

obey God, rather than man. Ought I to obey my husband in this, seeing that Christ is my Head? I feel like a coward in this.

OUR REPLY

Dear Sister:

Your favor of the 22nd is before me. I am glad that you have expressed yourself freely, and am glad to note that you have the spirit of a sound mind on this important subject. Your husband, probably a strong-minded man, has not fully recognized to what extent his attitude toward you on this subject is unreasonable and tyrannical. We are fully in sympathy with the Scriptural injunction that wives should obey their husbands; but this does not, as you have perceived, imply that the wife should obey her husband in matters contrary to the admonitions of the heavenly Bridegroom. No reasonable earthly husband will make such requirements, and we will trust that yours will consider the matter differently ere long. He will be helped, however, in seeing the right way by your kind and loving treatment of him, and your earnest endeavor to please him in all legitimate and proper ways, but by your positiveness, your firm decision and resolute conduct in the matters which appertain to your proper liberties of conscience. I would readily agree to keep my books and papers out of sight during my husband's presence in the home; but I would neither agree not to think nor to read, nor would I agree to absent myself from the meetings of those of like precious faith.

I would tell my husband plainly that it is our duty to obey the heavenly Bridegroom first, and that when he says "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together," I considered it duty to follow that admonition at any cost; that I hoped this would appeal to him as a reasonable and correct course; that I had no thought of neglecting legitimate, proper, home obligations and duties toward him, and the other members of my family, but would be as faithful or more faithful, than if under the influence of any other than my present convictions. I would tell him that this much liberty at least was thoroughly understood by me when entering the marriage relationship; that if in his marriage vows he did not intend to accord liberties of conscience he had misled and deceived me, and that in any event I would not submit to that kind of bondage, and that the quicker the matter was decided the better; that under no circumstances or conditions would I move one iota from this position, so long as I considered that my position was according to the

will of the Lord; that if this led to any breach between us the fault and the change were certainly on his side, as I had never given away my liberty of conscience and never intended to do so, and would not ask him to violate his; that I believed that my view of this would not only stand the test of the Scriptures but also of all men and women possessed of sound common sense.

In harmony with this I would assure my husband that the truth, so far from making me less careful of his interests and my obligation as a wife, should make me more careful; and that I believed that if he took a right view and stand upon the subject, as I was determined to do, it would mean an increase of blessing to us both and to the household.

If after a reasonable season of patient, loving remonstrance against such attempts to fetter my conscience there was no change for the better, I would consider that I had been *deserted* by my husband;—that he had ceased to be a husband and become an oppressor and was not treating me as even a slave might hope to be treated in respect to his or her conscientious convictions. Taking the matter to the Lord I should look for relief—for the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. Not liberty to remain, however, indeed even aside from the divine law making marriage perpetual (except upon one condition—Matt. 19:9) such an experience should be sufficient for anybody.

I will remember you at the throne of grace, that the Lord will guide in your affairs.

"THE GREAT COMPANY"

Question.—When and how did the class that fails to keep its consecration get "before the throne"? I understand that this class is to pass through the tribulation and "wash its robes and make them white in the blood of the lamb."

Answer.—This class seems to be located most particularly at the present time—altho there may have been some throughout this age, who, because of failure voluntarily to suffer, have been forced to suffer either with Christ in tribulation experiences, or to deny him and thus be condemned to the second death. In the tribulation time which will follow the church's glorification we anticipate crucial tests upon all the Lord's true people, and faithfulness then will mean "great tribulation" ending in death, which to these will signify change to spiritual conditions. On the other hand failure to meet the trials devotedly will mean full, intelligent rejection of Christ, and will bring the full penalty of such a course: viz., second death.

THOUGH YE BE ESTABLISHED

"I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth."—2 Peter 1:12.

What things are here referred to? Assuredly the necessity of giving all diligence to add to our faith virtue [fortitude]; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance [self-control]; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity [love]. . . . For if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.—Verses 5-11.

To be established in the truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by "the law and the testimony" (Isa. 8:20), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its verity, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable. We know whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with him. We have partaken of his spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fulness of his grace as manifested in the wonderful divine plan of the ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fulness of the appointed times. This is what it is to be "established in the present truth." It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.

But though we be thus established in the present truth, we need to bear in mind that our election to the high position to which we are called is not yet *made sure*. The race for the prize of our high calling is still before us, and we are yet in the enemy's country, surrounded by many subtle and powerful foes, so that if we would be successful we must "fight the good

fight of faith," remembering, too, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but [God's truth is] mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds" of error and superstition and of inbred sin; and remembering, also, that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."—2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12.

It is in view of these facts—of the warfare before us, of the subtlety of our temptations and of the weakness of the flesh—that the faithful Apostle Peter urges all diligence in the cultivation of the Christian graces and a continual calling to remembrance of the precious truths we have learned, that we may be strengthened thereby to make our calling and election sure. Faith is a good thing; but faith without virtuous works is dead; and to hold the truth in unrighteousness is worse than never to have received it. The truth is given to us for its sanctifying effect upon our hearts and lives. Therefore let it have free course and be glorified. Let its precious fruits appear more and more from day to day. Add to your faith virtue—true excellence of character, such excellence of character as will mark you as separate from the world and its spirit. In all such the world will see those moral qualities which they must approve, however they may oppose our faith. Add sterling honesty, truth and fair dealing in all business relations; moral integrity, in all social relations; manifestly clean hands and a pure heart, and a bridled tongue that works no ill to a neighbor. All of these the world has a right to expect from those who call themselves Christians; and all of these are indispensable features of that virtuous character which must be added to our faith. The clean hands will not dabble in anything that is not virtuous: they will have nothing to do with unrighteous schemes or projects in business. The

pure heart will not devise evil things, or harbor evil thoughts, or plot mischief. And the bridled tongue will not be given to evil speaking, but will hold its peace when it cannot speak well and wisely. But the promptings of virtue go further than merely these negative features which refuse to do anything which would work ill to a neighbor; they incite not only to passive, but also to active, goodness—in benevolent charity which seeks to alleviate suffering, to sympathize with sorrow, to comfort those in distress and to elevate and bless others—to assist “all men as we have opportunity.”

To such a virtuous character we are counseled to add knowledge—the knowledge of God's character, that we may the more thoroughly imitate it, and of his truth, that we may more fully conform to its teachings; and to knowledge, temperance—moderation, self-restraint, in all things. “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” We are not to be hasty and hot-tempered, or rash and thoughtless. But we should strive to be evenly balanced, thoughtful and considerate: our whole manner should be characterized by that carefulness which would indicate that we are ever mindful of the Lord's pleasure, of our responsibility to him as his representatives, and of our influence upon our fellow-men, to see that it always is for good, never for evil.

