

the blessing you have received from these Bible Helps, and arrange to sell or loan him one of them.

If the brother has some ability, he might do good by holding little question meetings while eating lunch. The answers should always be brief and to the point. To be helpful, such questions should be on the more simple features of the plan; deep questions would choke those who are spiritual babes.

For instance, the conversation might be turned to the subject of hell. The brother could insist that there is not a single passage in the Bible where the word means a place of endless misery, and the only places seemingly teaching so are very highly figurative passages. Then say, "I have a little book in which every passage in the Bible where the word hell occurs is explained. I will bring it here tomorrow and read you a couple of wonderful paragraphs in it." This will probably bring them together the next day; and by promising to consider further questions the third day, one might have a regular little lunch-time class. Of course, the majority will tire of it, but a few may stick.

In the larger towns and cities the truth-hungry might be advertised for. Some city-dailies will allow it among the miscellaneous religious advertisements; but in each case, judgment will have to be exercised as to where it should be placed, and how frequently inserted. The following is suggested as an advertisement:

"Those who want to believe the Bible but have never yet found in it anything as satisfying and reasonable as they would expect God to give, are invited to send their names and ad-

dresses to P. O. Box ——. This is no scheme, but simply an effort to bring real religious satisfaction to those who feel their faith is shaking."

Let some able, consecrated brother call upon those who respond, and either sell or loan them "The Divine Plan of the Ages." He might first tell them of the blessing he is getting from the Word of God now, in contrast to the former conditions. He might call again, from time to time, to see what progress they are making, if the interest warrants. Sisters should call on the ladies who reply.

I find that the brethren are not sufficiently alert to the opportunities among the foreigners in their town. If there be Greek confectioners in your town, send for a half dozen Greek tracts to give them. The same might apply to Chinese in the laundries, Italians at fruit-stands and in street gangs, etc.

"The Bible Students' Monthly," on "What is Baptism?" is specially good where Brother Russell has been misrepresented very much, because of the article by Prof. Ellis and letter by Rev. T. S. Thompson, endorsing him and his work. The Brethren sometimes forget that they are able to do more than merely circulate yearly Volunteer literature. Often a special tract will fit in very well with local conditions, if circulated at the psychological time.

Every day makes me more desirous for the time when our service will not be limited by the weak, imperfect body in which we now dwell. I am glad that day is so near.

I remain, with Christian love, on Jordan's Banks,

B. H. BARTON.

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JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER MANIFESTED IN HIS GREAT PLAN OF THE AGES

Why was Jesus Christ called upon to suffer and die? Could not the great God have accomplished the salvation of humanity in some other way, without the agony and death of his Son? These are questions which often present themselves to the thoughtful student of God's Word, and which can be answered very satisfactorily. God could have arranged the matter very differently; He is not an unresourceful God. He is an all-wise God, an all-powerful God. We can see, for instance, that God could have decreed that Adam should be excluded from the Garden of Eden for a time, and that after he had suffered somewhat for his disobedience, and had thereby learned a lesson, he should then be restored to favor. By that experience Adam would, no doubt, have been taught a very good lesson. So all of Adam's children might have undergone some penalty, some purging experiences, whereby they might have profited, and then have come back again into harmony with God.

But the wisdom of God is a mighty deep, and he has a great and wise plan! He had purposed that all of his intelligent creatures—angels, cherubim, seraphim, and humans—who would gain eternal life, must be absolutely loyal to him, and hence that they should all be tested in respect to their loyalty. They must all be tried and tested characters. It was his purpose, therefore, that all his intelligent creatures in heaven and on earth should be brought to perceive his goodness and worthiness of all praise, that they might be able to exclaim from the heart: "Blessing and honor and might be unto him that sitteth upon the throne . . . forever!"

Those who prove their loyalty to the Creator shall live everlastingly. Those who will not prove their loyalty shall die—go into absolute extinction. Up to the time man was created, God had not made known this feature of his plan. He then declared that death should be the penalty for sin, in order that all might know the law of his government—that only the righteous shall live, and that all sinners shall eventually be destroyed. Hence God arranged beforehand that man's sin, which he foreknew, should bring upon Adam and his posterity the extreme penalty of his law.

Many would not have chosen sin if they had known its sure results, and had been born with perfect ability to choose the right. But God purposed that Adam's posterity should come into the world under fallen conditions, as the result of his disobedience. He purposed to make manifest here on the planet Earth what is the natural tendency and certain outcome of sin. Sin's tendency is always downward; and not only so, but it aggregates itself, and leads to ruin and death.

God designed that this great lesson of the evil results of sin should be witnessed by the angels also, who before the creation and fall of man were surrounded by such conditions as presented no special temptation to sin.

TEMPTATION COMES TO THE ANGELS

God desires the worship of only such as worship him in spirit and in truth. Any who will not worship from this motive shall eventually be destroyed. We see that God allowed sin not only to enter the world through the machinations of Satan, but to be a source of temptation to the angels. We see how all the angels became exposed to a peculiar temptation in connection with fallen mankind. (Genesis 6:1-5; Jude 6) We believe that Satan instigated this temptation, as he did the temptation of Mother Eve. He himself was the first transgressor.

Some of the angelic host succumbed to this temptation, and some remained loyal to God. So we know that all the angels of heaven were subjected to a great test as to their obedience to their Creator. All those angels who are in harmony with God, according to the Bible, have stood their test. These, we understand the Scriptures to teach, have been granted the reward of everlasting life, because they proved faithful and obedient and demonstrated their loyalty. Those who fell were bound in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day—now present, we believe.

GOD'S ECONOMICAL PLAN

Man has for six thousand years borne the penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die"—the penalty which the Bible declares to be the wages of sin—death and all the weaknesses and depravities of mind and of body which are its accompaniments. But God purposes that all shall have a full opportunity of recovery from this condition of sin and death; and the provision for man's recovery has been made in Christ. This provision is the most economical one that could have been arranged. If a thousand perfect men had sinned, it would have required a thousand perfect men to redeem them—one redeemer for each sinner. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," a man's life for a man's life, is the requirement of God's law.—Exodus 21:23-25; Deut. 19:21.

Before the creation of our first parents God had arranged that only one man should have the opportunity to fall and to be sentenced to death, that thus only one man would be required as a Redeemer. This divine arrangement was most economical because it will bring all the masses of humanity back to life at the cost of but one human life as the redemption-price. No fallen man could be a ransom, a corresponding price, for the perfect man Adam. Therefore God purposed from the very beginning that his only begotten Son, the first-born of all creation, should become man's Redeemer and that in order to become the Redeemer he should become a man.

The death of an angel could not have redeemed man. Divine justice required that a perfect human life must be given for a perfect human life. And God, knowing all this, sent his Son to

carry out his great plan of human redemption and restitution. Neither was there anything unkind or unjust to his Son in this, although for the Almighty to have forced the matter upon his Son would have been an injustice; and God could not be guilty of injustice.

Thus the Scriptures inform us that the coming of the Logos into the world was a voluntary matter. He did this "for the joy that was set before him," by the Almighty. The Father set before the Son that if he would suffer the ignominy of the transference of his being from the higher plane to a lower, a human plane, in order that he might redeem the lost race of Adam, he should be highly exalted, next to Jehovah; he should be made a partaker of Jehovah's nature—the divine nature. All this was the inspiration of our Lord's course—the joy of doing the Father's will and of having his approval; the joy of restoring mankind and of being exalted to his Father's glorious nature. He who thus humbled himself to become a man and die the ignominious death of the cross, has indeed been highly exalted as promised, and has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.—Hebrews 1:3.

