

OUR UNDER SHEPHERD

"O Under Shepherd of the flock,
Thou who didst safely keep
The little ones of God's dear fold
While hirelings lay asleep,
Thy watch upon the mountain side
Is o'er; and thou hast passed
Within the palace of the King,
With glory crowned at last!

"Thy lot, O faithful one, was hard;
Sharp were the rocks that tried
Thy weary feet, when thou didst search
The rugged mountain side
For those poor, hungry lambs who strayed
Far from the safe, warm fold,
Led by the hireling's careless voice
Into the darkness cold!

"The Master's staff was in thy hand;
The Master's rod was thine;
They comforted the weary sheep,
They spoke the Word divine.
They led through thorns and briers rude
The weakest and the worst,
Who wandered, in their blindness, far
In paths of sin accursed.

"No burning lake of awful fire
Did thy keen eye discern
To frighten timid little lambs,
And faith to terror turn;
But up the mountain's rugged height,
A path that ever led
From darkness into that clear light
Where dwells our living Head.

"Beyond the shadows thou hast climbed,
But still thy clear voice calls:
'Press onward, little flock, thy God
Is true; no ill befalls
The sheep who walk the narrow way,
The way the Master trod,
The way which seems all loneliness,
But where Faith's eye sees God!'

"The shadows o'er that mountain top
Will lift ere long; and we
Who follow on shall find him there.
And with him Christ shall see.
O thou great Shepherd of the flock,
Whom we, like him, adore,
Be with us till at last we meet
To sever nevermore!"

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"WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL"

[This article with the exception of the paragraphs below, was a reprint of that published in issue of July 15, 1905, which please see.]

It poorly befits an instructed child of God to denounce with scorn and contempt those of the poor world whose failings and lacks in character may be apparent to us. If in some respects we have been more nobly born than are many others, have we anything whereof to boast in this regard? "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, wherefore shouldst thou boast?" Since we realize more and more as we go on in the narrow way how many and how humiliating are our own infirmities, we should learn to be very pitiful toward the infirmities of the poor, fallen world. And since the Lord is graciously willing to cover our many blemishes with the merit of the precious blood, we cannot do less than manifest this same spirit, if we hope to be pleasing and acceptable to him. Self-righteousness and a "holier than thou" attitude will surely separate us from the favor of the Lord to whatever extent we harbor such a spirit. Let us search our hearts carefully along this line, for we have a wily adversary, and our own flesh is very deceitful.

Even though the failings and weaknesses of some of the brethren or of the members of our own family be different from our own, who shall judge that they are less acceptable to the Lord than are we? "To his own Master each servant standeth or falleth." A captious spirit of criticism and of magnifying the faults of others, a desire to show them up in their worst light, may be far more culpable in the eyes of the Lord than are the faults that seem so reprehensible to us.

Let parents and children, brethren in the church—all who name the name of Christ—be of tender compassion toward one another. All have inherited and acquired weaknesses. Our own may be as serious as are those of some whose faults grate upon our sensibilities. Do our best, yet none of us can measure nearly up to the perfect standard. Who, then, are we, that we should sit in severe judgment upon others, whether of the brethren or of those outside, whose responsibility would be far less than ours?

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION

The Government is putting into motion its machinery relating to Selective Draft for military service. Local boards have been selected for each county and for various districts in the cities. The drawing is now made.

If you are on the list of the called ones you will first report for physical examination on the date named in the call. If you are found physically disqualified you will receive a certificate to that effect, with further instructions from the Board as to what to do.

If you are found physically qualified and you desire to claim exemption from military service, then you should file your application for exemption. After having been found to be physically qualified you will have seven days in which to file your application for exemption; and you will be given ten days' time after the filing of your application in which to file proof in support of your claims for exemption.

We have been expecting the Government to publish a form of application for exemption, but up to this time none has been published. As the calling of the men under the selective Draft Act has now been made, and knowing that many of our brethren will be desirous of filing application for exemption, and as many have written the SOCIETY for a form of application, we have prepared one, which we publish below, and which may be used, provided the Government furnishes no form for that purpose.

APPLICATION

TO THE LOCAL BOARD OF EXEMPTION UNDER THE
SELECTIVE DRAFT ACT:

Comes now the undersigned..... No.
..... (here insert your name and serial number),

and states that he resides at..... in the City
of; that he has had notice of call to
military service under the Selective Draft Act; that he has
presented himself for physical examination, and being ad-
vised that he is physically qualified, he now makes applica-
tion for exemption from military service under the provisions
of said Selective Draft Act, and claims exemption upon the
following grounds, to wit:

(1) Because this applicant was, on and prior to the 18th
day of May, 1917, a member of the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE
STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, a well-recognized religious organiza-
tion, which has been such religious organization and existing
for a period of more than thirty years, the creed or teaching
of which said religious organization forbids its members to
participate in war in any form; that the religious convictions
of the undersigned, this applicant, are against war or partici-
pation therein in any form, in accordance with the creed or
principles of said INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSN.

