

of us to misrepresent the punishment of sin as being eternal torture. Thus we directly contradicted God's arrangement, drew attention away from the present punishment and wages of sin, and made the future punishments so absurdly unreasonable that nobody believes them, or, believing them, are misled into the supposition that a dying prayer for forgiveness will permit an utter escape from their penalties. We cannot improve upon the divine arrangement, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"—either in the present

life or in that which is to come—but in no case a devilish and eternal torture.

"Upon thy Word I rest,  
So strong, so sweet, so sure;  
So full of comfort blest,  
So wonderful, so pure—

The Word that changeth not, that faileth never!  
My King, I rest upon thy Word forever!"

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## MERCY AND TRUTH COMPONENT ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart." "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Prov. 3:3; Micah 6:8.

Mercy and truth are great principles of righteousness. Truth and righteousness are, we may say, synonymous. That which is right is true, and that which is true—firm, faithful, steady, genuine—is usually right. The record does not say that we shall bind justice about our neck. Justice is a quality which we are not permitted to exalt too highly, except in our hearts and minds, as a principle of the divine standard. We are to remember that there is none righteous, no, not one—none perfect. Hence our course in respect to justice cannot be the same as that of our heavenly Father. He recognizes no lower standard than justice, up to which everything must measure.

### GIVE MERCY AND TRUTH PROMINENT PLACE

If we are acceptable to the Father, it can be only by righteousness. And if we have not righteousness, it must be obtained from Christ; for God receives nothing short of perfection. Though imperfect in ourselves, we are to come up to the standard of justice as nearly as possible in our own personal conduct, but we are not to exact full justice from mankind. Since they have no one to make good for them, it is our duty to be benevolent toward them, and thus emulate the character of God, who is merciful. While he keeps the two qualities, justice and mercy, distinctly separate in his dealings, it is not for us to do so.

For one to keep the principles of truth and of righteousness before his own mind, is to be a thoroughly upright man or woman, one in whom truth, purity, goodness, will be in control. But a person who has merely these principles in control should cultivate more and more the quality of mercy. We should bind these about our neck. The thought is that of a necklace, or ornamental band. As a man puts around his neck a cravat, with a jewel in it as an ornament, placed where it will be displayed, so these qualities of character are jewels. Give them a prominent place; for they will help to make you better, help to make you more acceptable to the Lord.

The preferable place for the display of a jewel is the neck. There a jewel is especially conspicuous and ornamental. So we should fasten these noble qualities of character where they will be manifest in all the affairs of life. Whether we buy or sell, or whatever we do, we should wear these ornaments. They will show what is the character of the man or woman—right on the outside, in the very front. They should be seen as we meet others. There should be nothing mean, nothing contemptible, nothing niggardly about us.

### RE-WRITING MERCY AND TRUTH UPON THE HEART

More than this, we are to write mercy and truth in our hearts. We are to remember that originally God wrote the divine law in Adam's heart. We know that in the divine heart, the Divine character, are the qualities of truth and mercy. God is merciful, kind and loving. And as God has these traits of character, so when he made man in his own image, his own likeness, man was created with these qualities in his character. Man was not created an unrighteous, an untruthful being.

But man fell from his original perfection. With the centuries of falling and imperfection of mind and body, and with every interest pressing for self-gratification at the expense of others, these principles of mercy and truth have become largely effaced from our hearts, just as the constant dropping of water, and the general wear and tear of the weather would tend to efface the original inscription on a stone. In time one could scarcely discern the characters. So we see in mankind that some have apparently lost all sense of justice, all sense of mercy, nearly all sense of patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness and love. All these qualities that belong to the

heart, as originally placed there by God, have been more or less effaced—in some more than in others.

### PURPOSE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCES

Under the terms of the New Covenant and through the ministrations of Christ's kingdom, God purposes to re-write upon the heart of man the original character which was in his heart, and which has been effaced by selfishness. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer. 31:31-33) "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."—Ezekiel 36:26.

God's law is the law of truth and mercy. Truth would include everything righteous, toward God and toward man. Mercy includes all the graces of character. The Millennium will be the time for the re-writing of these qualities in the character. And this work of re-writing the divine character in the heart, which will progress in the world by and by, for a thousand years, is already begun in the church. We write these qualities within our own hearts. The entering the school of Christ is voluntary, not compulsory. In the next age mankind must write these qualities in their hearts, through the assistance of the Mediator. There will be stripes to bring mankind to righteousness. And if they are intentionally unwilling to obey the laws of righteousness, they will be destroyed.

But now obedience is a voluntary matter. We declare that we desire to have these lessons written in our hearts; and to attain this end, we enter the school and submit ourselves to the Great Teacher. Then, by the various providences of our lives, he shows us where we have not yet engraved these qualities within our hearts. As we pray for patience, he gives us lessons of experience that will engender this quality in our hearts, and that will strengthen it more and more. As we pray for love, he gives us tests of love. As we pray that we may develop mercy, we find more opposition, which will develop mercy. Thus God gives us opportunities for the writing of truth and mercy in our hearts.

We must attain to that condition of heart where we shall love truth and righteousness, and where we shall hate iniquity and unrighteousness. As the people of God, we have the first opportunity now to develop these traits. And the Lord tells us that if we prove faithful in learning our lessons, it is his intention to use us during the Millennial reign, his intention to make us judges of the world—its rulers, teachers.

### THE JEWISH LAW HELPFUL TO CHRISTIANS

The words of our second text were addressed to the Hebrew people and not to Christians; for there were no Christians at that time, of course. The words do not seem to be prophetic, but an exhortation to the people. Apparently the Jews thought that the Lord was asking too much of them; and since this was so, they felt that they should not take the law too seriously. The Lord seems to bring the matter down to a specific statement: What is required of thee but three things; namely, to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? This would seem to be the sum total of the law.

The Lord was looking to see Israel live as nearly up to the requirements of the law as possible. And he purposed to bring them, in due time, the promised New Covenant, which would take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, thus making them tender-hearted. But if now they would walk as nearly as possible in harmony with the requirements of this law, doing justly, loving

mercy and walking humbly with their God, they would be blessed accordingly.

While this law was given to the Hebrews alone, nevertheless the principles inculcated therein are applicable to the whole world. Everybody who would have any standing with the Lord, is required to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. Therefore every statement of the law, in that it gives the Christian a conception of God's standards, is helpful to the Christian; it shows him the standards of perfection. But the standard of a Christian goes higher than that of the law. The law is merely an amplification of the Golden Rule—Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Deal justly with others, if you would expect them to deal justly with you; and be merciful to others, if you would expect them to be merciful toward you.

In thinking of these qualities and considering which should be put first, we decide that in our conduct toward another, we could not think for a moment of giving anything less than justice. Additionally we might be as merciful as the circumstances would permit. But nothing less than justice should be thought of. In our requirements of others, however, we are—as before stated—not to expect full justice. Remember that the whole human family are imperfect. If by the grace of God we are able to be more just or more merciful than the average, it is through God's Spirit.

#### GOD'S STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT

To walk humbly with the Lord would imply that we were in that condition of mind in which we could be taught of him, could appreciate his goodness and our own insignificance; that we were receiving whatever instructions he was sending. While God made our race in his image, we have largely lost that image. Therefore we should be very humble and teachable in all things.

