

terest to them. He mentioned religious matters only in connection with evil speaking, slander and backbiting until he fairly disgusted his hearers. But not so the certain class who seemed to enjoy his unchristian attacks on the life and character of another. The friends called to mind the text, "Speak evil of no man," and especially Paul's admonition prohibitive of the speaking aught against an elder, and thus he was unconsciously "driving nails into his own coffin," as the Germans say, I cautioned the friends to ever beware of anyone who allows himself to speak evil of others, assuring them that even were the statement entirely true the one who so speaks is manifestly more guilty in God's sight than is the one he is endeavoring to malign and injure.

In giving my own testimony in the general assembly, prompted by the other testimonies of the friends present, I told the dear ones of how I had for many years been a member of the Bible House family, had eaten and lived there, and even enjoyed your uncomfortable bed-lounge with you on various occasions since the year 1895, and that never once in all that time had I heard a cross or angry word from your lips, and that never had I known you to do or say aught unbecoming a Christian and a gentleman. Brother, I may have been somewhat personal, but in view of some malicious attacks that had been made on you behind your back I could not refrain from uttering the truth in your defense, although I am well aware of your practice to make little or no defense of yourself, but to vigorously defend others, or the truth, or

a matter involving a principle or doctrine. While I can say, All honor to the man who can adhere to such a policy persistently, yet sometimes I feel that you really ought to defend yourself, if not for your own sake, for the sake of many dear ones on whose shoulders part of the burden falls. You always say in substance, "The Lord knows all about it," and with him you let it rest. The letter enclosed contains a sentence right along this line. You will not need to return it.

I think these Fifth-Sunday conventions are a means of great blessing to our people, stimulating and refreshing. I would like to hear from the friends elsewhere as to their experience re these little gatherings. I feel like encouraging all the truth friends to institute these occasions of spiritual uplift. I will do all in my power to assist. Both at Detroit and Canton they worked me pretty hard, yet it was joy to serve the friends. I regret my inability to serve as I should like. The Lord, however, knows I am willing to do the best I can. The bond of Christian love was strengthened in the heart of everyone who attended yesterday's convention, I am sure, and you are more dearly than ever entrenched in the hearts of all who were there. God bless you and keep you in his tender care.

Thanking you once more for making it possible for me to be there, I remain in loving sympathy,

Your Brother in Christ, our Advocate and Lord,

J. A. BOHNET.

## SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I desire to let you know of an incident that is an occasion of joy to our little class, and I believe it is an act of justice to a brother to hasten to tell the good report we can now give, inasmuch as you were acquainted at the Jacksonville Convention, February, 1909, with the estrangement here.

We are so glad to announce that Brother —, once our elder, has won a great victory over the "old man," pride, self, and the adversary. He by the grace of God, at a testimony meeting, arose and confessed his faults, saying that pride and the adversary combined had deceived and cheated him of the blessed fellowship of this class, that he had been to the throne of grace with the matter and desired to do nothing but the Lord's will in all matters and desired to again meet regularly with "those of like precious faith."

Each one present at the end of our brother's testimony came forward and extended the hand of fellowship and love. Stimulated by the example, another one of our class who had been unstable, arose and testified in like manner, to whom also we demonstrated our love and good will be shaking hands. We felt that the power of God's holy Spirit had worked mightily in our midst and rejoiced greatly. These two brothers are demonstrating the sincerity of their testimony by attending all the meetings regularly, which is our Lord's appointed way of blessing his church, those who "forsake not the assembling of themselves together as is the manner of some."

Yours faithfully in our Redeemer and King,

M. L. McILVAINE.

MY DEAR PASTOR:—

For months the publications of those poor "dreamers," so graphically described by the Apostle Jude, have been coming through the mail into our home.

Dear Pastor, what a fearful thing to be "spots on the feasts of love" of God's dear people as they meet to worship and learn of him. To be "trees whose fruit withereth—twice dead, plucked up by the roots!" The empty clouds ("without

water"), carried about by winds, "every wind of doctrine."

Will you offer a special prayer for me and mine that we may "keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life?"

And for the foolish ones, deluded for a time by these "wandering stars," who have gone in the way "of Cain, Balaam and Core," pray that we may have all proper "compassion, making a difference," "pulling them out of the fire," by continually feasting our minds on the truth, and keeping on the "whole armor of God," thus being equipped for any service or any trial. Surely, we never could help any one by imbibing error, even with the thought of being better able to contrast it with the truth.

A number of times I have thought of writing letters to some, trying to help them; but if all the clear, beautiful expositions of Scripture we have been given through the TOWERS cannot dispel their mental and spiritual clouds, I thought anything I might say surely would do no good.

May the God of all grace keep you continually; give you wisdom, grace and strength to meet every need.

Yours in our blessed Redeemer and Advocate,

MRS. C. A. WISE.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Since the opponents of the vow called attention to the small number of names registered, the Birmingham church has decided to send a full list of her members that have taken the vow, as a means of expressing to you our hearty approval and appreciation of it.

While the majority took it some time ago and so notified you, yet others have been dilatory about sending in their names. Only a few have not yet seen the necessity for taking it, and we trust, in God's providence, they may soon see "eye to eye" with us, as no antagonism has been shown.

We should like to say, also, that we feel most grateful for the season of refreshing that we have recently enjoyed, and are confident that much permanent good will result therefrom.

Yours in him,

B. T. M.,—Secretary.

## THE MEMORIAL PASSOVER SUPPER

As heretofore announced, the date of the Memorial Supper Anniversary this year falls on Friday evening, April 22d, after six o'clock, according to Jewish reckoning. The Christian church originally kept this Passover Memorial as we now do, but in order to make the dates more regular, and also in order to draw the minds of Christians away from the thought of following the Jewish precedents too closely, the method of reckoning the date was slightly altered. Thus the Jewish reckoning let the Passover fall where it might as respects the days of the week. But the change made the anniversary of our Lord's death to come always on a Friday, styled "Good Friday," and his resurrection date always, therefore, to fall on the Sunday there-

after, "the third day," styled subsequently Easter Sunday. The Jewish reckoning of time was by the moon as well as by the sun. Thus the majority of years with them had twelve months, but occasionally one would have thirteen months. The Jewish reckoning of the Passover date begins to count with the first New Moon after the Spring equinox, the Passover day thus coming on the full moon, fourteen days thereafter. Subsequently the Christian church accepted the Friday near the first full moon after the Spring equinox, even though the moon was new before the Friday. This explains the difference in dates this year, Good Friday, according to Catholic usage, falling on March 25, while the corresponding date, according to Jewish reckoning,

will be April 23. We celebrate the Memorial on the evening preceding. Yet it is not the hour or day of our Lord's death, but the fact that it is chiefly important. This year such a Memorial service will be in order on Friday evening, April 22, after six o'clock (Nisan 14th). The next afternoon, Saturday, April 23, at 3 p. m., will correspond to the hour of our Lord's death; the Jewish Passover Feast beginning three hours later. So much explanation for the satisfaction of the minds of all.