“And to temperance, patience.” “Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” Yes, this grace smooths the way for every other, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline. Not a step of progress can be gained without the exercise of this grace of patience; and not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, or wins the approval of the world's conscience, or glorifies the God of all grace whose truth inspires it. It is long-suffering meekness earnestly striving to stem the tide of human imperfection and weakness, and endeavoring with painstaking care to regain the divine likeness. It is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of truth and righteousness, and prompt to walk in them; it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

“And to patience, godliness”—a careful study and imitation of the divine character as presented in the divine Word.

“And to godliness, brotherly kindness”—an exercise and manifestation of the principles of the divine character toward our fellow-men.

“And to brotherly kindness, charity”—love. Kindness may be manifested where but little love exists toward the subject of such kindness; but we cannot long persevere in such acts of kindness before a sympathetic interest is awakened; and by and by that interest, continually exercised, deepens into love. And even though the subject may be unlovely in character, the love of sympathy for the fallen and degraded grows, until it becomes tender and solicitous and akin to that of a parent for an erring son.

Peter indeed describes a most amiable character, but who can consider it without feeling that to attain it will be a life-work. It cannot be accomplished in a day, nor a year, but the whole life must be devoted to it; and day by day, if we are faithful, we should realize a measure of growth in grace and of development of Christian character. It is not proper that we know the truth, and are contented to hold it in unrighteousness. We must see to it that the truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character. And if the truth is thus received into good and honest hearts, we have the assurance of the Apostle that we shall never fall, and that in due time we shall be received into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Hence we see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into its inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing, but to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the spirit is quite another.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

Feeling as we do the necessity of a deeper work of grace, both in our own hearts and in the hearts of all of the dear household of faith, the thought has occurred to us that more special effort in this particular direction on the part of us all would probably be of great benefit. We do not know through what discipline of faith and patience we may yet be called to pass in the approaching dark night of which we are fore-

warned, but “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,” and also, thank God, sufficient unto the day is the grace thereof, if we earnestly lay hold of it and patiently continue in it. As each day brings its trials, so, if we have been rightly exercised by the trials, each day should bring its victories—thus leaving us strengthened and more firmly established in character, as well as in faith.

With the end in view of specially promoting the growth of Christian character, our suggestion, which has already been made and adopted by the congregation in Allegheny and many other places, is that wherever a few of the consecrated can arrange to meet together, it would be well to appoint a mid-week meeting for this special purpose. Such a meeting should be devoted to worship, prayer and praise, and to brotherly exhortation, conference and counsel, but not to Bible study or controversy. All discussions of doctrinal matters should be eliminated from such a meeting, and such subjects as would elicit controversy avoided, leaving such matters for another meeting, at an appropriate hour on the Lord's day, when all meet together; the object being, not to ignore doctrine, nor to discourage Bible-study; but, while meeting this necessity at the one meeting (on the Lord's day), to devote the other (the mid-week meeting) to the other equal necessity, without distraction.

Our arrangement here in Allegheny and Pittsburgh is as follows: As our congregation is much scattered, we have them parceled into as many neighborhood gatherings as is necessary for the accommodation of all desiring to attend; and a leader is appointed for each meeting, discretion being observed as to capability. They should be brethren established in the faith—sound in doctrine, faithful and pious. These meetings are held on Wednesday evenings at the residence of some member of each little group. The meeting is opened with a hymn and prayer, the reading, by the leader, of Sunday afternoon's text; then each one is asked to give his or her personal experience as to progress in the narrow way—as to how he or she is growing in grace and striving to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. Here they may humbly tell of their victories, or speak of their trials, or ask for Christian counsel and sympathy in hard places, speaking more freely in such little gatherings than would be possible or proper in larger assemblies. Here they can hear each other's petitions for each other, and Christian love and sympathy flow the more freely from heart to heart.

The object kept in mind at these meetings is a fresh, living, weekly and daily experience with the Lord and in his service, and not merely a stale experience of the remote past. A clear past experience is good, but a clear present experience is better;—much more vitally important. Doctrine is ignored at these meetings except as the word doctrine applies to all Scripture teachings, including hope, trust, obedience, godliness, prayer, etc. Too many, we find, have been contenting themselves with *knowing* the truth, without making special efforts to live it, daily and hourly. As honesty of heart and faith in the Redeemer's finished work and consecration to his service are necessary to a full entrance into the “holy,” where the deeper features of the divine plan can be discerned and fully appreciated, so these qualities must remain, must abide, or the light will become darkness—you will be cast out of the light into the outer darkness in which the world and the nominal church grope after the phosphorescent glimmerings of error—Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy and Universalism.

The leader of such a meeting should study to adapt his counsel, correctness or encouragement to the special needs of each of the little group over which he is placed, and his reverent piety and personal interest in each should inspire the confidence of all. We believe that such mid-week meetings prove steppingstones to higher attainments in the divine life, and that thus all may be greatly blessed and profited; and the whole body will be able the more effectually to minister to one another in spiritual things. On the middle Wednesday evening of each month the prayer feature is given more attention and an opportunity granted for all to address the throne of grace two or three in immediate succession. At a quarterly Sunday evening general meeting of the same character, we hear of the spiritual progress of the various little groups both from the leaders and the various attendants, and quarterly the leaders are transferred to other groups.

May the blessing of the Lord go with the suggestion, and may the outcome be a strengthening of the bond of Christian love and mutual sympathy and fellowship everywhere.

'Tis prayer supports the soul that's weak,
Though thought be broken, language lame;
God through his Word to us doth speak;
And we to him in Jesus' name.

Depend on him; thou canst not fail;
But ask according to his will;
Then always shall thy prayer prevail,
And nothing shall to thee work ill.

"HE WHOLLY FOLLOWED THE LORD"

JOSHUA 14:5-16.—OCTOBER 26.

What a grand, what a wonderful testimony this is respecting any man;—he wholly followed the Lord. And the words have special force and weight in Caleb's case, because by nature he was not of the children of Israel, but only by adoption into the tribe of Judah. He was of the seed of Abraham, but through the rejected son Esau. The lesson of his faithfulness and reward is, therefore, of special force and weight to us who by nature are children of wrath, members of the worldly class of humanity, whose natural disposition was typified in Esau whose little faith in the promises of God, and greater appreciation of the good things of this world, led him to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. Many of us who now rejoice that we are counted in as Israelites indeed, justified by faith, sanctified by the truth,—of the people of God, sharers in the great inheritance,—realize that many of us once loved the things of this present life more than the things of the life to come, and were disposed to grasp the tangible things of the present rather than to sacrifice these in the interest of the future glories and blessings of the divine promise.

