

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER APRIL TENTH

We will celebrate the Memorial Supper on the evening of Friday, April 10. We trust that all of the Lord's consecrated people everywhere will avail themselves of their privilege of memorializing the death of the Redeemer for our sins and—as the Apostle points out—our participation with the Redeemer in his sufferings and death to human conditions. As our Lord and the Apostles met and symbolized his death in advance of the event, so it is appropriate for us to meet on the anniversary to celebrate his sacrifice.

The doing of this annually, in harmony with the evident purpose of the Lord in establishing this Memorial instead of the Jewish Passover, makes the occasion a very impressive one, much more so than any celebration which ignores the anniversary feature and celebrates occasionally—monthly, weekly, quarterly, etc. Let us not find fault with others who do differently; but, as opportunity offers, let us inform them of our reasons for observing this great event on its anniversary.

As often as we do this (yearly) we do show forth the Lord's death until he come. While we believe that our Lord has been present for a number of years—during the harvest—this does not hinder us from continuing the blessed Memorial of his death. Our thought is that our Lord meant that we were to continue celebrating his death until, at his second coming, the full harvest work of the age shall be completed, and the entire body of Christ, the church, shall be received into glory. Then, as he declared, we shall drink of the new cup with him.

Whereas now we drink of his cup of suffering, shame, ignominy, reproach, the world's derision and opposition, his new cup will be a cup of joy, blessing, glory, honor, immortality—the divine nature. The Father, who poured for our Lord the cup of suffering, has already poured for him the cup of blessing and glory. As we are privileged to share with him in this cup of suffering, so with our resurrection “change” we shall be privileged to share with him the cup of glory and blessing. Yea, ours is a mingled cup now, a bitter-sweet; for by faith we already enjoy many of the things which he has in reservation for them that love him.

In the Lord's arrangement the moon symbolized the Jewish prospects, while the sun symbolized the prospects of the Gospel age. The Law Dispensation was a shadow, or reflection, of the things future, as the moon's light is the reflection of the rays of the sun. We are near the time of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his beams, to flood the world with the light of the knowledge of God. Seeing this, we lift up our heads and rejoice, as the Master directed. Since all the overcoming members of the church are included in that Sun of Righteousness, according to our Lord's parable (Matthew 13:43), it follows that the elect church must all be gathered, and her glorification must be completed before the full light of the Millennial glory will shine forth upon the world.

In partaking of the Memorial we may look forward with the eye of faith to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, in contrast with the conditions which prevailed at the time when the first Memorial was observed. Then, the Moon (the Law Covenant) was at its full; and immediately after the rejection of Jesus and his crucifixion the Jewish polity began to wane. It is worthy of note that the very day on which Jesus was crucified the moon was at its full, and the waning began at once. So this year, on April 11, the moon will be at its very full, and will then begin its wane. The 11th, therefore, corresponds to the day on which our Lord was crucified; and the evening of the 10th corresponds to the night of the first Memorial Supper.

EATING AND DRINKING IT WORTHILY

As from the intelligent appreciation of the fact symbolized by the Memorial Supper a great blessing comes, and a joy proportionate to the participator's faith and obedience, so also a condemnation attaches to an unworthy, improper participation in the Memorial. None are to participate except those who have come into relationship with the Lord by consecration of their hearts—their all—to him and his service.

None can come into this consecrated condition except as they have recognized themselves as sinners and the Savior as the Redeemer from sin, whose merit is sufficient to compensate for the defects of all those who would come unto the Father

through him. All such should partake with a great deal of joy. Remembering the sufferings of the Master, they are to rejoice in those sufferings and in the blessings that these have brought to their hearts and lives. None are to drink of the fruit of the vine on such occasions except those who have appropriated the merit of the sacrifice of Christ and who fully realize that all their blessings are through him. None are to drink of the cup except those who have given up their all to the Lord, for this is what the cup signifies—it is the cup of suffering, the cup of death—a full submission to the will of God. “Thy will, O God, not mine, be done,” was the prayer of the Master, and is to be the sentiment and petition of those who partake of the Memorial Supper.

For others to participate in this Memorial Supper would be a farce, would be wrong, and would bring more or less of condemnation, disapproval, from God and from their own consciences—and that in proportion as they realize the impropriety of their course.

But let none think that they should remain away from the Memorial because of imperfections of the flesh. This is a great stumbling-block to many. So long as we are in the flesh, imperfection of word, deed and thought are possible—yea, unavoidable. St. Paul says that we cannot do the things that we would. It is because we need divine grace to forgive our daily, unintentional, unwilling trespasses that all whose sins have been forgiven and who have been accepted into fellowship with Christ are encouraged to come to the throne of heavenly grace in prayer. The Apostle says, “Let us come with courage to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16) It was because of our needs that God opened up the way and made this arrangement for us.

By God's provision for the forgiveness of our sins, of which we have repented, and for which we have asked forgiveness in Jesus' name, we may realize ourselves as no longer sinners under condemnation, but as clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness. This is the thought behind St. Paul's expression, which applies to every day: “I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”—Romans 12:1.

All Christians should keep their accounts squared with the Lord. If they come short, they should lose no time in getting the account squared, in obtaining forgiveness through the merit of the Savior's sacrifice. Such accounts with the Lord should be settled promptly at the time of their occurrence, or not later than the day of their occurrence. They should not be allowed to accumulate; for they will rise as a wall between the soul and the heavenly Father. But whatever has been the condition in the past, the Memorial season, above all others, is the time for making sure that no cloud remains between the Lord and us, to hide us from his eyes.

Thus forgiven, thus cleansed of any defiling spot on our robe of Christ's righteousness, let us keep the feast—the Memorial of our Lord's death. In it let us afresh acknowledge and impress upon our minds the importance of the merit of his sacrifice and death, and how it represents the grace of God to us, as it will by and by represent the same grace extending through the Millennial kingdom to the whole world. Let us remember also our devotion of ourselves, our consecration to be dead with our Lord, to be broken as members of his body, parts of the one loaf, and to participate in the drinking of his cup of suffering and shame and death. “For if we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him.”—2 Timothy 2:12.

We trust that the celebration of the Memorial this year may be a very deeply impressive one, an occasion of rich blessing to all of the Lord's consecrated people everywhere. “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast.”—1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

We trust that each little class, or group, of Bible students celebrating the Memorial together will appoint one of their number a secretary to write a post-card to THE WATCH TOWER office, stating briefly the interesting facts connected with the celebration, the number present, and the number participating, so far as can reasonably be estimated.

THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION

We are not yet prepared to offer the DRAMA in the smaller cities. Friends residing in cities of 50,000 and upward desiring to co-operate may appoint a committee which should

write to the Watch Tower Society, care the DRAMA Dept., for instructions. The committee should be of good address and fluent of speech.

"ARE YE ABLE?"

"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?"—Matthew 20:22.

We recall the circumstances under which these words were uttered by our Savior: It was just a few days before his crucifixion. Jesus had promised his disciples that they should sit with him in his throne in his kingdom. So confident were they that this would be as the Lord had said that they were discussing the positions they might occupy. The mother of the two disciples, James and John, came to him and asked whether her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, in the kingdom. And Jesus, turning to the two disciples, replied by asking them: "Are ye able to drink the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

We know that Jesus' baptism in water took place at the beginning of his ministry. In harmony with the divine plan, he was to die as the Savior of men. And he symbolized this death as soon as he was thirty years of age—as soon as was possible under the Law. During the three and a half years of his ministry, he was accomplishing this baptism, he was pouring out his soul unto death, and this death he finished at Calvary. Jesus said, "The baptism that I am [being] baptized with"—now—not a baptism which was either future or past.

