this out until he had prayed those three improper prayers. We learn from this that we should be in the attitude to say, "Lord, Thou knowest what I have need of. Give what is best."

THE MODEL PRAYER

Some might declare that this would not be the proper way to offer a petition—that we should ask God for something definite; for instance, if one needed a coat, he should ask for a coat. But our Father has said that we need not go into particulars. God knows that we have need of bread. Our petition, therefore, when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread," is not that we think that God would forget about it, but rather as an acknowledgment on our part that all we have—our food and everything else—comes from God. He knows what we have need of, and provides these things aside from our asking. Nevertheless, it is the Father's good pleasure that we should go to him, asking forgiveness for our sins, realizing that he has made provision in advance for that forgiveness, and that only as we are merciful to others will he deal mercifully with us in respect to our trespasses. With regard to our food, we thank our Father as the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

We hallow his name—honor his name—put it first in our petitions, in our thoughts. The idea is not as to how much glory we can get; but, first of all, we mention our Father and his glorious name—we hallow his name, make it holy. Then we follow with the petition desiring that his kingdom would come; for we realize that his kingdom is the very thing that the whole world needs, and that he has promised that it shall come. This is merely to tell him of our dependence upon him, and our waiting for him and for those things which he has promised and arranged for in his kingdom. We are not merely saying, "Thy kingdom come"—we are waiting for it, expecting it. Then comes in the mention of our necessities. He knoweth what things we have need of—whether it be a full loaf, a half loaf or a quarter loaf, a small ration or a large one. Then we ask for protection from the evil one.

There is no such request as, "My shoes are needing to be replaced with new shoes," or "My coat is getting glossy." The heathen, the world might pray for these things; but we are children of God, and are to conform our prayers to what he has said. We are to take for examples the prayers of Jesus and such prayers as the apostles offered. These prayers are not so much requirements made of God, but telling him we are depending upon him, seeking to have no will of our own—merely sinking into his will, asking that his will be done in all our affairs. Then we are to live and act according to that will and according to those prayers.

MORE CONVINCING EVIDENCE DEMANDED

"Be not faithless, but believing."—John 20:27.

The words of our text are found in connection with our Lord's appearance to the eleven disciples in the upper room, St. Thomas being of the number. From the narrative we learn that just a week before this Jesus had appeared to his disciples, but St. Thomas was absent at the time. The ten who had witnessed our Lord's manifestation related to St. Thomas the things which they had seen; but their accounts seemed idle tales to him and he could not believe them. He said he thought they were too easily convinced, and that it would require stronger evidence than they had had to convince him. Unless he could see the print of the nails in our Lord's hands, and put his fingers into the print of the nails, and could be able to thrust his hand into the spear-wound in his side, he would not believe.

To some this might seem to be an example of extreme unbelief, an unwillingness to receive the testimony of the Ten as to the experiences through which they had passed. Yet to other minds it would not seem so strange. Some of us would find it difficult to believe from any lips that a person whom he had three days before seen dead and laid in the tomb had manifested by his presence to others that he was again alive; and especially hard would it be to believe that he had appeared when the doors were shut, and had disappeared, the doors still being shut. We rather fear that had we been in St. Thomas' place we would have been inclined to say, "Show us how that could be." We would have experienced the same difficulty, and would likely have said, "You think you saw something; you believe you are telling the truth,

but we think that you have been deceived." We are born with differences of mental qualities, and it is easier for some to believe than it is for others.

ST. THOMAS NOT REPROVED

However, on this occasion Jesus gave the desired demonstration. His first appearance to them as a group was, we believe, on the first day of the week, and the second manifestation was given again on the first day of the week, eight days later, under similar circumstances. St. Thomas being present, Jesus said to him, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." (John 20:27) These were the very things St. Thomas had demanded, the very proof he had required. The words of Jesus do not convey the thought of any special reproof to St. Thomas. It would seem that the fact that the Lord gave to him the desired evidence to convince him, was an indication that he did not disapprove of his demand for more convincing demonstration than the others had had before believing a statement so marvelous as that of the other ten disciples; for if it had been a thing of which he disapproved he would not have complied with St. Thomas' wish.

Our Lord did, however, say (though speaking of those of us who live subsequently, and not of the disciples), "Blessed are they who do not see, and do yet believe." This is our position. The Lord indicates a special blessing upon those who, not seeing, would be able to believe. But we remember that we have testimonies and evidences that St. Thomas did not have. If we had heard that ten men had seen certain things one night, we might have wondered if they had not been in a vision, just as the transfiguration on the Mount was a vision. We might have imagined some dream or some hallucination coming upon them. Here, however, was St. Thomas, a man like a great many of us, hard-headed and practical; but when the proof was given him, when demonstration was made, he recognized that it was not a phantom, but that the Lord stood there before him in a body of flesh. This incident has proved a strengthener to the faith of many of us.

