

"DOERS OF THE WORD"

Our golden text is well chosen—"Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only." To be honored with a knowledge of the divine will and plan is a great boon, a great blessing; but it brings a great responsibility: "to whom much is given of him shall much be required." We who have heard the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, speaking peace through Jesus Christ; we who, on the strength of this message of

forgiveness of sins, have been accepted in consecration as members of the body of Christ, we have greater responsibility than have others. To attain the glorious things to which we have been invited we must not merely have this honor but must make use of the privilege and show our appreciation by obedience to the terms of the Covenant—presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to the divine service in faithful obedience to righteousness, and in endeavoring to assist others in the same course.

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VOL. XXVII

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No. 7

"THE PASSOVER MUST BE KILLED"

LUKE 22:7.

The term Passover amongst the Jews was frequently applied as the name of a festival week, otherwise called the Feast of Passover, beginning on the fifteenth day of Nisan. But we must not confound this with the frequent references to the Passover found in the Scriptures when the word feast is not used, which generally referred to the lamb that was killed, the Passover. For instance, we read, "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed." Again, our Lord sent disciples to inquire of a friend, "Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" Again we read, "And they made ready the Passover." When our Lord sat down with the disciples to eat of the lamb he said, "With desire I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you I will no more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."—Luke 22:7, 11, 13, 15, 16.

While the Jews still apparently think more of the Passover week than of the Passover lamb, we, on the contrary, and in harmony with the example of our Lord and the apostles, have special respect for the lamb, which typified the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and under whose blood of sprinkling we who now believe—namely, the "Church of the First-Born"—are passed over or spared in advance of the world.

God's arrangements for the Jews were typical and full of valuable lessons for us who belong to antitypical or Spiritual Israel. In the type the Lord provided for two great religious occasions amongst his people, the one at the beginning of the secular year and the other at the beginning of the religious year. The religious year began in the spring, counting from the first new moon after the vernal equinox, approximately April 1st, but varying because of the difference between lunar and solar time. It was in connection with this, the beginning of their religious year, that the Lord appointed the Passover—the killing and eating of the Passover lamb on the 14th day, to be followed by a Passover week of unleavened bread. The civil year with the Jews began six months later, in the seventh month, approximately October 1; and it was in connection with this civil year that the Atonement Day sacrifices were appointed, in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, in which the Israelites called to mind their wilderness journey on leaving Egypt en route for Canaan.

These two great religious celebrations pictured the same lesson from different standpoints: the first emphasized more particularly the passing over of the first-born, who subsequently were represented in the tribe of Levi, at whose head stood the priesthood. Although the type seems to carry forward and to picture the deliverance of all Israel through this priestly tribe, to which Moses belonged, yet specifically, particularly, in detail, it dealt merely with the deliverance, the blessing, of the priestly tribe, the first-born. The other type, in the seventh month, more particularly pictures the atonement for the sins of the whole world, the forgiveness and reconciliation of all mankind who desire to be reconciled to God: nevertheless, in connection with this Atonement Day sacrifice, the special favor of God to the church is also represented as preceding the blessing coming upon the world, reconciliation for the church's sins being represented in the first sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, while the sacrifice for the sins of the world in general was represented in the second offering.

"CHRIST OUR PASSOVER"

There is a force and meaning in the Apostle's expression, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," which is not gen-

erally appreciated. (1 Cor. 5:7.) Our Lord is not the world's Passover, but the Church's Passover. All Israel prefigured or represented the world of mankind, and the bondage of the whole people represented all mankind under the bondage of sin and death, the great taskmaster in the type being Pharaoh, in the antitype being Satan. Deliverance is desired for all, and the Lord's arrangement is ultimately to deliver all. The Apostle so explains when he writes, "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

But the Apostle divides the groaning ones into two classes, saying, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"—"waiting for manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19, 21, 22.) His reference here is to the world of mankind whose deliverance from the bondage of Satan and the power of sin and death will only come through the manifestation of the glorified church, the Christ in glory and power, as God's kingdom ruling the world. The Apostle also mentions the church of the first-born in her present condition, saying, "But ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, do groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the deliverance of our body." Both classes have an experience of groaning, both classes have an experience of waiting, but they wait for different things. The latter, the church of the first-born, waits for her deliverance as the body of Christ through a share in the First Resurrection. According to the divine promise, the former, the world, waits until the church class shall have been perfected, glorified, empowered, and shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for the blessing of all the families of the earth, for the uplifting of all who desire divine favor on divine terms.

Look now at the type: notice that it is not all Israel that is in danger from the destroying angel, but only the first-born. Only the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. Hence it was only the first-born of the Israelites that were spared or passed over. These first-born ones, protected by the blood of the lamb, the Lord declared to be specially his; and, with a view to marking them out and keeping them as a special, peculiar people, an exchange was made whereby the first-born of all the tribes were exchanged by the Lord for the one tribe of Levi, which he accepted as specially his and which in the type represents the household of faith. Out of this household of faith, in turn, a priestly family was selected, which typified Christ our High Priest and the church his body, the under priesthood, the royal priesthood. So, then, those who perceive the matter clearly see that the Passover has to do only with the household of faith. It is in full accord with this that the Lord's Supper, which antitypes the eating of the lamb, is not offered to the world, but is strictly and exclusively an institution for the household of faith.