Comparing God's requirements of Israel, as given in the text, with His requirements of the church, we would say that God requires nothing more than this from the church. This is as much as justice could require from any creature. The peculiarity of the position of the church is that it is not one of requirement, but of privilege. But we see operating in the church a still higher principle than that of Law; namely, that of sacrifice. As Jesus loved the Father and loved righteousness, and sacrificed his earthly will and earthly ambitions

and privileges, so he set us an example that we should walk in his steps. It was not required of him that he should do more than justice, but he was permitted to do more. And so with the church. We are not required to do more than justice, but are permitted to do more. If we present our bodies living sacrifices, and are faithful to the end, the Lord will count us among those to whom he will be pleased to give, very soon, the glorious kingdom, the kingdom for which we pray.

#### VARIOUS DEGREES OF LOVE

After we came voluntarily into this condition of sacrifice, it became a bondage to us in that we had taken vows to this effect, and we are bound by our own vows. We vowed that we would lay down our lives in harmony with the invitation: "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Still the Lord is not requiring more of us than justice. But he is waiting and watching to see to what extent we will be faithful to the agreement of our covenant. If we are joint-sacrificers with Jesus, then we shall become joint-heirs with him. At our consecration, we took his yoke upon us. Could we go back and take up the privilege of restitution? No; this we gave up entirely! The only thing for us is to fulfil our covenant of sacrifice and rebellion against that covenant would mean the second death, everlasting destruction.

There are various degrees of love. That degree to which we have consecrated ourselves is the sacrificing love, which goes beyond what would be just to a brother, a neighbor or an enemy. This is the love of God, which is an all-absorbing, an all-comprehensive love.

That the requirements of the texts are very reasonable will be conceded by all. That God could not require less from those whom he is educating for the future judging of the world, is evident, and yet all of these qualities specified through the prophet are comprehended in the one word—Love. Love requires that we shall deal justly with our neighbors, with our brethren, with our families, with ourselves; that we shall seek to cultivate our appreciation of the rights of others—their physical rights, their moral and intellectual rights, their liberties; and that, appreciating these, we shall in no sense of the word seek to abridge or deny them. But additionally, love leads us to have the spirit of sacrifice that gladly lays down life itself for the brethren.

## PRAYER THE VITAL BREATH OF THE NEW CREATURE

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke 18:1.

Jesus spoke a parable, of which the gist, or import is, "That men ought always to pray and not to faint." That parable tells how even an unjust judge would, because of importunity, heed an appeal for justice and would finally yield to its demands, although he cared little for the principle itself. In the parable the woman was importunate in her petitions for justice against those who were doing her injury. The Lord seems to inculcate just such importunity in prayer, and gives this as an illustration of how his people should continue in their prayers; not that they should pray all the time, in the sense of never getting off their knees, or of never doing anything except to pray, but that they should continue in their prayers and not grow faint or disheartened.

In order to pray properly, the child of God should know what he may pray for. Otherwise he might be asking for the wrong things, such as God would never be pleased to give him. How may we know what things are proper to pray for? The Lord gives us an intimation along this line, of what is proper. He says, If earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, how much more is the heavenly Father pleased to give good gifts to his children. The things which earthly fathers give to their children are earthly things. The things that the heavenly Father is pleased to give to his children are heavenly things. The world of mankind are not permitted to call God their father. He disowns them as children. There is only one way to come back into relationship with God, and that is the way that Jesus opened up by his death.

Were not the Jews children of God before Jesus came and died? We answer, No. The very highest expression of God's favor toward any of them was shown in Abraham. And he was called only a friend. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant." Those Jews who were not faithful were not even servants. But when Christ came, he made it possible for some to come out and pass from the house of servants into the house of sons. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." (John 1:11, 12) This privilege was not actually granted immediately, but

merely in a reckoned way, up to the time when Jesus finished his course, ascended up into heaven and poured out the holy Spirit upon his followers. Then they were privileged to become sons of God.

All down the Gospel age those who receive him have been privileged to become sons of God. All the good promises of God's Word appertain to these. This class includes not only Jews, but Gentiles, to whom the door of opportunity was thrown open, after the special opportunity which had been granted to the Jews came to an end. Thus we have become spiritual Israelites and heirs of all the things God promised to this class of sons of God. So when we go to the Father in prayer, it is the privilege of prayer as a new creature. Whoever has not ceased to be an old creature and has not become a new creature has no privilege of prayer whatever. The only exception to this is in the case of the children of consecrated parents, and God's favor to them is only on account of their parents' spiritual interests.

#### THE NEW CREATURE'S GREATEST NEED

Our text means that new creatures should be persistent in their petitions to God. These may know what is proper to pray for, by studying the words of Jesus and the apostles and the prophets of old. The spirit-begotten ones may thus understand what are the rights and privileges of sons of God. To these the heavenly Father is more willing to give the holy Spirit than earthly parents are willing to give good gifts to their children.—Matthew 7:11.

The holy Spirit is the one thing which the new creature needs. The new creature is on trial for the new nature—for glory, honor, immortality. And he can receive these only as he is worthy. The terms on which he is received into spiritual relationship with the Father are that he shall mortify, deaden, the earthly impulses and seek to have the spiritual impulses quickened. What, therefore, he especially needs to strengthen him and bear him up as a new creature is the holy Spirit of God. Consequently God is particularly willing to give us this, and especially pleased that we ask for it. This does not mean that earthly interests will be ignored. It means that our heavenly Father knoweth what things of an earthly character

we have need of, just as he knows what we have need of for our spiritual welfare.

The Scriptures indicate that God has given us the instructions we need in his inspired Word, the Bible. This Word will make us more and more wise, as we grow in grace and knowledge and in his Spirit, so that in time we shall know exactly what things to pray for and what things not to pray for. At the beginning of our experience, we might not know this so well: The Lord said in speaking of prayer, that the heathen think they shall be heard for their much speaking, and that they use vain repetitions. Their prayers are all vain repetitions. The first petition was vain and all the subsequent petitions were vain, because they are not based upon the conditions necessary to acceptable prayer.

#### THE MOTIVE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

All who have come into the covenant of sacrifice with Christ may realize that they have the privilege of prayer. What may they pray for? They may not pray with definiteness for earthly things, as the heavenly Father would not answer any petitions that would not be for the good of his children. St. James speaks of some who offer improper petitions. He says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."—James 4:3.

The word lusts here signifies desires. We are not to ask to gratify fleshly desires. For instance, suppose we should pray to the heavenly Father to send us a million dollars, telling him that we knew what to do with the money, and how to use it in his work. The Lord probably would not give it—for we would probably be asking amiss. But it might be that we would think that we were asking wisely. Whenever we ask anything from the Lord, we should scrutinize our motives to see if there is any personality connected with the matter. In our own case we should ask ourselves: Do we want that million dollars in order that we may shine in the use of it? If so, such a prayer would be a grossly improper prayer. We might offer such a prayer at the beginning of our Christian experience, and the Father would not chide us for it. We would excuse a child for doing what we would not excuse in one of adult years.

In respect to this matter of prayer our Lord gives us a cue. It is this: "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7) How broad a statement this is! It might seem at first as though we might ask for anything. But it has very particular limitations. Who are these who may pray thus? These are such as have already become members of his body—such as have made a full consecration of themselves, and have received the begetting of the holy spirit. Furthermore, the word abide means not only that they have entered into this relationship, but that they are remaining there, dwelling there; that they are members of the body of Christ in good standing with him.

"If my word abide in you." For God's Word to abide in us implies that we have a knowledge of God's Word. This necessitates the studying of the Word of God, that we may know what to pray for. We should not hasten to offer petitions, and make a great mistake, and then say, I have made a mistake, and have asked for the wrong things. We should consider what the Word of God teaches on this subject, and if any one has become well acquainted with the Word of God, he should know whether or not he has met the conditions which will sanctify his prayer. It is only after he has come to this position that he may continue to make his request, nothing doubting. But very likely he will then find that he has not a very large list of petitions that he can present. What are some of the things we may ask for?