It is quite probable that St. Thomas was not permitted to be present at the first interview for the very purpose that there might be that demonstration, to the intent that it might be easier for some of us to believe. We can readily see that an established faith was all-important to the disciples. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6) If the disciples had been in doubt about our Lord's resurrection, they would not have been able to give us clear testimony on the subject, and how would we otherwise have known the facts? Some would have believed that he ascended to heaven and others of us would have thought differently if we had not the positive testimony, the proof. So the Lord purposed that these eleven disciples should be thoroughly convinced. Unless they had had absolute faith in him as the ascended Redeemer and Advocate they would not have been prepared to receive the holy Spirit at Pentecost. And unless they had received the holy Spirit they would not have been fitted for the ministry.

These forty days then seem to be the most important part of our Lord's ministry; for on them depended all the success of the Gospel message which was to be launched not by angels, but by men—these very men to whom he appeared—it was for them to tell what they saw and believed. For them to have lost faith and to have gone back into the ordinary affairs of life would have been contrary to the divine arrangement.

Jesus appeared four times—once to the women on the morning of his resurrection, once later on the same day to two of his disciples who were going to Emmaus; later the same evening to the ten in the upper room; then after a week, this appearance to St. Thomas and the other ten disciples. Some two or three weeks then elapsed, in which they neither saw him nor heard of him. Jesus was giving them some time in which to develop faith. They had these proofs, that he had spirit power to go and come like the wind. But he had not told them what to do, so in spite of all they had seen they thought it best to go back into the fishing business.

This was the moment for which Jesus was waiting. He knew they would have doubts and wonderments, and was on the alert to be invisibly with them to teach them a necessary lesson just as soon as they returned to the fishing business. As a result they did not catch even one fish. None were allowed to go into their net. All night long the disciples toiled in vain.

In the morning Jesus was standing on the shore. They had not seen him for about three weeks, and at first did not recognize him. He told them to cast their net on the other side of the boat. If there were no fish on one side, there would probably not be any on the other side; for a little distance would not make much difference. But they had had such a trying experience during the night that they were willing to do almost anything. While it did not seem reasonable that it

would do any good to cast the net just a few feet further away, yet having lost all confidence, they were ready to follow the suggestion of the stranger. So they put the net down, and enclosed a great haul of fish. It was a miracle; for the net was full. But it was nothing remarkable for a spirit being to make this exhibition, this manifestation, of divine power.

By this experience the disciples were taught two great lessons—that without the divine blessing they could not succeed even in the fishing business, the occupation in which they had been engaged all their lives. The second great lesson was that he who had been a fisher of men had the divine power to supply all their needs; that as he had the power to supply the fish, so he had power to supply all other needs. Furthermore, when they got to the shore, he had fish there and had cooked them—he was not dependent upon the fish in the net. Of course we do not understand the power—it was divine power, unlimited power. This experience became to the disciples almost a final demonstration of divine power. They knew it was Jesus, although they did not ask him. He showed them that he had all the while known just what they were doing, and that he had absolute power to give or to withhold blessings from them. It must have been a great strengthener of their faith to realize that he was as able to provide for them in one place as in another, and that they did not need to go back into the world and its pursuits; for he would be with them always, even to the end of the age.—Matthew 28:20.

Subsequently the Lord appeared to his disciples twice more—seven times altogether. Then he ascended up on high. Later he appeared to St. Paul. By these different demonstrations Jesus thoroughly convinced his disciples of two great things; first, that he was no longer dead, that he was alive; secondly, that he had supreme power. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthews 28:18) This great Being was their Master. He had not lost anything, but had gained much in passing into death and then out of it. So they might have great confidence in him, and might go forth to speak of his death, of the fact of his resurrection and of his ascension into God's presence, as manifested by the giving of the holy Spirit. But they would not have been ready to declare any of these things had they not been thoroughly convinced.

We do not think that Jesus reproved St. Thomas for his doubts. It is a great satisfaction to one whose mind happens to be of that particular kind as was St. Thomas'. Some minds require more proof than do others. Undoubtedly the whole church has been blessed by St. Thomas' action at this time. If we had been one of the disciples and had been absent when Jesus first appeared, and had been told of it by the others we would have said, "You are dreaming, gentlemen. In your perplexity and excitement you are telling us a fairy tale." We would wish to be satisfied and to have the sense of touch to prove the matter. Now the Lord gave us this evidence, and it is a great blessing to us.

A POWER POSSESSED BY SPIRIT BEINGS

The evidence of the resurrection of Jesus lay in the fact that there was a person there in that upper room who had the power to come and go like the wind and to demonstrate that he was not dead by any means. That body which St. Thomas and the other disciples saw was not the body crucified and buried in Joseph's tomb, but a materialized body—with the same facial expression, the same hands, the same feet, that the human body of Jesus had. Jesus said that it was flesh, that "a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." He had both the flesh and the bones there.