INFINITE WISDOM OF GOD'S GREAT PURPOSE

Thus we see that the plan which God has adopted furnishes opportunity for the manifestation of the principles underlying his own glorious character, which neither angels nor men could so clearly have understood by any other means. When the great work of restoration is fully accomplished, angels and men will see the justice of God—a justice which permitted the penalty of death to be executed upon our race for six thousand years—a justice which provided a Redeemer to pay this penalty for Adam, that he and all his posterity might go free—a justice, too, which provided a great reward for the faithful Son who carried out, at such a cost to himself, the Father's purpose! This is the highest conception of justice of which men or angels could conceive!

JUSTICE—RIGHTEOUSNESS—THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."—Proverbs 21:3; 1 Samuel 15:22.

These words were addressed to God's chosen people, the Jews. The nation of Israel had come into special relationship with God. At Mt. Sinai, they had entered into a covenant with him and had pledged themselves to do justice and judgment. This was a requirement of Jehovah. But there seemed to be a tendency to think of sacrifices as being especially pleasing to the Lord. Some seemed inclined to feel that no matter how unjust they had been, they could offer a sacrifice and make it all right. But Jehovah pointed out that this would not do. His law was a requirement, and must come before all else; whereas these special sacrifices of thanksgiving for victories, etc., were privileges, voluntary offerings. The law demanded full allegiance to God.

The relationship of Israel to God as his people was based upon the law. This law comprised justice and judgment. The Israelites were to do according to its commands—first Godward, then manward. They were not to steal, not to kill, not to covet, etc. The essence and substance of the Golden Rule was there embodied.

To do justice is to do that which is just, right, equitable; to do judgment would be to render righteous decisions in the mind, to decide justly. One might be very just in his business dealings with his fellows. He might be very careful not to cheat any one out of a cent; and yet in his mind he might have unkind, uncharitable views of others, and perhaps say things about them that would be very unrighteous. This counsel of the Wise Man seemed to guard not only against the doing of injustice, but against having wrong thoughts. The decisions of our minds, as well as our actions, should be in harmony with the principles of righteousness.

OUR INABILITY TO JUDGE OTHERS

We are not to judge, decide, in an unfavorable manner in the case of any with whom we have to do, without indubitable proof. If they claim to be trying to do right, we should give them credit for sincerity wherever possible. We are not to call them hypocrites, for we cannot judge their hearts. Our Lord called some hypocrites in his day; but he had a superior power of discerning the heart, and we have not that power. We are not to judge the motives of others. We are not to go beyond their declaration, for we are not competent to do so.

We may at times judge the outward action as wrong or improper, but we are not to attempt to judge the heart, where there is possibility of misjudgment. We have pledged ourselves to strive to observe the Golden Rule in our every action

By this means God will also manifest his sympathetic love, which otherwise neither angels nor men might ever have known. Had there been no sin, no death, no sorrow, no pain, they might never have known the depths of divine mercy. After sin had entered the world, the angels beheld the love of God, in that he "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever [of mankind] believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life" for another! The Father's love was thus shown in his plan to send his Son to die for the world. This love will be manifested to all men in the incoming age, now very near at hand.

Through his plan God will manifest his power also; for while his power has been shown in the creation of the worlds, of men and of the various orders of angels, still this manifestation of energy is small in comparison to the power which he will yet exercise. This power will restore every individual of the race to his former condition; every soul of man will be awakened from the tomb. This will be a manifestation of power that is beyond the comprehension of humanity.

Then, too, God's wisdom will be wondrously manifested. When the grand outcome of the divine plan of the ages shall have been seen in its glory and majesty by all the created intelligences of God, all will hail him as the infinitely wise One—who fittingly ordained that every creature formed in his image should be tested as respects absolute loyalty, that only the loyal and obedient should have life, and that all others should be destroyed!

Thus we see that in his wonderful program for dealing with sinners, angelic and human, God chose the very best way, the one most profitable to angels and to men, the one which most redounds to his own ultimate glory and honor. "Who shall not reverence thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? . . . All the nations shall come and worship before thee, when thy judgments are made manifest!"—Revelation 15:4.

and word and thought, and we are to remember that God would be more pleased with us if we did not sacrifice and merely maintained our relationship to the Golden Rule, than that we should manifest ever so much zeal in sacrifice and yet violate the rule of justice. This rule requires love for our neighbor as for ourself. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in that matchless chapter on love—1 Cor. 13: "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

The proper course for us as disciples of Christ is that we observe the Golden Rule in our conduct, watching over our thoughts and our lips; and also that we present continually all that we have and are in sacrifice to the Lord. But obedience, justice, must come first, for this is demanded by the law of God. Before we can make much development in the cultivation of sacrificial love, we must learn to have a love of justice, righteousness. There is a trite and true proverb that a man must be just before he is generous. It behooves the children of God, as members of the new creation, to study with diligence this subject of strict justice toward all, and to put into practice day by day this quality of character which is absolutely essential if we would be acceptable to God; for it lies at the foundation of all Christian character.

We are not able while still in the fallen flesh, to keep perfectly this law of strict justice in act, word and thought. But it should be our prayerful endeavor to do so as far as possible. The merit of Christ will then make up for all unintentional and unavoidable deficiencies. Those only who have this foundation of character well laid can make proper progress. A love which is built on a foundation of injustice, or wrong ideas of righteousness, is delusive, and is not the love which the Lord's Word enjoins and which he will require as a test of true discipleship. Obedience to God demands that we strive to be just in deed and word and thought.

OBEDIENCE A TEST OF LOYALTY

The lesson taught in the Lord's rebuke to Saul at the mouth of the Prophet Samuel, given in our second text, applies with much force to spiritual Israel. How often today we see the need for this counsel amongst the professed followers of Christ! Many of these are Christian workers in the various denominations of Christendom, and many are their sacrifices of time, strength and money; but inasmuch as they are not obedient to the Lord they fail of the blessing they might have, and indeed cut themselves off from greater privileges and op-

portunities. Yea, many of them, we fear, are cutting themselves off from the kingdom—from glory and joint-heirship with the Master in that kingdom. We should learn from this lesson given us in the experience of Saul that our heavenly Father wishes us to be very attentive to his Word, and not to think for a moment that we can improve upon it, nor that any circumstance or condition will excuse us from obedience to him.

Had King Saul obeyed God, and the results had seemed to prove disastrous, he would have had a clear conscience. He would have been obedient, and could have left the results with the Lord. God would have been responsible for the results. How many of the Lord's people in Babylon would be blessed by following the instructions in this lesson!

Many have said to themselves again and again: I see that present arrangements and conditions in the churches are contrary to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ and the practice of the early church. I see that much is practised and taught that is not sanctioned in the Scriptures. But what can I do? I am identified with this system and am engaged in sacrificing for its upbuilding. If I now withdraw myself, it will mean more or less disaster or loss to it as well as to myself. I wish I were free from human institutions and that I had my hands filled with the Lord's work along the lines of his Word, but I cannot let go; necessity seems laid upon me. This seems to be the most convenient place for me to work and to sacrifice.

The Lord is not pleased with such arguments. His message to us is that to obey is better than sacrifice, however active and busy we may be. He tells us plainly that no sacrifice we can offer will be acceptable to him unless we are first obedient to his Word. He calls now to all the followers of Christ who are still in Babylon: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."—Revelation 18:4, 5.