After the fall of Jericho Israel passed through various experiences in taking possession of the land of promise. First, there was the sin of Achan, his covetousness which led him to disobedience of the divine command respecting the possessions of the people of Jericho. His love for the condemned things not only cost him his life, but brought considerable injury to the cause, just as with us one whose consecration is defective and who loves the present evil world, and contrary to the divine command secretly encourages evil in his own life, may bring considerable disaster to the Lord's cause before the secret sin is made manifest, and eventually brings upon the wrong doer the weighty penalty implied in the Apostle's words, "If we live after the flesh, we shall die." Achan's course also represented the rule of the Millennial age, when all who even secretly love evil will be made manifest and will be destroyed from amongst the people.—Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:9.

Later on the Lord brought the people to the valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. In the wonderful natural amphitheater between the two mountains the people were gathered while from the one mountain was read the blessings of the law and its keeping, and from the other curses which would come upon those who would fail to keep the law; thus did the Lord reimpres upon the people their continued obligation to him and the fact that their prosperity would depend upon their faithfulness to his law. So it is also with the royal priesthood who by faith have reckonedly entered the land of promise, from the time of their consecration the Lord speaks to them through his Word and through his providence, instructing them that although free from the Law Covenant which was upon Israel they have come under the still higher statement of the divine law, briefly comprehended in the word, love; and that on the one hand spiritual blessing, refreshment and growth will come to them in the line of obedience to this law of love, and on the other hand weakness, inability to overcome the world, the flesh and the adversary, and general spiritual disaster will be their portion if they neglect this divine law of the New Covenant, love. So in the Millennial age after the antitypical Joshua shall have brought the world under the new conditions of the Millennial kingdom, the law of God will be distinctly set before all as the standard of conduct, it will be the law of love, the highest expression of the divine law with its many illustrations and explanations and assistance as may be necessary to bring the matter to the comprehension of every creature. "The law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Micah 4:2) Those who will obey the leadings of the glorious Joshua, the Deliverer, the Christ, will by his help and encouragement and guidance be brought off victors in the end; and those who will not obey that Law-giver and the law expressed through him, shall be chastened, judged, and if these corrections in righteousness do not serve to bring their hearts into accord with the Lord, there will be but one end possible; the wages of sin (no longer Adam's sin) will call for their death—second death—from which there will be no redemption, no recovery, no release.

Later on came the great battle between the Israelites under Joshua and the confederated kings of that region, resulting in the defeat and destruction of the latter and their armies on what is generally known as Joshua's long day. Then followed sundry other defeats of Israel's enemies until a sufficient portion of the land had been conquered to permit of its distribution between the tribes.

It was at this time when the enemies had been reduced in a general way and a considerable portion of the land of Canaan was in possession of the Israelites, that a division of

the land was made between the tribes, each tribe still having considerable to do in the way of conquering its own province and destroying the inhabitants remaining therein to dispute their possession. Joshua occupied the place of judge, formerly held by Moses, and the various tribes were assigned their portion by him; Judah evidently was one of the last to make application for an allotment, and Caleb was one of the representative men in the tribe of which he was an adopted member. The representative elders of Judah came also with him as implying their indorsement of his request for Hebron, promised him by Moses, and because they also considered that to be one of the most desirable localities of Palestine.

Caleb rehearsed to Joshua the story of the spying out of Canaan and reminded him that Moses promised that the particular part of Canaan he trod upon in spying should be his portion. He showed how this promise had fully entered into his heart; that not only had he the faith which enabled him to make the good report as to the possibility of Israel, under the Lord's favor, taking possession of the land of promise at once, but the same faith was with him afterward; he believed the Word of the Lord through Moses respecting his ultimate inheritance in it. The same promise and faith had been with him and actuated him during the wars of Israel in taking possession of the land, and now he still had full confidence that God would accomplish all the promises of Moses through the new leader Joshua. He was not unmindful of the fact that Hebron, which was the portion promised him by Moses, was not yet conquered; that it was in possession of the Anakim, giants, and that there would be serious battles to be fought before he could take full possession. His confidence was, however, that the same God who had made him the promise in the beginning, who had kept him thus far and who had fulfilled the promise up to this time, would be with him still and give him victory over the entrenched and fortified enemies in Hebron. How well this illustrates the progress of the spiritual Israelites who in the present time, by faith, are living the new life in the land of promise, battling with the enemies and overcoming them in the name and by the power of the Lord! They look back to the beginning of their experiences and rejoice that the Lord has kept them and blessed them in all spiritual things up to the present, and in proportion as they realize this they have faith to look forward into the future and to see the final outcome,—see themselves victors in their contests even with the strongest and most entrenched enemies of the flesh,—its giant passions, customs, etc. Amongst these enemies of spiritual Israelites, living high up in the mountain fastnesses, giant in form and thoroughly fortified, are religious customs, traditions of men, nominalism, sectarian pride and ambition and love of show. But the same grace of God which was sufficient to enable us to gain the victory over the common sins, in the valley, is able still to give us the victory over all these enemies of the new mind, the new creature, and to bring us off conquerors and "more than conquerors through him that loved us" and bought us with his precious blood. But as faith was necessary at every step of the journey—to spy out the land, to enter in, to fight the battles, so the same faith increasing as it has progressed, is necessary now for our final victory and our entrance into the full promised inheritance. Doubtless, the same condition in some respect will be true during the Millennial age to the world also: at first the requirement of the kingdom will be obedience in outward form; but ultimately the requirement will be the full submission of the heart to the will of God ere the restitution class will reach full perfection and enter upon the inheritance of everlasting life at the close of the Millennial age.

It is pleasant in passing to note the generous language of Caleb in respect to the ten other spies who were with Joshua and himself, and who brought back the evil report. Here would have been a fine opportunity for an ignoble man to have spoken evil of those associates and to have endeavored to glorify his own faithfulness and that of Joshua in contrast with the unfaithfulness of the ten. But no; generously he passes over their wrong conduct in as mild language as possible, and so far from denouncing them or reviling them, he speaks of them as "my brethren." The spiritual Israelite must have this same disposition, only with us it should be still more pronounced than with Caleb, because we, having been anointed with the holy spirit and through this anointing having been taught many of the "deep things of God," may well judge ourselves by a standard much higher than any with which Caleb was acquainted; purely spiritual Israelites have much advantage every way over natural Israelites. Whenever, therefore, we hear those professing the new life and large attainments of grace speaking evil of their brethren, we

are to remember the word of the Lord, that revilers shall have no part in the kingdom of God; we are to remember that it is written of our Lord that "when he was reviled he reviled not again"; we are to remember that evil speaking is classed by the Apostle as amongst the works of the flesh and of the devil, and the conduct of Michael, the archangel, is held up before us as a shining example of propriety, in that he did not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but merely said, "The Lord rebuke thee"; we are to remember too the Apostle's specific declaration, that evil speaking against others is a part of the filth of the flesh from which we, as the Lord's people, must be cleansed if we would be acceptable to him through Jesus Christ our Lord; and that revilers "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."—1 Cor. 6:10.