St. Thomas and the others could not appreciate how a spirit could materialize a body. In fact, with all that we know, more than eighteen centuries later, we do not understand how it could be. We know, however, that angels appeared like men and could talk, eat and walk. We know that various evil spirit beings appeared in the days of Noah, and sought to dwell on earth as men. The disciples knew this, but they had not thought to apply this to the Lord. They were learning how to apply these things to the Lord—how a spirit could materialize and dematerialize in their presence. This was a matter of education. Subsequently they would come to a more particular understanding of this—when they received the holy Spirit; just as with us. When we come to a better knowledge, in this proportion the holy Spirit has guided our understanding.

We have come to a full ability to believe these matters, although we do not understand them yet; for to understand would be to enter into the matter in a philosophical way and to know how the thing is done. We do not think that the apostles saw the body of our Lord in the resurrection. But what they saw was proof that he was no longer a human being, but a spirit being. To make a body suitable for the occasion was no more of a miracle than were any of the other things connected with the resurrection.

GOD'S ARK IN WICKED HANDS

FEBRUARY 21.—1 SAMUEL 4:1-18.

A CORRUPT PRIESTHOOD—A DEMORALIZED PEOPLE—ATTEMPT TO BRING GOD INTO THE WAR—THE ARK OF THE COVENANT CAPTURED—PUNISHMENT AT THE HANDS OF THEIR ENEMIES—THE SAME PRINCIPLE IN OPERATION TODAY—TRAGIC DEATH OF ELI AND HIS SONS—WHICH NATIONS ARE IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves."—James 1:22.

Some twenty years after God's prediction of the calamities that would befall Eli and his family, the tragedy in this lesson occurred. In all those twenty years, apparently no reformations had taken place—the aged Eli, now ninety-eight years old, had not purged the servants or the service of the Lord. He had allowed matters to continue in the hands of his sons, notwithstanding their continual dishonesty in the things of God and their immorality and pernicious example. Samuel, apparently, may have been absent at the time of this lesson, and perhaps for years before. Wherever he was, we may be sure that he was a true servant of God, and more and more recognized of the people as such.

We are not to overestimate the moral and religious conditions of the people during those twenty years; but we may assume that the evil example of the priests, the sons of Eli, whom he had associated with him in the priestly office, had an injurious effect upon the people—a demoralizing effect. According to God's covenant with the nation, he was bound to reprove them, punish them. A fresh invasion of the Philistines took place. The Israelites went out to meet them in battle and were defeated. In their chagrin, and groping after some help, they looked to God, just as all the nations of Europe today are looking to God for help and praying in vain.

The usual customs under such conditions today are the same as then; namely, an attempt to bring God into the war, an attempt to invoke the assistance of religious symbols, etc. And, indeed, the Israelites had more ground for so doing than have the warring kingdoms of today; for God had declared himself to be the Keeper of Israel, and that they were his special nation, his ward, and that he would protect them as long as they would be loyal to him. On the other hand, the kingdoms of this world have no such divine promise, have no ground for such expectations of divine aid. They are falsely styling themselves Christian kingdoms, "Christendom"; whereas they have neither part nor lot with the Lord. He recognizes no nations except natural Israel of the past and spiritual Israel of the present. "Ye are a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, to show forth the praises of him who hath called you from darkness into his marvelous light."—1 Peter 2:9.

The Israelites doubtless had read how the Ark went before them in the Wilderness journey, how it was in the midst of the River Jordan when the people crossed over dry-shod, and how it was in the procession that marched around Jericho when the walls fell. And so they determined to bring up the Ark of the Lord and put it in the battle with the people of Israel; and thus they thought they would insure victory. Their reasoning, apparently, was that God would not permit the Ark of the Covenant to be injured or to be captured; and hence they would be safe and victory would be bound to come to Israel.

With our mental eye we see the pageant: Here come the Levites, bearing the holy Ark of God, and the two sons of Eli, arrayed as the priests of the Most High, the representatives of God's holiness; and the people, enthused with the thought of victory through the Ark of God, shouted their usual battle-hymn, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee."—Numbers 10:35.

The people forgot that they had been living irreligiously, in violation of their covenant with God; and that that covenant called for punishment upon them at the hand of their enemies. They forgot that the two representative priests by no means represented God and his righteousness—that they were thieves and robbers, garbed as the priests of God; that they were immoral, impure, posing as the representatives of the divine holiness. They forgot that God's blessing was not to be expected under such conditions.

A PRESENT-DAY PARALLEL

And alas! Although we are many centuries removed from their time, we see much of this same principle today—much sham, much pretense, much misrepresentation of God on the part of those who profess to be his representatives. We behold the present war, with the Kaiser of Germany at the head of the Lutheran church; with Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary, the chief son of the Papacy; with King George at the head of the church of England; with the Czar, the "little father" of Russia, the chief representative of the Greek Catholic

church—all these marching out to battle, each rallying his soldiers with the thought of God, each treading the precious name of the Prince of Peace into the dust, each bent on the use of the sword for the selfish purpose of promoting the greatness of his empire and its commercial prosperity, and, incidentally, upholding the traditions of the past respecting his authority to establish the kingdom of God upon earth.