THE FRUITS OF DISOBEDIENCE

We remember that Saul's error was his failure to carry out the command of the Lord in every particular. He slew all the Amalekites, old and young, except the king, whom he kept alive, possibly thinking to exhibit him in some kind of triumphal display. As for the flocks and herds, he consented that his people spare all that were goodly and desirable, but everything that was vile and refuse he destroyed utterly.

As we study the narrative and note the indignation of Samuel, and the Lord's positive declaration of his displeasure and of the punishment to be meted out to Saul, we see clearly that the king had not misunderstood his instructions, but with considerable deliberation had violated them. Consequently we must understand his words of explanation to Samuel to have been to a considerable extent hypocritical. He first saluted the Prophet with blessings and assurances that he had performed the command of the Lord. But Samuel replied: "What means, then, this bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen which I hear?" He understood at once that the destruction had not been complete, that Saul had only partially obeyed the Lord.

Saul, noting the displeasure of the Prophet of the Lord, began hypocritically to assure him that these fine sheep and oxen had been preserved that they might be sacrificed to the Lord. Alas, how fallen human nature ever seeks to justify itself in its course of perversity and disobedience to the commands of God! How much wiser and better would it be to obey under all circumstances! Saul reaped the result of his disobedience in being rejected as king of Israel. How bitter are the fruits of following our own course, of compromising our conscience, of seeking to evade the responsibility which rests upon us as professed children of God! It is sure to bring trouble and spiritual disaster to the Lord's people, and the hiding of our Father's face.

Ordinarily considered, sacrifice is a step beyond mere obedience. Obedience is a duty toward God. We ought to obey God. To his creatures God's will is law. This is duty of the very highest type. But the privilege of sacrifice granted to the people of God goes beyond duty, beyond obligation. We may give unto the Lord what he has not required of us; but what we give in sacrifice is voluntary, not commanded.

The question now arises, How can we apply these texts to ourselves? In the first place, we find some who desire to be the Lord's people, who seem to grasp the thought that there is a privilege of sacrifice in the present time, but who fail to note that the Lord has given some direct commands which must be considered first. Such should come to perceive that obedience is a prime requisite. No one can perfectly keep the law of God, but he must exhibit the true spirit of obedience, the earnest endeavor to be in harmony with that law. Then consecration to sacrifice is in order. For all who have met these conditions full satisfaction has been made, and they are accepted in Christ. And "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, and all things have become new."—2 Cor. 5:17.

St. Paul says of these, "The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:4) If we are not thus walking after the Spirit, we are not hearkening to the Lord; and while we are in that condition, he does not take pleasure in what we do. Even though we sacrifice some of our time for the colporteur work, the pilgrim work, etc., we shall not be pleasing to God if we do not keep his requirements of justice toward others.

If when one decides to make a consecration of himself to God he realizes that he has been unjust to another, restitution must be made. No one has a right to be generous with the money of another—to take another man's money and offer it in service to God. This is a form of injustice which must be very offensive to the Father—one which he would disdain altogether as a sacrifice. Yet we see that this is very largely practiced. There are a great many who have gotten money in a way not altogether right, and who, to quiet conscience, give some of it to religious work. This class are overlooking the weightier matters of the law of God. They have taken from others unjustly; then they desire to give to the Lord that which belongs to another. God's law demands justice, and it is no wonder that he is not pleased with this course of action.

Coming down to the ordinary affairs of life, we see that justice should be the very foundation of everything—between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, teachers and pupils, employers and employees, etc. The lesson of our text is a very important one to us of the church. In Christian character justice, obedience to God's law, comes first; mercy and benevolence come afterwards. We do not know of a principle that the Lord's people need to learn more particularly than this one of justice.

Injustice seems to crop out in many ways in the fallen human nature. Little injustices are daily practised in respect to trifles. These are thought not worth considering. But whoever cultivates injustice in even a small way is building up a character which will be unfit for the kingdom. As justice is the foundation of God's throne and of God's character, so justice must be the foundation principle governing the lives of his people.

THE OBEDIENCE OF THE CHRIST

The lesson of obedience is one which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus. It is necessary, too, that we have the spirit of obedience and not obey merely the letter. Whoever has the true spirit of obedience will not only obey the expressed commands of the Lord, given in his Word, but will seek to know the divine will in everything. He will seek to note the providences of his life, that he may be guided in the way the Lord would have him go. It is such faithful, obedient children of God who exclaim in the language of the Prophet: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart!" (Jeremiah 15:16) These can say with our dear Master: "Lo I come! I delight to do thy will, O my God!" Let all, then, who would be wholly acceptable to our Father in heaven be very diligent to build character in harmony with his law, having justice in thought, in word and in deed at the foundation, justice in our relationship to God, to the brethren and to all, and then building thereupon all the various qualities of love, that thus we may grow up into Christ our living Head in all things, and be able to render up our account at last with joy and not with grief.

PEACE WITH GOD AND THE PEACE OF GOD

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."—Isaiah 26:3.

To have come into a condition of Peace with God means that one has become reconciled to God. This implies a former condition of alienation, of "enmity through wicked works." Peace with God, then, means that this estrangement from God is a thing of the past, and that the estranged one is now in

harmony with God—that he has turned his back upon sin and is seeking to walk in the path of righteousness. This is a step of faith, and is accompanied by reformation of life. We rejoice with all who have come thus far; we are glad that they have this position of advantage over the masses of mankind

whom the god of this world has so blinded that they cannot see the beauty of the Lord nor the desirableness of peace with him, and who have not learned the bitterness of the fruits of sin.

But in our second text above, the Prophet is referring to a class who have gone further than the condition of peace with God. He is speaking of a class who have come into possession of "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," as the Apostle Paul declares. This peace can come only to those who have given themselves unreservedly to God—their time, their talents, their influence, their life, their all. These have a peace that none others can know. This peace of God rules the heart even amid turmoil and trouble; it is an inward tranquility and rest which is the direct result of a close, personal relationship of the soul with God. It is the peace of God because it is a peace that God only can give, a peace which only his very own can fully know.

What a precious legacy our dear Lord left with his disciples when he went away from them! He said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27) This was truly a legacy of priceless value, and it is the inheritance of the entire church throughout the age, even unto its close. To the world it may seem that the course of the Christian is far from peaceful, for the Lord's saints often have a stormy voyage. But if our hearts continue to be stayed on Christ by faith, and we do not let go our anchor, we shall be kept through all the tempests of life, however severely we may be tossed, however fiercely the storms may rage.

Faith can exclaim with the Prophet Isaiah, "For the Lord will help me, therefore I shall not be confounded; therefore have I set my face as a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." (Isaiah 50:7) On the assurances of the Lord we may rest, because our anchor holds fast to the throne of God. The language of our Master's heart was, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee." He had been with the Father from the beginning and he knew his love and goodness; he had seen the manifestations of his power; he had marked his loving-kindness. So we who have come into similar relationship to God have come to thus know and trust his love and faithfulness.

PEACE IN THE LORD

The Lord does not bless his people with peace in an outward sense. The Master's special associates, the Apostles, were buffeted, and so all his followers have been. The adversary does everything in his power to make their lives anything but peaceful and happy. This is true of all who walk in Jesus' footsteps. We have fightings without and fightings within, rather than peace without and peace within. We have fightings with our own flesh; and it is part of our victory that we "fight a good fight," a conquering fight. We are to put forth our best efforts in fighting against the world and the adversary, against all the things that Satan would put into our minds and hearts, and we are to get the better of these things. The Lord blesses his people with strength to surmount these difficulties.

We are not to be at peace with the flesh, but always at warfare with it. Yet there is a peace in the Lord that is born of faith in him and in his promises. He has promised us grace sufficient; he has promised that we shall not be overcome through having trials and difficulties that are too great for us. We are assured that we shall have the victory if we trust in his strength. This gives us a rest and peace in all our experiences.

"Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing!
It finds an echo in my soul;
How can I keep from singing?"

We are resting in the Lord's promises—we are resting in his strength and in his ability to make good his promises; for we know that he who has called us is able to fulfil all his good Word. This peace, or rest, is the special blessing of the holy Spirit. Only in proportion as we receive the holy Spirit, the holy mind of God, the holy disposition, can we have this peace fulfilled in us. It is a matter of simple ratio. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, in the knowledge of the truth, we shall have this to comfort and strengthen us; and we shall thus have more of the peace of God every day, and be able to abide in his love.

There is an eye that never sleeps beneath the wing of night;
There is an ear that never shuts when sink the beams of light.
There is an arm that never tires when human strength gives way;
There is a love that never fails when earthly loves decay.

It has been written for our instruction and comfort—"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." This faith is built upon the testimony of God's Word—a sure foundation. It is only through strong and unwavering faith that the peace of God will abide with his children. God has made us his sons and heirs, joint-heirs with our Lord. "No good thing will he withhold" from these; "All things shall work together for their good"; "He shall bear them up in his hands, lest they dash their foot against a stone"; "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry." Then let us be strong!

PEACE FOUNDED UPON FAITH

This peace of God is not dependent upon the smile of fortune, nor upon physical health, nor upon a host of friends. But it is a peace which abides even when health fails, or poverty comes in, or death steals from us the treasures of our hearts. It is a peace which none of the changes and vicissitudes of this life can take from us and which enemies are powerless to touch. What gift so rich could our Father give to his children!

How poor would be our inheritance today if we were without our anchorage in Christ! But with it we can endure all things which the Father's loving providence shall permit. Then let us face the coming days with calmness and courage. He who was with his dear disciples upon the stormy Sea of Galilee, and whose word of power quelled the mighty storm and stilled the raging of the sea, has the same care over his disciples today. When they cried out in fear, he quieted their hearts, saying, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Nothing can in any wise hurt us if our hearts are stayed on him.

In order to enjoy this perfect peace we must have unswerving trust in our Father's love and abiding faithfulness. As we look out into the starry heavens we see a manifestation of God's mighty power and majesty, but our hearts and minds would not be stayed and sustained by this; we might receive gifts from him, but without knowledge of his abiding faithfulness we would not know whether these might be only traps for our injury from the adversary. But if we have this proper foundation for faith, if we learn to know our Father through his Word (the only way we can know him), we come to have confidence in him.

If we trusted to our own reasoning, we would be in a very unsatisfactory condition. All would be uncertain; we would have no sure basis for faith or assurance. But when we see that the testimony of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, reveals to us a God of justice, wisdom, love and power, our minds and hearts have something reasonable and convincing to lay hold upon, and we say: We can trust such a God, because he is trustworthy. This conviction deepens into joy as we step out upon his promises and prove them for ourselves, thus learning their reality and realizing their fulfilment. We rejoice that this loving God has called us to redemption through his Son. We rejoice that he has offered us eternal life, and has called us even to a glorious joint-heirship with this Son.—Romans 8:17.

PEACE DEPENDENT UPON FULL OBEDIENCE

We rejoice, further, to know of the wondrous provision for the whole world in the future. All these things form a firm basis for peace and joy and confidence in the Lord. But our peace is proportionate to our constancy—our staying qualities. No one can retain this peace of God whose mind is not "stayed," fixed, on God. It is not a peace of recklessness nor of sloth, but a peace begotten of God himself, through his promises, which we have made our own. It is dependent also upon our full obedience to the Lord. It is the peace of Christ—"my peace." This peace and the faith which inspires it, can look up through its tears with joyful expectancy for the glorious fruition of our hopes, which God has promised and of which our present peace and joy are but the foretaste.

"Peace, perfect peace? our future all unknown?
Jesus we know, and he is on the throne!

"Peace, perfect peace? death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers!

"Peace, perfect peace? 'mid suffering's keenest throes?
The sympathy of Jesus brings repose.

"It is enough! Earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace!"

O weary soul with cares oppressed, trust in his loving might
Whose eye is over all thy ways through all thy weary night!
Draw near to him in prayer and praise, rely on his sure Word,
Acknowledge him in all thy ways, thy faithful, loving Lord.

FAITH THE BASIS OF TRUE REST

"We which have believed do enter into rest."—Hebrews 4:3.

In our text St. Paul refers to the fact that the law provided for the Jew a physical rest for the seventh day of the week, for the seventh year and for the forty-ninth and fiftieth years; and that these Sabbaths were typical of a better rest. He points out that all who believe in Christ enter into rest, and thus keep a continual Sabbath. As new creatures we rest all the time, if so be we abide in the Lord and in his promises.

The Apostle says that faith is necessary to rest. He tells us what to do in order to avail ourselves of that which God has already provided for us. He shows us that God made promises to Abraham, and these were reiterated to Isaac and to Jacob. God declared his purpose to have a special, holy nation, and promised Abraham that the blessing of the world should come through his Seed, who would constitute this chosen nation. The promises were great and precious.

Abraham believed the message and was glad. He rested. He did not know the way by which God would bring about the blessing, but he had the promise of God, confirmed by his oath. He did not need to know then about the Lord Jesus or the plan of salvation. He had full rest in fully believing God; and so did as many of his posterity as exercised the same faith as Abraham. Isaac and Jacob and many of the prophets, including the Prophet David, thus trusted God. Their writings show that they were fully in harmony with God. They realized that he had made a gracious provision for the future, and that this provision was for the world in general; yet they knew that they were to have a "better resurrection" than that of the world. They had a rest of faith in these things that God had not yet accomplished.

Our Lord Jesus declared that Abraham saw his day and was glad. He did not see it with his natural eye, but with the eye of faith. He saw the day in which Christ, who has died for all men, will uplift the human family, raising the world up out of sin and death—first exalting his bride, and finally causing the blessing of God to extend to every creature. This is just what God promised to Abraham—"In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Abraham was glad, and everybody else is glad who sees it. Abraham was content to see that there was to be a great blessing for his posterity, and through them for the world. He did not see God's plan clearly, as we see it, but he saw enough to make him rejoice.—John 8:56.

INCREASING LIGHT AND GREATER TESTS

Coming down to our own age, we see that a greater light, a greater privilege, has brought greater tests of faith in many respects. Abraham was tested in that he was told to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice. He knew that the promises were to be fulfilled through this son, but he said, It is for me to be obedient; God can raise my son from the dead. This shall not hinder my faith in the outworking of God's plan.

We of the Gospel age have not heard God's voice speaking to us audibly, as did Abraham; but we live in the time of a further development of the great plan of God. He has sent his Son into the world, who was made flesh and dwelt among us, and who died, "the just for the unjust."

Unbelief would assert that if Jesus had been the Son of God he would not have died; but there was a mortgage held on the human race by justice, and their case was hopeless unless a Redeemer should be provided. So the eye of faith today is able to grasp God's purposes in a fuller way than did Abraham. Yet we do not know that our faith is any greater than his; for even if we have more trials and difficulties, we have also greater opportunities and greater light. Abraham had full faith, full confidence in God, and no one could have more than this.