(2) This applicant therefore prays that he be exempted
from military service under the provision of said Selective
Draft Act.

(Signed)

State of.....SS:

County of.....

....., being duly sworn, upon his
oath says that he has read the above and foregoing applica-
tion for exemption, and is fully acquainted with the contents
thereof, and that the matters and things stated therein are
true.

Subscribed and sworn to before
me this day of, 1917

.....
Notary Public.

If you can procure a form of application for exemption use and insert the grounds named in this application.

If you claim exemption on any other ground than that of religious conviction, then insert such additional ground under paragraph marked "2" in the application; and if you claim exemption upon any further additional grounds, insert a third paragraph, and so on. Such other ground or grounds for claiming exemption are set forth in a bulletin issued by the office of the Provost Marshal General and are published in the July 1 issue of THE TOWER, page 204.

HOW TO PROVE CLAIMS

Proof must be made by affidavits. Go to the Local Board and consult the regulations to find out the form number of the affidavits that you must submit for your particular claim.

Ask the Board for the blank affidavits that are necessary in presenting your proof; if the Board has not the forms ask to consult the pamphlet of forms.

Have the affidavits properly accomplished and return them to the Board within the time limit assigned you—ten days from the filing of your claim.

Set out in your affidavit the following: that the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION is a well-recognized religious organization and has existed for more than thirty years; that said Association has a branch or church at (the place where you live); that you are a member of said Association and associated with said church; that you are fully consecrated to the Lord, and that you follow the teachings of Jesus and the apostles as set forth and explained in the Bible and in the publications of the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION and the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY; that you are in harmony with and believe the teachings of said Association, which forbids its members to participate in war in any form, and that your religious convictions are against war or participation therein in any form, in accordance with the creed or principles of said Inter-

national Bible Students Association; that the teachings of said INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, in harmony with those of Jesus and the apostles, are briefly epitomized in the following: "Thou shalt not kill." (Romans 13:9) "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." (Matt. 26:52) "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow in his steps." (1 Peter 2:21) "For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:56) "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3:15) "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14) "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men."—Gal. 6:10.

You may further add to your affidavit the quotation from THE WATCH TOWER of September 1, 1915, page 260, column 2, which is quoted in the May 15, 1917, issue of THE WATCH TOWER, page 151.

Within three days after the production of this proof before the Local Board, that Board will decide the question of exemption one way or the other. Appeal may be made to the District Board, and must be taken within ten days after notice that exemption claim has been denied by the Local Board. The Local Board may grant longer time to perfect appeal, in its discretion.

Because of the fact that many of these exemption cases are apt to arise at the same time in different parts of the country, we make the above general statement in the interests of all of our brethren of the Association who may desire to avail themselves of the provisions of the law for exemption. If any one feels that he should have a lawyer to assist him, then if might be wise to employ some local counsel to advise and conduct his case before the Board. We stand ready to advise and assist any of the brethren at any time to the extent of our ability.

Let us all trust in the Lord for his guidance, and claim the promise that he will cause all things to work together for our good, because we love him and have been called according to his purpose. Be calm and sober of mind, and having done all you can, stand fast in the faith. His blessings be with you!

"UNTO THE END!"

"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

"Unto the end!" What strange,
Sweet, wondrous love! How deep, how fond and true!
For love that knows no change
We seek, but seek in vain, the wide world through.
Until the end he loved
The frail, weak, timid ones he called 'his own.'
Nor ever heard unmoved
Their cry for help, in sorrow's plaintive tone.

"Unto the end!" All, all
Who are his own are known to him by name;
No tear of theirs can fall
But Jesus knows the source from whence it came.
Unto the end, though
Faithless and wayward we may be,
With calm and ceaseless flow
The tide of love divine rolls strong and free!

"Unto the end!" Though wide
And high along our way dark barriers frown,
This truth will still abide
To comfort and sustain. We are his own

Unto the end. His own!
Not death itself from him our souls can part;
His hand has overthrown
All that divides us from his home and heart.

"Unto the end!" With arms
Outstretched, he waits to clasp us to his breast;
Where, safe from all alarms,
He offers us our shelter and our rest.
'Unto the end' to live
And know that we are his, and only his!
The joys that life can give,
Its sweetest and its best, yield no such bliss.

"Unto the end!!" Thine own?
O dear and blessed Master! Can it be
That, never more alone,
Our weary hearts may dwell in peace with thee,
Knowing that to the end
Thou wilt be with us, walking by our side,
Our Guardian, Guide and Friend,
Until in heaven we shall with thee abide!"

THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

[The first and fifth paragraphs of this article were reprinted from article entitled "A Broken Vow a Fulfilled Penalty," published in issue of September 1, 1905. Paragraphs 2, 3, 8 and 9 were reprinted from article entitled "The Holy Land Desolated," published in issue of December 1, 1898. The remainder appears below.]