But he spoke differently of the cup—"the cup that I shall drink of." He thus implied that the cup was future—not in the present nor in the past. He had told his disciples that he would go up to Jerusalem; and that there he would be crucified, and on the third day he would rise again. And he said on another occasion, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." What the Master said about his being crucified the disciples did not understand. But Jesus understood the situation, and he knew that this cup was about to be poured for him. And so he spoke of it again, saying of himself, "The cup that my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?"

OUR LORD'S SPECIAL TRIAL

We might think of the word cup as representing various experiences of life—that everybody has his cup of mingled joy and sorrow. But Jesus used the word in a different sense. When he was in the Garden of Gethsemane he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." And again, the same night he prayed, saying, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!" In the matter of his baptism into death, there was no hesitation on our Lord's part. On the contrary, from the very beginning he voluntarily participated in it. The ignominious death was the thing that he prayed might pass, if it were possible. But this was what he learned was the Father's will for him, and he was content to have it so.

There was nothing in the Law to indicate that our Lord should be executed as a blasphemer of the divine law. Yet blasphemy was the charge preferred against him. The Sanhedrin decided that he was a blasphemer in that he had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again," and also in claiming that he was the Son of God. Apparently, then, the thing which was specially weighing on his mind and from which he would have liked to be relieved was the ignominy and shame of being crucified as a criminal, as a blasphemer of the Father he loved so well.

Jesus knew that he had come into the world to die, and that he must suffer. But this part of his experience he had not fully understood. Evidently he knew that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up"; for comparatively early in his ministry he had stated this in his conversation with Nicodemus. But as he came down nearer and nearer to the time of his humiliation, his degradation, and realized all that it meant, he felt a great shrinking from it and poured out his heart in the cry, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" But immediately—proving that his affirmation, at the time of his consecration, "Lo I come to do thy will, O God," was not empty words—he added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt!"—Matthew 26:39.

ARE WE WILLING TO SHARE HIS IGNOMINY?

And so to his disciples our Savior said: Are ye able to lay down your lives completely, even though this shall mean to you injustice in the taking away of your lives? Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of? There will be disgrace and ignominy connected with it all. Are ye willing to share with me in this, my cup? They answered: "We are able." They were willing.

This, we see, is the same cup represented in the Communion Service. The bread represents the body and the wine the blood of our Lord. The cup especially represented the shame and ignominy connected with his death; and the two disciples said that they were willing to share his cup—they had no hesitancy.

At any cost they would be faithful. They would comply with any conditions he would make. They did not, of course, yet know the full import of the word baptism or of the word cup. These were things all his disciples were feeling after. When Pentecost should come, these things that Jesus had spoken to them would come to their remembrance, as he had foretold. (John 16:4; 13:19) But they were willing and anxious. And that is all that we can be. Jesus guaranteed that, being willing, they should have these experiences; that, continuing willing, continuing to suffer with him here, they should reign with him in his throne. But as to the particular place for each in the throne, that would not be for him to say, but for the Father.

The courage, the fortitude, of our dear Redeemer in walking the narrow way fills us with admiration. How strong and brave was his character! He had no thought of looking back; his whole being was intent upon accomplishing the will of his Father in heaven—upon sacrificing himself in the interest of the world. What a noble example was set before the apostles!—greatness in humility, victory through entire self-surrender!

DRINKING OF THE LORD'S CUP BY THE CHURCH

The drinking of the Lord's cup by the church, represents our participation in the sufferings of Christ in the present time. None shall be a member of the body of the great Mediator of the New Covenant unless he come in now under the proper terms. The drinking of the blood, then, is the sharing of the cup. For if we drink not of his cup, neither shall we share with him in his glory. He said, "Drink ye all of it." All must drink, and the entire cup must be drained during this age.

It is a very great privilege that we are permitted to have a share in the sufferings of Christ. "If we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him." We shall participate in the inauguration of the new dispensation, and in dispensing its blessings. The antitype of Moses, who will do the sprinkling, is Christ the Head and the church his body, glorified, of whom we read in Acts 3:22: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me"—that is, Moses was his type, on a smaller scale. The body is now being raised up. Jesus was first raised up, then all the apostles; and following after, the remaining members of his body.

As Moses sprinkled all the people, so this antitypical Moses, when completed, will "sprinkle" the world of mankind; and this will mean the bringing of them into harmony with the divine law. It will require the thousand years to "sprinkle" mankind. So there is a great difference between the drinking of the cup and the sprinkling of the blood. The sprinkling with the blood represents justification, while the drinking of the cup by the church represents, not only justification, but sanctification.

OUR LORD'S RECOGNITION OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES

Our Lord, in his memorable words to St. Peter—"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—referred, evidently, to his dying experiences, which were severe in the extreme. He was dishonored of men and reckoned as an enemy of God—a blasphemer. His physical sufferings he knew would be intense, but to his perfect mind the shame and disesteem, the opprobrium, added greatly to the poignancy of his anguish. Yet this was the cup the Father had given him; it was the divine purpose respecting him.

Our Lord had all the experiences necessary for proving and testing his loyalty; for it was necessary that he manifest his loyalty before both angels and men. The whole matter had been divinely arranged from before the creation of man. He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8) Everything pertaining to that slain Lamb was foreknown by the Father. Jesus was to drink the cup which belonged to the sinner, in order that he might redeem man and might thus be a faithful and merciful High Priest. This was the cup of suffering and death. It was necessary that Jesus should suffer the death of the cross, in order that he might redeem the Jew.

LOVE AND LOYALTY MANIFESTED BY SUBMISSION

All his sufferings were foretold in the Scriptures. The crucifixion was pictured by the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. All of his experiences were foreknown, forearranged and necessary. When he came to earth to do the Father's will, he did not know of all that was to come. But he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, the things which were "written in the book." He submitted himself to all the Father's will, and thus he proved his loyalty. As he himself declared, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of my Father which sent me!" As the hour of the consummation of his sacrifice drew near, in the lonely shades of Gethse-

mane, the Master prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" We are not to suppose that he prayed for the cup of death to pass away; but he wondered whether or not the ignominious experiences of the crucifixion might pass. Yet we find that he did not murmur nor rebel, but said, "Not my will, but thine, be done!"

SPECIAL SUPERVISION OF OUR CUP

We see that our beloved Lord drank of the bitter cup to its dregs, and did so thankfully. And we are to remember that he gave the cup to us, that we should all drink of it—not that we should all have exactly the same experiences that he had, but that we must all drink of the cup of suffering and death in the Father's own way. Jesus was the perfect One, and the Father dealt with him in a very particular manner.

In our cases the experiences would be different; because of our imperfection we could not be dealt with from the standpoint of perfection. We are, therefore, not to think of our cup as a definite, fixed program as was the Master's, but rather that the Father permitted us to have a share in the cup of death with his Son. Our cup is supervised by our Savior, although it is the cup poured by the Father; for it is the Father's program.

In the Master's case the cup was necessary for the sins of the whole world. In our case it is not necessary, but it has pleased the Father to grant us a share in the sufferings and glory of our Lord. Jesus makes good our deficiencies and develops our characters, fashioning us into his own glorious image.

OUR REASONABLE SERVICE

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Romans 12:1.

This exhortation of St. Paul's is based upon the preceding statements of the eleventh chapter of this same epistle, as is shown by the connecting word therefore—because of those things recited in that chapter. The eleventh chapter tells of the mercies of God toward both natural Israel and spiritual Israel—not so much to the world. But the tenth chapter takes up in elaborate form the mercies of God toward all his creatures. In this epistle the Apostle is addressing those who had been Gentiles. In view of these mercies of God (his plan of salvation and the call of some of the Gentiles to take the places in the body of Christ, lost by natural Israel) St. Paul exhorts his hearers to present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable.