#### SOME THINGS FOR WHICH TO PRAY

One of the things for which we may pray is that God's kingdom may come. We may go continually to the throne of grace, then, appreciating the fact that God has said that he purposes to have a kingdom here on earth. And nothing doubting, we are to pray for that kingdom. And as we pray, we are strengthening our faith more and more. What else may we pray for? We may also pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." But is not this something for the flesh? This is a necessity, and the Lord has warranted us in praying for our necessities. We are to use our judgment the best we may; yet we are not to trust to our own efforts alone, but to the Lord's supervising care. If, therefore, the temporal supply be scant, we are to learn the lesson of frugality and care of what we have.

We should learn very early in life not to be wasteful. When Jesus fed the multitude with the loaves and fishes, and then instructed his disciples to take up the remainder of these in their baskets, he illustrated his economy. We are to eat

with thankfulness what we have, if it is merely bread and water, or potatoes and salt. There is nothing to indicate that we are to ask for pie or cake or ice cream, but for the necessities. If in God's providence he furnishes the necessities and withholds the luxuries, then we are to be satisfied, to be thankful. But we are to pray and not to be fearful.

What if we do not get anything, tomorrow? Did you waste anything today? Did you eat too much today—twice as much as you had need for? If so, the Lord will probably teach you some lesson, and it will be for your good as a new creature. But if you have used wisdom and economy, he will provide the things needful. As the Prophet says, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."

We may pray for deliverance from the evil one. This should lead us to see that there is an evil one, and that we are not sufficient of ourselves to resist his attacks successfully. We need the Lord's help at all times, and we need to pray continually and not to faint.

We may pray for the forgiveness of our trespasses. What the Lord indicates in his model prayer is the forgiveness of our daily trespasses—"day by day." And these trespasses are the result of our fleshly imperfections. Our trespasses of the flesh today should be a great deal less than similar trespasses with us ten years ago or five years or even one year ago.

It is best not to use any set form of words in prayer, but merely to think in advance what you desire of the Spirit—more faith, more patience, more meekness, more love. Of course, we shall want to express thanks for divine care and to request a continuance of the same. With such prayers, however simple, the heavenly Father is pleased. The prayers recorded in the Bible are generally not lengthy. God accepts as our prayers all the good thoughts and sentiments of our minds, as well as those expressed by our tongues.

Other statements of our Lord and also of the apostles seem to imply that we should not grow faint-hearted. After we have prayed for a certain thing, we should continue to keep it before our mind, and not conclude that because the prayer was not answered quickly God would never answer it. This would seem to apply to particular, individual things. Our text seems to include the thought that we should have in mind the advantages of prayer in all the affairs of life, coming repeatedly to the throne of grace to obtain the necessary aid.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER

Will God forget us if we do not ask him for things, and neglect to do the part of a father? The answer of the Scriptures is, that this is not so. God has made abundant provision for his children. But we are so constituted that reverence for God and desire for prayer are among the highest qualities of our nature. The organs of veneration and spirituality lie at the top of our head. And those who are not enjoying the exercise of these highest qualities are not getting the proper blessing out of life. Instead of living in the parlor of their brains, so to speak, some people live in the basement. Our true enjoyment comes from the exercise of the highest faculties of the head. Here we can commune with God respecting the highest things, the noblest things, the best things.

The natural tendency of some is toward the baser qualities of the human mind, rather than the higher ones; that of others is toward the nobler sentiments. But all are imperfect. Therefore when any have turned from sin and come into the school of Christ, they are instructed to pray, because this will enable them to get the best results from their own natural combination of faculties. By coming to the Lord with regularity in prayer they are enlisting the best qualities of their own minds. Thus the new creature is using the highest faculties of the old nature to wean the old creature from the natural habits which he had cultivated through weaknesses of the flesh.

#### BLIGHT FOLLOWS NEGLECT OF PRAYER

There is a great blessing that comes from prayer! We see that if prayer be neglected, a certain amount of blight comes in; whereas if the new creature persists in coming to the Lord in prayer, he thus uses the higher organs of the mind. He brings out the highest qualities, which will make for righteousness and truth, and for the growth of the new creature. And the new creature, making use of the higher organs of the brain, makes progress in character-structure and in the Lord's service.

Prayer is the vital breath of the new creature. We cannot control, nor get the best out of our old bodies except we conform to our Lord's instruction to pray. If prayer was appropriate for our Lord, who was perfect, if he needed to go often to the Father in prayer, even so it is necessary for us to go to the Lord in prayer that we may be more and more transformed by the renewing of our minds. This does

not mean that we should be always on our knees, but that we should go with regularity; if possible at least every night and morning.

Some may prefer to stand when they pray, and some to kneel; some to have their eyes open, others to have them closed. In all this the Lord leaves us free to exercise our own judgment. But some formal approach to the Lord every day should be observed. Not only should we have special seasons of prayer, but we should have the spirit of prayer, which should be with us in all life's affairs. As we are going about the duties of life, we should think, Now I am looking for the Lord's will and way. What shall I do about this matter? And, not stopping to pray again, we think as to what would be the Lord's will. Thus we shall have the Lord's blessing and guidance on that day in everything that is good.

Some persons of active mind have the tendency to make light of divine guidance and to say, I know what to do. No-

body need tell me—neither the Lord nor anybody else. Such are likely to have this tendency grow on them, and to be unlikely to seek any special counsel.

But the child of God should feel that it is a privilege to have the Lord's approval of every thought, every act and every word. What we do is God's work, not ours. And because it was done a certain way today, does not mean that it would necessarily be done so always. There are certain things that are as fixed as the hills, and others that are not. So with our experiences. The Lord may give us one experience today, and another tomorrow. Today he may be leading us by the still waters and in green pastures; tomorrow the pathway may be thorny and through rough places. Thus day by day we grow in knowledge and grow in love, and we should be ready for whatever experiences may come to us:

“Content whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.”

## THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FLESH AND SPIRIT

“Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”—Matt. 26:41.

These words were uttered by our Lord to his disciples at the close of his earthly ministry, when the hour was fast approaching in which he would be betrayed and crucified. He knew of this trial that was so close at hand; he had repeatedly mentioned the matter to his disciples; but outward appearances were so contrary to this that they could not appreciate his words. He had often spoken in parables and dark sayings (which they did not fully understand until after his resurrection, though they indeed got many lessons from his sayings). So when he told them that he would be crucified, they thought that it was another dark saying—one of the deep, hidden things, just as when he said, “Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”

They did not understand these things. They saw no evidence that the Roman government would take any hand in crucifying him, and they knew that their own nation had no authority for crucifixion. While they knew that some of the Scribes and Pharisees were very indignant, yet they remembered how the people had cried, “Hosanna,” and hailed him as king.

The disciples had been discussing the kingdom, and questioning as to who should be greatest in that kingdom. Two of them had made special requests at that time for seats next to himself. Thus evidently their minds were far from the things that were approaching. When finally he said that some one should betray him, one after another asked, “Is it I?” And finally St. Peter said, “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, . . . though all should deny thee, yet will I not deny thee.” But Jesus said, “This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.”

They thought that the Lord was acting strangely simply because they did not know what he knew of the things near at hand. So this night, in the garden, he said, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation”; he meant for them to be on the alert, for he knew the trying times just at hand for them. But they did not know the battle that was being waged between Christ, the Prince of Light, and Satan, the prince of darkness.