"LET US KEEP THE FEAST"

Seeing in the type the slain lamb, its blood sprinkled upon the posts and lintels of the home and its flesh eaten with bitter herbs, we apply this in the antitype and see Christ the antitypical Lamb, see that his blood sprinkled upon our hearts cleanses them from a consciousness of evil and gives us an assurance of our being PASSED OVER, of our being spared, of our being granted life through his blood. This sprinkling represents our justification by faith; and the subsequent eating of the lamb with bitter herbs is represented in the antitype by our consecration, our partaking of Christ, our participation with him in his sufferings and self-denials—also repre-

sented by the bitter herbs, which give zest to our appetite and encourage us to partake more and more abundantly of the Lamb. All who believe the testimony, all who trust in the precious blood, are passed over, and, more than this, are expecting a general deliverance of the whole people, of all who love God, who desire to do him reverence and service. So many as thus believe realize themselves pilgrims and strangers under present conditions, looking for a better country, even the heavenly Canaan. All this was represented in typical Israel, for while eating the lamb on that night of Passover they stood staff in hand, girded for a journey. Likewise the Lord's faithful today should realize themselves pilgrims and strangers, having no continuing city, but setting their affections on things above.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

All Christian people to some extent discern what we have above stated to be the basis or foundation for the commemoration of our Lord's death, usually designated the Lord's Supper, the Communion, the Eucharist, and by WATCH TOWER readers usually known as the Memorial. The difficulty seems to be that the majority of Christian people are not sufficiently critical and persistent in their study of the Word, and that for this reason their faith and hope—not only upon this subject but upon all religious subjects—are more or less confused, indefinite. To us the ministry appear to be considerably to blame in that they have not sufficiently taught the Word of the Lord but too frequently the traditions of men, indeed preaching chiefly to the world and comparatively little to the church of the first-born—the passed-over ones, passed from death unto life, adopted into God's family as sons.

This indistinctness of view respecting our Lord's sacrifice as our Passover Lamb slain for us is well represented by the confusion of thought respecting the appropriate times for commemorating our Lord's death. As we look throughout Christendom we find Protestants generally observing the celebration, observing the Memorial, not upon its anniversary but as irrespective of it, as though they had no knowledge of the relationship between the typical Passover and the antitypical one which our Lord enjoined upon us to celebrate. Some, therefore, have communion every four months, some every three months, some monthly, some weekly, all except the latter considering it a matter of convenience and expediency, and not observing this special and appropriate annual observance. Our brethren of the Christian denomination, otherwise styled Disciples, hold tenaciously to a weekly observance, because they read in the book of Acts of weekly meetings of the Lord's people in commemoration of his resurrection, at which they had "breaking of bread." Not seeing the principles involved they have too hastily concluded that a communion service would be the only proper breaking of bread amongst the Lord's people.

On the contrary, we see that as the early church remembered that our Lord after his resurrection made himself known on several occasions in connection with breaking of bread—as at Emmaus and again in the upper room—they were glad to meet together on the first day of the week as a fresh reminder of the joys of that resurrection day which meant so much to them and to us all. There is no suggestion anywhere that these were anything more than ordinary meals or love-feasts, such as we often have at the conclusion of a general convention. There is no intimation that in so doing the early church thought they were keeping the Passover the first day of the week, because Christ our Passover was slain and because we have been passed over by the mercy of God through faith in his blood of sprinkling. There is no intimation that they considered this the Lord's Supper—there is no suggestion anywhere of the cup, which was an equally important feature with the bread in the Lord's Memorial Supper.

ONE ERROR LED TO ANOTHER

The beginning of this carelessness respecting the annual celebration of our Lord's Memorial is easily traced. The early church observed the matter annually, and this annual celebration is still preserved in the older Christian churches, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Episcopal, etc., all of which celebrate Good Friday as the memorial of this slaying of Christ our Passover. But to them the whole matter has lost much of its vital importance. The sacrifice of the mass—a gross error introduced somewhere about the third century—has drawn to itself the special interest which still should center in the annual Memorial and the great sacrifice which it commemorates. In the sacrifice of the mass it is held that the priest officiating, by the pronouncing of three sacred Latin words, works a miracle upon the bread and wine, by which they are transformed and become actually the flesh and blood of Jesus. Thus the officiating priest claims to make a

fresh sacrifice of Christ, and as a priest to offer a fresh atonement for the particular individual sins represented in the mass, sinners for whom the mass is performed. Thus the hearts of mankind have been turned away from the one atonement sacrifice for sins, by which all believers were passed over once and forever, and have their gaze attracted to the priest and the mass and the blessings and the holy water, etc., etc. No wonder the Lord in his Word refers to this as the "Desolating Abomination" set up in his church, his temple.—Dan. 11:31. Millennial Dawn, Vol. III, Chaps. III, IV.