The Lord's people of the present time believe that mankind are to be rescued from sin and death. Some have more knowledge than others, and more testing; some who have less capacity cannot endure so severe testing, nor can they enjoy so fully. But all can have the same rest that Abraham had—the rest of faith in God. God has promised to his saints a resurrection to glory and honor and blessing. But these are not actual as yet. We have now only the earnest of this inheritance. It is for

faith to triumph and to realize that God can bring us to that glorious condition which he has promised; and he will, if we are faithful. Each in proportion to his knowledge and faith will have rest. The most learned and the most ignorant can have this rest, if only they believe God.

REST PROPORTIONATE TO FAITH

The rest we have entered into is not our ultimate rest. If we have the faith today, we may have the rest today; if we lose the faith, we also lose the rest. But a perfect permanent rest awaits us. God has promised us certain great and precious things. He is our Creator and our Father, and will do for us the things he has promised. And according to our faith it will be unto us—much faith, much rest; little faith, little rest. Those who are in harmony with God believe his testimony.

This does not imply that all who have been of God's children have believed all of the divine plan; for we see that this would not be possible. Some have had greater opportunity for believing; and some have had less. We who live today have much more advantage than those who lived prior to our day. Our test, then, does not come so much from lack of knowledge; but it is a test of faith in God, and obedience to the light now given us. Having this great flood of light now granted at the close of this age, our faith should be very strong, and we should seek to increase it more and more by gaining all the knowledge now due. We should grow in faith, grow in grace, grow in knowledge and grow in love. We enter into a deeper and more intelligent rest if we avail ourselves of the helps which the Lord has provided for us. If we truly believe, we will manifest our belief by works in harmony therewith.

In Scriptural usage the word believe implies much more than merely to acknowledge a fact or a truth. The great truth before us all is what the Bible calls the Gospel, the good tidings. The belief referred to in our text is belief in this Gospel: We who believe the Gospel do enter into rest. What is the Gospel that we believe? It includes all the features of God's love and mercy to us as a fallen race—his proposition for eternal life through Christ, with all the blessings this involves. To the church the Gospel—the good tidings—includes also the offer to us of joint-heirship with Christ in the kingdom.

One might have an intellectual belief in these promised blessings without entering into the rest mentioned in our text. But this form of belief is evidently not in the Apostle's thought. To the extent that the individual recognizes those facts, accepts them and acts upon them, to that extent he enters into rest. If he believes partially, he rests in that proportion; if he believes more, he rests more; if he believes perfectly, he has perfect rest, and will show his faith by his works. The Gospel message is so wonderful that any one who believes it will desire to avail himself of its blessings. If the opportunity is presented of becoming a joint-heir with Jesus to the divine nature, and the mind can grasp the proposition, one would really be a fool if he did not accept such an offer. So any one who does not accept does not believe, in the sense the word is used in our text. All who truly believe will accept such an offer and will enter into rest by faith.

HEART CONFIDENCE ESSENTIAL

The expression of the text, "We who have believed," implies that the belief has reached the heart, and will thus affect our course in life. And the second part of the statement, "do enter into rest," implies that the rest is gradually coming to him because he has believed. He has first believed; and the fulness of rest is a condition to be attained gradually as his faith grows stronger, and as he learns to appreciate more fully what he has accepted.

"With the heart man believeth," and not merely with the head. It is not a mere intellectual belief. When we accept the Gospel as a fact, and enter fully into it, we begin at once to have a measure of this rest; and as we learn by our experiences how true the Lord is to all his promises to us, the rest becomes more deep and abiding. The belief was at first a full belief in the message of God; but as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, the more firm and established does our faith become, and our rest is proportionate.

THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION

The people of New York, Boston, Cleveland, Toledo, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Chattanooga, Nashville and some smaller places will all have been introduced to the "Photo-Drama of Creation" before this announcement reaches your eye.

The amount of money at our disposal being limited, we are moving very cautiously, and going merely where the Lord seems to open the door by giving us especially low rates on auditoriums. We seek to hire theaters of good class not doing

prosperous business, whose business managers are glad, therefore, to let us have their buildings at a price little or no more than the cost of the light, heat and janitorage, hoping for some other compensation through the publicity it will bring to their house by advertising. Gradually the Lord's providence is guiding to the exhibiting of the Drama in other cities than those mentioned. After getting the matter well started in this country, we will see what can be done in Great Britain. Then a little later we will look to the interest of the friends in

Scandinavia and Germany, not forgetting Australia. The Drama has been well received everywhere. There has been scarcely a criticism.

The Editor's personality has been permitted to come before the people in connection with the Drama, because newspaper people assure us that without the personality the Drama would fall flat, and be taken for some ordinary church entertainment. The personality necessary for advertising the Drama and the Sermon is quite distasteful to us, but is submitted in the interest of the cause.

Our friends need have no hesitation in recommending the Drama to their friends and neighbors. All who see it admit that nothing like it has ever been produced before. It is certainly beautiful and very instructive. A gentleman who recently visited the Cincinnati Exhibition remarked to the Brother in charge: "I am a U. B. minister, and I want to say to you that I have learned more about the Bible and about God in my visit to this Drama than I learned in my entire three-years' course in the Theological Seminary." A Catholic priest remarked when leaving, "I will write up this Drama in our Catholic paper, and I assure you the report will not be unfavorable."

A Christian Science lady remarked, after seeing the Drama: "From a child I have been feeling after God. I thought I had gotten on the right tracks when I was healed by Christian Science, and was given the power of healing others. Some money that came to me I gave freely (one hundred and fifty thousand dollars) to the building of a church in Boston, and a hundred thousand dollars to the building of a church in New York City, so that now I have practically nothing except my income as a healer. But all the time something was lacking. My heart found no fellowship with the Lord. Instead, I saw lights, heard voices that others did not hear, and saw spiritual forms. After seeing the Drama I said to myself, 'The person who wrote this Drama knew God. I am now on the right way.'"

The lady and her father inquired for the address of Brother Russell and visited him, expressing great joy at having found the truth. She admitted, however, that with the acceptance of the clearer light of the divine Word she became again afflicted with the same malady from which she suffered before she was healed by Christian Science. We told her not to be surprised at this, and related to her a somewhat similar case, as follows: A lady in Canada became more or less identified with Spiritism. The spirits promised that if she would follow their direction they would make of her one of the most eminent vocalists in the world. She followed their advice, and her voice became remarkable. About that time she came in contact with present truth and accepted it, and, of course, learned what Spiritism is. She also learned that the marvelous power sometimes used by the spirit mediums is from the fallen angels, who personate the dead. She renounced Spiritism. Incidentally, her fine voice failed her absolutely.

Priests and nuns frequently visited the Drama in Cincinnati, and they evinced great delight. Many Sunday School teachers attended and brought their classes.

Not only have we lectures that are interesting and profitable, but they are delivered by a Talking Machine combination peculiarly our own, which is, we believe, superior to anything which has ever before been produced. The horn talks with the volume and tone of an orator, and no one recognizes that the words come from a machine.

The pictures are simply beautiful—some of them slides, others films, panoramas, etc. Many of our Moving Picture films are far superior to those ordinarily seen, in that they are hand-colored, dignified, graceful.

At the introduction, intermission and conclusion of each lecture we have choice vocal selections beautifully rendered by the horn, and delicate instrumental music is produced during the showing of the films.

THE COLOR LINE FOUND NECESSARY

We might have anticipated that many colored people would be deeply interested in this Drama. But it did not impress

itself upon us until gradually their numbers increased to about twenty-five per cent. of the whole audience. Of course, we were glad to see them, glad that they were interested in the Drama. We had the same feeling respecting them as others; but it was quickly discerned that it was not a case of feeling, but that, whereas the colored people of New York City are about five per cent. of the population, in our audiences they are about twenty-five per cent. and the number increasing. What shall we do? As the attendance of the colored people would increase, proportionately the number of the whites would decrease; for explain it how we will, a majority of whites prefer not to intermingle closely with other races.