After King Nebuchadnezzar had taken a part of the Jews captive, he left King Zedekiah in control as his vassal under tribute. But Zedekiah treacherously entered into a league with the king of Egypt in a vain attempt to throw off the Babylonian yoke. When Nebuchadnezzar learned of the rebellion he came again to besiege Jerusalem. Famine and pestilence resulted; and ultimately the city was captured and utterly destroyed. The king's eyes were put out; and he was taken captive to Babylon, with all the people except a few of the poorest and least competent. Subsequently these went

down into Egypt, so that Jerusalem and the country round about lay "desolate without inhabitant for seventy years, to fulfil the word of the Lord at the mouth of the Prophet Jeremiah."

The folly of King Zedekiah in violating his oath of allegiance to the Babylonian king is only an illustration of the general folly of all who reject the counsel of the Lord. Through the Prophet Jeremiah the Lord had warned Zedekiah respecting the keeping of his oath and the certainty that the king of Babylon would vanquish him. But the self-

willed, unbelieving king, abetted by his princes and counselors, took the course which proved to be the way of folly, and which led to the utter overthrow of the nation. The Lord permitted the natural consequences of his wrong course to overtake the king; and they were severe indeed. His sons were slain before his very eyes. Then he was blinded and carried to Babylon, where he remained a prisoner until his death.

From these facts we infer that King Zedekiah never came to a proper repentant attitude of heart before the Lord. On the contrary, Jehoiachin, the previous king of Judah, who had been taken captive to Babylon eleven years before, was subsequently released from prison and granted many favors at the hand of Evil-Merodach. (Jeremiah 52:31-34) Properly enough these high ones in natural Israel may represent the more highly favored ones of the Lord's people in spiritual Israel; and we may draw the lesson that the unfaithful, like Jehoiachin, might be chastened and afterward treated with leniency, but that those who violate the oath of their covenant with God by breaking that vow will suffer loss in every sense of the word—that thenceforth they shall be blinded by the adversary to the blessings once enjoyed, and that subsequently they shall die the second death.

Everywhere the Scriptures uphold the thought that a vow, a solemn compact with the Lord, is a most binding obligation. Under such a solemn obligation all the members of the new creation have been granted the first-fruits of the holy Spirit. Therefore disloyalty or renouncement of this vow could to us mean nothing short of the second death, from which there is no redemption.

Judah represented those Israelites who were faithful to the Lord, those who trusted in the promises, all of which centered in the tribe of Judah; and many of the faithful of the ten tribes had moved into the territory of the smaller kingdom. Yet with all these lessons, and with the instructions of the prophets, the history of the nation is one long record of unfaithfulness to their great King, Jehovah God. Now the time had come for the change which God saw best to bring upon them; and nothing could divert the impending doom. Nevertheless, they were given a hope that at the end of a certain period—after seventy years of chastisement—the Lord would graciously bring those back who revered him.

"THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES"

When God gave the law to Israel he plainly told them the terms and conditions upon which he would receive them as his people. If they would be obedient to the divine requirements, all would be well with them. They would be prosperous, a rich nation, blessed of the Lord. But if they should neglect the divine law and become idolatrous, the Lord would oppose them and would deliver them into the hand of their enemies for chastisement. If they persisted in following the wrong course, He would finally punish them "seven times more."—Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28.

Of course God knew the end from the beginning. Nevertheless, divine patience was manifested throughout the experiences of the nation leading up to the overthrow of King Zedekiah's government; for he was the last king of the Davidic dynasty to sit upon the throne of Israel. We have seen how evil followed good, both in the kings and in the practices of the nation; and how divine providence chastened the people, yet repeatedly brought them back from idolatry. Now had come the time for the complete overthrow of the national polity, for a period of "seven times," as foretold by Moses, the mediator of the Law Covenant. In this case, however, the "times," or years, must have been symbolic; for frequently the nation had had captivities for more than seven years each.

NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST

The new will begins when we turn from sin to the Redeemer, desiring to be his followers. But the new will is not then the new creature. We do not become new creatures until the Redeemer has accepted our offering, covered it with the merit of his own sacrifice, and presented it as a part of his sacrifice, to the Father. The Father, accepting all who thus come unto him through the Son—up to the full limit of the number of the elect—begets them through the holy Spirit. Then, and not until then, is there a new creature—a spirit-begotten being—whose development will be in the school of Christ, and whose full entrance upon the spirit plane as a new creature will come through the resurrection change.