The question naturally arises, Whom did the Apostle address? He evidently is using these words as an exhortation, not to the world, but to believers. The introduction to the epistle indicates that it was written to those already consecrated. But evidently some connected with the church at Rome had not yet made a consecration. Some who were believers, who had come to a knowledge of the Lord and had counted the cost of self-sacrifice, but who had not given themselves fully to the Lord, might yet become brethren in the truth in the full sense. The Apostle's words would apply equally to both classes—those who had presented their bodies living sacrifices, and those contemplating doing so. It would have been fully as proper to say, Brethren, you who have already given yourselves to the Lord, I beseech you that you fulfil your vow of consecration; for your bodies are holy and acceptable to God.

The heavenly Father never forces anybody; but he tells them that he is willing to accept sacrifices, and that now is the acceptable time to present them. He sets forth the fact that self-denial and sacrifice are the only terms upon which one can come into fellowship with him. But nowhere does he urge or command any one to make a consecration. To do so would be to change the matter from sacrifice to obligation; and the very thought of sacrifice is in opposition to requirement.

THE TERMS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Our best example of what we should do is shown by our Lord and the apostles, the chief members of God's royal family. Our Lord did not seek to entrap any into his service—as we see done today. On the contrary, he proceeded along high and noble lines. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that are oppressed and heavy-laden." This is an appeal to reason. If you have found that you are sin-sick, come unto me—I have the will and the way to help you to come to the Father.

When talking to the young ruler of the synagogue, our Lord set forth the terms of discipleship. He did not say, Never mind; do not make it too serious a matter. On the contrary, he stated just what are the terms of consecration. No man could be his disciple unless he would surrender all. To this rich young man our Lord showed that with all his morality there was inconsistency. He possessed wealth, and should use that

Without this supervision of our cup by our Lord, we might be very poorly developed in many qualities; therefore our cup needs to be specially supervised. And so he assures us that, while the necessary experiences are coming to us, at the same time his grace will be sufficient, and his strength will be made perfect in our weakness, and all things will be made to work together for our good.

Let us never forget that unless we partake of his cup, unless we are immersed into death with him, we can have no share in his kingdom of glory, we can never sit with him in his throne. Let us then count all the things of this earth as loss and dross that we may attain this pearl of great price. As the experiences of suffering come to us, let us not be affrighted, nor "think it strange concerning the fiery trials that shall try us, as though some strange thing happened unto us"; for even "hereunto were we called," to suffer with our beloved Master now, and by and by be glorified together with him in the kingdom eternal!

"Are ye able to walk in the narrow, strait way,
With no friend by your side, and no arm for your stay?
Can ye bravely go on through the darkening night?
Can ye patiently wait till the Lord sends the light?"

"Ah, if thus ye can drink of the cup he shall pour,
And if never the banner of truth ye shall lower,
His beloved ye are, and his crown ye shall wear,
In his throne ye shall sit, and his glory shall share!"

wealth to the glory of the Lord. He must not be selfish, or he could not be Christ's disciple.

The young man might have said, I have some children for whom I must make provision. But the Lord said, Give all that you have to God. A parent can consecrate his children, so far as he is concerned. The Lord would not ask any one to do that which he was unable to do. But he said, "Take up your cross and follow me," if you would be my disciple.—Mark 10:21.

Again, our Lord said, "He that putteth his hand to the plow, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom." (Luke 9:62) We should make up our mind to use all of our powers, or else stand aside. The Lord's method should be our guide. We should not try to entrap any one or resort to hocus-pocus to convince any one. We should not plead what there is to be gained in a material way by becoming a Christian. We should tell people that there is no other way to come into Christ but by the way of the cross. We cannot reach him in any other way. It is the Lord's way or no way. We must bear the cross, as he bore it. We believe that we do the people more good by setting forth the message with no uncertain sound than by trying to entrap them. Nevertheless, in putting before them the trials and the cross, we should also put before them the glory to follow.

TEXT APPLIED TO THE CONSECRATED

To those who have already made a consecration the thought would be, You have entered into a covenant with God to follow Jesus. You have given up your own human will. Remember that this includes your mortal body. Continue the work of presenting your body—of dying daily. Keep before your mind this covenant of sacrifice; for it is not yet fulfilled. The mere promise to fulfil a covenant is not fulfilling it.

The Father begets us of the holy Spirit, and gives us the great privileges that belong to those who have become new creatures in Christ. Then it is for us to go forward, and day by day lay down our lives in his service. It would be appropriate, therefore, for the Apostle to say to such, Lay down your lives daily. Remember that it is your mortal bodies which you are to sacrifice in the Lord's service. It is yourselves as old creatures, human beings, and not as new creatures, that are being sacrificed. Yours is a living sacrifice in the sense that this body, reckonedly passed out of sin, is being continually sacrificed. It is not given you to preserve, or to be your everlasting possession; but it is your covenant and privilege to accomplish the sacrifice of your flesh. Therefore I beseech you to do this.

TEXT APPLIED TO THE TENTATIVELY JUSTIFIED

To those whose justification has not been vitalized, the text might mean, You are desirous of serving God. This is indicated in your attending the meetings of the church. The fact that you assemble with the saints of this congregation signifies that you love holy things—that you desire to know the will of

God. Now then, brethren, I beseech you to make a full consecration of yourselves to God. Consider your body as a living sacrifice—not that you are to commit suicide and destroy your body, but that you are to esteem your body a living sacrifice, day by day using your strength and your life in the Lord's service.

The exhortation, "Present your bodies," then, would seem to be applicable both to the consecrated and to those who are following on to know the Lord. The next statement should be understood to be in harmony—"holy and acceptable to God." If this statement be taken in relation to those who are already consecrated, then the Apostle is saying, This vitalization of your justification which the Lord has granted you has constituted you holy. And because the Lord counts you holy, and yourselves wholly acceptable to him, you should continue to do good works—complete the good work which you have begun. The sacrifice being esteemed of God holy and acceptable, the results will be grand and glorious.

This exhortation, viewed from the standpoint of one who has not completed his consecration, might be understood to mean, If you take this step of consecration, remember that then the merit of Christ will be imputed to you, and that through the arrangement which he has made in Christ God is willing to accept you.

CONSECRATION TO DEATH MOST REASONABLE

Every one who recognizes God's mercies and blessings finds it a "reasonable service" to sacrifice the earthly things for the precious privilege of serving him. If it was a reasonable service for Jesus to leave the heavenly glory, to become a man, and to sacrifice himself unto death, then surely ours is most reasonable. We, being imperfect, have very little to give; and when there is an opportunity for showing our appreciation of the heavenly Father, then we should make haste to use it.

The Father made a proposition to the Lord Jesus, and it is not to be supposed that he would suggest anything but a reasonable service. To have asked Jesus to sacrifice his life for humanity without any reward of a future life would have been a most unreasonable thing. The Father set before the Redeemer a great joy, to be the recompense of his obedience. And so with us. The Lord does not invite us to sacrifice ourselves at the present time without any reward from him. He tells us that if we do this he will make us joint-heirs with his Son, participators with him in all the joys of the kingdom.

CONSECRATION NOT THE END OF OUR WORK

The term brethren may be viewed from two different standpoints. On the one hand, we may apply it to those who are in the state of prospective justification, in a justified attitude of mind, and whose justification is growing by every step they take toward God. On the other hand, it would refer to those who have become brethren in the fullest sense—who have taken the step of consecration, and whose consecration has been accepted by the Father through the Lord Jesus. With these there is a continual, a daily presentation. This morning we presented ourselves before the Lord and asked his blessing on the day. It is a presentation day by day and hour by hour. It is a constant surrender of self-will, in this way and in that way—a daily waving of our offering before the Lord. So it was with our Lord Jesus. He not only made the full consecration at the beginning, but day by day he laid down his life, until the sacrifice was completed on Calvary.