Recognizing that it meant either the success or the failure of the enterprise of the Drama as respects the whites, we have been compelled to assign the colored friends to the gallery, which, however, is just as good for seeing and hearing as any other part of The Temple. Some were offended at this arrangement.

We have received numerous letters from the colored friends, some claiming that it is not right to make a difference, others indignantly and bitterly denouncing us as enemies of the colored people. Some, confident that Brother Russell had never sanctioned such a discrimination, told that they believe it would be duty to stand up for equal rights and always to help the oppressed, etc. We were obliged to explain the facts, assuring all of our loving interest in the colored people, and of our desire to do them good, and not injury. We again suggested that if a suitable place could be found in which the Drama could be presented for the benefit of the colored people alone, we would be glad to make such arrangements, or to co-operate with any others in doing so.

Our explanations were apparently entirely satisfactory to all of the fully consecrated. To these we explained that it is a question of putting either the interests of God's cause first, or else the interests of the race first. We believed it our duty to put God first and the truth first—at any cost to others or to ourselves! We explained that we thought that all the colored brethren should know our attitude toward them—they should know that we love to serve them in any way possible and to give them the very best we have to give of the Gospel message; and that it is only a question of whether our giving to them in one way would entirely deprive us of giving the truth to others.

Some who were still tenacious and quarrelsome we merely reminded of our Lord's declaration that in inviting visitors into the house it is the place of the host to say where they shall sit, and then we showed them the parable of the man who chose the chief seat of honor and was given a lower one.

In answer to the query as to how our course of conduct squared with the Golden Rule, we replied that it squares exactly. We would wish others to put God first. If our personal interests are or ever have been in conflict with the real and apparently best interests of the Lord's cause, it is a part of our consecration vow to ignore our interests in favor of the interests of the Lord's cause. This is what we mean by the declaration that we are dead to self and alive to our God as new creatures.

We reminded one dear sister that the Lord enjoins humility, and assures us that unless we humble ourselves we shall not be exalted. If nature favors the colored brethren and sisters in the exercise of humility it is that much to their advantage, if they are rightly exercised by it. A little while, and our humility will work out for our good. A little while, and those who shall have been faithful to their Covenant of Sacrifice will be granted new bodies, spiritual, beyond the veil, where color and sex distinctions will be no more. A little while, and the Millennial kingdom will be inaugurated, which will bring restitution to all mankind—restitution to the perfection of mind and body, feature and color, to the grand original standard, which God declared "very good," and which was lost for a time through sin, but which is soon to be restored by the powerful kingdom of Messiah.

THE PRODIGAL SON

MAY 3.—Luke 15:11-32.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight."—V. 18.

Respecting the parable of the Prodigal Son the following comments have been made: "One of the masterpieces of the Great Teacher."—David Gregg, D.D. "This has been fitly called the crown and pearl of all the parables—the Gospel within the Gospel!"—D. S. Clark, D.D. "Its beauty and its pathos are unequalled in the realm of fiction."—R. H. McKim,

D.D. "It is more like a complete allegory than any other of our Lord's parables."—*New Century Bible*. "No other parable has touched so many hearts."—W. E. Burton, D.D.

The setting of the parable shows the Master's object in giving it. He was seeking in this parable, as in those considered a year ago last fall, to show the Pharisees that their

position respecting the publicans and sinners was wrong. He here pointed out that their wrong attitude toward the common people was likely to cost them their own share in the kingdom.

In the parable the father who had two sons evidently represents Jehovah God. The two sons here represented the two general classes into which the Jewish nation divided itself. The elder son represented those who sat in Moses' seat, and who remained loyal to God in their outward profession, at least, and in their endeavors outwardly to keep his law. The younger son represented the common people, not so religiously strict as to their ideals. This class, the younger son, misused their privileges and opportunities as members of the nation of Israel, as beneficiaries of the divine promises. They wasted their opportunities in self-gratification. They were known to others, and acknowledged by themselves, as publicans and sinners—not attempting to live godly lives.

This younger-son class of publicans and sinners felt their degradation, just as described in the parable. They were spiritually hungry. They were ragged. They felt a longing to be back in the Father's house, yet they hesitated to go back. It was just such characters that Jesus especially encouraged, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." Jesus represented the Father's house, and prompted the younger-son class of the Jews to have confidence that the Father would receive them when they had come to him penitently.

The parable tells us that some of this class, repentant, came back to God and were abundantly pardoned. And not only were they pardoned, but because of their penitence they were granted special manifestations of God's favor. Recurring to the parable, all this was illustrated by the prodigal's feeling his hunger and wretchedness and saying, I will return to my father's house. And while he was yet a great way off, the father saw him, ran to him, embraced him, had compassion on him and kissed him. And the prodigal said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it. Let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

How grandly this illustrates to us the love of God—its lengths and breadths and heights and depths! The best robe and the other attentions given to the repentant one well illustrate the provision God has made for all who return to him from the ways of sin. The robe and all the blessings are provided through Christ—covering for all the imperfections of the fallen nature. The fatted calf well represents the "feast of fat things" which God has provided for the penitent class.—Isaiah 25:6-8.

Making a particular application of the parable, we might say that the time when the Father accepted the prodigal, kissed him and put upon him the robe of Christ's righteousness, provided in his sacrifice and freely granted to all who during this age come unto the Father through him, was at Pentecost. The feast and merry-making may well represent the blessed promises of God, which become applicable to those who are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness and accepted into God's family by the begetting of the holy Spirit.

This is the marriage feast represented in another of our Lord's parables. (Matthew 22:2-14) The elder brother of our lesson was indeed bidden, but refused. He would not go in. He was jealous that the father should receive the young spendthrift. This jealous spirit on the part of the Pharisees apparently kept many of them from appreciating the gift of God in Christ. Just as shown in the parables, they refused to enter in.

The parable represents the father as entreating the elder son to come in and join in the feast, rejoicing in the reclamation of his brother; but he was angry and declined. Likewise the elder-brother class of Jews did not show the right spirit for those for whom the kingly privileges were intended, all of whom must be meek, loving, copies of God's dear Son in their generous good will toward all who desire to come to the Father.

The refusal of the elder brother to participate in the festivities reminds us of another of the Lord's parables respecting the marriage feast. (Luke 14:15-24) Those who were originally bidden appreciated not; one went to his farm and another to his merchandise. They dishonored the host who had invited them to his banquet. Then the servants were sent out into the streets and lanes to gather any who desired to come, and afterward they were sent to invite all everywhere who desired to share the feast; and finally the full number fore-ordained to be of this class was found.

THE PRINCIPLES APPLY BROADLY

While the parable of our lesson illustrated the two classes of Jews, the principles set forth in it are more generally applicable. For instance, there are noble characters in the world who love to do right—people who are well-born, and well-enviored after birth, and who apparently should be the very first ones who would be chosen of God to be the joint-heirs with his Son in the great kingdom that is to bless mankind in general. Nevertheless, the Scriptures make clear that not many of this kind may be expected to be of the kingdom class—not that God is unwilling to have them because of their education, wealth and good morals, but that these very qualities make them less ready to accept the terms.

All are sinners, whether they know it or not. All should be honest enough to confess the fact; and God requires this very honesty, this very confession of our need, before the merit of Christ can be imputed to us as covering our blemishes. This better class, represented in the elder brother, seem to feel that in contrast with the lower strata of society they are perfection itself, and that God would be sure to desire them. His declaration, however, is that not many great, not many noble, not many learned, not many wise, are being chosen, but chiefly the mean things of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom.