They did not understand this in the way we do. They had not yet received the enlightenment of the holy Spirit. The most that they could understand then was that there were temptations, and that they should be on the lookout, guarding themselves and being earnest of spirit—not drowsy nor frivolous, but on guard lest they should fall into some kind of temptation. They were not only to watch, but to pray. The praying would signify that they were watching, and that their own watching was not sufficient, but that they would need, additionally, divine assistance. What they would be praying for they would be striving for. And the earnestness of the praying would help them in the watching.

The events for which they were to watch included not only our Lord's betrayal, trial and crucifixion, but also their experiences of the subsequent days when the disciples met within closed doors, and those which they were undergoing when Jesus appeared and explained to them that he was risen from the dead. In various ways he manifested himself to them. If they were in the attitude of watchfulness, in the attitude of praying for wisdom from on high to help them to know the will of God, it would be a very great blessing to them, and the Lord knew this. He knew that they would need help during those days of trial. If they had not had strong faith, the events of the next few days might have overwhelmed them and their faith in the teachings of Jesus. But they were kept

in that time of special trial and testing. Jesus prayed for them, and they came off victorious—but some of them with scars, as St. Peter and St. Thomas.

### A SPECIAL SEASON OF TRIAL

This lesson is applicable to us as respects watching and praying. We live in this favored period since Pentecost, in which God's people are privileged to have the leading and guiding of the holy Spirit; therefore our watching and praying may be, and should be, still more earnest than that of the disciples at the time of our Lord. And as they were then entering into a time of special temptation, so we in the end of this age are living in a time of special trial regarding all that we have learned in the school of Christ as new creatures, along the lines of meekness, gentleness, brotherly-kindness and love. If we be found short in these, so far as the heart is concerned, we would not be counted worthy to be of the kingdom class, and therefore would be separated in some way from those who were found worthy.

The Lord had temptations; and all of his faithful disciples must also have temptations. And the Apostle James assures us that the having of temptation and the resisting of temptation will bring us special blessing in our development of the character-likeness of Christ. The Lord, then, did not mean that by watching and praying we would not have temptations come to us, but that we would not fail in those temptations. We might even be ensnared, as St. Peter was, yet he wept bitterly and repented. We know not what his prayers were, but we may be sure that they were full of deep contrition that he had denied his Master.

“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” This cannot be understood to mean what it would mean in our own case. The disciples at this time were not new creatures in Christ. They did not receive the begetting of the Spirit until Pentecost. It means more to us than it did at that time to them. To them it merely meant that they were willing in spirit, in mind, in intention. These intentions were to be good. They were to demonstrate that they were “Israelites indeed,” and that they were not hypocritical, even though their flesh was weak and had the depravity that had come down through the several thousand years since man fell into sin. Their intention was better than their ability to perform; consequently they needed specially to watch and to pray.

### THE NATURE OF THE BATTLE

The same thing is true of the church from Pentecost to the present time. We note, however, a special distinction between the spirit and the flesh. To the new creature in Christ Jesus, old things have passed away and all things have become new. (2 Cor. 5:17) But the new creature is weak in one sense of the word, though strong in another sense. It must be strong in the sense that it is of strong determination to have no sympathy with sin or unrighteousness or evil-speaking.

The new creature represents the power of God, so to speak, that has become identified with us. We have accepted God's will as our will, and have been begotten by his holy Spirit to a new life. We are therefore styled new creatures by this begetting. As new creatures we are at first represented as babes. The difference between the new creature and the old creature is that the new creature expects to attain the divine nature—glory, honor and immortality—while the old creature desires earthly things and comforts of the present life—honor of men, etc.—and is continually pulling toward the things which it desires and craves.

The new creature must conquer the old creature and its

desires, which more or less interfere with the new creature's engagements in the covenant of sacrifice. Thus there is a conflict between the new creature and the old creature. The new creatures, who realize themselves to be at first but babes in Christ, must grow in grace—grow in the Lord and the power of his might—grow up into him in all things. Thus gradually the new creature becomes stronger and stronger.

But, alas, there is often difficulty here. Many of the Lord's people have not been fed on the strong meat; as the Apostle says, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb. 5:12) Many of these do not know what justification by faith means; many do not understand what consecration or sanctification means.

They do not understand that they are merely babes. They have taken the first step, and there is a tendency to believe the word of the ministers, priests and bishops who have told them that they are not to know these deep things, but that their elders and pastors are to know them, and to do the thinking for them. This condition is quite contrary to God's Word. He wishes all of his people to be qualified for telling forth his truth to others as they have opportunity. Therefore the Apostle advises that we "henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," but that we become new creatures in the Lord and thus prepare ourselves for the glorious things to which we have been invited by the divine promises.—Eph. 4:14, 15.

The flesh is weak in that it is not up to the standard of righteousness. Father Adam was perfect, and his fleshly mind was a perfect mind, strong for righteousness. But as the fall brought our race lower and lower, mentally, morally and physically, this flesh gradually became weaker and weaker. Therefore all flesh is weak in its natural tendencies, the fallen nature strongly in the ascendancy. But we are strong in proportion as the new creature overcomes these tendencies, so that the flesh is kept as a servant of the new creature, that the new creature may be ultimately developed into the character-likeness of the Master.

But people will say, "John ought to make a good business man; but he can talk or think of nothing but religion." Or in the social set, they will say, "Mrs. So-and-so was once very attractive, but now she can talk only about religion." And so it will be with everything else pertaining to the world, if we are true men and true women—performing our covenant vows unto the Lord, walking faithfully in Jesus' footsteps.

Yet every one is dissatisfied with those who are double-

minded. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Jesus tells us that before becoming his followers we should sit down and count the cost of discipleship—the cost of serving God. If we do so and make the right decision and continue to serve in harmony with it, we shall get not only the future reward of everlasting life and divine favor, with glory and honor, but we shall also have the present reward of the Lord's favor, the Lord's care, and fellowship one with another.

#### LUKEWARMNESS UNDESIRABLE

If after counting the cost of service you decide to serve mammon, selfishness, then try to be a millionaire. If you desire to enter politics, aspire to be president. If you intend to enter social life, go into it with all your might. A man who is wishy-washy, who does not know what he is doing, does not accomplish much of anything. The Lord says that he likes men to be either hot or cold.

If we are determined to be servants of the heavenly Father, we are to recognize no other master. This does not mean that we are not to recognize headship. Some one may be master of much of our time. But the controller of our time is not master of our hearts, which are given to the Lord. We seek to use our time, energy and strength in the service of the great King.

A certain portion of our time is necessary for providing for our physical needs and for the needs of those dependent upon us. In thus caring for our own we do not lose allegiance to the great God; for we should refuse to become servants of any earthly master if it would be in conflict with our service to the heavenly Father. This would not interfere with the thought that in the church of Christ there are varieties of service and activities, each department having its own organization and head. But the body of Christ working together is to recognize Jesus as the Head over all things, and to seek to know each his own part in all the affairs of the body.

We read, "One is your Master, even Christ." And yet Christ is not the one referred to here in our text—"No man can serve two masters"; these are God and mammon. Jesus said, "I delight to do thy will, O God." "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent me." So, then, in serving Jesus and recognizing him as our Master, we are not ignoring the Father. Likewise in recognizing order in the church we are not ignoring the Father or the Son. And in serving an earthly master, we are not to think of this service as conflicting with the service of our heavenly Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to see that we have been directed to provide things honest and decent in the sight of all men.—Romans 12:17.