The new creature does not sacrifice itself; for, as we have just seen, it did not come into existence until the sacrifice had been made and accepted by the Father. The new creature is in full accord with the consecration made originally by the new will, and with the sacrifice of its earthly rights and interests made to the Lord. The new creature therefore

Accepting the fact that these seven years, or "times," were symbolic years, we now proceed to determine how long a period they would indicate. We find that it is an accepted fact that in Bible symbolism a day represents a year; and that the Jewish year had twelve months of thirty days each. Thus each year symbolically represented three hundred and sixty years; and the seven years of chastisement foretold by Moses would represent 7×360 years, or 2520 years. When therefore we read the Prophet Ezekiel's statement that the kingdom would be "overturned, overturned, overturned," until Messiah should come, we are to understand that the period of the overturned condition of the Jewish polity would be 2,520 years, beginning with the time when the crown was removed from King Zedekiah—in 606 B. C., seventy years prior to the proclamation of Cyrus, king of Persia, permitting the people to return—536 B. C.

A LOOK AT THE FACTS OF THE CASE

It is always both interesting and profitable to Bible students to note the fulfilment of prophecy; for thus are the divine promises made more real, and we are assured of divine supervision respecting the affairs of Israel—both natural and spiritual. As we glance back over the pages of Jewish history, we see the fulfilment of the declaration that the nation of Israel would be overturned three times. After its restoration by King Cyrus, 536 B. C., it continued to have a sort of national existence for six hundred years. Yet in all that time it did not have one king of the line of David. On the contrary, it was ruled over by the various adjoining nations. As it is written: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles" until the times [years] of the Gentiles be filled full."

Some may point to the Maccabean kings as an offset to this declaration that Israel has had no king since the overthrow of King Zedekiah. We answer that the Maccabean kings were not divinely appointed nor of the royal family. Others may remind us of the reign of the Herods at the beginning of the Christian era. We reply that the Herods not only were not of the line of David, but were not Jews at all; that they were Edomites—descendants of Esau, who ruled over the children of Israel as representatives of the Roman Empire.

THE PROPHET DANIEL'S TESTIMONY

When God removed the typical kingdom of Israel and his typical throne in the world, he gave over the lease of earthly dominion to the Gentiles. This lease of power, as set forth in the prophecy of Daniel, was to continue for "seven times"—2,520 years. In other words, during the same period in which Israel would be undergoing tribulation and subjection, the Gentiles would be having "seven times" of prosperity; and both periods would of necessity terminate at the same time. Since both began in the fall of 606 B. C., and since both were "seven times," or 2,520 years long, both must have ended in the fall of 1914 A. D.

During this period the world has been under the dominion of four universal empires; (1) Babylonia, (2) Medo-Persia, (3) Greece and (4) Rome. According to the Scriptural view of the matter, the fourth universal empire is still represented in the various so-called Christian governments of the world. These have practised and prospered during the long period of Israel's subjection and the overturned condition of God's typical kingdom. After the expiration of the "seven times," the next feature of the divine program will be the establishment of the Messianic kingdom and its recognition by the children of Israel. Then will follow the long-promised blessing of all the families of the earth.—Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8, 16, 29.

coöperates with the Lord, and manifests this in presenting itself daily, hourly, a living sacrifice to the will of the Lord.

It is the flesh that is to be sacrificed, and not the new creature. The High Priest, our glorified Lord, alone is able to offer the sacrifice acceptably; and we, as new creatures, merely coöperate with him, and thus make our calling and election sure. Any holding back on our part would spoil the matter as a sacrifice; and the best thing that could be done with it would be to destroy the flesh that the spirit might be saved. The Scriptures seem to indicate that this will be the experience of the great company class. Any drawing back from the Lord in the sense of the repudiation of him and his work of righteousness in them, would signify what the Apostle calls "the drawing back unto perdition"—unto destruction. (Hebrews 10:39) In that event the new creature would die; and it would be the second death, from which there would be no recovery. As we have before shown, the new creature never sacrifices itself. It merely coöperates

with the great High Priest in the sacrifice of its flesh in which, for the time, it tabernacles. Prior to the harvest time, the new creature, at the death of the body, slept; for except in the case of wilful sin, the new creature is never to die. Since the Spring of 1878, however, the new creature

does not sleep, but passes immediately into the new body. In the case of Jesus and the apostles the new creature slept for a longer or shorter time, awaiting the divine intervention and power for its perfecting on the spirit plane through the resurrection change.

THE SHEPHERD OF CAPTIVE ISRAEL

SEPTEMBER 2.—Ezekiel 34.

[This article, with the exception of the paragraph below, was a reprint of article entitled "Prophecy Against the Shepherds," published in issue of May 15, 1915, which please see.]

Verses 10-12 assert that at a certain time the Lord comes to the rescue of his sheep, and casts aside the unfaithful shepherds. Mark well that this time of his presence will be "in the cloudy and dark day"—in the time of trouble, already upon the nations and upon the unfaithful shepherds. Surely we have ample evidence that we are in this "cloudy and dark day"—that the Chief Shepherd is now present! Otherwise, whence comes the food upon which his flock has been feeding all these years and the refreshing rest of faith which they

may enjoy even amidst the turmoil of the time of trouble now upon the world? During the past forty years the Chief Shepherd has been feeding his people upon the richest of food: and all who have been strengthened thereby should be aware that he is gathering his sheep. Although the sheep have been scattered all over the hills of sectarianism, he calls them his own: and those who hear his voice are being gathered into the one fold—the true church—even as in the beginning of the Gospel age.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS

THE LORD'S DIRECTION OF OUR AFFAIRS

Question.—To what extent does the Lord actively direct our affairs, and guide us in thought, word and deed? When two courses perplex us, how may we know the divine will concerning us?