#### WHAT WE MEMORIALIZE

We memorialize four great matters:—

(1) The death of our Lord Jesus as the Passover Lamb.  
(2) Our relationship or participation with him in the sufferings of Christ, the death of Christ, as followers in his steps and sharers in his cup.

(3) We celebrate incidentally and prospectively the great deliverance which soon will follow this passing over of the present night-time. The deliverance will affect first of all those passed over, the church—the “little flock” and the “great company,” the antitypes of the Royal Priesthood and the Levitical host or tribe. The deliverance of these will come in the morning, the resurrection morning, the Millennial morning.

(4) We also incidentally commemorate the great “feast of fat things” which will follow the passing over of the church, when the passed-over ones shall be associated with their Lord in his heavenly kingdom as the great antitypical Prophet, Priest, Judge, Mediator, and King over all the earth, to bless and uplift the human family through the merit of the same precious blood which he now permits the passed-over ones to participate in sacrificially, after the imputation of its merit to them has made them worthy.

These different points should be kept in memory separate and distinct from each other if we would have the greatest blessing from this Memorial.

Looking unto Jesus as the “Lamb of God,” we behold his spotlessness—“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” We behold how “he was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth.” (Acts 8:32) By speaking the word he could have resisted those who were intent upon his destruction. He assures us that no man took from him his life; that he laid it down himself—voluntarily. He laid it down not in obedience to the Father's law, for justice could not demand sacrifice; but laid it down in accordance with the Father's will, saying, “I delight to do thy will. O my God; thy law is written in my heart.” From this standpoint the Christian believer can rejoice greatly that the Redeemer spared not himself, but freely delivered himself up with the foreknowledge that in the divine purpose the value of his sacrifice would ultimately redound first for the benefit of his followers, and subsequently for the blessing of all the people. Hence in partaking of the broken, unleavened bread we memorialize the purity, the sinlessness, of him who gave himself to be, in God's due time, the ransom-price for all of mankind. From this standpoint we realize that his shed blood signified that his death was necessary in order that our condemned humanity might be restored to life without infracting the divine law. Our hearts should pause here to appreciate, not only the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also the love of the Father, who designed the programme; and the justice of God thus exemplified; and the wisdom of God in making the arrangement; and the faith also to grasp the power of God, as it will ultimately be manifested in the full carrying out of all the glorious purposes and promises which we memorialize.

The second point is scarcely less important to us than the first. The first blessing from the Redeemer's sacrifice has been offered during this Gospel age to such as have the “hearing ear” and the appreciative heart. This blessing is most astounding. It purposes a still further blessing to such of mankind as turn from sin and accept the grace of God in Christ by faith, and present their bodies living sacrifices, with full consecration, vowing to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. To all such, during this Gospel age and until the completion of the elect number, the Redeemer will impute the merit of his sacrifice, in order to make their sacrifices acceptable in God's sight—to the intent that they may suffer with him in the flesh, and share with him in the begetting of the Spirit now and in birth to the Spirit plane in the resurrection. Thus as his glorified “members” they be associated with him in his Millennial kingdom, when he shall act as “Mediator between God and men.” The word men here includes all not begotten of the holy Spirit to be new creatures on the spirit plane.

Our partaking of the bread symbolically represents our partaking of the fleshly perfection of the man Jesus. We partake of his perfections by faith, and not actually. He gives us, not restitution to human perfection, but merely an imputation of his righteousness, his perfection, as covering in the divine sight

the blemishes, the imperfections, of our fleshly bodies, which we have tendered to God as living sacrifices.

When as our great Advocate the Redeemer imputes to our offering the merit of his sacrifice the Father accepts the same and begets the sacrificer to the new nature as a “member of the body of Christ.” And since we are not at once perfected as new creatures, but still have mortal flesh, the Father “adopts” us in a sense that includes our justified flesh and all of its interests.

It is only those who have thus partaken of the merit of Christ and whose sacrifice God has accepted that are directed in conformity to their Covenant of sacrifice to drink of his cup and to daily be immersed into his death.

#### “MY CUP OF THE NEW COVENANT”

The cup is not ours, but the Lord's. The life or sacrifice symbolized by the blood is not ours, but the Redeemer's. We are merely given the privilege of drinking it, partaking of it. The blood of Jesus could have sealed the New Covenant between God and Israel, and on behalf of all mankind through Israel by the New Covenant, without being offered to us at all. The offering to us of the privilege of participation in the cup of Christ's sufferings and death is therefore not to indicate that it was insufficient nor that we could add anything to it. It illustrates the grace of God—that he is willing to receive us and make us joint-heirs with our Lord and Savior, if we have his Spirit. The Spirit which actuated Jesus was a spirit of devotion to the doing of the Father's will—to the smallest detail, and even unto death. Exactly this same spirit must be in all those whom the Father will now accept as members of his bride, his body, his church in the heavenly glory. Hence the Redeemer emphasized the matter distinctly, saying that all who would sit with him in his throne must drink of his cup of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and must be immersed into his death.

This is exactly what St. Paul points out to us, namely, that our Lord is the true Bread, the true Loaf, which came down from heaven, and that we are invited to be portions of the One Loaf, which ultimately will be the Bread of Life for the world during the Millennial age. We not only partake of Christ, but, accepted by him according to the Father's plan, we become members with our Lord in the larger Loaf, the multitudinous Christ. Hence, as St. Paul suggests, when we break this Bread together as a Memorial, we not only symbolize our Lord's broken body, but in a larger sense we symbolize the breaking of the church and our own breaking or dying as members of that church. “The loaf which we break, is it not the communion (the common union or participation) of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one Loaf, the one body; for we are all partakers of that one Loaf.”—1 Cor. 10:16, 17.