## THE REPORT OF THE SPIES

OCTOBER 19.—Numbers 13:1-3, 17 to 14:25.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"—Romans 8:31.

The first journey of the Israelites was from Egypt to Mt. Sinai, where they remained about a year. Their second journey began after the appointment of the seventy elders, and after Miriam had been received back into the camp. The start was with some ceremonial—the blowing of silver trumpets, the leading of the pillar of cloud and fire, and Moses' invocation, "Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee." This was the morning call of the Israelites; and in the evening, as the host rested for the night, Moses prayed, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." In other words, "Abide with us."

Their journey led through a waste, barren wilderness, scorched by the sun, very different from Sinai's valleys, in which they had recuperated and rested. The journey to Kadesh-Barnea, on the border of the land of Canaan, was approximately one hundred and sixty miles. It was beset with unknown dangers—serpents, wandering bands of Arabs, lack of water, etc. The Israelites, including women, children, household goods, cattle and sheep, etc., necessarily journeyed slowly. Apparently one or two months were spent on the journey, as they arrived at the time of the first ripe grapes—July.

Kadesh-Barnea, their objective point, is a delightful place, well watered, and is a sharp contrast with the desert of Paran. Here they rested and refreshed themselves, and looked toward the mountains north of them, their land of promise; for they were on the south border.

#### TIMIDITY OF THE ISRAELITES

Moses, full of faith, proposed that they should forthwith proceed—enter the land of Canaan, the land of promise, full of faith in God, who already had manifested his favor toward

them in so many ways—in their deliverance from Egypt; in the crossing of the Red Sea; in the sweetening of the waters of Marah; in giving them the victory over their enemies, the Amalekites; in sending them the manna, and later the quail; in manifesting his favor toward them in the covenant at Mt. Sinai, and in the manifestation of his presence with them in the Tabernacle and in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night.

But the Israelites were timid. They had no knowledge of war, excepting a little experience with the Amalekites near Mt. Sinai; and they had been worsted until God helped them while Moses' hands were uplifted in prayer on their behalf. Their caution over-balanced their faith. They urged upon Moses the sending of the twelve spies. These apparently were divided under two leaders, Caleb and Joshua. One party went the full length of the land, and returned in the short space of forty days; the other took a shorter journey, and returned sooner. The spies were cautious men, and gave a truthful report of the land, declaring that its cities had high walls and would be difficult to overcome, especially without up-to-date military equipments. They reported also that they had seen giants, probably some of the same families afterwards represented by Goliath, whom David slew in battle. The report of these ten is described as an evil report, because they presented the matter from the viewpoint of its difficulties, as in contrast with the report made by Caleb and Joshua, which is styled a good report, because it was encouraging. These two emphasized the favorable features—the fruits, the honey, the fertility of the country. Their report was backed by faith, while the adverse report was backed by fears, which forgot the divine providences and leadings.

The spies really should have considered themselves a



committee on ways and means for entering the land of Canaan rather than a committee to decide whether it was possible to enter it or not. The possibilities were already determined by God's promises, hence Joshua and Caleb left these out of account. If God could deliver them from the Egyptians and from the Amalekites, could give them water in the desert and bread from heaven, he surely could do all that was necessary to fulfil his promise to bring them into possession of Canaan.

#### THE LESSON FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAELITES

Various lessons may be drawn by spiritual Israelites from the experiences of the typical people. If we view the matter from the personal standpoint, we may see that each Christian has from the Almighty a special invitation to enter into Canaan's rest and to take possession of the blessings promised by the Lord. He turns his back upon Satan and the world, typified by Pharaoh and the Egyptians. By faith he puts between him and the adversary a firm resolution for righteousness and obedience to God, through whose providential leadings he reaches the place of making the covenant.

Thenceforth as a new creature he journeys on, beset by the trials of the wilderness journey, until he comes to the position of an advance soldier of the cross. There he perceives the new life, the new experiences before him, in harmony with God's promises. He would at once with faith and courage enter in and possess himself of all the good things of the spiritual life.

The enemies of the land to him would represent the weaknesses of the flesh and the oppositions of his fallen nature, all of which are to be overcome. To the extent that he can overcome these, he enters into and possesses and enjoys his inheritance promised of the Lord. Some can do this promptly, by reason of faith; others make investigation of the trials and alas! too often become discouraged, fearful, distrustful, murmurers—sometimes wishing that they had not left the world at all, and that they could return thither.

The reports of the spies represent the different viewpoints from which the promises of God may be seen. To the eye of faith, all things are possible; to the eye of unbelief, all things, in the way of the conquest of the flesh, are impossible. Let us go up and possess the land! Let us be of good courage and fight the good fight! God will be with us and give us the victory, with the proper exercise of faith!

#### DID GOD ENCOURAGE WAR?

In studying this lesson, remembering that the Israelites were invading a land possessed by other people, remembering that this invasion meant the loss of many lives amongst the Israelites, as well as amongst the people of Canaan, many are perplexed. They say, It does not seem reasonable to believe that God gave such a message to Moses and to the Israelites. They say, Contrast this with the Scriptural declaration that Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and that God "will make wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." Agnostics inquire, How are these things reconciled? Where is the justice of commissioning the Israelites to steal the lands of the Canaanites, yea, to murder them? And according to some Scriptures, they were to utterly exterminate all the peoples of the land, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, etc.

We reply that to understand the Bible we must view it from the Bible's own standpoint, and not from the standpoint of our creeds formulated in the darker days, nor from the standpoint of our own imperfect reasoning. The Bible is consistent, beautiful, godlike, only when viewed in its own light.

In the first place, we must remember that the Bible entirely antagonizes the theories of our creeds, which tell us that all those slaughtered Canaanites went straight to an eternity of torture, and are suffering there yet, because they did not know the true God and Jesus Christ, whom he sent to be the Savior. The Bible tells us that those people and all the people in the whole world are children of Adam, and all perishing because of the death sentence. When they die, they are not alive anywhere. They are dead. Whether they die by pestilence, or famine, or consumption, or pneumonia, or otherwise, it is all the same. They are suffering the penalty that God pronounced; namely, "Dying, thou shalt die."—Genesis 2:17, margin.

It matters not, therefore, in what way we die, or very much whether our experiences be longer or shorter. In the case of the Amalekites and other peoples of Canaan, God declared that their iniquity had come to the full. That is to say, divine justice determined that for them to live longer would not be

to their advantage, nor to anybody's advantage. They were merely cumbering the earth.

God was using the Israelites as a typical people, through whom he was making types and shadows of coming blessings. He would give Canaan to Israel, and thus make another type of how the antitypical Israel will enter and possess the antitypical Canaan. He would make the slaughter of the people of the land to illustrate the destruction of the works of the flesh and the devil which his people are to accomplish in themselves by fighting the good fight of faith and overcoming the evil tendencies which have become entrenched in their own flesh.

#### NO INJUSTICE TO THE CANAANITES

Although God is not bound by justice to give any future life to anybody, he has arranged so to do. To this end Christ already has died for the sins of the whole world—including the Canaanites, as well as the Israelites. Aside from this plan of redemption the whole race would have perished under the death sentence. By God's grace, however, we are not to perish, but to be recovered from the death sentence. So we read, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish."—John 3:16.

As all the world came into the death condition by one man's disobedience, so all are to be rescued from death conditions by the obedience of another One, "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all"; "as by a man came death, by a man also comes the resurrection of the dead"; "as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive"—the church the first-fruits.—1 Corinthians 15:21, 22; Revelation 20:6.