Today, as in the days of Eli's sons, the people give a shout as they couple the cause of God with their national projects. Again they forget that the two are entirely separate; that God's cause is under divine direction; and that his cause will prosper best by the permission of a great defeat to all these systems of men, preparing incidentally for the establishment of Messiah's kingdom, after the Armageddon of the Bible shall have humbled the world and made them ready to acclaim the new King Immanuel and his kingdom "the desire of all nations."

Calling upon the name of the Lord and having the Ark of God in battle did not help the Israelites, even as the carrying of the ikons by the Russian soldiers will not give them the victory, or the wearing of the name of God upon their belts give the victory to the Germans, or the carrying of the Cross of St. George give victory to the armies of the British.

There was a great slaughter and a scattering of the forces of the Israelites. The two sons of Eli were slain. The Ark of God was captured. A swift runner from the army brought the sad intelligence to Shiloh, where Eli as judge sat upon the high seat in the gate, anxiously wondering, fearfully remembering the twenty-year-before prediction of disaster. The runner reported to Eli that the battle had gone against the Israelites, that his two sons were slain, and concluded by telling that the Ark of the Lord had also been captured by the Philistines.

ISRAEL DIFFERENT FROM OTHER NATIONS

Eli heard all with equanimity until the last sentence. When he learned that his precious treasure, for which he was the guardian by divine appointment, had been taken by the Philistines, the poor man fell over in a faint, his chair toppled, his neck was broken. Although faithful at heart until death at ninety-eight, he, nevertheless, is not without reproof in that he neglected his family and neglected to see that the work entrusted to him was not interfered with by those of his own household. His loyalty to God was not sufficiently great to hinder him from shirking his responsibility. In his character was too much of the "peace at any price," not enough of that courage which is prepared to die for righteousness' sake.

The lesson taught to God's covenant people, Israel, the Lord next sent chastisements upon the Philistines, so that they were glad to return the Ark to the people of God. Some are inclined to make light of the declaration that the Philistines were plagued with mice and with hemorrhoids so long as they had the Ark with them; and that when the Ark had been restored to the Israelites, these plagues were removed. We have no reason, however, to doubt that the Philistines had cause for the realization that these were special plagues, and the Scriptures seem to uphold the thought that they were of the Lord.

This does not authorize us in supposing that every kind of plague today is of the Lord—that pestilences, etc., are special punishments of God. We must remember, when considering this matter, that the nation of Israel, and everything pertaining to it, was in a special covenant relationship with God and under divine supervision. Whoever touched Israel or any of the things pertaining to the typical system was to that extent adverse to the Lord, his cause, his interests, and this could be done only by the Lord's permission; and when the Lord wished to bring back the Ark, or deliver his people from such circumstances, it was for him to bring to pass conditions necessary to that end.

There is no such condition of things prevailing today. The nation of Israel is temporarily cut off from the divine protection which was with them—until the full number from the Gentiles shall have been brought into Spiritual Israel. Then all Israel will be recovered from their blindness and their alienation from God, as it is written: "This is my covenant with them when I shall have taken away their sins."—Romans 11:26-32.

The only people or nation now in covenant relationship with God, according to the Bible, is spiritual Israel, "a holy

nation, a peculiar people." And, as respects spiritual Israel, their interests are spiritual; and the divine promises do not guarantee them earthly blessings and protection, but rather the reverse—persecution and opposition. God's guarantee to

spiritual Israel, however, is that all the adversities of the present life which he permits to come to them will work out to their eternal spiritual welfare, if they are rightly exercised thereby.

CONFESSION OF SIN, FORGIVENESS, VICTORY

FEBRUARY 28.—1 SAMUEL 7:3-17.

SAMUEL PROPHET AND JUDGE—HIS INFLUENCE FOR GOOD—ISRAEL BECAME PENITENT—A CONVENTION AT MOUNT MIZPEH—THE WATCH TOWER—FASTING AND PRAYER—GOD'S FAVOR RETURNED—PHILISTINES REBUKED—ISRAEL BLESSED UNDER SAMUEL'S JUDGESHIP—A CIRCUIT JUDGE.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."—1 Samuel 7:12.

Samuel the prophet might serve Eli the priest, but he could not become his successor, because not of the priestly family. It is probable, therefore, that, as he reached maturity, he found other service; but there is a blank in the record of twenty years at least. The intimation, however, is that he was faithful to God and to the interests of his people, and that the people trusted him as a servant of God. We may be sure, therefore, that he was not idle, but engaged in some good work. Quite possibly he engaged himself in instructing the people respecting their wrong conditions, the permission of idolatry amongst them, their neglect of God, etc.