The cup of the fruit of the vine to us means the sacrificed life of our Lord. But additionally, it reminds us that we, in becoming his disciples, accepted his invitation to share his cup. To us this means faithfulness in self-sacrifice as the Lord's representatives, even unto death. “The cup of blessing which we bless (for which we give thanks as the greatest imaginable favor of God bestowed upon us), is it not the communion (the general union, the fellowship) of the body of Christ?” Does it not represent our Lord's sacrifice and our share with him in his sacrifice, by his invitation and in harmony with the Father's pre-arranged plan, in which he foreknew us with Jesus from before the foundation of the world.

Oh, what a depth of meaning attaches to the communion cup from this standpoint! Oh, what heart-searching should go with the accepting of it! How evident it is that this communion cup represents not merely turning from sin; not merely believing in Jesus; not merely preference for right over wrong, but chiefly the presentation of believers' bodies living sacrifices to God; sacrifices considered holy, because of the imputation of Jesus' merit, and which sacrifices God has accepted, begetting the offerer to the new nature as a new creature!—Rom. 12:1.

No wonder the Apostle intimates that whoever lightly, irreverently, yet intelligently, partakes of this symbolic flesh and symbolic blood brings condemnation upon himself. It is of this blood, viewed from this standpoint, that the Apostle speaks in Heb. 10:29. He speaks of some who count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unsaved or common thing—some who do despite to the spirit of grace, favor, which has called us with this high calling during this Gospel age. The Apostle intimates that God's providence for such would be the second death. We cannot understand the Apostle to mean that church members who have never made a real consecration to God, who have never understood the real grace of God, the real privilege which they enjoy—that these should be subjects of the second death. The context, on the contrary, intimates that the persons referred to had at once time a clear understanding of the matter; that they had been “once enlightened”; that they had not only been justified by faith in the precious blood to approach God thus, but, on the basis of that justifying faith,

they had gone on to sanctification—presenting their bodies living sacrifices. The text cited indeed declares that it refers to only such as despise the blood of the covenant (the cup we memorialize), with which they had previously been sanctified by the begetting of the holy Spirit when they agreed to “drink of Christ’s cup” in their consecration.

#### “EVEN YOUR SANCTIFICATION”

Our sanctification, which is the will of God and in harmony with which the present Gospel call is made, is effected not when we are “called,” nor when we begin to turn from sin, nor when we begin to hear and heed the voice of God, but when, under the influence of these blessings and mercies of God, we come to the point of full consecration—full discipleship, full surrender, full sacrifice of all of the earthly rights and privileges, that we might have instead thereof the spiritual blessings, the divine nature, joint-heirship with our Lord in his kingdom. Is it asked who would despise such a favor as this? Who would repudiate the privilege of being joint-sacrificers with the Lord? Who would spurn “his cup” and “his baptism” into death in view of the privilege of being associated in the reward? The answer is that surely none would do so who still retain the spirit of begetting and faith-appreciation of the things not seen as yet—glory, honor and immortality. If, therefore, any who have once tasted of the heavenly gift and been made partakers of the holy Spirit and participated in the powers and privileges of the coming age—if they shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.

We cannot read the heart. We cannot know, surely, who have seen beyond the first veil, and who have not. We cannot know absolutely who have committed the “sin unto death,” and who have not. We are not to judge one another. We are rather to accept one another’s expressions, provided the course of life corresponds—in that it is not symbolically represented by the injurious thorns and thistles. If, however, any should repudiate “the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified”—if any should claim that participation with Christ in this memorial cup is participation in something common or ordinary, and not participation in his great sacrifice, it would imply that he had lost his spiritual vision, his spiritual apprehension of the value of being a partaker of Christ’s cup—the blood of the covenant, which shortly is to be sealed for Israel and through Israel for all the families of the earth who will come into harmony with its divinely arranged terms.

It may be possible that some who have professed to see the spiritual things, some who have professed a fulness of consecration even unto death, some who have professed to appreciate the participation in the breaking of the one loaf and the drinking of the one cup of fellowship with Christ in his death, have never really appreciated these things. Perhaps they not only deceived us by their statements, but also deceived themselves.

Let us remember our Lord’s words, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” If those who once professed that they were sanctified, set apart, consecrated sacrificers as members of the body of Christ and who partook of his cup of suffering and self-denial and then manifested a spirit of holiness and gave evidences of developing the fruits and graces of the spirit, we may safely consider that they were spirit-begotten. If these afterward repudiate the blood of the covenant and view the privilege of partaking of Christ’s cup as something that is merely common or ordinary, but not exclusive and only for the members of Christ—if these now manifest no longer the fruits of the Spirit of God, but the fruits of the spirit of the adversary, we may well fear for them that they not only have lost the light, but also lost the Spirit. We are not to expect that such would necessarily go to open deeds of violence, murder, robbery, etc. It would be sufficient evidence of their having lost the Spirit of the Lord if they should develop afresh the spirit of anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife—works of the flesh and of the devil.

True, a sanctified member of the body of Christ might be overtaken in a fault, or act in a manner that would imply anger, but he certainly could not have malice and hatred. Besides, if overtaken in a fault, he would soon realize his difficulty and not only go with the fault to the throne of heavenly grace for forgiveness, but also go and make reparation and full apology to those wronged, injured, by the act. Whoever, therefore, indicates that his spirit has become a malicious one, gives evidence that he has already lost the Spirit of God and is “twice-dead, plucked up by the roots,” and belongs to the thorn and brier family and not to the vine.

In our Memorial service let not our hearts merely meditate upon the sufferings of Jesus, not merely upon the sufferings of the members of his body as they walk in his footsteps to sacri-

ficial death. On the contrary, let us receive a proper exhilaration of spirit from our participation in this cup. We read that Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and the Apostle urges all these who are drinking of the cup, saying, “Rejoice in the Lord; and again I say, Rejoice!” The Christian’s life is not a sad or morose one, but a most joyful one. He can even be joyful in tribulation, “knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.” Knowing also that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”—beyond the veil. (Rom. 5:3, 4; 2 Cor. 4:17) We thus partake in the cup of suffering and joy which is an earnest of our inheritance, which we will receive at the second coming of our Lord and our gathering together with him—as his member- and his bride class. This rejoicing in spirit is necessary to our courage and zeal in the service of the Lord. Note the operation of it in St. Paul, who, with Silas, could sing praises to God in the prison with his feet in the stocks and his back lacerated. And so it should be with all Christ’s true followers in the narrow way. With the wound of every thorn, with the pain of every sharp arrow of bitter words with which we are assaulted for Christ’s sake, we may have joy unspeakable.