For one to make a consecration of his time and his talents, and then to withhold his offerings, would insure his not gaining the great prize for which the Father invited him to run. The great company will be made up of those who have presented their bodies, but who neglected their opportunities for laying down their lives—their time, influence, money, all—in the Lord's service. This neglect will lose them their place in the throne, their privilege of being a part of the bride class. The bride will be made up of those who not only have presented their bodies in the beginning, but have faithfully continued that presentation unto death.

CONSTRAINED BY GOD'S MERCIES

The Apostle states the reason why we should make this presentation of ourselves as being the "mercies of God"—"I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies." God's mercies are to a certain extent over all. He sends his sunshine and his rain upon the evil as well as upon the good. For many centuries God's special mercies were granted only to the Jews. But the arrangement of God's plan is such that Gentiles, as well as Jews, may now come into God's favor. God broke down the middle wall of partition through Christ, and thus gave all people an opportunity to come back into harmony with him and to have him as their Father, their Life-Giver, and through Christ to share his blessings.

As many as see and hear and have the eyes of their understanding opened, should consider this a reason for a full consecration, a full surrender, to the Lord. It is truly a most reasonable service, as the Apostle points out; and the prize which he attaches to the matter makes it unspeakably desirable and precious. It would be very unreasonable to accept God's marvelous favors and then neglect to live up to the conditions attached to them. If we really believe God, if we have a proper faith in his exceeding great and precious promises, we will joyfully and faithfully meet the requirements.

A lady said to us recently: You put more stress on godly living than we in our church have done. You say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." You put a special stress on believing. Yes, we replied, this word believe has a most important bearing on the entire matter. If we should say to you that if on your way home today you would stop at a certain house, of a certain number, you would find, in a particular corner under the steps, a little bag, and that it contained valuable treasure which should be yours—if you believed our words you would go and get that bag. If you said that you believed us, and then went another way altogether, we would be sure that you had not believed us. Your course would prove it.

Now the Lord has offered us the opportunity of being joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord in "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away." If we believe this fact, we will seek to know just what the conditions are. Whoever really believes will find that the conditions are very easy in comparison with the great reward. But if he fails to put forth his greatest effort to win this great prize, he will show that he has not believed the Message; for if he recognizes the offer and believes it, he will surely be eager to lay aside every weight and encumbrance and run patiently to the end to obtain the crown.—Hebrews 12:1, 2.

THE COMPLETENESS OF OUR OFFERING

It is, therefore, a reasonable service. The Apostle tells us the conditions. All who would have this great blessing must offer themselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. It is ours to present our bodies. It is not the new creature who does the presenting; there is no new creature at the time the body is presented. Our natural mind discerned from the message of the Lord that there is a more excellent way—a way of harmony with the Lord—and we desired to come thus into harmony with him. And that new, or changed, will presents our earthly interests and all that we have in sacrifice. We are altogether human when we offer ourselves to the Lord. We are then begotten to a new mind, a new hope, and thus are new creatures.

While we present ourselves to God, we do not come to him directly with our presentation. We come through the great High Priest—as in the type, the offering of the Lord's goat was presented by the high priest. We come to the Father through the Redeemer. We do not offer a justified sacrifice, but come with all our sins, for cleansing in that fountain opened for us. The sentiment of our hearts is:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee—
O Lamb of God, I come!"

But God could not accept a sacrifice in that imperfect condition; it is only as we come through the Priest that he recognizes us. If we were perfect, we might come in our own name; but we are not perfect, and so we come only through this High Priest, Jesus. The great High Priest then imputes his merit, and includes our sacrifice as a part of his own. The divine blessing then comes upon us—we are begotten of the holy Spirit. Thenceforth we are new creatures in Christ. We have been presented in God's way and have been accepted.

REFUSAL TO ACCEPT SHOWS LACK OF APPRECIATION

Now we are dead; and our life is hid with Christ in God. We presented our bodies, and they were made living sacrifices; they were then received by God and were slain with Christ and we arose to walk in newness of life. By the body is meant also all the earthly interests, both present, past and future—every interest that we ever had or might ever have. Such a one gives up all the hope or right he might otherwise have had in a future restitution. The covenant is a complete one. The sacrifice of such became holy and acceptable to God as soon as the merit of Jesus was imputed; and our offering continues to be acceptable to the end. And as day by day we lay down our lives in the Lord's service, it brings us more and more of the Lord's blessing, and we are more and more filled with his spirit.

To render all that we have in the service of the Lord is not only a most reasonable thing, but an offering far too small. It is far less than we would gladly render to him who has manifested toward us such wondrous compassion and grace. When God has offered us so great a reward and blessing in return for our poor lives, we should feel that a refusal to accept this offer would be an indication not only of a pitiful lack of appreciation of infinite goodness, but also a weakness of

mind. It would show a puerility of judgment which is unable to weigh and compare the trifling and transitory pleasures of self-will for this brief life with an eternity of joy and blessing and glory on the divine plane, far above angels and principalities and powers and every name that is named, next to our glorious Lord and Head—a station so glorious, so exalted, that no human mind can grasp its infinitude. Let us be faithful—even unto death!

LET US GO ON "IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH"!

"Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."—
Hebrews 10:21, 22.

The Apostle Paul is here drawing to the attention of the church, and especially to those familiar with the Jewish arrangements of that day, the fact that the Aaronic priesthood was only a typical one, designed for a time to illustrate greater things; that God's real plan was not to be carried out by the Aaronic priesthood from the house of Levi, and that their sacrifices of bulls and goats could not take away sins; but that from year to year this arrangement merely shielded God's typical people—typically covered them—through their covenant. The Apostle points out that there is to be a greater priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek; that our Lord is the Head of this priesthood, and that the Gospel church are his members, the under-priesthood. He then asks, Why should a better priesthood be needed than the one that God provided in Aaron and his sons? The answer is that they were sinners, and could never really cancel sin; and the blood of those animals possessed no real merit. Those priests themselves never really got back into favor with God. They merely had access into a typical Holy and Most Holy.

But now we have Christ as the Head of this new order of priesthood; let us realize our position as underpriests of this order. Our High Priest has entered into the true Most Holy. The evidence of this came in the Pentecostal blessing showing that the Father was well pleased with the sacrifice made by our Lord, and that all things were then ready to permit us also to come near to God, sharing our Redeemer's experiences, that we might later go to him beyond the veil and share his glory. Seeing that God has thus made all these gracious provisions, and has accepted us as the house of God to take the place of the house of Aaron—and so much greater than his house—let us enter into the real Holy and Most Holy, "with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

The under-priests were permitted to enter into the Holy, and after the Day of Atonement into the Most Holy. All, in this Gospel age, who have made consecration to God, and have been begotten of the spirit, are in the first Holy. Aaron and his sons were a type of the true priesthood; but we are not of the order of Aaron; we are not members of the Aaronic priesthood, but of the Melchizedek priesthood, under its great High Priest. "Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."—1 Peter 2:9.

LET US COME WITH TRUE HEARTS

Seeing, then, that we have confidence that God has made this arrangement, confidence to take the proper steps, and have presented our bodies living sacrifices, have gone through the antitypical consecration, and received the begetting of the holy Spirit, let us begin at once the work of the new order of Priesthood. There are great things to be accomplished: let us fully enter in with him—let us become full participators in this work—in everything that God has for us to do. Let us come with true hearts, however, realizing how wonderful are our blessings, how precious is the provision of the covering of our Savior's merit. Let us be true and loyal to this covenant into which we have entered with God.