In a word, God's proposal is that Messiah's kingdom, the members of which are now being selected from the world—the church, the bride—will for a thousand years, with the Redeemer, bless and uplift and restore all the nations of earth—from sin, degradation, death, the tomb.

Jesus explains that the Sodomites will be of this class to be restored by resurrection processes, and so also will, with those Canaanites, be subjects of restitution.—Ezekiel 16:55; Mark 6:11; Acts 3:19-21.

#### DEAF EARS TO BE UNSTOPPED

Nobody will receive God's blessing except through faith in the Lord Jesus as the Redeemer. But the promise of God is that he as the true Light shall yet enlighten "every man that cometh into the world." The Canaanites, the Sodomites, and all the people that lived before Jesus' day must have an equal chance with others to hear the message of God's favor—the opportunity to believe in Jesus as the Redeemer and to obey his voice.

The same will apply to all the heathen of our day, and the thousands of millions from Jesus' day until now. And the same will apply to the great mass of heathen who have lived in Christian lands, but whose eyes and ears have been holden by Satan—by false doctrines—so that they could not understand and appreciate the message of the love of God. The assurance of the Scriptures is that all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears unstopped, and that the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth.

The church, under the headship of Jesus, is the Spiritual seed of Abraham, and in and through these will come the blessing of Messiah's kingdom for a thousand years unto every nation, people, kindred and tongue.—Gal. 3:29.

All men are to be rescued from the penalty of the Adamic death. All are to have a full opportunity of knowing about the Savior and of accepting him. With the knowledge will come responsibility. Whoever willingly and knowingly rejects the grace of God, and chooses sin in preference to righteousness, will be esteemed a wicked sinner, unworthy of everlasting life or any further favors of God. Such, the Bible says, will die the second death. From it there will be no redemption; for Christ shall die no more. Hence from it there will be no resurrection. As St. Paul declares, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction. (2 Thess. 1:9) As St. Peter declares, they shall perish like natural brute beasts.—2 Peter 2:12.

The present life does not end hope for any except those who have come to a clear knowledge of God and who have chosen sin with wilful deliberation. As for other trespasses, the Bible assures us that they will all receive a just penalty: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." But the horrible doctrine of eternal torment, which has been driving so many away from God and the Bible, is not a Bible teaching, but a part of what St. Paul styles the "doctrines of devils."—1 Timothy 4:1.

"Wondrous mystery, long concealed,  
Unto us has been revealed.  
Herald wide the gracious story—  
'Christ in you, the hope of glory!'

Christ in you the world's sore need,  
Christ in you the promised Seed.  
Canst receive it? Then thou art  
Of the Christ, indeed, a part."

# A GOOD MAN'S SIN

OCTOBER 26.—Numbers 20:1-13.

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”—Psalm 19:14.

Israel's fortieth year after leaving Egypt was God's appointed time for them to enter the land of Canaan. Moses was in his one hundred and twentieth year, but yet quite vigorous. His sister Miriam had died previously; Aaron, his elder brother, still lived, but died the same year. For thirty-eight years the children of Israel had resided in the wilderness, making Kadesh-Barnea their camp center, but really occupying a considerable portion of the wilderness with their flocks and herds.

It was in April of the fortieth year that, by divine command through Moses, they assembled at Kadesh, prepared to enter into the land of promise. But the water supply was scant. The people and their cattle were famishing. Murmurs arose, and inquiries if it were not as well to have perished in Egypt or elsewhere as to perish there from thirst.

The burden naturally fell upon Moses, shared, however, by his brother Aaron. All leaders of honor and influence carry weighty responsibilities. Moses and Aaron in turn went to the Lord with the matter, not complainingly, but inquiringly—desiring guidance from on high—from the real Leader of Israel. Nor did they go in vain. The Lord graciously manifested himself—“the glory of the Lord appeared unto them”—quite possibly also manifest to the people of Israel, who looked on. This glory is surmised to have been a ray of light emanating from the mercy seat in the Most Holy.

They were to take the rod, presumably “Aaron's rod that budded,” and that was kept in the ark in the Most Holy. That rod would be a reminder to the people of the Lord's special acceptance of Aaron as the high priest and assistant of Moses. It would be a sign to them of the divine favor which hitherto had guided their nation, and which still would continue to guide all who would trust in the Lord and in the power of his might.

## SMITING THE ROCK A SIN

The Lord particularly directed that Moses should speak to the rock, and that in response to the word waters would rush forth. On a previous occasion, about thirty-eight years before, in a similar experience near Mt. Sinai, Moses had been instructed to smite the rock; but in this case the rock was not to be smitten. Here Moses and Aaron sinned. “The meekest man in all the earth” forgot himself, and allowed a spirit somewhat akin to pride, self-sufficiency and anger to control him for the moment. Smiting the rock, he cried aloud to the people, “Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of the rock?”

The water indeed came forth, as the Lord had promised. The people indeed got the blessing needed, but one of the most illustrious men and servants of God there fell under divine disapprobation. The Lord's decree was that neither Moses nor his brother should enter Canaan. Moses, however, was permitted to go with the people to the end of their journey, and then from Mt. Nebo to see the land across the Jordan.

This condemnation does not signify the divine reprobation to eternal torment or to any lasting dishonor. Moses got his entire punishment then and there, before death, as do all of God's saintly ones. Whatever stripes, chastisements, punishments, of the future shall be meted out to mankind in general because of wrong doings in the present life, there are none reserved for the saints. The Apostle explains that they are chastened in the present life, that they may not come into condemnation with the world by and by.

## THEY DRANK OF THE ROCK—CHRIST

St. Paul points out to us that the smiting of the rock was symbolical. As the manna, the bread from heaven, represented Jesus, so the smitten rock represented him also. The refreshing water from the rock symbolized the blessings which flow from Christ's sacrifice. The smiting of the rock at the beginning of Israel's experience was authorized of God. It was necessary that upon Jesus should fall the rod of affliction, even unto death:

(1) “The Lord laid upon him [the death penalty for] the iniquity of us all”;

(2) “By his stripes we are healed.”—Isaiah 53:5, 6.

St. Paul's words are, “They did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”—1 Corinthians 10:4.

Just what was symbolized by the second smiting, which God did not authorize, is not explained by St. Paul. The fact that this second smiting was punished tells us that it was wrong, and that it symbolized some improper course on the part of the professed people of God. Two suggestions come to us, either or both of which may be applicable.

(1) This second smiting, at the end of the forty years

and just as the people were about to be led into the promised land, may symbolize a smiting of the people of God—the body of Christ which is the church. A number of Scriptures appertaining to the Gospel age give the inference that some of the saintly members of the body of Christ in the end of this age will be put to shame, or, perhaps, put to death—and thus enter into glory, as did the Master, when he was smitten. In his case the high priest declared that it was expedient that one should suffer, rather than that the entire Jewish people should perish as a nation.—John 11:50.

The religious rulers conspired against the Master—as they supposed, for God's glory. The suggestion has been offered that similarly, in the end of this Gospel age, religious leaders, moved by similar motives of self-preservation, may conspire for the smiting, the injury, of some of the Lord's followers. If this be a proper interpretation of the type, it indicates that under the divine providence blessings will flow from the wrong course, yet no greater blessing than might have come by pursuing the right course—of speaking to the rock, asking for the water, the Truth, the refreshment, instead of smiting it.

(2) The other thought, closely related to this one, is that any denial of the Redeemer on the part of his consecrated followers would signify a crucifying afresh, a putting to open shame, a smiting of the rock the second time. St. Paul explains that such a repudiation of the word of Christ by those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and of the powers of the world to come, etc., would mean for them an unworthiness of any place in the heavenly kingdom—that they would die the second death.—Hebrews 6:4-7.