Answer.—The Christian's relationship to God is based wholly upon faith. The Apostle declares, "According as it is written, 'I believed, and therefore have I spoken'; we also believe, and therefore speak." So likewise, we believe, and therefore we speak; we believe and therefore we act. "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—2 Cor. 4:13; Heb. 11:6.

Christians are those who have approached God along this line through Christ, who have turned from sin and have accepted the merit of Christ as their propitiation, and the divine will as their will; and who have embraced the divine promises respecting the rewards of righteousness, truth, holiness, instead of the rewards and delusive pleasures of sin. They have made their consecration unto death, have been begotten to a new nature, and have received the anointing of the holy Spirit. They then recognize themselves as children of God, BECAUSE GOD HAS SAID SO. They know that all things will work together for good to them; for God has so informed them.—Rom. 8:28.

The whole matter, then, is one of faith. It is for the Christian to perform his part and to trust that God will perform his part. God's part is to instruct him, and develop him in faith and obedience. Sometimes the way in which God will guide his people will be very contrary to the one we would naturally prefer. We are to remember, however, that we have fully given ourselves to the Lord; and that we are to abide in this condition loyally, and to accept in perfect faith all the experiences of life—the things that seem favorable and the things that seem unfavorable—and to bear in mind that all things will work out for good to us, who are the called according to God's purpose; and that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord," if we continually seek his guidance.

If, therefore, trials and difficulties come, we are to look to the Lord and go to him in prayer and seek to know his will. How can we know that his will shall be done? We must make sure that we desire his will above all things—whether it be pleasant or unpleasant to us. After earnest prayer that we may be shown his will, we are to use our best judgment in the matter. We have asked God's wisdom and blessing, and we are to expect that the Lord will overrule the results for good. And we are to accept these results as of divine overruling, divine providence, whether the matter turn out as we have expected or some other way.

ASKING HIS BLESSING UPON OUR FOOD

Question.—Why do we ask the Lord's blessing upon our food unless we expect him to bless it?

Answer.—A very sensible question. Our bodies are a part of our endowment of the Lord; and we are responsible for these bodies, to keep them in as good order as possible, in addition to asking his blessing. We are to eat to his glory, and so far as possible, only foods which agree with us. The blessing we ask is supposed to be that we may have coöperation on God's part with our own endeavor. But we are to endeavor so to eat and drink as to keep our bodies in the best possible condition to render the most effective service to him. Then we should expect his blessing.

COMPROMISING THE TRUTH

Question.—Since the Lord's people are to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," and not unnecessarily to bring upon themselves persecution, might it have been a lack of wisdom on the part of the three young Hebrews to refuse to bow down before the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon? Could they not, while bowing before the image, have in their hearts worshiped God?

Answer.—It would be quite contrary to the teaching of God's Word to suppose that the Hebrews who were cast into the fiery furnace because of not worshiping the image of Nebuchadnezzar were unwise. We believe that they were very wise not to compromise the truth in respect to Nebuchadnezzar and the image which he had made. A careful reading of the Bible story should convince one of this. Whoever compromises the truth is very likely to have it taken from him.

If the three Hebrews had been disloyal to God in this matter, then there would probably have arisen other circumstances of like nature; and they would have been likely to be finally swallowed up. They could not have made a reservation in bowing the knee in this instance. The king had declared that any one who would fail in this matter should be thrown into the fiery furnace; that all must bow down and worship the golden image. If they had bowed down, it would have implied that they were worshiping the image. God surely set his seal of approval on their course! Any other course would have been disloyal to Jehovah.

Applying this principle to our day, we see that churchianity is coming to be worshiped. The book of Revelation pictures the condition of things as we believe it soon will be. Whoever will not worship the first beast, nor his image, and will not receive the mark of the two-horned beast, or the number of his name, will come into a disadvantageous position. (Revelation 13:15-17) The question then would be, What shall be our attitude regarding such unfavorable arrangements? We do not ourselves take the position of some that it would be wrong to enter a Catholic church building because we would feel that we were thus worshiping the images. Neither would we think it wrong to enter a Protestant church. We would not by so doing be thought to be accepting their doctrine.

It we happened to go to a church where the congregation were partaking of their communion, doubtless we would commune with them, if they were willing. The fact that they did not understand the matter as we do would not affect us unfavorably at all. The Presbyterians, for instance, claim to recognize the great fundamentals of Christianity—the heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus as Savior; they affect to believe, at least.