The Lord's call under this covenant is, "Gather my saints together unto me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5) This call, or invitation, has been going forth during the entire Gospel age. And all the holy ones, all who have entered into this covenant, are privileged to have a share in the sacrifice of Christ and to co-labor with him.

Let us come with full assurance of faith in the sense that we shall have no doubt whatever that God's promises are true and for us. The world sees no cause for sacrificing in the present life, and they count us fools all the day long, as the Apostle says. But nevertheless in full assurance of faith, let us go on! Let us loyally press forward unto the end of the way, until we shall be joined to our great High Priest, and enter into his rest!

ANointed IN HIM

The anointing of the high priest in the type represented the divine appointment to office. Aaron was thus anointed of God. The Apostle Paul says that "no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron." Even Christ took not this honor upon himself. God appointed him, saying, "Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (Hebrews 5:4-6) God's direct dealings were with the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the one acceptable to the Father. God gave his holy Spirit to our Lord in fullest degree. Jesus himself tells us that God gave not his Spirit by measure unto him, because he was able to receive the holy Spirit in full measure. Those who are counted as his members are not able to receive the spirit in full measure, because of their imperfection. The less fallen man can receive more of the spirit, and the more fallen man can receive less.

When Christ appeared in the presence of God for us, and applied his merit for those who would offer themselves to become members of his body, to be associated with him in the glorious kingdom work, he received divine approval and sanction, which was manifested by the begetting by the holy Spirit of those who had presented themselves in consecration, the holy Spirit being first given at Pentecost. The Apostle Peter says that God fulfilled his promise to Jesus by granting him the holy Spirit to shed forth upon his disciples. (Acts 2:33) It is of the Father, and by the Son.

It was not necessary that the heavenly Father should pour out his holy Spirit upon each individual member of the body. We understand that the picture given in the type is quite complete. The holy Spirit being poured out upon the Head of the great High Priest, and flowing down over the skirts of his garments, all his body is thus anointed. We each receive our share of the anointing when we come into the body, and under the robe.

FULL ASSURANCE BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

Speaking to those who are privileged to come to God in prayer, the Apostle says, "Let us draw near in full assurance of faith." He is speaking to the house of God class. Natural Israel were of the house of God, too, but they were servants. The servants belong to the house, of course, but not in the very special sense, as do the children. We have the suggestion given us that Moses was faithful as a servant over his house, but that the church of Christ are a house of sons, and that Christ is Head over this house. It is this house of Sons that may draw near to God. The assurance with which these may rightly approach is dependent upon certain conditions here indicated. They must have a true heart, and are not to be double-minded. Entire heart loyalty must be theirs; they must fully demonstrate that they meant what they said when they gave their lives to God. Then they may come to the Lord with holy boldness, in full assurance of faith. All the steps of God's true people are steps of faith, of realization of his care. But there is a full assurance of faith in contrast with a lesser faith. A faith that is only partial will bring us somewhat near to God. A faith that is strong will bring us nearer. But a full assurance of faith is that faith which, if retained, will bring us off "more than conquerors," and make us at last members in full of the royal priesthood—in glory.

This full assurance of faith cannot be attained in a day. It requires quite a degree of information. And God has provided this information by instructing us in his Word as to what Christ did for us, and what he is willing to do; why he died for us, etc. All this is furnished us as a basis for faith. Then to further strengthen our faith, we have all the exceeding great and precious promises, and his daily providences over us. Therefore this fully consecrated class may draw near, and have the full assurance that they may attain all the glorious things to which God has invited them—to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

FULL ASSURANCE NECESSARY TO GOD'S APPROVAL

The Apostle intimates that without this full assurance of faith the child of God cannot come close to him. Only those who trust the Father as a little child would trust its earthly parent, can expect to make good progress in the narrow way and have the courage and confidence which it is the privilege of all who are his to have, and without which we cannot have the perfect peace and rest of heart promised. "According to your faith be it unto you," is the promise. The desire to draw nearer and nearer to God must be in our heart; else we shall fail to go on and attain our privilege in Christ. Such a desire is a manifestation of our hunger and thirst after righteousness, which the Lord expects to see before he makes good to such his engagement that they shall be filled.

There are definite conditions specified in the Word as necessary to continued progress along this line. As we cannot draw close to the Lord except through this full assurance, neither can we have the assurance unless our hearts are kept "sprinkled from an evil conscience," or a consciousness of evil; for, as the Apostle also declares, "If our own heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." (1 John 3:20) We may be sure that if our course as new creatures in Christ is condemned by our own conscience it would also be condemned by God.

Therefore, if the child of God would draw very near, and would have the blessed realization of the Father's smile of approval continually, he must seek to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men—a conscience which can truthfully say, I am striving to do that which would be pleasing to the Lord, that which is in full harmony with my covenant of sacrifice; and I am striving also to do that which would justly have the approval of righteous men. Nothing short of this is at all permissible in those who have consecrated themselves to be members of the royal priesthood, to sacrifice their lives in the Lord's service that they may reign with him.

CAUSE AND REMEDY FOR LACK OF FAITH

He who has begun a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it. (Philippians 1:6) But how few children of God, comparatively, have this "full assurance of faith" which is our glorious privilege! How few can say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever!" Surely, by God's grace I shall ultimately gain the heavenly kingdom and the glorious things which he has promised to those who love him. The few who can thus enter fully into sympathy with the Apostle Paul and the Prophet David in their expressions of confidence have therein a great joy, a great blessing, a great rest of heart which none others possess.

Let us therefore inquire why it is that the number who thus enter into the rest of faith is so small. What are the hindrances to others, and how can these hindrances be removed? How can each one of the children of God enjoy fully this, his

blessed patrimony? Many say, or think if they do not say, Oh, that I could feel sure that God's goodness and mercy would continue with me to the end! Oh, that I could remove my doubts of gaining the kingdom, of being ultimately "more than conqueror"!

What is the difficulty with these? Why do they not have the "full assurance of faith" of their acceptance? We answer that their difficulty is a lack of trust in God; and such a lack is not pleasing to him, for "without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6) Moreover, this lack of faith is a constant hindrance to their overcoming; as it is written: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4) The Christian who has not the shield of faith, and a large one, is continually at a disadvantage before the adversary, and all the hosts of evil.

Then let each one who realizes a lack in this direction pray earnestly, as the apostles of old, "Lord, increase our faith!" And then, acting in harmony with this prayer, let such a one cultivate such faith in his or her own heart. (1) Let him refresh his memory continually with the precious promises of the Word, becoming very familiar with these. (2) Let him seek more and more to remember that, having made a covenant with the Lord, these promises are his; and in his heart and with his lips let him claim them as his before the throne of grace, with thanksgiving. Let him claim them in his thoughts, and in his conferences on holy things with the brethren.

When trials or difficulties arise, he should call to mind these precious promises, remembering that they belong to him, because God has given these promises to such as love him and have made a covenant with him by sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5; Malachi 3:17) He should resolve that henceforth he will trust the Word of his heavenly Father implicitly. If some seeming accident befall him, let him call to mind the promise, "All things work together for good to them that love God, who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) Let him thus assure himself that the seeming accident could not have occurred had God not seen a way to make it the channel of a needed lesson or blessing to him.

Let us never forget that he who has begun this good work in us changes never, and that if we keep our hearts in harmony with him, if our faith is still firm and clear in the great atonement made for our sins, and we continually renew our consecration to him, keeping our all on the altar of sacrifice, letting the Lord consume it in his own way, seeking not our own will, our own way, but his will alone, we have every reason to have full confidence that this good work in us will be finished, that we shall enter with joy into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord, and shall hear his blessed words of approval, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

APRIL 19.—Luke 14:25-35.

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."—Matthew 16:25.