#### JOY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A further joy may be ours as we gradually comprehend more and more fully the significance of this New Covenant or New Testament blood in which our Lord offers us an opportunity to participate. He imputes his merit and thus enables us to be dead with him. He thus passes the blood of the New Covenant through us, his members. But it is offered only to such as pledge themselves to be dead with Christ. Even then it is not given, but merely imputed or loaned to us to make good or worthy our offerings when the great High Priest as our Advocate presents them and accepts them in the Father’s name and grants us his Spirit of adoption.

These earthly rights which belong to our Lord Jesus alone, which are at his disposal, are to go by the New Covenant to natural Israel. (Jer. 31:31) “They shall obtain mercy through your mercy.” (Rom. 11:31) We may therefore rejoice in sympathetic anticipation of the blessings about to come to natural Israel, in which all mankind will have an opportunity of sharing. If their casting away at the beginning of this age was preparatory to our acceptance, how glad we may be that our acceptance will not mean their everlasting loss, but, on the contrary, that they will be profited through the blessing of Spiritual Israel, members of the great High Priest and Mediator and fully “qualified servants of the New Covenant.” (2 Cor. 3:6) Thus to Israel eventually will be given the earthly blessings and promises which God originally set apart for them, and which were typified under the Law Covenant and its typical Mediator Moses, who is like unto or a type of the great Mediator, the Christ of God, of which Jesus is the Head and the over-coming saints, his faithful followers, are accounted members.

Let us then appreciate this glorious Memorial more and more as the years go by, seeing in it expressed more and more of the “Love divine all love excelling,” whose length and breadth and height and depth surpass all human comprehension.

We urge upon the Lord’s people who recognize the foregoing facts and signification to meet in the name of the Master as his “members,” and comply with his invitation, “Do this in remembrance of me,” and not as the Jews, in remembrance of the type: as St. Paul said, “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26): until at his coming he shall change the church, which now is his body of humiliation, to make it in the truest sense his glorious body.

Again, we suggest that where the dear friends possibly can they meet together in little groups, and where this is impossible, they nevertheless should celebrate alone with the Lord. We do not urge large gatherings on such occasions, but the reverse—that each little group or company meet by itself as a separate organization of the body of Christ. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”—Matt. 18:20.

The Congregation of Brooklyn Tabernacle will meet at No. 13-17 Hicks street, Brooklyn, near the Fulton Ferry and Jersey City (P. R. R.) Annex, and not far distant from the terminus of the Brooklyn Bridge. On the preceding Sunday there will be an immersion service. All who desire to participate will, if possible, please give word in advance. Friends from nearby cities will be accommodated with pleasure at this immersion service. But no Memorial service invitation is given to distant friends. Individuals, however, who have no better opportunity at their homes will be welcomed at any of the classes anywhere.

## SECRET FAULTS AND PRESUMPTUOUS SINS

[This article was a reprint of that published in issue of January 15, 1898, which please see.]

[4592]

# INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

For many years the dear friends who regularly meet all over the world for the study of God's Word, using WATCH TOWER publications as helping hands, have been perplexed to know how to advertise themselves. We have continually warned against everything simulating sectarianism and churchianity. But we have been at a loss to know what to suggest to the friends along this line. It is true that wherever two or three are met in the Lord's name, they would be entitled, if they chose, to speak of themselves as a church. But if the name church be used our friends and neighbors inquire, What church, What denomination? And we find it impossible to explain to them in a reasonable time that we do not mean a sect or party separate from other Christians. Indeed, there is danger of our losing sight of the fact that we are non-sectarian—that we acknowledge all as brethren and members of our church, Christ's church, the church of God, who give evidence of full consecration to self-sacrifice, following in the footsteps of the Redeemer. There is a disposition on the part of some, unconsciously, to fellowship only such Christians as are outside of all denominations. Our true position, nevertheless, is that we recognize all loyal to our Redeemer, whether babes or fully-grown, whether in Babylon or out of her, whether they follow with us or indirectly speak evil of us.

Now in the Lord's providence we have thought of a title suitable, we believe, to the Lord's people everywhere, and free from objection, we believe, on every score—the title at the head of this article. It fairly represents our sentiments and endeavors.

We are Bible students. We welcome all of God's people to join with us in the study. We believe that the result of such studies is blessed and unifying. We recommend therefore that the little classes everywhere and the larger ones adopt this unobjectionable style and that they use it in the advertising columns of their newspapers. Thus friends everywhere will know how to recognize them when visiting strange cities.

In harmony with New York State laws the association will be under the direction and management of the Peoples Pulpit Association, which, in turn, represents the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

We have adopted the style Brother instead of Pilgrim, as requiring less explanation to the public; and the term lectures instead of sermons, as carrying with it less prejudice. It should be our desire, while holding the truth in love, to present it as acceptably as possible, giving none offense to any—Jew, Gentile or Christian—seeking in everything to glorify God and to assist his people out of darkness into his marvelous light.

To avoid everything that might be construed as "joining," the membership is confined to those constituting the chartered Peoples Pulpit Association. The provision is made that all Bible Student Classes using the Bible Study Helps published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society may consider themselves identified with the Association and are authorized to use the name "International Bible Students' Association" in respect to their meetings.

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND

MATTHEW 10:1-15.—APRIL 10.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Freely ye have received, freely give."—Matthew 10:8.

Jesus had been preaching for more than a year when he appointed twelve of his followers to be specially his representatives sent forth—Apostles. He sent these two and two throughout Judea. They had not the Father's appointment. They had not yet received the holy Spirit from on high and did not receive it until Pentecost, some two years later. The holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:39) But by virtue of the holy Spirit given without measure to Jesus at the time of his baptism, he conferred upon these Apostles his own special powers that they might heal the sick, cast out demons, etc. But their special mission, like his own, was not that of healing physical ailments merely, nor chiefly. They were to proclaim the Lord Jesus to be the King, the long-expected Messiah, and to tell the people that the time was at hand for the establishment of his Mediatorial kingdom, in conjunction with their nation. This message would be in harmony with the expectation of all the Jews. For centuries they had been waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise made to Abraham that through them all the families of the earth would be blessed. The miracles of Jesus and the Apostles were to call attention to the proclamation, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2) This message, in harmony with that of John the Baptist, was expected to arouse all the "Israelites indeed" and to attract their attention to Jesus as the King. They were particularly warned that their message was not for the Gentiles, nor even for their neighbors, the mongrel people called Samaritans. True Jews, and these only, were called upon to make ready their hearts and minds that they might be participants in the kingdom and its glories. Their message was only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—V. 6.