Our lesson introduces him to us as the leader of the hour, when the people had become thoroughly aroused to a sense of their unholiness, their need of God, and their need of mutual help if they would come back into relationship with God. Having brought the people to this proper condition of mind, the Prophet Samuel appointed a general meeting at a small mountain called Mizpeh; that is, Watch Tower. They came in considerable numbers and with hearts bowed down with grief in recognition that they were sinners, and that therefore they had been foreigners—out of divine favor. They came seeking God, and he was found of them.

A GREAT REFORMATION EFFECTED

The Prophet Samuel put the matter before the people in plain, distinct terms, saying, "If ye do return unto the Lord will all your hearts, then put away the strange Gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." Samuel was warranted in telling the people that they would be delivered from the power of the Philistines; because this was God's standing agreement with them by the covenant he entered into with them; namely, that if they would obey his laws and be loyal to him, he would be their God and they would be his people, and he would guide their interests to their highest welfare, both as a nation and as individuals; but if they would not obey his statutes and be loyal to him, then he would deliver them into the hand of their enemies and punish them seven times. God was keeping his part of the covenant; it was Israel that had failed, and Samuel was properly bringing the matter to their attention and urging repentance.

"Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only." Baalim was the plural name for Baal. The word Baal signifies overseer, caretaker. The Israelites had been distinctly forewarned not to make any kind of idols, and to keep themselves separate from all idols to such an extent that they might not even make an image of their own God, Jehovah. He would not have any symbols before his people, but have them worship him in spirit and in truth. But all around them were the Canaanites, whom they had not had faith and obedience to drive out of the land. These Canaanites had the Baal idols in all their towns, and some had them in their homes and trusted in them as protective genii.

Ashtaroth is the plural for Ashtoreth, a female deity—the same known to the Babylonians as Ishtar and to the Greeks as Astarte. She was the goddess of fertility and the sexual relations; and connected with her worship were many licentious services supposed to promote fertility—the propagation of the human species. If Samuel's work of twenty years reached this harvest where the whole people of Israel decided to put away their Ashtaroth of gods and to worship and serve Jehovah only, he certainly accomplished much. We may be sure, also, that some human agency was connected with so great an outward manifestation. Such reformations do not come by chance, nor are they miraculous.

Samuel prayed for the people of Israel; "and they drew water and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord." The confession of sin was not only credible to the people as a manifestation of their honesty and sincerity, but it was appropriate that they should do this when asking the God whom they had offended to receive them back again into cove-

nant relationship with himself. The poet has said that confession is good for the soul, and surely all have proven it so. It served to commit them. The humility which was necessary to the making of such confession would be profitable in respect to their character-building.

The water poured out may be viewed from various angles. One suggestion is that it represented the truth which they could not gainsay, could not take back, even as water spilled upon the ground cannot be recovered. Another suggestion is that as the water was drawn from the depth of the earth, so their confession came from the depths of their hearts. Another is that it represented their vows of faithfulness to the Lord, which would be as irrevocable as water poured out.

A LESSON FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

"And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh." That is to say, as a judge, a counselor, he gave advice, gave decision in respect to their affairs, disputes, proper course of conduct, right and wrong on any subject, etc. Thus the nation of Israel was making a new start; and as a people were more drawn together than at any time in their history from the days of Joshua onward. But, as though it were a trial of their faith, at this very time, while they were resolving on the course of righteousness, their enemies, the Philistines, having heard of the gathering, sought to nip the rebellion in the bud, and came against them with an army of considerable size.

The Israelites had not come together for battle, but for prayer; nevertheless they were probably more or less armed. But they felt themselves quite unprepared to meet the Philistine hosts. And they said unto Samuel, "Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he save us out of the hand of the Philistines." They were learning to look for help in the right direction. This cry coming to the Lord after they had abandoned their idols and had vowed to be loyal to Jehovah, put them in a very different attitude toward him from that of twenty years previous, when they called for the Ark of God to lead them in battling against the Philistines without any reformation of character, without repentance for sins.

Is there not a lesson here for all of God's people? Is it not as true today as it ever was that it is vain for the Lord's people to call upon the Lord for assistance and blessing while they are living in sin, in violation of their covenant and its obligations? The first lesson of all, then, for those who realize their being in sin is repentance, and definite vows to the Lord respecting faithfulness in petition to him for his mercy unto them. Those who thus come to the Lord now, as Christians, under the Headship of our Lord Jesus Christ, are sure to have divine mercy and "grace to help in every time of need."

Our Philistines that come upon us and enslave us are our passions and weaknesses, and the oppositions of the world and the adversary. These are our foes, and against these only divine power can enable us to fight a good fight and come off victorious.

In response to the cry of the people, Samuel the prophet offered to the Lord a sacrifice—a lamb of the first year. He knew it not, but it was a type of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Beside this typical sacrifice, Samuel cried to the Lord on behalf of his people, and the Lord heard him. So with all that stand beside the great antitypical sacrifice, and in the name and merit of that sacrifice, as people of God in covenant relationship with him—having put away sins and weaknesses to the best of our ability, we may be sure of divine help, deliverance.