Let us not be misunderstood; the Scriptures nowhere teach that all men are brethren in the spiritual sense; on the contrary, they teach that the unjustified are not God's children, but "children of wrath," and some of them are so thoroughly evil that from God's standpoint they are of "their father the devil"; we are to recognize as brethren in Christ only the household of faith, and to draw a sharp line of demarcation in our minds and in our salutations as between these and the children of this world. This does not imply either that the children of this world are to be treated unkindly by us or insulted or offended; rather they are to have our sympathy, our

love, to whatever extent possible, our assistance as the Apostle suggests. We are to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity," especially unto the household of faith,—the brethren. Brethren are still to be recognized even though they fall into difficulty, dangerous snares of the adversary; and if it be necessary that our fellowship be withdrawn for a time, it is merely with the view to assist them back to their proper relationship to the Lord and back to our love and sympathy in fullest measure; as the Apostle says even such are to be treated, not as enemies, but, as misguided brethren for whose recovery we are to be willing to lay down even our lives—an hour here, another hour there, an effort for this one and an effort for another one because they are the Lord's. It is only after such brethren have turned back from the Lord's service like a "sow to her wallowing in the mire" or after they have discarded the redemptive work of Christ like the man in the parable who took off the wedding garment—only then are we to esteem them as enemies, adversaries, and even then we are not to bring against them a railing accusation, but to leave the matter for the Lord's judgment.—2 Thess. 3:15.

The essence of this lesson to the spiritual Israelite is that in order to inherit the good promises of God, we, like Caleb, must have faith in God and a corresponding obedience, that of us, as of him, the Lord will write, "He wholly followed the Lord."

FLYING FOR REFUGE

JOSHUA 20:1-9.—NOVEMBER 2.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."—Psa. 46:1.

Very wise indeed was the divine arrangement of cities of refuge for the Israelites. Six of these were designated, so scattered throughout the length and breadth of Palestine that they were convenient for the whole people. They were of divine appointment and had already been referred to through Moses (Num. 35:9-34; Deut. 4:41-43; 19:1-9), and by him their purpose had been fully set forth. Now that Israel had entered the land of promise and taken possession of it, the time had come for the putting of this measure into effect. The six cities chosen as refuges were all of them cities of the Levites which would all the more insure their being free from all tribal bias or prejudice. The tribe of Levi stood separate and distinct from all the other tribes and was specially interested in all, as the religious representatives of the nation it was fitting, therefore, that these refuges from justice should be of the Levites wards—under their protection.

From earliest times and in almost all countries the taking of life has been a capital offense calling for the death of the slayer. In almost all countries, too, particularly in the East, it is considered the bounden duty of the person next of kin to the one slain, to avenge his death; with some it is permissible to take money as a compensation for the loss of life, but with the Jews it was not so; the law "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" held with special rigidity in respect to a life for a life. We can see the wisdom of this general law recognized by the whole human family—that human life must be considered sacred and that he who would slay another must be shown no pity. Life was originally a divine gift, although forfeited through sin, and whatever remnant of it is transmitted from parent to child is still to be esteemed as so much of the original divine gift, and no one is at liberty to treat it lightly.

The cities of refuge were a step in advance along the line of tempering justice with mercy; they were established, not for the protection of wilful murderers but, for those who unintentionally, through error or accident took the life of another: any one who even thus committed man-slaughter was really worthy of death under the decree, "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,"—regardless of any excuse which he might be able to offer, either of aggravation or passion or self-defense or accident. The arrangement was that anyone believing himself to be free from malice, wilful, intentional murder, might flee to one of these cities of refuge and there be protected from the full demands of the law against his life—he might thus have a measure of mercy extended to him without the condoning of his offense. It was a further regulation that the routes leading to these cities of refuge should be built and kept in thorough order, free from stumbling stones, with bridges over water-courses, etc., so as to afford the guilty ones full opportunity for a rapid flight to secure safety. Moreover at frequent intervals sign boards were erected pointing in the direction of the city of refuge and bearing the word, "Refuge." It was also a custom among Jews that two scribes should accompany the refugee with the

special object of persuading the avenger should he overtake the culprit, to permit him to reach the city of refuge and there have a proper trial of his cause to hear what could be said on his behalf. This was a recognition of the justice of vengeance, but it was also an inculcation of mercy. Apparently the whole people felt a sympathy for every person fleeing from an avenger to a city of refuge, as each one realized his own liability at some time to commit a similar offense and thus likewise need to seek refuge and mercy.

Arrived at the city of refuge, the culprit was not free, but was obliged to stand trial before the elders of the city representing the congregation of Israel. He was received into the city and protected until such time as the trial could take place. His cause was carefully investigated;—Prof. Beecher remarks respecting these trials: "Much stress is laid upon the previous conduct of the slayer, and the relations between him and his victim, whether he lay in wait for the slain man (Deut. 19:11), whether he 'hunted' for him or not (Ex. 21:13; Num. 35:20, 22), whether he smote him 'in secret.' (Deut. 27:24) Was it presumptuous,—that is to say, malicious? (Ex. 21:14) Was it with guile? (Ex. 21:14) Especially, was there enmity previously between the two men? (Num. 35:21, 22) Was there hatred of the slain on the part of the slayer? (Num. 35:21, 23; Deut. 19:4, 6, 11; Josh. 20:5)."

The fact that so many particulars were enumerated shows that the trial contemplated was to be a careful one; it was not therefore the intention of these cities of refuge to defeat the ends of justice, but that while serving the ends of justice, mercy might be extended to those who were proper subjects for it. If the man were found guilty of deliberate murder, intentional, premeditated, the city of refuge did not save him from the death penalty; and if he were acquitted of any malice, he, nevertheless, was obliged to remain in the city of refuge or within its suburbs of 1,000 cubits beyond the walls (Num 35: 26, 28), for the remainder of his life, or until the death of the high priest. This was putting a heavy penalty upon carelessness, passion, etc., a penalty of separation from family, a restriction of liberty which, undoubtedly, would be beneficial, not only to the individual under restriction but, in its influence beneficial upon the whole people. The careless man is culpable, and when his carelessness results in serious injury to another it is but right that the matter should result in his own inconvenience—that it should cost him something.

The high priest was in some respects the most prominent individual in the nation, and his death, therefore, would be such a notable event as to be known throughout all the tribes, and on that occasion all refugees in all cities of refuge would be at liberty to return to their homes free from danger from the avenger, the avenger's opportunity expiring with the death of the high priest; and were he to avenge after that, he would be the murderer and be obliged to flee to a city of refuge. This unique arrangement, it will be observed, is the very reverse of our present-day arrangements of jails, penitentiaries, etc., and in some respects, at least, it presents advantages. The cul-

prisoner himself was the one who sought the prison and who desired to stay therein for his own protection during the appointed time. This certainly avoided the necessity of building massive walled, iron-barred jails from which prisoners continually seek to escape. And instead of inciting the people to the pursuit of the offender under the presumption of his guilt even before his trial, it rather conduces to a reverse condition of sentiment—the supposition of the culprit's innocence and the desire and sympathy on the part of the people to assist him in his safety and protection and mercy.