God evidently wishes to have a class honest enough to acknowledge their own imperfections and their own unworthiness of his favors. So doing, he will bless them with a knowledge of themselves and of his righteousness; whereas others, self-satisfied and unwilling to accept the grace of God in Christ or to confess their need of any covering for their blemishes, are not humble enough to be of the class that the Lord desires for the great work of glory by and by.

Thus it comes about that the majority who accept God's favor and become his children are from the younger-brother class—that described by the apostles—not many rich, not many noble, not many learned, and not many wise, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. These have the ear to hear the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." These have the hearts to respond to this invitation. They realize their wretched condition and their need of help, while frequently the others who have lived more open lives do not recognize their need of forgiveness and help.

Perhaps no other parable has been so helpful to the poor and needy, the sinful and the weak who have a desire to return from the ways of sin and to be received back into the family of God. They see their own picture in this parable, and are encouraged by its representing the Father as willing to receive them. It is quite contrary to the thought generally entertained by sinners. The heavenly Father's character has been so misrepresented to them by the creeds of the dark ages that they fear him and expect no kind reception from him. As the proper thought of God's character reaches the poor and the depraved, they receive a suggestion of hope from this parable and other Scriptures. This hope leads and assists many of them to a full return and a full surrender to the God of all grace.

The prodigal is represented as coming to himself, as awakening to a realization of his dire necessities, as coming to a knowledge of the fact that his father has an abundance, and probably will be willing to let him have a share of the blessing which he no longer merits. His expression, "I will arise and go to my father," represents what should be the attitude of all repentant ones—the attitude which all Christian people should help them to attain—reliance upon the love and mercy of the heavenly Father and the provision which he has made in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and for their reception again to his love and care.

DIVINE PARADOXES

"Because thy loving kindness [favor] is better than life, my lips shall praise thee."—Psalm 63:3.

There are two ways in which this text may be viewed, both of which are very proper. One way is to consider it merely from the viewpoint of the Psalmist and what he meant. The

other is to consider it from the standpoint of prophecy. We understand the Prophet David to mean that to have God's favor is more desirable than life; that is to say, he would

rather die than to live without divine favor. The other way, of viewing it prophetically, is to suppose that here, as in many other places, the Psalmist represented The Christ, Jesus the Head and the church his members.

Our consecration is unto death. God has invited us to present our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto him, and he has given us exceeding great and precious promises for the life to come. Therefore, because of our love for him and for the principles of righteousness for which he stands, we are not merely willing to lay down our lives, but glad to lay them down. We are glad to lay down our human lives in doing the things that are pleasing to God.

Another of David's Psalms gives us the thought that in God's favor is everlasting life. (Psalm 30:5) These paradoxical statements are in harmony with the other Divine paradox, that "he that loseth his life shall find it." He that surrenders his earthly life shall gain glory, honor, immortality, the divine nature. We are glad that we can appreciate these glorious things represented in the divine favor extended to the church; and we gladly lay down our lives. We have chosen the better part.

"Therefore my lips shall praise thee." The Scriptures declare "that with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10) We may say that to live righteously is one of the best ways of proving our obedience to the Lord. Yet there are some who try hard to live pleasing to the Lord, who might be restrained from making a confession of him. There

are reasons for the blessing which we receive by confession. One reason is that it is a witness to the world—showing forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness; and a second reason is that this witnessing has a good effect on ourselves. We enlist our natural forces to support this witness, and thus bring into unison all the powers of our nature.

The preaching of the Gospel brings opposition. If our Lord had gone about casting out demons, healing the sick, etc., and had not told anything about the divine plan, he would probably have been looked upon as a fine character—as a man going about doing good. But because he preached differently from the scribes and Pharisees, and his preaching of the truth infringed upon the teachings of those about him, it roused their ire.

So it is today. All the persecution comes about from the making known of the truth. In no time that we know of has this not been so. In the dark ages and throughout the Gospel age, the preaching of the truth has brought upon those telling the good tidings persecutions from those whose minds have been benighted by the prince of darkness. In proportion as we open our lips and tell of the Gospel of the Lord, we are opposed by Satan and those who are blinded by him. With the lips one might praise God, and with the lips he might injure men. The lips of this class consecrated to God—those who are laying down their present life in his service—should be devoted to his praise, to showing forth the glorious character and loving kindness of our God, to telling forth the wonders of the divine plan, which is marvelous in our eyes.

THE UNJUST STEWARD

MAY 10.—Luke 16:1-13.

"He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous in much."—V. 10.

Because the Pharisees were the leading exponents of the law, Jesus pointed many of his parables against them, while he comparatively ignored the irreligious Jews—the Sadducees, who made no profession of faith. Today's lesson is in line with this. This parable was spoken as a rebuke to the spirit of the Pharisees, who bound heavy burdens upon others, but shirked them themselves, while pretending hearty obedience to the law.

In olden times, more than now, it was the custom for rich men to appoint stewards. Such a steward had as absolute control of his master's goods as had the master himself; he had, as it were, the power of attorney. Some stewards were faithful; others extravagant. The one mentioned in our Lord's parable was extravagant, unsatisfactory. His master had concluded to dispense with his services, and had asked him to render up his accounts.

On his books were the accounts of certain debtors who apparently were left with no chance of being able to meet their obligations. The steward concluded that he would scale off these debts, so that the debtors probably could pay before he turned over his office to his successor. He did so. One owing a hundred bath of oil was told that he might scale off the debt to fifty. Another owing a hundred measures of wheat (500 to 1,400 bushels) was told that he might scale it down twenty per cent. And so he went down the list. Such a use of his authority made him friends amongst those whom he had favored; and his lord complimented him upon the wisdom he had displayed.

Applying this parable, Jesus proportionately condemned the Pharisees for taking an opposite course. He had declared that the scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat as interpreters of the Mosaic law, and that, had they followed the course of this steward, they would have made friends of the poor publicans and sinners by trying to minimize their shortcomings, and to encourage them to do the best they could to comply with the demands of the law. Instead, they bound heavy burdens upon the people and discouraged them.

All this on their part was hypocrisy; for they could not help knowing that they themselves were unable to comply with the requirements of the law, which is the full measure of a perfect man's ability. Their proper attitude would have been to confess their own shortcomings, to strive to do their best, to appeal to God for mercy and to teach the common people to do similarly. So doing, they would have been better prepared to be received into the Gospel favor in the end of their age. As it was, by their hypocrisies they were hindering themselves from becoming disciples of Jesus and from seeking grace and forgiveness of sins. They were also hindering others

from becoming disciples by claiming that it was possible to have God's favor through keeping the law.

APPLYING THE PARABLE

Jesus then said to his disciples, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail—at the end of your stewardship, at death—the results of your benevolence may cause that ye be received, in the resurrection, into the everlasting habitations.—Verse 9, paraphrase.

There is room for dispute in respect to the teachings of this parable, but to us it seems clear that Jesus meant that the wisdom of the unjust steward should be exercised by his disciples in their dealing with the mammon, the riches, of the present life. From the moment God's people give themselves to him, they give also their earthly rights and interests, and become merely stewards of their time, talent, influence, wealth, etc. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God." Use all that you have energetically in the divine service.