The fact that both Moses and Aaron participated in the type, and that neither entered the land of Canaan, signifies that the very highest dignitaries and most enlightened members of the royal priesthood might be in danger of committing the sin typified, or pictured, in the second and unauthorized smiting of the rock. On the contrary, those who smote the antitypical Rock the first time—those who crucified Christ—the Scriptures assure us did so ignorantly and merely fulfilled the divine intention. “I wot, brethren, that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers”; “for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”—Acts 3:17; 1 Corinthians 2:8.

## LESSONS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

If “the meekest man in all the earth,” after long years of training and experience, made such a failure, even typically, the lesson to all spiritual leaders should be an impressive one. It says to us in inspired words, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” The Lord declares (v. 12) that the sin of Moses and Aaron was one of unbelief, “because ye believed me not—to sanctify me in the eyes of Israel.”

It did require faith in God for Moses to smite the rock. Apparently his lack of faith was in the people. Apparently he wished to produce a dramatic effect—to impress upon them a lasting lesson, “Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of the rock by a blow from this rod?” The effect may have been dramatic. The people may have stood in awe of Moses, but all the same, that was not the best way for dealing with the matter; for it was not God's way. Better would it have been for Moses to have hidden himself—humbled himself—and to have asked water from the rock in Jehovah's name.

Class leaders, elders, ministers in the church of Christ, will do well to remember that the blessings which God has arranged shall flow to his people from the smitten Jesus and will come for the asking; and that they are not authorized either to smite the “rock” or to pose dramatically before the people of God as necessary to the supply of the streams of grace and truth.

On the other hand, the Lord's people, spiritual Israel, thirsting for grace and truth now due, are to feel a great deal of sympathy for those who occupy teaching positions. There never was a time surely when the honesty and the faithfulness of the Lord's servants were more severely tested than now. What all need is meekness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love—loyalty to God—faithfulness to their covenant.

## EDOMITES, MOABITES, MIDIANITES

The various nations inhabiting the promised land, whose iniquity had come to the full and who were to be dispossessed by Israel, were not related to Abraham; but the Edomites, Moabites and Midianites, who dwelt to the south and the east of the promised land, were of blood relationship to Israel.

The Midianites were children of Abraham by Keturah. The Moabites were children of Lot, Abraham's nephew. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. The divine program was that Israel might leave these related peoples unmolested, except when they made the attack.

When the time came to enter Canaan from Kadesh, the nearest route would have been through Edom. The Israelites asked permission to cross Edom without injuring their people, and offered to make good any damage of any kind. They were refused permission, and, in harmony with the covenant between Esau and Jacob, Israel's host detoured to the south and passed through the land of Moab—the land of the children of Lot.

This detour of so vast a company through the desert was disheartening, "and the soul of the people was much discouraged." Again there came murmurings against Moses, who really represented God to them. Their murmurings were promptly punished—they were not protected from the serpents prevailing in that vicinity. The result was terrible. Many died from the serpents, until Moses made a brazen one and erected it on a pole. Throughout all the camp went messages, directing the people to look to the brazen serpent, exercise faith and be healed of their sickness.

#### POINT THE SIN-BITTEN TO THE SAVIOR

Thus not only were the natural Israelites corrected, chastened, punished, but a lasting lesson was written for the benefit of spiritual Israelites. We see that the fiery serpent of sin has bitten our race, that we are all dying, and that only by the exercise of faith in the Crucified One can any be healed. Our mission has been during the reign of sin and death to point the sin-bitten to the Savior. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," said Jesus.—John 3:14; 12:32.

In the present time, comparatively few hear the message, or see with the eye of faith the Crucified One. The great mass are dying in heathen darkness; only the few have had opportunity to exercise faith in Christ. Thank God, the day is nearing when he who was lifted up at Calvary, and afterward lifted up in resurrection power, will be manifested in power and great glory—"the true Light which will lighten every man which cometh into the world!" If they do not respond, the fault will be their own. (Matthew 24:30; John 1:9-11) That glorious condition will come through Messiah's kingdom, for which still we are praying, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven."

## THE LONDON CONVENTION—AUGUST 1-4

There is necessarily a considerable difference between a convention held in a great city and one held in a countryside. There is also a slight temperamental difference between the blended English character of America and Canada and the composite English of Great Britain; hence there is always a slight difference between the conventions held on opposite sides of the Atlantic. But the oneness of spirit of all the dear conventioners is manifest to everybody who has attended both. And how reasonable this is! All spirit-begotten, all children of the one Father, all patterning themselves after the same glorious Savior, these dear ones must have many wonderfully harmonious characteristics. "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."

Find the members of that one body where we may we find them of that one Spirit. It is always beautiful. It is always separate from the world. It is always showing forth the praises of "him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." It is always striving to let its light so shine before others as to glorify the Father.

The world-wide harvest message could have no more potent testimony than this—the oneness of spirit manifested among the members of the body of Christ. It is gathering the wheat class to the Lord, to his Word and into sympathy with each other. Some of the wheat is more and some less ripe, but gradually the glorious sunlight of truth is producing a ripening and separating effect. Wherever it enters it rests, abides. This is one reason, we believe, why it is so generally said on every occasion that the last convention is the best. All of our joys, all of our spiritual blessings, are largely what

we make them; or, rather, what the Lord is able to make them for us. We can be filled with his Spirit only in proportion as we become emptied of self and fully submitted to him. We can be taught in the School of Christ only in proportion as we realize our own insufficiency and need of guidance in the ways of the Lord and submit ourselves to the Master's instruction.

The convention just closed has been a most interesting and profitable one. So far as we know the sentiment of all present was, "It is good to be here." Although not as abundantly furnished with able speakers as the American conventions usually are, it was nevertheless admirably served, and a number of very able addresses were given along various lines of Bible study. Helpful thoughts and ennobling impulses were started which, it is hoped, were carried to the homes of many and then scattered further around, to the glory of the Lord and to the comfort of his people. The spiritual fellowship, which is always one of the chief features of the blessing of a convention, seemed to be thoroughly enjoyed and participated in by all.

The total number in attendance from outside the London Tabernacle congregation was about nine hundred, the most of these from nearby towns and cities, though some of them came from Germany, Denmark and Sweden, besides an American representation. One hundred and sixty-nine symbolized their consecration by water immersion, symbolized their immersion into Christ's death.—Romans 6:3-5.

Brother Russell arrived in good time for the beginning of the convention, and was with it throughout.

## QUESTION ON JUSTIFICATION

Question.—Have you changed your views respecting the justification of the church, so that the presentations of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Volume I, on this subject no longer represents your thought?

Answer.—Surely not! If we have, why would we continue to publish and circulate the volume? "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." So the subject of our justification is clarifying daily to many of the Lord's dear people. Features of justification not previously discerned by them are now very clear. For instance, many failed to see in the past, and some still fail to see, that justification by faith is a gradual process. Each step of faith brought us nearer to the climax.

But the climax was not wholly reached until our faith manifested its perfection by our obedience and full surrender in consecration to the Lord. Then our great Advocate accepted our consecrated bodies and imputed to them of his merit, absolutely justifying them in the sight of Justice—the heavenly Father. Then it was that the heavenly Father accepted that completely justified soul by the begetting of the holy Spirit. Thenceforth he was a new creature, and a son begotten to the spirit plane.