Our Golden Text draws to our attention an antitypical significance of these cities of refuge: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." From the time we become acquainted with the real facts of our case, we realize that a death sentence has been issued which involves each one of us. We realize, too, that justice has a full right to pursue us unto death because we have "all sinned and come short of the glory of God"; and because the "wages of sin is death." The Apostle Paul points out this matter distinctly (Rom. 5:12), saying "By one man [i.e., disobedience] sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so [thus] death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." From the moment, therefore, that we recognize that we are sinners—that we could not stand approved in the divine presence,—from that moment we realize that the avenger, Justice, is upon our trail, and that it is only a question of time when we will be overtaken and destroyed unless we reach some place of refuge. As we flee we see finger-posts which God has set for our instruction pointing us to Christ as the only place of refuge, and to him we have to flee.

We are abiding now within the hallowed precincts of this salvation, deliverance, refuge, which God himself has provided for us; even as it is written, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" And yet it is with us even as it is shown in the type, a place of refuge not from wilful and intentional violation of the divine Law, but a refuge to cover our weaknesses and ignorance—the results of the fall. As a thorough investigation was made in the type, so we may be sure that in our cases a thorough investigation of motives, intention, etc., will be instituted.

Fortunately for us, this refuge in Christ is specially intended for those who are "new creatures in Christ Jesus," whose sinful course prior to coming to a knowledge of the Lord is accounted, not as intentional or wilful, but, as of ignorance.

Our responsibilities for wilful sin may therefore, be said to begin with and keep pace with our knowledge of the divine Law. Although acquitted as respects wilful sin whose penalty would be the second death, it is necessary that we continue to "abide in him"—that we do not put off the robe of Christ's righteousness. If we leave the city of refuge,—if we abandon our trust in the precious blood which cleanseth us from all sin, we become liable again to the demands of justice and that without mercy. Divine justice is represented in the avenger, as divine mercy is represented in the city of refuge, and he who would leave the city of refuge necessarily falls into the hands of Justice; as again the Apostle explains, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"—to depart from Christ, to abandon the mercy and forgiveness which the Father has extended toward us, as culprits,—through the Beloved One.

How long must we abide thus in the mercy of Christ and have no standing or liberty outside of his robe of righteousness, no safety outside his provision of refuge? We answer that we must thus abide "until the death of the high priest." This is already in a large measure accomplished—the Head of the antitypical high priest, our Lord and Master, already has finished the work that the Father gave him to do, and the members of the body of the high priest, his church in the flesh, are filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, and soon the entire high priest, its every member, will have died. Then the new dispensation will be ushered in and no longer will we be obliged to own our own imperfection and the need of a covering before justice; from thenceforth having been made perfect by a share in the First Resurrection, having been made like our Lord and Master, we shall be presented before the Father blameless, unreprouvable, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, without any vengeance against us on the part of divine justice.

The entire arrangement is of God—Justice is the avenger of sin, and Christ is the refuge and deliverance; therefore, while acknowledging the Lord Jesus and appreciating very highly his work for us, the redemption accomplished through his sacrifice and all the blessings which come from the Father through him, and thus honoring the Son as we honor the Father also, it is nevertheless appropriate that we should remember that all these blessings are of the Father through the Son. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble."

"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE SHALL SERVE"

JOSHUA 24:14-25.—NOVEMBER 9.

Decision, one of the most important elements of Christian character, is the essence of this lesson. When Joshua was about 110 years old, realizing that his course was about run, he called a general assembly of the Israelites, presumably the heads of every tribe and family, and reviewed before them the Lord's mercies from the time of the call of Abraham. It was now about thirty years since Joshua had succeeded Moses as the leader and law-giver, the judge of the nation. Under his able administration Canaan had been divided amongst the tribes, and a quarter of a century of prosperity in the new land had followed, not, however, without its conflicts and difficulties. In leaving the people Joshua sought to impress upon them not only the blessings and favors that they had received of the Lord, but also the obligations which they had assumed in becoming his people prospectively: heirs of the Abrahamic covenant, and blessers of all the nations of the earth. He shows how Abraham's fore-fathers had been idolaters "on the other side of the flood," that is, on the other side of the great river Euphrates; and that God's favor had been markedly with Abraham and his posterity up to the time of which he spoke. In order to impress upon their minds what they might expect of the Lord in the future, he calls pointedly to their attention his dealings with them in the past, the lessons in Egypt, the deliverances, the crossing of the Red Sea, the experiences of the wilderness, their crossing of Jordan into the land of promise, their conquest of the land against the various inhabitants. He would have them remember that these victories were not of their own strength or ability or wisdom, but that the Lord was on their side: calling attention also to one of the great battles in which their enemies were discomfited by great swarms of hornets, and then he comes to the exhortation which constitutes this lesson.

It is profitable, too, that the spiritual Israelite frequently take such a review of God's providences. He may look back not only to God's manifestations of favor and power during the Jewish age to natural Israel, but he may see also divine favor of another time granted to spiritual Israel during this

gospel age. Noting the differences of dispensations, he can see that God's blessings were of a temporal kind during the Jewish age; that those who were faithful to the Lord were blessed in their flocks and herds and earthly advantages and health, while during this Gospel age those who reverently obey the Lord and seek to walk in his ways are blessed in spiritual things; he opens the eyes of their understanding, feeds their hearts; grants them refreshment of the water of life, and light of the knowledge of the goodness of God which shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, and makes known to his faithful the lengths and breadths and depths and heights of divine love, wisdom, and power. They now realize a protection from the world, the flesh and the adversary, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding rules in their hearts, even though the same divine providence may permit them to have various trials and difficulties, persecutions and disappointments and reverses, physical, financial and social. The spiritual Israelite's evidence of divine favor on his behalf is in the healing of his soul from the sicknesses of sin, and in the invigoration of the new life, and in the victories over the weaknesses of the flesh and the oppositions of the Adversary—these are potent arguments with the spiritual Israelite respecting the goodness and faithfulness of our God, as the temporal victories recited by Joshua were evidences of them to the natural Israelite.