These stewards of the mercies of God have his approval in the use of all of earthly things to the forwarding of their spiritual interests; they will not be counted unjust squanderers, as they use their earthly opportunities for advancing their heavenly interests. On the contrary, this will be reckoned to them for wise stewardship; and being found faithful in the use of earthly things in God's service, they can safely be entrusted with the greater things of the future. They will be received into the everlasting habitations and be granted a share with Messiah in his glorious kingdom. They will be entrusted with all of God's favors to be bestowed upon mankind. Their unselfishness in the present time, their willingness to sacrifice, will be the basis of the divine approval and glory to follow.

Unfaithfulness in the present time respecting things of trifling value in comparison would mean unfaithfulness in the future great things. Whoever therefore selfishly appropriates to himself the things of which he is steward will not be trusted with the future great things; and whoever is sacrificing will thus demonstrate his faithfulness, his loyalty to God, and to such the greater things will be entrusted. Would God entrust the riches of the future life and glory and honor to any who now prove themselves unfaithful, selfish, covetous, using present blessings merely for self-gratification? Surely not!

Jesus asks, "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who shall give you that which is your own?" With the followers of Jesus all things of the present time are God's—the things of the present life belong to God, because we have consecrated or devoted them. The things of the future life belong to us, because God has promised them to us. But there are conditions; namely, our faithfulness, our loyalty.

If we are not faithful in handling the things which we have devoted to God, he will not give to us by and by those things which he has promised shall be ours conditionally. If, then, we should misappropriate the things consecrated to God—if we should abuse our stewardship and use those opportunities selfishly, could we expect God to give us the things which he has promised to give only to the faithful?

SERVING TWO MASTERS

There are two great impelling powers; one evil, the other good. These are known by different names and are in every way opposite. God is the Good Master; Satan is the evil master; but each has representatives and various interests. Thus God, his Spirit and his teachings, are represented by the word love; while Satan and his course are represented by selfishness, covetousness, mammon. Through the fall of man the whole world has lost the Spirit of God, and has been under the domination of Satan for centuries. All have become more or less evil. The spirit of selfishness, covetousness, leading on to unrighteousness in general, has gotten hold upon our race, so that even after we see the wrong course it is with great difficulty that its power over us can be broken. "We cannot do the things which we would."

But here comes in the proposition of the Gospel: God desires some faithful souls to be associated with Jesus in dispensing his blessings. He offers this great prize of the kingdom to those who will demonstrate that they have the right spirit. This prize is a pearl of great value. No other consideration can compare with it. Whoever intelligently accepts the Gospel call turns his back upon sin, selfishness and all the works of the flesh and the devil related thereto, and sets his face Godward, love-ward, rightward.

But it is not sufficient that he shall enter into a covenant to give up the world and walk in the footsteps of Jesus. It is not sufficient that God accepts that covenant and begets such a

one of his holy Spirit. More than this is needed. He must demonstrate not only that he prefers right to wrong on equal terms, but that he is willing to suffer the loss of all things that he may be on the side of right, on God's side.

Then comes in the trial and testing. He seeks to serve God and to gain the reward of glory, honor and immortality in the kingdom with Jesus; but he finds a tendency in his flesh to look after and appreciate the rewards of mammon, selfishness. This brings about the great battle. One or the other must conquer. In addition to growing in grace, in knowledge and in love, the new creature in Christ must feed upon the divine encouragements and promises of the Bible. Otherwise he will be discouraged and utterly give up the fight against the world, the flesh and the devil.

The Lord has promised grace sufficient in every time of need, to the faithful. He tells us that he knoweth that we are dust; He remembereth our frame, that we cannot do what we would like to do. But at the same time he requires that we do all that we are able to do, assuring us that for all such his grace will be sufficient; that is to say, to all such he will make up the deficiency.

In our lesson Jesus forewarns us that the choice we make must be a permanent one, that the supposition that we can serve God and mammon at the same time is a mistake. In proportion as we are faithful to one, we are unfaithful to the other. It is therefore for us to choose the service of God, counting it the greatest of our privileges, and its rewards the greatest of all rewards, and these for eternity.

After all, much will depend upon the degree of our faith. If we have faith in God, in his promise of great reward, if we have faith in the promise of the Savior to give us his grace and assistance in every time of need, it will be quite possible for us to fight the good fight and to gain the crown which the Lord hath in reservation for all those who love him supremely.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES THE KINGDOM OF BLESSING

"And His [Jehovah's] feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."—Zechariah 14:4.

This text refers to the closing of the day of trouble and the manifestation of God's power in connection with that trouble. The literal Mount of Olives may have, and probably will have, somewhat to do with the matter. It is referred to here as experiencing a great earthquake. No doubt the Israelites will be gathered at Jerusalem at this time, and no doubt the Lord's favor will be manifested to them there. This will be at the close of "Jacob's trouble," from which the Lord will be present to deliver them. Our thought is that this will be after the church shall have passed into glory. The execution of what is here described seems to be a part of the work of the glorified church.

We understand that the ancient worthies will then appear, and that God's favor will have returned to the Jews, and that Israel's temporal blessings will there begin. This would imply

that the Jews will then be under the New Covenant arrangement, and hence that the church must have been completed.

Symbolically, a mountain represents a kingdom. The Scriptures elsewhere declare that Jehovah will make the place of his feet glorious. The word olive always associates itself in the minds of the people of the Orient with the thought of light and nourishment. The olive oil they use regularly instead of butter. As the olive furnishes both light and food, the Mount of Olives would represent the kingdom of God. Olive oil was poured upon the head of the Jewish kings and priests, and symbolized thus the holy Spirit. God's kingdom will be for the blessing of mankind. It will be of two phases—the heavenly and the earthly—and all people may eventually come under its blessed condition.

See STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. 4, pp. 649-656.

"UNDER HIS WINGS"

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust."—Psalm 91:4.

The 91st Psalm very clearly applies to the church, and would seem to be especially applicable to the church in the end of this age. But since it is addressed in a personal way, as though to one person, it may be The Christ as a whole that is referred to, from the Head to the last member of the body. Our Lord Jesus had trials and difficulties, and needed protection and care. He went to the heavenly Father and sought the necessary aid. And so with all the Lord's people continually.

But the Psalmist seems especially to refer to our day: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." Of course, there have been times in the past when thousands have fallen through persecution, etc., but the falling away mentioned here seems to be the falling away from God's people. Many will be turned aside, injured, wounded, if not killed, in the great battle pictured.

This battle, we understand, is at the conclusion of this Gospel age. The powers of darkness are now specially arraying themselves against the consecrated people of God, and all associated with them. There never was a time when God's people, as a whole, had so large opportunities or so great success as Christendom has had in the past century. Under the attacks of Satan that have been in progress for the last fifty, sixty or seventy years, many have fallen into unbelief, Higher Criticism, infidelity, the various features of which are represented

as a great pestilence. We see that there is a pestilential infidelity abroad in the land. Its votaries are misled by the adversary—quite probably without any such intention on their part.

Very probably in the future, as they see the truth, many of these will acknowledge their error; but for the time being there is a great drouth in Christendom. Church attendance is falling away. Many of the ministers are preaching what they themselves doubt. They have fallen from grace, fallen from divine favor, fallen from an appreciation of the Word of God.

THE FEET OF THE CHRIST

This Scripture points out, too, the "feet" of this Christ class living in our day. "He shall give his angels charge over thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." All the members have a relationship to the Head and to one another. These "angels" we understand to represent divine promises and helpful assistances of the saints. These "angels" are represented as bearing up the feet, that they may not stumble over the stone of stumbling at this time. (Isa. 8:14) Instead of stumbling over this stone, they will be lifted up by it to greater appreciation and higher conditions. The feet shall not be moved.

In the figure of our text, these who are to be covered represent all who are of this one class. As a hen gathereth her