It was at the close of the great Teacher's ministry. Vast multitudes were following him, all, according to the requirements of the law, going up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of the Passover, at which Jesus foreknew that he would die as the antitypical Passover Lamb. Occasionally in the journey he would turn and address some of the multitude. Today's lesson gives us some of his teachings. It was the custom of teachers in those days to accept disciples, or pupils—those who considered them great teachers and desired to learn of them and profit by their instruction. To this day Christians claim to be the disciples, or followers, of Jesus, claim to be giving heed to his word and seeking the blessing which he promised to his faithful followers.

The terms of discipleship which Jesus set forth, it will be noted, are very different from those proclaimed by some who profess to be his mouthpieces, his ministers. They sometimes proclaim that it is a sufficient sign of discipleship for persons to arise in a congregation and declare that they desire the prayers of God's people. Such are counted converts. To get them to take even this step requires the holding out of inducements. Sometimes the inducements are of a commercial kind—greater business prosperity to the merchant, greater favor with the employer for the clerk, an entrance into society or a better prospect of political preferment.

If we contrast these methods with the words of Jesus in this lesson, we shall perceive that the vast number of nominal Christians have been, so to speak, inveigled into professing something that they never intended to profess. Many are entrapped into professing Christianity who never became Chris-

tians, according to the Master's conditions of discipleship, and who hearken not to his Word.

"If any man come unto me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Surely there is no excuse for us to misunderstand such plain terms and conditions. The Master did not say that only his disciples could ever gain everlasting life. His general teaching was that the whole world is lost, estranged from God and without the right to everlasting life. But he came to die, "the Just for the unjust," that all of the unjust might have the opportunity of returning to divine favor. He did not say that none but his followers would have such an opportunity of future life. Those who so declare are adding to the Word and helping thus, eventually, to confound themselves.

What Jesus did teach was that he would in due time be "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The world had already existed for 4,000 years before Jesus came, and no one will dispute that those who died previous to his coming had no opportunity of knowing him and being his disciples. Yet he died to bless them, as well as to bless all who have been born into the world since. This blessing of the world, he declared, is to be accomplished by his kingdom; and he told them plainly that his kingdom was not of this world, age, or epoch, but of a future period. For the time being he was merely inviting disciples, and not attempting to reach the world.

The disciples were invited to become joint-heirs with Jesus in his kingdom, that they might sit with him in his throne and participate with him in his great work of human uplift—Restitution of all that was lost in Adam and redeemed at Calvary. He told them plainly that only through much tribulation would they be able to enter the kingdom class; that the tribulations would prove their love of righteousness, their loyalty to God; and that God had purposely made the way so narrow that only the few, the very choicest of humanity in God's sight, could find it—a very few walking in that way to its further end of glory, honor and immortality.

With this view clearly before our mind's eye, there is a reasonableness in the hard terms of discipleship. Only those willing to comply with such terms, and thus to demonstrate their love and loyalty to God, could properly be entrusted with the great power, glory and honor which will be granted to the kingdom class, in association with the Redeemer, as soon as it shall have been completed. Let us examine these words carefully, meanwhile measuring ourselves—not our flesh, but our spirit, our intentions, our desires.

Well did Henry Ward Beecher say respecting this statement made by the Master: "Never was there before, and never has there been since, I apprehend, such a speech made to those that professed to be willing and desirous to follow another." And probably a parallel statement is found in Matthew's Gospel (10:37): "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." The word hate is apparently used in contrast with love. To be a disciple of Christ, then, means that we must love supremely the Lord and the principles for which he stands, so that love for others would comparatively be hatred.

This proposition in its very start signifies a cutting off—so far as the man is concerned, the will, the purpose—of every other love that would conflict with our love for the Lord and with our obedience to his will. Our earthly loves are to be counted as nothing in comparison. We are to be ready to sacrifice at the Lord's command every earthly hope, aim, object, and to lay down our lives willingly, gladly. Such a manifest a devotion of this kind can be trusted with anything. Of these the Lord speaks, saying prophetically, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I (come to) make up my jewels."—Malachi 3:17.

The fact that Jesus was of this character himself, and placed the Father's will above all other considerations, is an assurance that all amongst his joint-heirs in the kingdom will have the same mind, the same spirit. He assures us that the kingdom will not be a selfish one, but the very reverse. The kings and princes and judges of that kingdom will be not only irresistible in power, but incorruptible, unbribeable. With them the divine standard will be first, in the absolute sense.

Such devotion to the Lord as is here described will necessarily at some time or other mean the severing of many earthly ties. It means that the followers of Jesus will be thought a peculiar people; and that many will think their course strange, unnatural, insane. Hence, as St. Paul said, we are counted fools all the day long for Christ's sake—because we preach the wisdom of God and the love of God in preference to the wisdom of humanity and the love of humanity. Of such St. John writes, saying, "As he was, so are we in this world"—ostracized, misunderstood, reprov'd, slandered. Only those who can stand such an experience can be winners of the crown to which Jesus referred, saying, To him that overcometh I will give a crown of life, and permit him to sit with me in my throne.

Who is sufficient for these things? asks the Apostle. And he furnishes the answer: "Our sufficiency is of God"; and in the promises—"my grace is sufficient for thee; my strength

is made perfect in weakness"; and again, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

DEFINITION OF CROSS-BEARING

Adding to the severity of the terms, Jesus declared, "Who soever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." It is not enough that we should start out with a courageous intention, a bold acknowledgment of Jesus, and a bold profession of discipleship. After we have been faithful in taking our stand on the Lord's side, we must be proven. Not merely those who have a little enthusiasm at the beginning, but those who shall demonstrate their worthiness by their faithfulness will be accounted worthy, and will be finally accepted by the Lord. Cross-bearing must be a daily matter. Our crosses are those oppositions of the world, the flesh and the devil which conflict with the divine will as laid down for us in the Lord's Word. The only proper sentiment is that which the Master expresses, saying, "Not my will, but thine."

As an admonition to all not to undertake discipleship without mature deliberation, our Lord gave a parable of a man who began to build a tower, laying the foundation, but who was not able to complete it, and thus wasted his effort and made himself ridiculous, foolish. Another illustration was that of going to war without adequate preparation—an undertaking which would result disastrously. All the followers of Christ set out to build character and to "fight a good fight." Whoever enlists under the banner of Jesus takes his stand against Satan and sin, and must expect to have a hard battle and not to receive the victor's crown, nor to hear the words, "Well done," except by faithful perseverance in well doing.

What a blessing it would be if all who espouse the cause of Christ would do so with a full, clear understanding of what they are doing and with the fixed determination to go onward in the good way, not even to look back! The cause of Christ would be much further advanced amongst men; and while their number would be much smaller, their influence and power in the world would undoubtedly be much greater.

"SALT IS GOOD, BUT—"

Salt has preservative qualities in connection with whatever it touches. It also serves to bring out the flavor of our food. In olden times it was used as a symbol of faithfulness, loyalty; and it is said that even yet some of the Arabs would be faithful to death to any person in whose home they had eaten salt. To them it seems to mean a pledge of loyalty.

Jesus used salt as a symbol, representing his own loyalty to God and the loyalty which all of his followers must have, and not only so, but which they must maintain. If salt lose its value for seasoning purposes, it is useless for anything else. It will not serve as a fertilizer, for it has an opposite effect. It is absolutely useless except for its intended purpose. So the Christian has a special purpose in the world—to be a preservative power, to have, as it were, antiseptic qualities, and to draw out all the good qualities of those with whom he is connected. This is the mission of the Christian in respect to the world. If he fail in this, he has failed in the purpose for which he was called, and is of no particular value in the Lord's service.