As Moses before he died had called upon Israel to renew their covenant with the Lord, so Joshua desired at the close of his days to make an appeal to his brethren on behalf of faithfulness to the Lord, that would long be remembered by them. He recognized the fact that God seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth—not of fear, not of compulsion but of a willing mind, and his argument accordingly was along this line—Brethren, let us make a firm resolve that in view of God's goodness to us we will ever be faithful to him; let us fear him in the sense of reverencing his commands, in the sense of fearing to displease one who has been so gracious to us; let us remember, too, that notwith-

standing his graciousness, he is dealing with us along the line of principle, and that if we depart from the principles he approves his blessing and favor will depart from us. Let us put away, therefore, the gods which your fathers served, and serve Jehovah only. It may have been that there was still a lurking of idolatry amongst the people, or it may have been that Joshua was merely guarding them against the idolatrous tendencies which more or less assail all mankind—a tendency to forget more or less the invisible God and to set upon earthly objects—idols—the affections and reverence which properly belong to him. Joshua would incite the people to a good resolution.

Just so, too, we see that spiritual Israelites need frequently to incite one another to faithfulness to God, to an appreciation of what he has done for us and what he rightly expects of us, and to caution one another against what we recognize to be the tendencies of the world—the drawing away of our hearts and affections toward earthly things.

The Israelites had come into a land whose people practiced idolatry accompanied by a lascivious form of worship, and there the laws of God upon them would necessarily mean restraint against which their fallen natures would more or less rebel, and Joshua wished them to have these matters well before their minds and to decide the question of loyalty to God in full view of the facts as they already realized them, or would subsequently appreciate them: on the one hand were the license and attractions of the sensuous forms of idolatry and the pleasures of sin such as they are, for a season, with divine disfavor; on the other hand were the restraints of the divine law accompanied by divine favor, protection and care, relating not only to the present life, but to that also which is to come. He inquired whether it seemed evil—that is undesirable—to them to be Israelites, to be God's people, to be under the restraints of his laws in order to have his favor and blessing. They would as a people now be tested along this line individually and nationally, and he desired to anticipate the coming tests and trials of their faith and obedience by fortifying their minds and leading them to make a decision one way or another. Then as a leader he took his own position most positively on the side of the Lord, saying, "As for me and my house (my family) we will serve the Lord."

MAN'S FREE WILL OPERATIVE NOW

Many would be inclined to doubt the wisdom of setting before the people such a choice; they would be inclined, on the contrary, to leave no choice about it, but to insist and demand that the Lord be recognized and obeyed at all hazards. But really Joshua was merely emphasizing the choice which God puts before people continually: he leaves them open to choose good or evil,—to serve him, or to serve self or sin or wealth or other idols. As a matter of fact we have no right to attempt compulsion, because the Lord leaves the matter open for choice, as Joshua did; he is seeking those who desire to be his servants, his royal priesthood, his holy nation, his peculiar people; those who do not so desire he does not desire, and he is not calling them and drawing them now. Our Master emphasized this lesson in his preaching, saying to the Jews, "If any man will come after me (as a disciple), let him take up his cross and follow me"; he exhorts them furthermore to sit down and count the cost of discipleship before undertaking to make a choice, just as Joshua in this lesson drew before the minds of his hearers something of the two sides of the question which he exhorts them to decide properly on the Lord's side,—on the side of life and peace and blessing and the promises of God.

Although this matter of choosing was left open to the people during the Jewish age, and under the still higher call during this Gospel age, yet it will not be so left open during the Millennial age; men will not then be invited to choose whom they will serve and worship; on the contrary, when the kingdom has been established, the law shall go forth, and without asking for the preferences of any for good or for evil, obedience will be enforced and the evilly disposed will be forcibly restrained. Such a reign of law and order will be maintained, and those who will not conform thereto will be chastened as well as instructed, and all who shall not come into accord with that kingdom and its law of righteousness outwardly, and ultimately conform to it heartily, will be cut off in the second death.—Acts 3:23.

The people responded nobly, that they appreciated God's care and blessings and that they would be faithful and loyal to him: but realizing that promises are easily made and need to be deeply impressed, Joshua repeated the injunction the second time (verse 19) saying in substance: Ye can not serve the Lord easily,—you must not imagine that the promises you are making can be kept without considerable effort, neither must you imagine that a partial perfunctory observance of

the divine law will please the Lord or have his blessing,—he is a jealous God. As a husband or wife having entered into the marriage relationship would properly be jealous of any intrusion or indifference or coldness, so the Lord having accepted Israel as his peculiar people would watch over them with a jealous care, would not be indifferent if they divided their affections or worship as between him and others. And God is the same today and forever, and wishes his Spiritual Israel to understand that to abide in his love means obedience to his regulations, all of which are reasonable services. He would have us understand, clearly, that while he has favored us by lifting our feet from the horrible pit and miry clay of sin, condemnation and death, and has reckonedly justified us, placing our feet upon the rock, Christ Jesus,—although he has adopted us into his family as sons robed in Christ's righteousness, accepted in the Beloved one, nevertheless, having done these favors for us he would disown us and cast us off as unworthy of further favor if we deliberately prove unfaithful to him.

As the Israelites re-affirmed their decision to be faithful to the Lord so let us Spiritual Israelites engrave deeply upon our hearts our consecration, and let us frequently revive and review that consecration that the cares of life do not obliterate it to any degree.

THREE WITNESSES TO THE CONTRACT

But these two exhortations and two responses were still not enough for Joshua, for a third time, as still further and more deeply impressing the lesson, he exhorted them not only to put away all thought of idolatry, but, on the other hand, to incline their hearts to the Lord. It is after we have become God's people through justifying faith, after he has called us no longer servants, but sons, that he speaks to us, saying, "My son give me thine heart." To give the heart to the Lord means a full consecration of the will and hence of every hope, ambition and interest: and this is really the only way in which we can assure ourselves that no form of worldly idolatry will have any place in our lives. If we merely attempt to serve the Lord in an outward way ceremoniously and nominally, it will be but a little while until insidiously the world, the flesh and the adversary will draw our attention and energies away from the Lord to various things, entangling them in various earthly alliances and worshipships that will mean spiritual poverty and luke-warmness, if not absolute coldness of heart towards the Lord. Let us, therefore, like those addressed by Joshua, reach a positive decision once for all and whatever it may cost and however seductive and beautiful the service and worship of self or Mammon may appear to us, let us, in view of the experiences of the past and the promises which reach into the future, decide that we will serve the Lord: not waiting for him to raise his hands in judgments and denunciations, but listening for his voice that we may know his will and do it.

There were three witnesses to this contract or covenant. The first was the people themselves who would now long remember this covenant thrice repeated. The second was Joshua's declaration, in connection probably with the tables of the law, that Israel's covenant was renewed by statute and ordinance—that the original covenant of Sinai had been ratified, re-affirmed. The third witness was a monumental stone which he "erected under an oak" [or oak grove] that was about [near] the sanctuary of the Lord. This also would be a witness to them of what they had done—of their pledge to the Lord in the presence of Joshua. So it is well for the Lord's spiritual people to do more than merely make a covenant or agreement with the Lord in their hearts and minds. That decision of the mind is important first: but it needs besides helps, such for instance, as a confession of it before the fellow members of the body of Christ, the Church: and it needs some memorial of it, as for instance in the baptismal memorial of consecration unto death.