They were to make no provision for their journey—neither money nor extra clothing. They were to learn a lesson of absolute dependence upon the Master who sent them forth. They were not to be beggars seeking from house to house. On the contrary, they were to recognize the dignity of their mission and service for God and ambassadors of Messiah and were to inquire in each village for the most worthy, the most saintly, the most holy people, because these would be the ones who would be specially interested in their message—whether rich or poor. And such of these as received their message would be glad indeed to treat them as representatives of the King, whose kingdom they announced. Their stay in each place was to be as guests until they were ready to depart to the next place. On entering into a house they were to salute the householder in a dignified manner, advising him of the object of their call. If received peacefully, cordially, their blessing would be upon that house. Otherwise they were not to lose their own confidence and serenity, but to pass along and look for one more worthy of the message and of them as its representatives. Those receiving them would receive a blessing. Those rejecting them and their message would lose a great privilege.

### THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Many wonder greatly why it was proper for our Lord and

the Apostles to declare the kingdom of heaven at hand when, as a matter of fact, it has not yet come and, by the Lord's directions, its followers still pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." The understanding of this furnishes the key to the appreciation of much of the Bible that is now misunderstood. We must, therefore, outline the matter in some detail.

For more than sixteen centuries Israel had been waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise that they would become so great that through them the divine blessing would extend to every nation. Our Lord through the Apostles signified that God's time had come to fulfil all of his promises made to the Jewish nation if they were ready for them. To be ready they must be a holy nation. And to instruct them and prepare them their Law Covenant had been introduced to them through Moses centuries before. And now, just preceding Jesus, John the Baptist had preached to them reformation, repentance, getting into harmony with the law, that they might be ready to receive the Messiah. While as a people they were the most religious nation in the world at that time, nevertheless but few of them were "Israelites indeed"—at heart fully consecrated to God; fully in accord with the principles of holiness. As a consequence, instead of the whole nation being ready for God's work, only a small remnant of them were saintly and received the message. At the close of Jesus' ministry only about five hundred worthy ones had been found, and the multitude cried, "Crucify him!" while the godless Pilate inquired, "Why, what evil hath he done?" Most evidently, therefore, Israel was not ready to be used of God in the blessing of the other nations.

God foreknew this, however, and through the prophets declared that a remnant only would be found worthy. To the nation as a whole our Lord declared, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:43) Accordingly five days before his crucifixion our Lord said to them, "Your house is left unto you desolate. Ye shall see me no more until that day when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Matt. 23:38, 39.

The kingdom privileges or opportunities which were first offered to natural Israel were transferred to Spiritual Israel, whose existence began at Pentecost. All "Israelites indeed" of the fleshly house were privileged to become members of the spiritual house—to receive the begetting of the holy Spirit and adoption into the body of Christ, which is the church. Of this church St. Peter says, "Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people."—1 Pet. 2:9.

After selecting as many Jews as were worthy a place in Spiritual Israel, nominal Israel was cast off from divine favor until the completion of Spiritual Israel, when God promises that his favor shall return to them. (Rom. 11:25, 26) Meantime the invitation has gone through the Lord's faithful members to every nation, seeking such as have the spirit of loyalty to God, the spirit of "Israelites indeed." All such are accepted with

the Jews as members of the same kingdom. Around these Spiritual Israelites have gathered all sorts, so that there is an outward or nominal body or church numbering millions, as well as a real body or church scattered amongst them.

As at the end of the Jewish age Jesus came to inspect them and to set up his kingdom if enough worthy ones were to be found, so he will do in the end of this Gospel age; he will come to spiritual Israel to find the saintly. The Scriptures assure us that from first to last, from Pentecost until the end of this age, a sufficient number of saints will be found to constitute the elect church of Christ, designed of God to be his queen and joint-heir in the Millennial kingdom, which will then be set up and begin the work of blessing the world. After the spiritual kingdom of God shall have been exalted, the Bible assures us, in Romans 11:25-32, that God's favor will return to natural Israel and they will be the first nation to be blessed under the new order of things that will then prevail and through those of that people in harmony with God the blessing will extend to every nation.

#### "MORE TOLERABLE FOR SODOM"

The Sodomites were wickedly immoral; yet, in the Master's estimation, less wicked than those who, after hearing the Gospel, reject it. This principle applies to many people and many cities

of our day, as well as to Capernaum. The Master assures us that when the great Millennial age, otherwise called the Day of Judgment, shall furnish opportunity for the whole world to be on trial for everlasting life or everlasting death, it will be more tolerable for the Sodomites than for many others. In proportion as anyone has come to a knowledge of Christ he has become responsible. The death of Christ secures for Adam and all of his race one full opportunity for salvation and no more. The majority have died in heathenish darkness without any opportunity; and many in Christian lands have disregarded their opportunity, as did the people of Capernaum. All must be brought to a full knowledge of their privileges in Christ and then all rejectors will be destroyed.—Acts 3:23; 1 Tim. 2:4; Matt. 20:28.

It is for us to be followers of Jesus and the Apostles—to walk in their steps of devotion and thus to make our calling and our election sure to a share with Messiah in his Kingdom, which, during the Millennium, will bless Israel and all the families of the earth under a system of rewards and punishments, called judgments. The Scriptures distinctly tell us that the Israelites and the Sodomites will be sharers in that work of restoration—restitution.—Ezek. 16:50-55; Acts 3:19-21.

## TRUTH SPREADING IN INDIA

We are much gratified with the reports reaching us from India. Apparently the Lord has a great harvest field there. A large proportion of the natives in the cities understand the English language, which is taught in the schools; besides a considerable number of English-speaking people reside there. The fact that India's three hundred millions have come under subjection to the British rule has operated both favorably and unfavorably as respects Christianity. It has carried the Bible to the people—to a very limited extent, of course. But it has also carried here and everywhere much of error and much of combination with sin and pride. Apparently many people in India realize the impossibility of ever converting the world. And such of these as are of believing hearts are earnest and ready for the harvest message—the gathering of the Lord's jewels and the establishment then of the Millennial kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth with restitution privileges.—Acts 3:19-21.