Going, therefore, on that broad platform, we might be able to enjoy ourselves with them. We could not mean that we were palming ourself off as a Presbyterian, a Lutheran or a Methodist, etc. To our understanding none of these denominations are up to the divine standard of the Word of God, none of them are recognized of the Lord. But we can fellowship with those who worship there, if they profess belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. We can be interdenominational on the subject and can see their good points, while we need not be influenced by their wrong doctrines.

We would not feel justified in giving any one the impression that we belonged to any of these denominations, by attending their church regularly or frequently. One might

drop into any church, at any time, without being understood to be a devotee.

But when the time shall come that church federation will make a test, and every other belief than theirs will be banned, then we think it would be wrong for us to worship at all in any of their services; that it would be more or less upholding or supporting the errors for which they will be standing. We would consider it our duty then to stand out clearly and plainly, as did the young Hebrews of old, and refuse under any circumstances to bow down or worship among them.

SINS BLOTTED OUT

Question.—Acts 3:19 refers to a blotting out of sins. Will the sins themselves be actually blotted from memory?

Answer.—The Apostle Peter was not preaching restitution, although he mentioned restitution. He could not, therefore, be calling on the Jews as a nation to repent, for at that time repentance would not have been possible. Not until after Israel had been accepted could the Deliverer come out of Zion and turn away godliness from Jacob. (Romans 11:25-27) To have preached restitution at that time would have been premature by more than eighteen hundred years.

But the Apostle's words were designed to reach those Jews who might become members of the church. The sins would be blotted out at the second coming of Christ. Our sins are now covered, and because of this we are treated as sons. God gives us the spirit of adoption, brings us into his family. This present relationship shows us still sinners so far as the flesh is concerned, but righteous so far as the new creature is concerned.

However, in the second presence of Christ, he will change this vile body, the body of sin, and give us a body fashioned like unto his glorious body. We shall have none of these sins then, in any sense of the word. The sins will be absolutely blotted out—gone. God will remember them no more; that is, he will utterly ignore them, as though they had never been. He has never recognized these sins as belonging to the new creature, although the new creature has been charged up with everything derelict on the part of the body. But after we have received our "change," from that time onward there will be no sins to be remembered.

THE NEW CREATURE NOT A SINNER

We read in Psalm 32:1, "Blessed is he . . . whose sin is covered." We understand that this class whose sins were covered typically during the Jewish Age were the Jewish people, whose sins were covered year by year under the arrangement God made with them. We understand that the church's sins are actually covered by the special arrangement God makes with them through Jesus Christ. Ours is not a covenant which is renewed year by year, as was the Law Covenant with the Jews. With us, God's covenant is perpetual, so long as we abide in him. Nevertheless, though our sins are thus covered by our Lord, there is not an actual blotting out of the sins; it is a covering with the robe of righteousness, an imputation of the merit of Christ's sacrifice for Adamic sin.

There is a difference between the covering we now receive through faith, and the blotting out of sin which we shall receive later, and which the world also will ultimately enjoy. When our sins are thus covered according to the divine arrangement, our wills, which we determined to consecrate in sacrifice to God, are received of him through our great Advocate; and we are begotten of the holy Spirit as new creatures. The new creature never was a sinner. The new creature is in full accord with God. If he is a young new creature, he is, it may be, not as yet fully established in his har-

mony with God. If an older new creature his character is crystallized.

So it could not be the new creature that would be referred to as having the sins blotted out at the second coming of Christ. But since the new creature is the possessor, or owner, of the flesh, he is responsible for the things done by the flesh; just as a man who owns a dog is held responsible for what that dog does. The new creature reigns over the body of flesh; but sometimes the flesh slips the leash, as it were. As the Apostle Paul expresses it, "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do."—Romans 7:18, 19.

The trespasses of the flesh are those for which we ask forgiveness when we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses!" A trespass is something which is done contrary to law, and yet in this case it is something disapproved of by us. But so long as we have the flesh, the mortal body is marred by blemishes, by the imperfections of sin. Not, then, until the members of the body of Christ shall have passed beyond the veil will their sins be blotted out—be no more. Meantime they are all covered and graciously arranged for in God's plan.

We understand that all those sins that were ours up to the time we gave ourselves to the Lord were fully covered—that Christ assumed those for us at the moment of our consecration. The Apostle refers to those as "sins that are past, by the forbearance of God." But we still have the flesh and are still liable to trespass, and all trespasses are offenses against the divine law.

God could say: I will just count these as something that Jesus has arranged for. But he evidently did not see fit to do this, but to allow these trespasses to be counted up against the disciple of Christ. Thus the child of God is continually reminded of his own shortcomings, and must go daily to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, and he becomes much more fortified against these weaknesses. It is these infirmities of the flesh that need to be settled for. These weaknesses still remain with the individual, and he has the responsibility with him unto death. This is our thought; and it is all in God's record. In God's accounting, each trespass must be reckoned for. And so we do not pray to the Lord Jesus, "Forgive us our trespasses," but we go to the Father. And we think they are still in the divine record until forgiveness is sought through Christ; for we still need the Advocate. But the blotting out of these imperfections will not be accomplished for the church until they shall have passed into glory, at the second coming of Christ.