SIGNAL MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE FAVOR

While yet the offering was upon the altar, the voice of the approaching hosts of the Philistines was heard. How would God assist his people? How could they hope for deliverance against the Philistine hosts? Would they in fear scatter or would God's power to help be manifest? The deliverance came in the shape of a great, violent, sudden storm. Going hastily, it swept down the hill Mizpeh, in the faces of the approaching hosts. They turned their backs against the violent storm; and the Israelites perceiving the opportunity, rushed onward with

the storm, pursuing the Philistines and driving them before them, and thus gaining a great victory. The place of the victory was the very spot where, twenty years before, the Ark of the Lord had been captured by the Philistines. Samuel there set a stone as a pillar and monument, and called it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."—Verse 12.

So with Christians in their victories under the Lord's assistance; when by the Lord's grace they gain victories they should set up memorials or monuments in their minds, in their hearts, and not pass these blessings by or forget that the victories were gained by help from on high. Every Christian, therefore, should have his Ebenezer, his monuments of victory, as it were, of divine assistance over his foes, the world, the flesh and the adversary and he should rejoice in these. This sentiment has come down to us in the words of a beautiful hymn, familiar to nearly all who read the English language:

"Here I'll raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by thy help I'm come;
And I hope by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at Home."

PROPER AND IMPROPER JUDGMENTS

The record is that Samuel continued to be a judge, an interpreter of the divine law, a counselor to his people, "all the days of his life." The Israelites had accepted God's laws, and had agreed to abide by its decisions. Whoever, therefore, they would have confidence in as an interpreter of the divine law, they, in proper condition of heart, would be ready to obey his rulings, his judgments. Spiritual Israelites similarly have come into covenant relationship with God, and have bound themselves to seek to know and to do the will of God and not their own wills. Hence whoever may be the person of opportunity who can show "an Israelite indeed" the mind of the Lord in any manner, he becomes his counselor, the Lord's mouthpiece to him; thus all the people of God assist one another to judge themselves, to build each other up in the most holy faith, to guide each other to know and to do the will of the Lord.

This office is not left to ministers, to priests, but is open to all the Lord's people; for St. Peter declares all the Lord's people are priests—"Ye are a royal priesthood." True, these priests have not entered into their royalty, nor yet have they

entered fully upon their priestly office. These glorious offices belong especially to the future, when by virtue of the resurrection change, these priests who are now sacrificing, will be priests in glory, reigning with Christ and judging the world—assisting the world, counseling the world, instructing the world regarding God's will and helping them to know and do that will.

The royal priesthood are to remember that their judging in the present time is not a judging of the hearts, but merely a judging of the conduct. As respects the hearts, they are informed of the Lord that they are not competent to judge; and hence the words of the Apostle Paul, "Judge nothing before the time." The time for the judging of the hearts, when this work will be committed to the church, will be after that which is perfect shall have come, after the resurrection change shall have made us like our Redeemer and qualified therefore to read the hearts of mankind, and to judge a righteous judgment, a merciful judgment, a sympathetic judgment, a helpful one.

The only judging which the people of God may now do for and toward each other, is that which the Lord represented when he said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Men do not gather grapes off thorn bushes or figs off thistles. A good spring will not send forth bitter water. We are, therefore, to judge ourselves as to whether or not our conduct is in harmony with the principles of righteousness; and we may similarly assist in judging one another as respects outward conduct, leaving the judgment of the heart to the individual himself and to the Lord.

The Prophet Samuel established a new order of things, which we see was the outgrowth of his reformation work amongst the people of God, his nation. He did not do as others before him had done—have his place of residence, to which all the people must go to ask is advice, his counsel, his judgment; but he introduced the circuit judge system, and went from place to place holding a court, not so much to condemn anybody, but rather to advise those who desired advice. Thus the nation of Israel began to be cemented as one people, and to realize that their interests were in common; and that all of their interests were bound up with God, his law, his covenant with them, and the interpretation of these through such agents as the Lord might send to them—Samuel the prophet being one of these.

RETURN OF THE CHURCH FROM THE WILDERNESS

A wilderness condition is one of separation from the blessings of civilization; it is a cut-off condition, a separation from the world. In the case of the church, we read that the Lord provided her with two wings, that she might go into the wilderness 1260 symbolic days, or years. Apparently she went into the wilderness condition of her own accord, and became voluntarily an outcast from the privileges and advantages of the world's society; she underwent a general ostracism or separation.

In the account of the typical Atonement day sacrifices we read that the scapegoat went into the wilderness, but it did not go voluntarily; it was sent away. In the antitype the faithful, consecrated class go into the wilderness voluntarily, while the others will go into it of compulsion. The two classes will have similar experiences, however. The experiences of the church have been tribulations, brought on by reason of their loyalty to the Lord and the truth. The Lord's people can be in this wilderness condition even while surrounded by all the affairs of the world. We are separate from the world; we are in the world, but not of it—isolated.