Our Brother Devasahayam writes us that in the city of Madras there are approximately 120 to 150 who have considerable ear for the truth. But the majority of them, weak and fearful, he styles Nicodemuses, because they desire to inquire after the truth in secret rather than more courageously. Apparently there is a good field in India for laborers—colporteurs and preachers. Few, of course, can afford the expense of such a journey and few are qualified for the position. Europeans there are quite generally well educated, as are many of the natives; and no one could properly present the truth unless he could speak

English quite grammatically and with some fluency. Moreover, it is a place where great self-denial would be required, as the people are poor and colporteurs would have more difficulty than here in meeting their expenses.

Some of you, but not all, know of Brother Devasahayam's conversion to the truth; hence we give a brief recital. His father was a convert to Christianity, a native preacher in India. The son desired to enter the ministry, and, seeking a good education, came for it to the United States. He took a college course, working his way as janitor, etc., through a college under the auspices of the Methodist church. In common with all colleges, that one had professors who inculcated Higher Criticism and Evolution, and Brother Devasahayam was poisoned thereby. He was too conscientious to further consider preaching the Bible, which he had come to disbelieve. He had gained an education, but lost his religion.

He came in contact with the truth, but cared not to read it, disbelieving everything connected with Churchianity.

A friend of the truth, deeply interested in him and believing him to be honest, paid his expenses to the Saratoga convention. There he became partially interested in the truth and began to read the SCRIPTURE STUDIES. He stopped with us at the Bethel Home while studying and became fully convinced respecting the Bible and the divine plan of the ages. He gave his heart fully to the Lord and symbolized his consecration by baptism. The Society paid his way to India and purposes to co-operate in the work as the Lord shall seem to open the door further.

## THE LEAST IN THE KINGDOM

MATTHEW 11:11.—APRIL 17.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."—John 5:36.

John the Baptist, the Master declared, was a prophet; yea; more than a prophet, for of him it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee." (V. 10) This noble character was God's chosen servant for heralding the Messiah to Israel. His message to the people had been "The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent and believe the good news." Many had responded and had been baptized, symbolically washing themselves from sin and giving fresh adherence to the Law and care in its observance. Prophetically John had declared that stirring times were ahead of the nation; that the Messiah was about to make a separation between the true wheat and the chaff class; that he would gather the wheat into his barn, but would burn up the chaff in unquenchable fire. The wheat in this prophecy signified "the holy," "the righteous," who, as a result of following Messiah, would be exalted or glorified. This prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost and subsequently, when the "Israelites indeed" were accepted of God as sons on the spirit plane—begotten of the holy Spirit—as members of the body of Christ, members of the kingdom class—then in embryo, but, later on, by resurrection power, to be ushered into heavenly glory and domination. The remainder of the nation, merely nominally God's people, had merely the outward form, as chaff. For such, the Prophet John declared a time of trouble at hand, symbolically represented by a furnace of fire, which would consume them as people. As the forepart of this prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost, it reached final accomplishment thirty-seven

years later, when the entire nation collapsed, ceasing its national existence, which it has never since re-attained.

#### JOHN IN PRISON DOUBTED

But instead of Jesus becoming a great king after the manner of John's expectation, to reward his faithful and destroy the impious, John beheld, What?—Himself cast into prison and Jesus surrounded by a paltry few—barred from the vicinity of Jerusalem because the Jews sought to kill him, and doing most of his preaching in "Galilee of the nations," amongst those who made less religious profession and amongst whom were few scribes or Pharisees or Doctors of the Law. Moreover, Jesus had not made any attempt to deliver his forerunner from prison, although he continually manifested great power in the healing of diseases and the casting out of devils. What could it all mean? was John's query. Had he been mistaken?

Surely he was not mistaken in supposing that he had God's testimony to Jesus at the time of his baptism; as he had declared, "This is he!" But what he? Was he merely another prophet still greater than himself preceding the still greater and true Messiah? Thus wondering, he sent messengers to inquire of Jesus, saying, "Art thou he that should come (the Messiah), or look we for another?"—Are we to look behind you for a still greater through whom God will fulfill his prophecy?

#### PROOFS OF JESUS' MINISTRY

In answer to the query our Lord sent word to John particularly of the work he was doing—healing the sick, casting out



devils and preaching the good tidings of God's grace to the poor. And he added, Tell John not to get offended; not to allow his faith to stumble in respect to me. Otherwise he will lose a great blessing.

The Master improved the opportunity to discuss John's case, who he was, etc., with the multitude. For the fame of John's preaching had spread throughout the land and many from all parts went to hear him. What did they find him? Merely a reed shaken by the wind, pliable to those who would influence him? Oh, no! They found him a rugged character, strong, independent in the advocacy of the truth, in the bearing of his message. Did they find him clothed in soft raiment and giving evidences of being related to the great, the wealthy, the noble of the time? No, he was simply clad, lived in seclusion, and was faithful and earnest in the delivery of his message to all who would hear. But if they went out expecting to hear a prophet they were not disappointed, for John was more than a prophet. As another account renders this, "Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."—Luke 7:28.

#### THE LEAST IN THE KINGDOM GREATER THAN JOHN THE BAPTIST

These words by our Lord have caused much perplexity amongst Christian people, who have failed to discern the necessity of "rightly dividing the Word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15) The matter is simple enough when we remember that John was

the last of the faithful under the Jewish dispensation. He was not invited to become one of the disciples of Christ, nor one of the Apostles, neither did he live until Pentecost to share in the blessings there poured upon the faithful. He belongs to a class described by St. Paul in Hebrews 11:38-40. He was in a class with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets, of whom the Apostle says, "They without us shall not be made perfect"—"God having provided some better thing for us"—the Gospel church, the body of Christ, the bride class—than for them.—Heb. 11:40.

The Great Teacher continually referred to the kingdom in all of his discourses and in the sample prayers which he set forth. This kingdom is to come into power at the close of this Age and under it, as the Millennial kingdom, the whole world will be subjected to divine law for their deliverance from sin and death, if they will, into righteousness of life. The class that will compose that kingdom are spoken of in the present time as a royal priesthood in a prospective sense. They are in the school of Christ for preparation for the kingdom. Those faithful will make their calling and election sure to places in that kingdom and sit with the Master on his Throne, judging, blessing and uplifting mankind. How wonderful a blessing is ours! We cannot be so great as our Lord, the Head, and his Apostles, his most honored members, but if faithful in that which is least, our glorious reward will be exceedingly high—"far above angels and principalities and powers and every name that is named."—Eph. 1:21.

## THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT

*"Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."*—2 Cor. 3:6.

We must not understand this—"the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"—to refer to our letter or our spirit, nor to the letter of the Word, nor to the spirit of the Word of God, nor to the letter of the law, nor to the spirit of the law, but to the letter of the covenant and the spirit of the covenant, because that is evidently what the Apostle is discussing here—"Who hath also made us able ministers," or qualified or efficient servants or messengers of the New Covenant. Taking the broad thought connected with the covenant it would be this: That all the angels are in covenant relationship with God, not through a New Covenant, but by a covenant that is very old. Not, perhaps, by a covenant that was expressed in so many words, but by a covenant that was understood in that they receive everlasting life and all their blessings on condition that they be obedient to God. Such is their covenant relationship.

Adam, the founder of our race, was similarly created in covenant relationship with God. God's Law was written in his very heart, or his very being; and, without being specified in so many words, it was understood by him that if he would be obedient he should have everlasting life and everlastingly enjoy all of God's favors and blessings. We see that Adam failed in this. He broke the covenant. The result was divine sentence upon him—the death sentence—and that has followed all of his posterity because they have inherited imperfections, so that however good their intentions, their work is imperfect—all, therefore, are out of covenant relationship with God.

In the case of Abraham, God intimidated his willingness to deal at some time and in some manner with any of our race who were out of relationship merely through wicked works and not through wicked hearts or intentions. Abraham, being of the class who are in accord with God in heart, in their desire for harmony with the divine will, was granted at once a measure of covenant relationship in that he was privileged to be called the friend of God instead of the enemy of God. He was privileged to know of God's provisions of blessing, not only for himself, but for all who would likewise become harmonious with God. He was not given the details of this, but merely the rough outline, sketch. In due time his descendants, the children of Israel, were given a further compact with God, under which he offered to give them everlasting life if they would keep his law, because it is written, "He that doeth these things shall live by them." This, the Apostle says, they thought would be of great advantage to them, but they found the requirements impossible for them. Therefore the law, which was granted them apparently as a favor—and it was a favor in certain senses—"they found to be unto death," and not unto life. Later, through the Prophet Jeremiah and others, God explained to them that the fault of the Covenant was not in the Law, not on his part, but it was on their part, because they did not keep the law, and the only way that anything could be done to their advantage would be to enter into a New Covenant through a new Mediator, a Mediator who would be able to make up for their deficiencies and to assist them in a manner that Moses was not able to do.

From that time onward God's people began to look for this new Mediator. They saw that Moses himself foretold this Mediator, saying, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God rise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me [my antitype]; him shall ye hear in all things, and it shall come to pass that the soul that will not obey that Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people."

All the expectations of the Jews thenceforth were for this Messiah; and by the words of the Prophets we see that God specially pointed out the coming of this Messiah, saying, "Behold, I send my Messenger before my face to prepare the way before me, . . . even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in"—the one you have been waiting for, the one you have been praying for, the one you have built your expectations upon, even him I shall send, saith the Lord; but who shall abide in the day of his coming; who shall stand when he is here, for he shall be like fullers' soap, in that he will cleanse everything; he will be like a refiner's fire, in that he will purge all imperfections from those to be associated with him, that he might purify the sons of Levi, that he might offer a sacrifice acceptable to God. Israel was expecting that God would carry out all of his original proposition to make them his chosen people and use them as a channel of communicating the blessing of eternal salvation and reconciliation—eternal life, to the world of mankind—to bring all the world into covenant relationship with God. This was called to Israel a New Covenant, because God had made a proposition of this kind to them before, namely, the Law Covenant, which they were unable to keep. "This, therefore, is to be a covenant with you anew, afresh," so to speak, a better covenant. That is, not one better in some of its features, in its law for instance, but better, more favorable to you; not more favorable in that it would require less than obedience to the divine law—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself"—but a better covenant through the Mediator it would have—a Mediator better qualified than was Moses, and an arrangement which would be more favorable for helping them out of their difficulties, imperfections, etc.

When our Lord Jesus came, he therefore was this Mediator of this New Covenant. He came for this purpose. But who of them abided in the day of his presence? Who of them were ready when he appeared? Very few. Only the "Israelites indeed," and his teachings, his ministry, were like the fullers' soap and like the refiner's fire. He did at that time purify the sons of Levi, the consecrated ones, that they might offer themselves unto the Lord; that they might present themselves living sacrifices. Thus the church might be a sacrificing priesthood class. And so it has been all through this Gospel age. Having selected all the suitable material from amongst the Jewish nation, the privilege of becoming antitypical Levites and antitypical priests, largely passed to the Gentiles, to fill up from among them the number lacking of the Jews. Thus we have been brought into this class, to be a part of this sacrifice, that we might offer unto

the Lord an acceptable sacrifice. All of this we understand to be preparatory to the great work of the Mediator, the greater mediation of this New Covenant arrangement.

God is now selecting the antitypical house of Levi and the antitypical royal priesthood. The church in this age shall be completed, and glorified—the great body of the Mediator will be completed and he will be ready to begin his great work. His work will be the installation of New Covenant relationship, or, as stated in other words, the institution of covenant relationship between God and Israel anew, afresh, upon a better basis than the arrangement made through Moses, because this antitypical Priest, this antitypical Moses, will have power to forgive sins of the people, and therefore the right to restore them and to bring them up out of degradation. From the time he will take hold of his work as Mediator of the New Covenant, those under the New Covenant arrangements will have a share of this blessing and thus they will be in relationship to God and enjoying his favor, but not to the full measure, merely in and through the Mediator. For instance, when at the conclusion of this age the Lord shall present his blood a second time on the mercy-seat on behalf of all the people, he will thereby seal the New Covenant, make it operative, and take his place as the great Mediator or King of the Millennial age. By virtue of this application of his blood and sealing of this New Covenant he will take charge of the world of mankind and by virtue of the sealing of the New Covenant with Israel he will use that nation in a special manner, to be his channel of blessing.