Because of our weaknesses through the fall, and because of the seductions of the Adversary and the world, we need to hedge about the new creature and its good resolutions so that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Let every true Israelite adopt the words of Joshua "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." and as this would mean no light matter for himself so, also, it should be no meaningless phrase as respects his household; it should mean that his children shall be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: it should mean that minor children shall not be allowed to rule the house nor to discredit parents outside the home, but that the parental influence exercised in kindness, in love and in firmness, shall seek to bring the children of each family so far as possible into covenant relationship to the Lord, instructing them in the way of the Lord, both by precept and example.

THE MORN IS COMING

Our age's sphere of light,
Though widening still, is walled around by night;
With slow, reluctant eye, the Church has read,
Skeptic at heart, the lesson of its Head.—*Whittier.*

Despite the light that cheers the world today,
Shadows surround us, on our heavenward way,
And Error darkens Truth's celestial ray.

Not yet the beams, whose radiant splendors dart
From the fair realms of Science and of Art,
With equal glory shine from soul and heart:

Men worship golden calves and serpents still;
Like cringing slaves bow to their master's will—
Obey the letter, but the spirit kill;

Still tremble at the Priest's uplifted rod,
For fear that he may doom them, by a nod,
To endless hell-fire in the name of God.

False prophets still the wrath of Heaven provoke;
And hypocrite, and Pharisee, and rogue,
Sit in high places in the synagogue.

As sheep disguised, wolves still make sheep their prey;
The blind still lead the blind the downward way;
And sneaking Judases their Lord betray.

Still is assailed the free soul that aspires;
Still persecution feeds her smoldering fires;
And still, to murder Truth, are leagued the Liars.

Still everywhere a selfish spirit rules—
Men herd themselves in squabbling sects and schools,
And deem dissenting brethren knaves or fools;

Still hack their heads with dull, polemic swords,
Fan the fierce flames of hate with windy words,
And take the Devil's plaudits for the Lord's.

The world, which God gave to his children all,
They parcel into sections, large or small,
And round each petty church "patch" build a wall;

Shout their strange shibboleths and battle cries,
Assert pre-emption title to the skies,
And curse him as a heathen who denies.

Thus bigotry and sect intolerance
Sharpen the infidel's else harmless lance,
And cause the Devil's imps for joy to dance!

Thank God! Religion is a plant that grows:
Its perfect flower perennially blows,
More fragrant and more fair than Sharon's rose.

It yet shall rise from out the sloughs and swamps,
Shed from its shining leaves the dungeon damps,
Break every bond that yet its free growth cramps!

Methinks I see it rising and expand!
Its mighty branches arching every land,
From Zembia's snows to India's sunny strand.

Upward, forever up, I see it rise,
Flashing resplendent glory on our eyes,
Until its crown is lost within the skies.

And there, beneath this everlasting tree,
This Tree of Life and Human Destiny,
I see the nations gather, bond and free,

Gentile and Jew, of every clime and race—
God's children all—and standing face to face,
Own but one God, their Father, and embrace!

Then, only then, will men indeed be free,
Then will the Golden Age we dream of be,
And Jesus Christ reign universally.

—*Charles W. Huoner.*

YE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES

The following extracts from a letter in which one dear sister in Christ relates to another her temptation of the adversary along Christian Science lines will be interesting, and we trust, profitable, to many of our readers. She writes:

"My dear mother seemed always to 'hunger and thirst after righteousness.' She was so glad to know and understand every word of truth as it was brought to her, and *rested* in it. She used to say, 'It is all perfect peace now.' That was after you were gone. She had never read any of the *Dawns* except the first volume and part of the fifth. I read part of the second to her, but it was only just the beginning. I cannot be glad enough that it was given her to know so much of the blessed truth in the short time that she had left; yet I have thought that if she had never known she might have been living even now in that same tired, almost hopeless way. Indeed the doctor blames the truth entirely, and has been very bitter against it and all our people ever since. When mamma was taken down sick she was not nearly so bad as usual, but she did not seem to change much, either for better or worse for a long time. One day the doctor called me into the parlor and said: 'I do not know what to make of your mother's case; unless she can be aroused to exert herself and try to throw off the disease she will run down very fast, and nothing can then be done for her. She seems bright and cheerful, but she has no power of resistance in herself, or else she is not trying to live. I am doing all I can; if you know any way to arouse her you can do more for her than any of us.'

"After he went away I told mother just what he had said. She replied: 'That is not so: I am trying to get well; but it must be just as the Lord wills, he knows best.' The doctor had told me that had it not been for her strong will she could not have lived through several previous bad attacks (she said she *must* get well for the sake of her children), and it was now so different! This time when I reminded her that the children needed her more than ever, she said: 'The Lord knows best what they need, and I will be with them as long as he pleases.'

"Years before I had heard some people—and intelligent ones, too—argue that any strong willed person could not only keep another alive for years, but could even raise the dead by *sheer force of will*. Isn't that a crazy idea? Well, just then I would have believed anything; I became simply possessed with the thought that since the Lord *would not* help her I

could and would, if only my strength would hold out until spring.

"For months I never left her room except for a few minutes at a time, not even going down stairs to meals for days in succession; I just took a cup of coffee in the hall, and sometimes I would not leave even for that. Of course, I used every means in my power; giving her medicine regularly until the doctor told me to leave them off as her stomach was too weak for them to have any beneficial effect. I spent a great deal of time rubbing her until she became so sensitive that she could not bear that; but when those terrible cramps or sharp pains came in different parts of the body, they were stopped almost instantly if I laid my hand on her. I could put her to sleep in less than two minutes by putting my hand on her head, or by taking hold of her hand, and she slept just as long as I sat beside her even if I removed my hand; but if I left the room she was awake instantly. One day she told me it made her nervous for me to look at her, so I went over on the other side of the room to sit. In a few minutes she called me to come back because she felt so strange if she could not see me all the time. I was almost afraid to think of other things for fear of forgetting my purpose even for a moment.

"After a while she began to think that something was not just right, and said so; but for a time she was puzzled not knowing what to make of it. One day she said, 'I could die so easy if you would only let me!' Another time she said, 'The Lord is going to take me anyway, but if you would only let me go it would be so much easier. I did the same thing with your father and kept him alive and suffering for weeks, knowing that it was resisting the Lord's will; but he took him at last in spite of all I could do, and it will be the same with you.' Of course, I pretended not to understand her, but I was never so frightened in all my life, nor so determined to have *my own way* whatever came of it. So I did not lie down day or night for three weeks, for fear of getting sleepy; and I did not dare to feel tired during all this time. The doctor came regularly every day, but he gave no medicine; he would inquire how she had passed the night and all about her; once he told a funny story to make her laugh, and said to me, 'Keep right on as you are doing, she is getting along splendidly.' And she really seemed to be doing so, and she grew strong enough to sit up and talk and read, and even walked a few steps one day. At last the doctor said: 'If you could hold out two

weeks longer we shall have her out of doors, and she will soon be as strong as ever, once she gets out into the air, and you can have a long rest.' I said I was not tired—did not believe in resting, etc. He wanted to know if I was not a Christian Scientist; I said, 'No; of all silly things Christian Science is the worst; every one of those people must have softening of the brain.' 'Well,' said he, 'you are the queerest person I ever saw; what do you believe?' I answered, 'I am too busy to think about beliefs.'