In the Book of Revelation we read that the church fled for 1260 years into the wilderness, and that during a similar period of time a great system had control of affairs. This period, we understand, began in 539 A. D. and ended with the year 1799. It was a period of ostracism, called the wilderness condition, but not necessarily of persecution. One might go into the wilderness condition and not receive persecution—not be shot, not be hanged, or anything like that. Hence the wilderness condition does not include the thought of persecution, but merely of separation.

In figurative language the city represents honor, distinction and prominence in the world, while the wilderness signifies the reverse condition—that of being ignored, ostracised, etc. During the 1260 symbolic days the church was in the condition of ostracism. The governments paid no attention to her; but on the other hand, they gave a great deal of attention to the great system which exalted itself and became "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth"—Mystic Babylon.

THE RETURN FROM THE WILDERNESS

At the end of this period, beginning with 1799, the proper conception of the church was more nearly recognized by the world in general, when the power of Papacy was broken, when the pope was carried a prisoner to France. Then the nations realized that they had been more or less mistaken as to the pope being Christ's representative. From that time on the Papacy, as a great system, has not had the persecuting power, but has been compelled to vie with others. The Baptist denomination, the Methodist denomination, and others, have prospered during this period, and the world has recognized them in the same degree as it has recognized Papacy.

The Papacy did not go into the wilderness, however; but Protestantism stepped out of the wilderness condition, to be more particularly recognized by the people and by the government. This has continued for quite a while and the Bible has been more generally recognized than before. Shortly after 1799, Bible Societies began to be organized. The Bible was brought into great prominence. Old and New Testaments, God's two witnesses, were exalted to heaven. Those who advocated the Bible came out into the full light. Bible students and Bible study became more approved than ever before. Bibles were printed and everybody favored Bible Study.

There is no Scriptural declaration that the church will go back into the wilderness condition. Our reference to a second wilderness experience is founded upon the symbolic picture of our day that is given to us in the experiences of Elijah the Prophet. Elijah, representing the true church of God, had been a true prophet for some time. He was unpopular with Queen Jezebel, who had influenced King Ahab against him. The King threatened Elijah's life and he fled to the wilderness for 1260 days, or three and a half years. This was symbolical of the 1260 years during which the church remained in the wilderness condition.

At the close of the 1260 days in Elijah's experience, he returned from the wilderness and made a great demonstration. He made an exhibition of the priests of Baal, who had been favored by Queen Jezebel and by King Ahab. This manifestation resulted in a great exaltation of the Word of God, and

a great downfall of the priests of Baal. From that time they were obliged to hold themselves in seclusion. The people said, "Jehovah is God."

We understand that all this particularly represents how the true church, in 1799, manifested itself before the kings of the world, and stood up for God and the Bible. Elijah represented the true church; Jezebel represented the Papal System and other systems closely related to her; Ahab represented the government; and the people of Israel represented the world. The Bible was forced upon Jezebel and Ahab, and everybody. The two witnesses were exalted because the people took notice of them.

ELIJAH'S SECOND WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

Coming back to the picture: Queen Jezebel represented her daughters, her kind, her family. The Prophet Elijah represented the true people of God in the present time. The Queen did not persecute him, but threatened him; and again he fled into the wilderness—not for a specified time, however. The people in general were not under the same kind of restraint as previously. The priests of Baal never regained their influence. Elijah went again into the wilderness and was there nourished for a time; it was not the previous nourishment of the 1260 days by the ravens, but an especially provided food for a time.

To our understanding this food especially provided for Elijah, after his experience with the priests of Baal and after his fleeing from Jezebel, represents the special Message that is now feeding the people of God. After Elijah had reached the wilderness, there was an inclination on his part to feel discouraged; and he said, "Ah, Lord God!"—this signifying his discouragement. But the Lord strengthened him and gave him a special food, in the strength of which he went to Mt. Horeb. This mountain represents the kingdom of God, the Messianic kingdom. And we believe that by this spiritual food we are now brought to the time when the kingdom is to be established.

When Elijah got to Mt. Horeb the Lord gave him three witnesses. (1 Kings 19:1-18) The wind rending the mountains represents the present war. The great earthquake symbolically represents a social revolution, the like of which was never before in the world, and which we believe is due to come very soon. This will not come as soon as the war begins, but the war might continue while the earthquake is on. This was not all. The third demonstration was a great fire, which consumed everything before it. This represents wide-spread anarchy, which will prevail in the world, following the social revolution. Then after the fire Elijah heard the "still, small voice," representing the divine power, which will bring the blessings to the world.