The New Covenant arrangement will mean that the nation of Israel will enjoy certain favors and blessings, but that their relationship will not be with God direct, but merely with the Mediator. Then the Mediator will have the authority and the right to guarantee them eternal life and to assist them up to it and to give them all the rewards and blessings, just as though they were fully in favor with God. They will be in favor with God through him, but so far as God's law is concerned they will still be imperfect, be under the divine sentence, and thus kept, as it were, at arm's length from the Almighty; but he has made the arrangement that through this Mediator, this Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, all his mercy and favor will be extended to Israel. That nation, therefore, during that time, will have all these blessings and gradually begin to have restitution favors and uplifting from every evil of the present time—release from evil. The blessings will extend to other nations in that they will be permitted to come in and participate with Israel by becoming Israelites indeed, by receiving circumcision, perhaps not with hands, but circumcision of the heart. They will come into this relationship with the Mediator, this relationship, therefore, with the Father through the Mediator, as the Prophet declares, It shall come to pass that the nation that will not thus come to the Lord, to Jerusalem, and recognize the new relationship thus established in Israel, and take a share of it as they will be privileged to do, to that nation there will be no divine blessing. They will be under the curse just as much as ever. That is to say, they will be under divine disfavor just as much as ever. They will not be exposed to Satan and his machinations, but they will be subject to the various features of the penalty—death, the penalty for sin.

During the Millennial age, then, this New Covenant arrangement, at the hands of the Mediator, will mean a blessing to all who will be under the Mediator and shielded by him from the full requirements of divine justice, which would destroy them because of their imperfection, and under this beneficent arrangement they will come up to the full perfection of their nature and in the end of the Millennial age be fully able to meet every Divine requirement and no longer need a Mediator between them and the Father. And so, as the Apostle tells us, at that time having put down all sin and disobedience, having destroyed death, having uplifted humanity from death, except those who will go into second death, the Lord will deliver over the kingdom to God, even the Father—not for its destruction, but because it will at that time be fully able to enjoy direct all the blessings of covenant relationship with God, which in an imperfect condition it could not have.

Such will be the covenant relationship in the fullest sense at the close of the Millennial age. Mankind will be back to the same place exactly as Adam occupied at the beginning when he was created in the image and likeness of God and was called "son of God." So mankind, fully restored, fully harmonized with God, will be back in full relationship with him and they will all be subject to the Father.

As Adam was tried after he was a son of God, so these will be tried. After the thousand years Satan shall be loosed that he may test and attempt to deceive them. If after all their experience with sin they should have any lurking sympathy with it, the deception will be sure to discover this sympathy, thus determining the individual's unfitness for eternal life. By

this time they must have developed such character as would bring them to the place where they would love righteousness and hate iniquity or else they could not have everlastingly this covenant relationship with God.

We see, then, that during the Millennial age the New Covenant relationship will be just the same or just what it will be at the end of the Millennial age, except that it will be under the direction of a Mediator and have its limitations, because of the imperfection of humanity, while later they will be perfect.

Come back to our text, to the declaration that "God also hath made us able [qualified] ministers of the New Covenant. We see that we are now ministers of the New Covenant, servants of the New Covenant. We are serving it in the sense that Jesus served it. Jesus served it in the sense of first preparing himself to be the great Prophet, the great Priest and King—Mediator—so likewise we are in preparation, receiving our lessons and disciplining ourselves and developing in character likeness of our Lord, that we may be members of his glorious body, members of that glorious Seed, Prophet, Priest, King, in the future. This is the sense in which we are made able ministers or able servants of it—namely, that we not only serve it in keeping our bodies under the developing the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit in ourselves, but that we do this also toward each other. The bride makes herself ready. These servants of the New Covenant help to make each other ready. They are all members of the body of Christ, and able ministers.

This is not an imperfect ministration; it is a ministration that is accomplishing its work, its purpose. It will actually accomplish the matter. The sacrificing that we do is all bona fide; it is not sham; and the preparation that we make is bona fide; it is not sham. In what way? In this way: We were neither ministers nor suitable to be ministers of this New Covenant when we "were children of wrath even as others," but when we heard of the grace of God, we had the blessed ear, and when we saw that glorious invitation, we had the blessed eye, and when the eyes of our understanding and the ears of our understanding comprehended this message of God's grace, speaking peace in Jesus Christ our Lord, our hearts were of that attitude and condition that they responded. We had the same experience as our Lord. As he had the eye of understanding fully opened to know the Father's will and the obedient ear, saying, "I delight to do thy will," so also our hearts must have attained that position of desire to know the Father's will before we could in any sense of the word be pleasing or acceptable to him. And even in this condition we are not acceptable because the Lord looks beyond this and says, respecting us, You are well intentioned and your motives are good, but your flesh is weak and you are fallen. Then he pointed us to the fact that he had appointed for us an Advocate. Looking to the Advocate we perceived "Jesus Christ the Righteous," who offered to be our Advocate and to make good all of our imperfections, if we desired to join with him in his sacrifice. So we brought ourselves to the Lord. We presented our bodies living sacrifices. We acknowledged that of ourselves we are not perfect. We acknowledged that the good intentions were all that we had. We heard his grace and consecrated ourselves to the full. We gave up everything to walk in the steps of Jesus and suffer with him now that we might be glorified with him.

At the time we reached this point of consecration and desired to be associated with Jesus as able ministers, or able servants of the New Covenant, Jesus advanced to us, became our Advocate, and presented our cause before the Father, advocating it and applying of his merit to cover all of our blemishes. When he did so the Father accepted us and forthwith counted us as members of the body of Christ, members of the royal priesthood—associated with Jesus as able ministers of the New Covenant, new Testament. And so we are going on as able ministers now because we are accepted in the Beloved, not acceptable under the terms of the mediatorial kingdom of the next age, because there is no such arrangement now, and there is no such mediatorial work going on now, but we are accepted as members of the Mediator, as members of the body of Christ. The Head of this body having made good our defects so that our sacrifices could be acceptable, our standing is unique, different from that of the world of mankind in the future. As able ministers, or as recognized ambassadors of God in the world, we are associated with Christ in the work which he is now carrying on, to-wit, the work of gathering together the Lord's Jewels all through the Gospel age. This is the special work that the Lord has given us to do at the present time. The bride is to make herself ready. As soon as the bride is made ready then the great work will begin for the world of mankind; but now our able ministry of this New Covenant is in the sense of preparing us, preparing ourselves and presenting our bodies living sacrifices, laying down our lives for the brethren—and all this, as members of the Great High Priest, is, in another sense, part of