"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear," said Jesus, in conclusion. All of his followers are to take heed to these words. Whoever neglects them despises the One who gave them, and will surely fail of a blessing that might otherwise have been secured. But as for the world, "ears they have, but they hear not; eyes have they, but they see not." We are not to measure the world by the same standards that we measure ourselves and all who profess to be the followers of Jesus. The world's highest standard is the Golden Rule. The Christian's highest standard is self-sacrifice, doing God's will at any cost.

HEAVENLY INTEREST IN SINNERS

APRIL 26.—Luke 15:1-10.

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—Verse 10.

Bible students should always seek to view the jewels of the Lord's Word in the settings in which they have been placed. To neglect this is to lose a portion of the lesson intended. The scribes and the Pharisees held themselves aloof from the common people—the scribes, because the masses were illiterate; and the Pharisees, under the claim that the people were sinners, cut off from relationship to God, and therefore not proper to be recognized by the holy of humanity, which they claimed to be.

Jesus, however, received the common people, even the publicans, acknowledged sinners. His superior knowledge did not make him haughty, and his superior righteousness did not make him proud and unsympathetic. He has set his followers

an example that they should walk in his steps. And the more closely they follow him, the more pleasing will they be to the Father, and the more ready for a share in the kingdom for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

Our lesson tells us how the Pharisees and the scribes murmured against Jesus, charging against him as a sin that he received sinners and ate with them. Whatever did not harmonize with their standards they could only contest. Their difficulty in part was that they had too high an opinion of themselves. Their spirit in this matter was an evil one, begotten of the adversary. Hence Jesus sometimes spoke of them as being children of the devil, because his works they did, and his spirit they had. But even this does not signify that the

Pharisees were beyond hope of salvation. Did not Jesus address St. Peter on one occasion, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan (adversary)"? He was an adversary, had the adverse spirit at the time; but, corrected in harmony with the Lord's spirit, everything was changed.

So it is with us. "His servants ye are to whom ye render service." "By their fruits shall ye know them," said the Master. Applying his words to many who profess to be his disciples, we are bound to suppose that either intentionally or ignorantly they are in opposition to the Master's Spirit and teachings—adversaries of his teachings.

Jesus, knowing the thoughts of the Pharisees, and perhaps noting their gestures and looks or hearing their words, answered them in a parable, saying, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it?" And finding it, he lays it upon his shoulders rejoicing, and tells the fact to his neighbors exultantly. This course of the shepherd, Jesus declared, illustrates the attitude of God and all the holy angels associated with him. They have a special feeling of interest in those who have strayed, and especially rejoice in the recovery of such. There is more rejoicing over the repentant sinner than over ninety and nine just persons needing no repentance.

Oh, how encouraging it is to us to know that this is the sentiment of heaven, and that the fall of man and our imperfections do not stand as a perpetual bar to recognition by the Lord, if we return to him! He is merciful, and will abundantly pardon, and will remove our sins from us as far as the East is from the West. But this interest is in the repentant one or in the one who has not sinned beyond repentance. Any sheep, having been found by the Shepherd and then preferring the wolfish, would no longer be interesting to the heavenly ones.

Many apply this parable inconsistently. They seem to think of the whole world of mankind as representing the flock of a hundred sheep, and the one straying as representing the sinners of earth, comparatively few. Surely this cannot be the true interpretation! Rather, as the Prophet has declared, "All we like sheep have gone astray." "There is none righteous, no not one."

Let us rather interpret the parable on a broader scale, in comportment with the facts and the Scriptures. Let us understand the one stray sheep to represent Adam and his family; and the ninety and nine just persons needing no repentance as representing the holy angels. To this view every feature of the parable inclines. The Good Shepherd left the heavenly flock and came to earth to find, to redeem, to recover, mankind, the lost sheep; and there is more rejoicing in heaven over human recoveries from sin and alienation from God than over the holy ones themselves, than over each other, who have never been alienated, never needed redemption.

The lesson to the Pharisees is plain. They had a different spirit from that of the holy ones. Theirs was an earthly view, a selfish one, a proud and haughty one, out of accord with the divine spirit, and not pleasing to God. Jesus would have all of his disciples copy God. "Be ye like unto your Father which is in heaven." "He is kind to the unthankful." "His mercy endureth forever"—to a full completeness.

His mercy sent his Son, the Under Shepherd, to be our Redeemer, and to help us back into his favor. His mercy will pursue the lost sheep until every member of Adam's race shall have been brought to a knowledge of the truth and to a full opportunity of returning to the fold of God. To this end the Messianic kingdom is to be established. To this end also is the present call for the church, to be a royal priesthood, that under the guidance of the great Deliverer, they may be co-laborers with him in carrying the message of God's grace to all the members of Adam's family.

Oh, how different this view of our loving Creator from the one which was handed down to us from the dark ages! How different from the one which represented the Almighty as angry in a vicious sense!—as having prepared in advance a place for the eternal torture of the human family, except a few who would have the hearing ears and happen to hear the message in the present life. On the contrary, we find that God's loving provision is only beginning to be manifested, in his favor toward Christ and the church; and that ultimately the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth, until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God.

In proportion as we become Godlike we have an interest in sinners—especially in those who through heredity or evil environment are more deeply steeped in sin, ignorance and superstition. Having God's Spirit, we are glad to do anything in our power to reach these sinners. Nevertheless, we are

not to be wise above what is written. We are not to expect to find all the sheep. Rather, we are to prepare as many as the Lord our God shall call and draw to be associated with the great Chief Shepherd in the work which he shortly will institute, the work of seeking the lost sheep and finding it and restoring it—all the willing and obedient.

"The Son of Man came to seek and to save (recover) that which was lost." The race was lost, not merely a few, the church; and their recovery is to include all that was lost. This does not signify universalism, but will be accomplished in bringing every member of Adam's race to a full knowledge of God and to full opportunity of recovery from sin and death.—1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

Jesus gave another parable of similar import, to illustrate the same great truth from another angle. It was the custom among Jewish women to wear on the forehead a fringe of coin bangles. These might be of gold or silver, and sometimes represented her dowry. The loss of one of these coins would represent more than its intrinsic value; for its absence marred the beauty of the bangles. The search for the coin would mean that, instead of its being abandoned as not worthy of consideration, it would be hunted for diligently until found. The female neighbors would learn of the loss, and also learn if it were found, and would rejoice with her greatly. This is another illustration of joy in the presence of the angels of God over one repentant sinner.

THE VALUE OF A MAN

Jesus said, "Are ye not of much more value than many sparrows?" And in the present lesson he intimates that a man is of much more value than many coins and of much more value than many sheep. We all agree that it would be difficult to estimate too highly, too fully, the value of a human life, especially if it were our own life or the life of some one dear to us. But to what extent do we manifest this in our daily lives?

Each should put the question to himself first, before applying it to his neighbors. How do I manifest the spirit of God toward my fellow-men, in placing as the first object of my interest a human life? What am I doing day by day that substantiates my professed interest in humanity in general? How am I showing my interest in my friends, my relatives, my children, my brothers and my sisters?

The manufacturer should take up this subject and ask himself, To what extent am I placing coin as of more value than humanity? To what extent am I allowing the accumulation of coin to interfere with the making and the giving of proper protection to my employees and all for whose welfare I have a care, a responsibility? Their fingers, their eyes, their limbs, their health, their lives, should be precious to every one who has the Spirit of God to the slightest degree.

Each Christian should ask himself, How much of God's Spirit have I? How much of my time am I giving to helping my fellow-men out of their difficulties and trials back to God? How much am I sacrificing of my time and strength in going after the lost sheep? Harken to the Apostle, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." "He that doeth righteousness is righteous"—and not merely he that professes to be a follower of Jesus.