The new creature can sin, but in the act ceases to be a new creature. If we, the new creature, sin wilfully, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins. But in such a case the sin is unto death. But the new creature might sin partially, through beguilement of the flesh; through the weakness of the flesh it might participate to some extent—might not properly resist sin—and therefore would be more or less of a conniver and participant in sin. In such a case we understand the Scriptures to teach that the stripes which would follow would be for that element of participation into which the new creature had entered.

The part for which the flesh would be responsible would be forgivable. Our Lord said: "If any blaspheme the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but blasphemy against the holy Spirit shall not be forgiven." Christ never made atonement for the sins of the new creature. Anything that is not clearly attributable to the Adamic sin is punishable. There can be no sacrifice for it.

SOME LETTERS OF INTEREST

SIN-OFFERING—RANSOM—TRESPASS OFFERING

DEAR BRETHREN:—

In our Study of TABERNACLE SHADOWS the point has come out that on page 105 it is stated that the red heifer is not an "offering" at all. But in both the Revised and the American Revised Bibles it is called a sin-offering (see verses 9 and 17 of the 19th of Numbers); Strong's Concordance also bears this out. It seems to me that this point might help some to see that the word "sin-offering" is not synonymous with "ransom." Maybe you can explain the apparent contradiction between this statement and that of Numbers 19.

With Christian love, * * * R. E. B. N.

We are not to assume that the revisers were any more inspired than were the translators of the King James Version. There is a haziness connected with the subject which very few

escape until they come to a knowledge of that which we term "present truth."

From our viewpoint, the sin-offerings were those of the Atonement Day, which typified the satisfaction of justice in respect to the sin of Adam and its penalty, which rested upon Adam and descended by laws of heredity to all of his children. We distinguish between this original sin and subsequent wrong-doings by styling the latter "trespasses," as they are called in our Lord's prayer.

From this viewpoint, the red heifer was not a sin-offering—not offered for the original sin, either typically or otherwise; not offered on the Day of Atonement; nor connected with the Atonement in any sense.

The word ransom is separate and apart from either the trespass-offerings or the sin-offerings. It brings to our attention a different arrangement, with which we have nothing

whatever to do—the arrangement that the one life of the Man Christ Jesus should constitute the basis for the satisfaction of Justice in respect to the original sin of the first man. The sin-offerings of the Day of Atonement are not to be confused with the ransom, for they are separate pictures.

"THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS"

DEAR BRETHREN:

May I have a moment of your valuable time to call attention to the habit many of the friends have of "patting themselves on the back" and calling the attention of hotel-keepers and others, where considerable numbers are stopping, to their wonderfully good behavior, etc.?

I was privileged to attend a two-day I. B. S. A. convention recently, in a small town, where there was only one hotel, which was pretty well filled. The landlady had evidently put forth a great effort to please, in which she was successful to quite a degree, and she seemed anxious to know how her labors were appreciated.

But the slightest query would be met with, "Well, what do you think of these people? are they hard to please?" and, "Are they hard to get along with?" etc. Of course, the poor woman felt obliged to praise them, telling how nice they were, etc.

Now, would it not be much better to keep our "lamps" filled, and "trimmed and burning," so that all could plainly see the light; and not be calling attention to it, as though people would not know we are good and well-behaved if we did not tell them?

It looks to outsiders as though we are proud and boastful of our goodness. One man in our home-town, I am told, says he doesn't like our people because they are boastful and think themselves better than others.

It it meets with your approval, perhaps a line in THE WATCH TOWER would be well, calling the attention of the dear friends to these little oversights. I am sure a hint would be sufficient.

Your brother in the service,

—KANS.

"BROTHER TO HIM THAT IS A GREAT WASTER"

DEAR FRIEND:—

During the past six years I have visited many different ecclesias in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Texas, etc., and amongst other things, one thing has impressed me more and more and has pained me much—the careless way the Lord's tracts are treated by many of the consecrated children of God, and also by some of the ecclesias as a whole.

Just a few samples: (1) I was boarding with a prominent brother and sister in the truth during the year 1916, and at different times I picked up truth literature which was thrown down on the ground and scattered over the lawn and back yard. I also picked up quite a number of colporteur envelopes in good condition. Finally I took the whole assortment and showed it to the brother, and asked him to take better care of the Lord's literature. He promised me to be more faithful in the future.

(2) Recently I noticed several thousand copies of the Lord's literature going to waste in an upstairs store room in the home of a sister. A little ecclesia of about nine members met at said home three times a week. Pilgrim brothers from the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY conduct meetings there when they come to town.