During the period of progress in faith, justification was being gradually approached, and the individual had more and

more of the divine favor. But not until the final step was taken did he become fully justified to human nature—a son on the earthly plane. And only for an instant did he there remain. Then the begetting of the holy Spirit indicated the acceptance of the sacrifice of the perfected one, and started him as a new creature.

#### TENTATIVE AND ACTUAL SONSHIP

All this is indicated in the chart of the ages. Plane N represents the justified condition in its various steps. Thus Abraham and others of the Old Testament times were justified before God by their faith. They were not justified to life, not justified even to sonship. They were justified to God's friendship, favor and supervisory care. After Jesus had died, risen, ascended and made application of his merit on the church's behalf, he became the Advocate of all this class, desirous of walking in his steps in full consecration. The imputation of his merit constitutes for each one the work of justification, and this makes it possible for God to accept his sacrifice and to beget him to the new nature.

Abraham was styled God's friend, because of his faith and desire for harmony with God. So was John the Baptist, of whom we read, "The friend of the Bridegroom . . . rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice." The term "servant" is in the Bible specially applied to those



Jews who were under the Mosaic Law Covenant. By that covenant they enjoyed God's care and blessing, and were permitted to be his servants. Although many of them, as well as Abraham, were friends of God, and would have been fully qualified for all the sonship privileges, nevertheless it was not possible, in harmony with the divine arrangement, for them to be recognized as sons. For, as the Apostle explains, a "son abideth forever," and not until Christ's sacrifice had opened the way for the cancellation of sin and death, could any be received to divine sonship.

Likewise our standing even now as sons of God is tentative. If we abide in God's love, we shall abide as his sons and be perfected in due time. But if any man draw back to wilful sin and its service, he will lose his sonship. His name will be blotted out of the Lamb's book of life. The Advocate with the Father would cease to recognize him. He would have no standing with the Son, and another would be permitted to take his place as a member of the body of the Anointed.

Thus the Apostle declares, "Now are we the sons of God [in embryo], and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear [our Redeemer, our Head], we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2) That is to say, our present sonship is tentative. The actual sonship will begin after we shall have passed our probationary trial. As many as shall prove acceptable by their faith and loyalty will be made sons in the fullest sense, by the glorious resurrection change. Thus we see that as none are fully received to plane N until they have gone the full length of consecration, so none will be fully received to sonship until they shall have reached plane L.

#### THE "BETTER RESURRECTION"

Although the ancient worthies, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the prophets, etc. (Hebrews 11:38-40), could not be

styled sons of God, and were not so named, it was not because they were not worthy of such a station and such a name. The Apostle draws our attention to this, assuring us that they "pleased God," and nothing pleases him short of perfection of heart. The only thing which hindered their acceptance as sons was the necessity that first the atonement blood should be presented on their behalf. In the "better resurrection" which the ancient worthies will experience, they will, we understand, come forth perfect men. They will be perfect as was Adam before his sin, and with minds, hearts and wills developed, exercised, tested, proved loyal to God. In that perfect condition they will be samples of what all mankind may attain by obedience during Messiah's reign.

From the moment of their resurrection, these perfect men would have the same right to come to God as had Adam, and would be as fully entitled to be called sons of God as was Adam, except for one thing. And that is, that the ancient worthies, as well as the rest of mankind, will be in the hands of the great Mediator of the New Covenant for the thousand years of his Messianic kingdom. And, according to the Scriptures, not until the end of that period will he deliver up the kingdom to the Father.

Hence we understand that the Ancient Worthies will have no direct dealing with the Father as sons, and no direct recognition from him as such, until the end of Christ's reign, when he will deliver over to the Father all things, that he may be "all in all," and that all may be directly subject to him. During the thousand years, however, under Christ's mediatorial arrangements, the ancient worthies, perfected, and all others, in proportion to their attainment of perfection, will enjoy privileges and blessings, because they will no longer be under a reign of sin and death and of Satan, the "prince of this world," but under the Prince of Life and his reign of righteousness, unto life.

### LITERAL OR SYMBOLIC FIRE?

"But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."—2 Peter 3:7.

We have been asked whether this prophecy may be expected to be fulfilled in some way with more or less literalness as, for instance, by electrical displays of lightning, by storms, or in connection with the zone of electrical energy which some scientists believe is approaching the earth, etc., and whether this thought, if accepted as true, would be in line with Exodus 9:23: "And the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt."

We still think that the great fire that the Lord mentions through St. Peter, Zephaniah, the Prophet David and others is to be a symbolic fire. The Prophets declare that the fire of that great day shall burn up the wicked—root and branch. And it would seem to signify that God's justice, indignation, will burn against every one who is wicked, and that this fire will go on all through the Millennial age—"that day," the thousand-year day. It will leave of the wicked neither root nor branch.

#### WATCH, RATHER THAN SPECULATE

As the Apostle Peter seems to imply that the "heavens" will be on fire and the "earth" also, the conflagration might possibly have its beginning in the church. We see more or less of an excitement now amongst theologians and all classes. We see that people are more or less losing confidence in their leaders of the past, and it looks as though the "heavens" will pass away with a great deal of struggle and great commotion. Just now they are having a little diversion with special attacks on us. They do not yet have so much to do against each other, because they are all busily engaged in doing what they can against us.

All this will not interfere with the facts presented in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES—re the change of dispensations. We have the assurance from the Scriptures that Messiah's kingdom will bring the world great blessings, and we wonder how these blessings will come. There will be a new arrangement of things in the affairs of the earth, but just what will be the nature of the physical changes, or how these will be brought about, we do not know. We are not to suppose that there will be another canopy of water to make another deluge, for the Lord has declared that there will never be another world-wide flood.

It would be very unwise for us to speculate on anything not revealed in the Bible. We prefer to keep our eyes open and not allow our minds to specially dwell on any one theory. Our confidence is not in any one method, but in the One who has all power. We feel sure that all he has promised will be fulfilled. It is not necessary to decide the point in our own mind even, let alone mentioning it to others.

#### SIGNS OF DISPENSATIONAL CHANGES

Then it is to be borne in mind that Joel's account of the Pentecostal blessing is divided into two parts—the blessing upon the servants and handmaidens, and that upon all flesh. According to this, the servants and handmaidens of the Lord have special blessing at the present time. With the conclusion of the blessing of the servants and handmaidens comes the fulfilment of the other prophecy—the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh. This evidently refers to the blessing of the whole world by the church during the thousand years. And in this connection we see that the Lord will show signs and wonders, clouds, "blood and fire and pillars of smoke." We have no positive knowledge that this language

#### HUMAN MIND BROADENING TO RIGHTEOUS PRINCIPLES

The fire begins in the beginning of that day, in the great time of trouble. The fire here would seem to be of this same kind. The judgments of the Lord will be abroad in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. The Lord spoke of a fire being already kindled in the Jewish nation. Trouble came upon them until their entire polity passed away—in the year A. D. 70. And so we see now that more or less there are fires burning here and there, exposing, to some extent, the evil-doers.—Isa. 26:9; Luke 12:49.

This has been going on for some time, and is to a certain extent broadening the human mind to the principles of justice and injustice. This is taking hold on business methods in a way that was never before known. We hear a great deal about the political chicanery of the present, but the world has never had so righteous, so just and equitable business arrangements as at the present time. And this is not because the people are more righteous than their forefathers, but because they are coming to see better methods of business. But present conditions will eventuate in a great time of trouble, in which the Capital element and the Labor element will each seek to burn the other up—and it will, no doubt, be a great conflagration. The whole structure will be involved in anarchy, which, however, will be only temporary, because of the establishment of Messiah's kingdom.