INTERESTING LETTERS

REPLY TO A CRITIC OF PRESENT EXPECTATIONS

DEAR BROTHER:—

Your first letter was unanswered, not because of any discourtesy, but through pity. But now that you have written again respecting the disappointment of my expectation mentioned Nov. 29, 1911, that "within three years I shall have been joined to the Bridegroom," I have concluded to answer your letter, conceiving that after you have read my reply, my past, present and future faith may not seem so distressingly funny to you.

Twenty years ago you and I believed in infant baptism; in the divine right of the clergy to administer that baptism; that baptism was necessary to escape eternal torment; that God is love; that God created and continues to create billions of beings in his likeness who will spend the countless ages of eternity in the strangling fumes of burning sulphur, pleading in vain for one drop of water to relieve their agonies; we believed in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; we believed that we should be followers of God as dear children; in baptizing our infants we believed that God saved some and did not save others, or else believed in the salvation of all infants, except those poor unfortunates to whose parents the Gospel had not been preached; for such, we believed, no salvation was provided outside of baptism into some one of the hundreds of sects into which Christianity is divided.

We believed that after a man dies, he is alive; we believed that Jesus Christ never died; that he could not die; that no ransom was ever paid or ever will be paid; that Jehovah God and Christ Jesus his Son are one and the same person; that the holy Spirit is a person; that one plus one, plus one, equal one; that when Jesus hung on the cross and said, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me," He was merely talking to himself; that he was raised in the flesh; that he still bears, and will forever bear, his scars; that he alone of all mankind will have to go scarred and marred throughout eternity; that he will come again in the flesh; that the day of judgment is a day of horror; that the literal earth is to be burned up with literal fire; that all human beings who are saved become angels; that Paradise is heaven; that the crucified thief became an angel the day he died and went to heaven; that Christ did not become an angel, but was raised from the dead as a man three days later than the thief, but did not ascend to heaven until forty days afterward; that all the ancient worthies went to heaven when they died, including David; that present kingdoms are part of Christ's kingdom; that the devil has been away off somewhere in an unlocated hell, instead of exercising dominion over the kingdoms of this earth; that the Antichrist is to be a literal man; that sectarianism is a good thing and will be perpetuated forever; that one can be born of the Spirit while he is still in the flesh; that a resurrection from the dead is impossible because none are dead; that it merely means in the case of the saints the taking back of the poor bodies that they had, in place of the perfectly good ones they secured when they died.

We believed that sanctification means sinlessness, not self-sacrificing devotion to the will of God; that the expression

"bride of Christ" means nothing; because everybody who is saved will be the bride of Christ; that the expression high calling means nothing, because everybody who is saved will be saved to the high calling; that the "prize of the high calling" therefore means nothing; that the Time of the End will never come in your day, in my day, nor in anybody else's day; that present running to and fro, means nothing; that there will never be any end of the "Times of the Gentiles"; that there will never be any special "Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation"; that there will be no "restitution of all things"; that the Jubilee arrangements signify nothing; that the "abomination of desolation" signifies nothing; that there never was and never will be a great falling away; that there never was and never will be a great Mother Apostate church, and she never had and never will have any daughters; that the expression "royal priesthood" means nothing, because everybody who is saved will be of the priesthood; that there can never be a second death, not even a first one; that a human soul once born, lives on forever; that the Tabernacle signifies nothing; that there is no witness to the Lord in the land of Egypt; that the Memorial Supper can be properly observed any old time; that the Christian Sabbath is not a rest of faith, but merely a formal observance of one day in seven; that the literal heavens will be literally rolled together as a literal scroll; that at that time men will pray for literal mountains to fall on top of them.

I praise God for the day that brought present truth to my door. It was so wholesome, so refreshing to mind and heart, that I quickly left the humbug and claptrap of the past and was used of God to also open your blinded eyes. We rejoiced in the truth together, working side by side for fifteen years. The Lord greatly honored you as a mouthpiece; I never knew anybody who could make the follies of Babylon look so ridiculous. In your letter you ask, "What next?" Ah, now comes the pity of it! The next thing is that you permit your heart to become embittered against the one whose labors of love and whose blessings from on high brought the truth to both our hearts. You went out, and took several of the sheep with you.

I am reliably informed that when Billy Sunday was in your city you were one of the most prominent workers for "the cause." I am reliably informed also that you are now serving as superintendent of a Sunday School in the denomination from which you withdrew when you accepted present truth. You either believe the foregoing "confession of faith," or you don't believe it. If you don't believe it, and are helping to boost the organizations that do believe it, then Doc. Cook, the discoverer (?) of the North Pole, should enlist as your pupil. If you do not believe it, and admit, as you must, that you got all your light on these and thousands of other subjects from Brother Russell, then, by comparison, the boy who wished that his father would die so that he could have his jack-knife, should be considered a model of gratitude and loyalty and faithfulness; and his name should be handed down to posterity as a shining example of the way we should act toward our benefactors.

On the contrary, if you have returned to your belief of the