I have noticed similar conditions in other ecclesias. I feel it my duty to notify those in charge at headquarters of these deplorable conditions. From time to time we read glowing accounts in THE WATCH TOWER of the great amount of tracts sent out and distributed by the members of the International Bible Students Association—some years as high as 50,000,000 copies. To know that some of that quantity remain piled up in basements, garrets, barns, woodsheds, closets, etc., dusty and time-worn, in many of the homes of the friends in the United States and Canada, is a shame! (Luke 16:10) I am sorrowfully,

Your brother in Christ,

LORENZO TRAUB.—Ky.

GREAT HELP RECEIVED FROM V. D. M. QUESTIONS

DEAR BRETHREN:—

Your favor of the 9th, re my answers to V. D. M. questions, received. I wish to express my appreciation of the same and my increasing love for God and his great plan and gratitude for all the privileges of study and helps in growth afforded by the dear servants of the Lord at Brooklyn, and elsewhere.

I have received great inspiration in the study of the V. D. M. Questions, and spent not one or two days in the study of them, but all the time I could spare for a month. They are indeed deep questions, and require skill in answering briefly. I feared I had fallen far short of the required percentage.

I thank you for your patience in considering them. I will endeavor to continue their study, so as to become more proficient in expression of these great truths. I desire, too, the character growth necessary to please him and to attain the kingdom.

May the dear Father continue his blessing upon you all and his work in your hands. With much Christian love in him,

MRS. E. S. WEBSTER.—S. Dakota.

LEAVES AN EVERLASTING MONUMENT

DEAR FRIENDS:—

Our heart rejoices as we think of the glorious reward which has now come to our dear Brother Russell. Surely he did a noble work, and has left behind an everlasting monument to his fidelity, in the six volumes of SCRIPTURE STUDIES, in all the faithful warnings and exhortations in THE WATCH TOWER and his sermons!

We loved him for his faithful service, his untiring energy, and his devoted loyalty to the glorious cause to which he had consecrated his life. We are glad that he rests from his labors, and we are sure that his works do follow him. All the friends are calm and feel sure that the Lord is still at the helm and that Romans 8:28 is still true.

Doubtless other and more varied experiences and problems face the Lord's dear ones on this side the veil, to still further test our faith and patience; but we need not fear, for the "Lord is for us."

We should all heed carefully the noble words of warning left us by our dear Pastor in the November 1 WATCH TOWER. In the meantime let us also heed our Master's words, "Let not your heart be troubled!" Very soon, if faithful, we also shall join the ranks of those who have gone before; and what a blessed reunion that will be! How glad we will be to meet all those dear saints, our faithful devoted Pastor and our glorious Lord and Head!

We are praying for all at headquarters, that each one may have the "grace sufficient" to wisely and properly meet the new duties and responsibilities thus suddenly thrust upon them. May the dear Lord richly bless your hearts. Brethren, pray for us also.

Your brother and servant in His service,

R. H. BARBER.

GREATEST BLESSING OF HIS CONSECRATED LIFE

DEAR BRETHREN:—

The spiritual joy and refreshment of study and recording the great divine plan of God as outlined by the enclosed V. D. M. Question blanks has been the greatest blessing of my consecrated life. How thankful I feel to God that he has seen fit to grant me, even me, a knowledge of his glorious plan for the blessing of all.

My heart fills with gratitude and praise; for although I have been a consecrated being, a "new creature in Christ," since 1908, yet never before has the effulgence of the light of the Gospel been so gloriously mine. If the answering of these questions has brought as much joy to all who have so far answered them, there should be the greatest rejoicing in the church that has ever been experienced.

Surely all who have not answered them do well to do so speedily!

I anxiously await your decision as to granting the degree "V. D. M."; for I do want to be corrected should I be incorrect even in only one little item. In joy and expectancy,

By his grace,

ELBERT THOMPSON.—Wash.

AWAKE TO THE NEARNESS OF THE KINGDOM

DEAR BRETHREN:—

Resolved, That our heart-felt sympathy be expressed to the members of the Bethel family and Brooklyn Tabernacle, who because of their fellowship with our departed Pastor are most keenly affected by the finishing of his labors. Be it further

Resolved, That while confident that our beloved Pastor is now among the glorified with Christ, we awaken more keenly to the nearness of the Messianic kingdom, increasing our zeal; and that recognizing the manner in which the work of the Society has been arranged, we will in every way possible cooperate with the work, continuing the promulgation of the Gospel of good tidings.

READING ECCLESIA.—Pa.

APPRECIATIVE WORDS FROM A STRANGER

GENTLEMEN:—

I condole with you in the great loss you have sustained in losing dear Pastor Russell. I was ill at the time with an attack of heart trouble. It was a shock to me; I never felt so bad about a stranger. I was in hopes of hearing him some time. He was a man of God.

I thank you for the book and paper you so kindly sent me. I will buy another book some time, when I can.

Very cordially yours,

MRS. S. ROBERTS.—Mass.