Nevertheless, we are not to forget that God is the one chiefly interested in this great work, and that he has sent forth his Son for its accomplishment. We are not to forget that not only we have an interest, but that divine interest and love are greater than ours, and that divine wisdom is superior; and our course should be to give strict heed to "him that speaketh from heaven," to follow his course, his example.

This may mean that we shall to some extent be misunderstood by others. There are many theories for saving the world by social uplift, political uplift, moral uplift, vice-fighting, etc. Undoubtedly, the principle remains always true that there are but two great captains in the warfare between sin and righteousness; namely, Christ and Satan. It remains true also that whoever is fighting for the one is fighting against the other. It is for us to make sure, first of all, that we are on the Lord's side, on the side of righteousness, truth, purity and goodness. There is still a further step—to make sure that we are fighting as our Captain would wish us to fight; that we are laboring as he would wish us to labor; that we are spending ourselves as he would wish us to be spent.

"This is the will of God (concerning you), even your sanctification." Thus our personal salvation comes first, in God's order. Reconciled to God ourselves and consecrated to his service, we inquire, What is the next step? The answer comes, "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs." At first we might be disposed to demur, to say, Lord, should we not rather go after the straying, after the lost sheep? The answer is given by the Lord, through the Apostle, that we are to "do good unto

all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the household of faith." If, therefore, the household of faith demands all of our time when we have the opportunity, we may be doing nothing for the lost sheep, but only helping to perfect those whom the Lord has already found.

The circumstances of the Lord's providence alone can direct our course. When we see his purpose, his object, in this ar-

rangement, all is clear. He is taking out of the world a peculiar people, to be joint-heirs with his Son in the kingdom; and they all need education along spiritual lines for their own development, and to fit and prepare them to be the royal priesthood—to be kings and priests unto God—who by and by are to judge, to chasten, to uplift, to bless, all the world, in proportion as they shall prove willing and obedient.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS

FORGIVENESS VS. EXPIATION

Question.—In relation to sins partly wilful, are stripes given for the portion of wilfulness? And when the sin is expiated, is it then canceled?

Answer.—Our Lord died for the sin of Adam—for just the one original sin, and all sins which grew out of that original sin. This sin of Adam affected the body, mind and morals of all the race. Therefore we each have not only our own inherited imperfections to contend with, but also the imperfections of all those around us.

From the time that any one is begotten of the holy Spirit all things become new. The members of the little flock class have no record whatever of condemnation against them; all that condemnation is completely eliminated. The imputation of Christ's merit to their flesh made them perfect in God's sight, and they were brought forth as new creatures.

These new creatures have entered into a covenant with God to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. In the present time, as the Apostle says, we have this treasure of the new nature in an earthen vessel; that is, we have it under unfavorable conditions. We have also besetments from those around us and from the adversary to oppose us. All sins, then, that are the result of these adverse conditions, and to which our will does not consent, are coverable by the merit of Christ. If any of these new creatures unwittingly do that which is contrary to the divine will, they need not remain in a condemned condition. The Word instructs us that we should go immediately to the throne of heavenly grace and obtain mercy and forgiveness, and help for every time of need.

But suppose that the sin is not merely one of temptation—suppose there is a measure of wilfulness or a measure of slackness, so that the child of God is thus far responsible, what then? We answer that he may still go to the throne of heavenly grace, and the portion of his sin which was unwilling will be covered by the merit of Christ. Whatever portion of the sin is wilful is deserving of punishment, stripes; and these stripes he will surely get. The Father will not allow his children to wander away without help. The stripes complete the expiation of that sin; and it will be canceled from the record. Justice has no longer any charge against him.

But the Scriptures clearly tell us that if any consecrated child of God should sin with full wilfulness there would be no forgiveness whatever for that sin, and it could not be expiated by stripes. The penalty would be death—the second death. If he sins with no wilfulness, in full ignorance, entirely without intention, the sin is entirely forgivable, by application for the merit of the precious blood. If he sins with partial ignorance and partial wilfulness, there is a portion that would be forgiven and a portion that must be expiated.

The Apostle Paul declares that if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged of the Lord; but that when we are judged of the Lord we are chastened, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:31, 32) And this chastening that comes upon us is the proper penalty for our degree of wilfulness. The object of the Lord in meeting out this chastisement is that we shall learn the needed lesson, and be more watchful.

CHILDREN OF THE FIRST, OR THE SECOND ADAM?

Question.—Whose children will the world be when they awake in the morning of the new dispensation—the children of Adam, or the children of Christ, the second Adam?

Answer.—We understand that they will still be the children of Adam. When we think of our Lord as the Life-giver of the world, we should remember that he is the Life-giver only to those who come unto the Father through him. When the masses of mankind awaken in the next age, they will not have undergone any change which would lift them out of Adam and condemnation to death, into Christ and justification of life.

The New Covenant which God will seal with the precious blood of Christ is to be a covenant primarily with Israel—to those Jews who are his people, to those who will accept Christ. The faithful Israelites who will accept the Lord and the covenant relationship through the Mediator which is thus inaugurated for their benefit, will, as soon as they do this, come under the blessings of this covenant. But mankind in general, who

will not yet have come to a position of acceptance of the Mediator, will still be in the same attitude of today—aliens, strangers, foreigners. The work of the church during that time is described in Revelation 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." But none will begin to live until they partake of the Water of Life.

The world of mankind now go down into death as strangers, aliens from God, and it will be for them after their awakening to avail themselves of the privileges of that time. The Apostle John declares, "He that hath the Son hath life." Those who are awakened will not have this life, not having come into relationship with Christ. His relationship to them during the next age will evidently be that of a benevolent ruler, who is willing to enlighten them, to adopt them, if they will, as children, and who is willing to bring them up to the condition where they may have life everlasting. It will take the entire thousand years to fully perfect the race—to bring them up to perfection.

"Tell the whole world these blessed tidings;
Speak of the time of rest that nears;
Tell the oppressed of every nation,
'Jubilee lasts a thousand years!'"

The Lord Jesus will become the Father of all, just as soon as they comply with the required terms. He will give them, first, enlightenment and knowledge. Then if they use this knowledge, light and opportunity, and desire to come into harmony with him, he will receive them as his children, and grant them the blessings under the New Covenant.

We recall the Scripture which says that the law shall go forth from Mt. Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."

These people represent the world in general outside of those who have accepted the terms of the covenant. It represents them as learning a lesson and desiring to come into harmony with God. They say one to another, Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord's house, and let us walk in his paths. Not until they do this will the Mediator recognize them in any sense of the word, nor will they be on probation for everlasting life. As soon as they are ready to walk in the way of holiness, they will be counted as his children.

FLEETING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

Dear Brother Russell:—

My ever-increasing love for the truths now due, and my growing zeal for the scattering of the same among the masses of people who are beginning to hunger for something more satisfying than brilliant essays and talented choirs, prompts me to mention several opportunities for service which many might use if brought to their attention.

Many sisters have such splendid chances among their grocers, druggists, and others with whom they deal. The workers in Babylon are always begging these merchants for something for the church-fair, or asking them to buy tickets for the social. It has occurred to me, why not try to sell them the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES? Arrangements could be made to make purchases when no customers are likely to be present, and when the merchant would have spare time. A first volume might be carried, and after making purchases, inquire whether he has ever seen the book. He might be told how it has opened up the Bible to you and then he should be canvassed for a set. If he hesitates about taking a set, sell him a first volume. Say you will want to know how he likes it, as this will make him more likely to read. Try to make some of your purchases thereafter when he is not very busy, that opportunity may be had to water the seed sown.

Brethren employed where there are fellow-workmen have in many cases a grand opportunity to witness to them. These might be canvassed for the STUDIES at the noon hour. Try to eat your luncheon (if you take it with you) near a different man each day, and in the course of conversation tell him about