"About that time came your letter in which you spoke of the high calling, and of consecration as the giving up of your own wills entirely to the Lord. You seemed to think it a duty as well as a privilege for those who saw it,—but it seemed to me that I had never so much need of *my own will* as just then;—for two weeks longer to get mother out. I thought if your letter had only come two weeks later, when she would be strong enough to get along without me it would have been all right; for as she gained strength I let her help herself, only watching her all the time so as to be ready to help her whenever she needed me. I never forgot that she was my mother, and that I had no right to have any influence over her *actions*, only while it was necessary to help her during her great weakness. That was the way I looked at it; besides, I had begun to be tired as the strain grew less. I was so excited over that letter of yours that mamma noticed it and asked about it, so I read her that part of it where you spoke of angry parents being 'imitators of God as dear children' by torturing their children with red-hot poker, etc.! How we both laughed over that! But for the rest—What if the Lord wanted to show that his way was different from mine, and should *undo all of my work* (for I certainly thought that it was all my own doing)! On the other hand, he might *take* his own way anyhow. He was stronger than I, and *could* do it, that I knew. I studied then as I had never done before—mostly the Bible—to see if there was not some promise or something else which gave us the *right to demand* certain things in return for service. You know, how discouraging such a search as that would be! The verse 'Like as a father pitieth

his children' reminded me so much of my own dear father, with whom I should have been glad to leave everything;—and *the matter was decided*.

"Mamma knew the difference from the first though I never told her in words, and she was so glad and so satisfied. Our dear Father and his precious promises—our blessed hope—she could not talk enough of these things; but she grew so much weaker that she could not bear to have anything read to her, so I used to read and tell her just a few words at a time; even talking made her head ache and *I could do nothing for her after that time*. Yet she was so patient and contented (though she suffered all the time); still we thought it was the bad, rainy weather, and I never thought that the Lord's will was so different from mine until it was too late to change. Then I was sure that I had done wrong in order to selfishly secure what I had thought would be peace with God,—that in abandoning my self-will *I had deliberately sacrificed a human life*, which was a blessing to and needed by others, and which could not be recalled! Has not Satan the strangest way of helping us to reason backwards, and twisting things out of place until one can not tell right from wrong? During the day all was confusion, but at night the house was quiet, and there was time for study and prayer. The dear Lord showed me so plainly that all these things were in his hands, not mine, and you know how close he will come when we are anxious only to know and to do his will. Romans 8 made so clear that which was partly explained in the very letter that had *seemed* to cause so much trouble in the beginning. Since then I can truly say,

"This is my heart's sincere desire (to be)
Nearer, my God, to Thee"

I am so glad to leave everything in his care. Perhaps one reason is that I have had no great temptation to do otherwise since; but I am not looking ahead for temptations, only trusting for today. When I think of all the dear Lord has done and has promised it seems almost too much!"

"A VESSEL UNTO HONOR, SANCTIFIED"

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and made meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."—2 Tim. 2:21.

It is important to notice that this instruction is given, not to the world, but to the church—to those who are believers in Christ and who are consecrated to him and desirous of being used in his service. If the counsel were given to worldly people, no such incentive would be held out; for such have no ambition to be in the Lord's service. The world can better appreciate such maxims as, "Honesty is the best policy," etc.: for temporal good is all they seek. Yet it is indeed a good thing for worldly men to purge themselves of evil dispositions and practices. Moral reforms are always commendable as steps in the right direction, and we are always glad to see worldly men trying to break away from the bondage of bad habits—from the drunk habit and from lying, profanity and other vices.

But such purging from the filth of the flesh can never render such vessel fit for the Master's use. With all their efforts at cleansing they are still unclean; and the Lord desires clean vessels for his use. It is only when, by faith, we are plunged in the cleansing blood of our Redeemer that we are clean and acceptable to God.

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

But having been thus reckonedly cleansed from sin, and clothed in the pure robe of Christ's righteousness, it is all-important that we strive to make this reckoned righteousness an actual thing to the extent of our ability; for only so can we prove ourselves worthy of the imputed righteousness. It is purely of divine grace that we are *reckoned* of God as righteous, before we have actually become so. Seeing in us the desire to be righteous and the effort to be so in his appointed way, God, accepting the will for the deed, reckons us righteous now, and treats us as sons, since we have been redeemed from the curse and have accepted this gracious provision for reconciliation.

If, however, after being thus reconciled to God and reckoned righteous, our course of conduct proves that we no longer love righteousness; if we do not endeavor to make the reck-

oned righteousness an actual thing by a constant endeavor to purge out the old leaven of sin; if we are content to let it remain and to work in us, and if we neglect to strive against it, then we are proving by such a course that our love of righteousness is growing weaker, and we are proving our unworthiness of the Lord's gracious reckoning in our favor. But if, on the contrary, we are striving daily to purge out the old leaven of sin, if we are not merely working it down occasionally and allowing it again and again to ferment and disturb the whole spiritual being, endangering its complete souring and spoiling (but purging it out by constantly resisting it) cleansing our thoughts, words and deeds with the truth, and cultivating the blessed fruits of the spirit of love, joy and peace,—then, indeed, as the Apostle affirms, we shall be vessels meet for the Master's use.

And not only so, but the Lord can honor such vessels because they honor him; they fairly represent him and his cause. If they are meek and humble-minded, not inclined to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, but to think soberly, the Lord can exalt them to positions of trust and honor without injury either to themselves or to the cause; and thus they are more and more sanctified and prepared for every good work.

Let as many, therefore, as would be honored and used of the Master now and hereafter—as many as have this hope in them—seek to purify themselves, to purge out the old leaven of sin. In the language of another forceful illustration, let us endeavor to war a good warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil. And be assured that in these duties we have the work of a lifetime; and even at its close we will still find the necessity for the robe of Christ's righteousness to cover the remaining deformities of our character.

While the purging here spoken of refers to the general cleansing from all sin and uncleanness, the Apostle had special reference on that occasion to purging from a disposition to hearken to the false doctrines of those who would subvert the faith of the church. His counsel is to avoid foolish questions and strife about words to no profit; to shun profane and vain babblings which increase only unto more ungodliness, which savor more of bombast and self-exaltation than of truth and godliness, and, on the contrary, to study to show