As the Protestants received their earliest conceptions of religious matters from Roman Catholicism, with which they were originally identified, it is not surprising that many of the errors of that system clung to them, and blinded the eyes of their understanding as respects the deep import of many of the spiritual teachings of God's Word. And this is true of the subject we are now discussing as well as of others. What we all should desire would be to have our minds freed from the errors of the "dark ages," that we might see clearly the teaching of our Lord and the apostles, Moses and the prophets, the inspired instructors of the Church.

WHEN THE HOUR WAS COME

The entire Scriptural narrative pertaining to the Passover and pertaining to the Lord's Supper, which was instituted as a substitute for it, by which his disciples might commemorate him as the antitype, all indicate particularity of time—that it must be celebrated, in the evening, not in the morning, not at noon nor in the afternoon, the common custom of various denominations of Christians. Our Lord and his disciples did not sit down to the Passover until even—the beginning of the fourteenth day of Nisan. And so all who recognize themselves as members of the household of faith, as members of the church of the first-born, should be careful in following the Master's guidance in this matter as well as in others. There is a blessing and meaning in it. It was the same night in which he celebrated, the one in which he was betrayed, that he took bread and brake and gave unto his disciples. We are still in that night, and the eating of that bread and the drinking of that cup are still in progress amongst the Lord's disciples.

Our Lord, of course, was equally particular respecting the fourteenth day of the month as the proper time for the celebration—that all Israel might celebrate appropriately on the same day. But as for the proper beginning of the dating there was evidently less particularity. The Jewish method of reckoning, based upon the phases of the moon, was necessarily different from ours, and it was therefore very much less easy to determine an exact beginning for their month. Especially was this the case when the spring equinox had a bearing upon the matter, and when, as was the case with the Jews, another type demands that the Passover should come at the time of the harvest. All who have knowledge on the subject will admit that it would be practically impossible to fix dates for the beginning of the Jewish year by lunar time, in harmony with the harvest season, without there being room for dispute and difference of opinion. From our Lord's standpoint all that was settled for the people by the decision of the Scribes, whose business it was to fix a date as the beginning of the new year, and the fourteenth day of that year became the established date for the Memorial. In other words, whether the Scribes fixed a date earlier or a date later would not have particularly mattered; the object was to have a uniform date and to recognize the fourteenth day of the first month at even.

So the matter remains today. We do not understand that any stress or hair-splitting is necessary in the ascertainment of the particular counting of the first day of the first month, Jewish time, but that there is appropriateness associated with a general commemoration upon the same day after sundown, a consensus of judgment as to which day shall be observed as the fourteenth of Nisan being all that is necessary and proper. In our issue of January 15 we have pointed out that this is one of the years in which the definite fixing of the first day of Nisan, the first day of the new moon after the spring equinox, seems to be difficult. We attach no importance to this, however, and have recommended the keeping of the Memorial on Sunday night, April 8. This is in harmony with the Jewish observance, and tallies with the fact that the full of the moon occurs on April 9, corresponding to Nisan 15. The important features to be remembered are: (1) that it be in the spring of the year, approximately at the Passover season; (2) that the date be uniformly observed; (3) that it be observed in the evening, to correspond with the original institution in Egypt and with our Lord's subsequent Memorial institution.

ASSEMBLE 7.30 P.M., APRIL 8

In harmony with the foregoing the congregation at Allegheny, Pa., hopes to meet at the time indicated (see last page) to commemorate the death of Christ, our Passover slain for us. We hope to hear later on that little companies all over the world celebrated at the same time. We meet not as Jews to remember the deliverance from Pharaoh and Egyptian bondage, but as antitypical Israelites seeking to escape the power of Satan and the dominion of sin. We meet not to eat literal lamb and bitter herbs and to commemorate the passing over in Egypt, but as Spiritual Israelites to recognize and commemorate the death of the Lamb of God as our Passover—to feast upon him, upon the truths which he gave us—to appropriate to ourselves the life rights which he gave up on our behalf.

More than this, as explained by our Lord, we not only will use the unleavened bread to represent the purity of his flesh broken for us, and the fruit of the vine to represent his blood shed for us, but also in the light of the Apostle's explanation we perceive that it is a part of our privilege to be broken with Christ as a part of the same larger loaf, and to have fellowship in his cup of suffering and death as a part of the larger cup. From this double standpoint we view our relationship to the Lord, first as those whom he passes over, and secondly as those who join with him in the sacrifice, that we may have share also with him by and by in the great work of leading forth from bondage to sin and Satan all who will accept of the divine favor and liberty as the sons of God! How wonderfully grand is the privilege thus accorded us! No wonder the Apostle said,—

"LET US KEEP THE FEAST"

Our feasting upon this bread which came down from heaven and which was broken for us is not merely for the special occasion of our assembling annually. Rather that annual assembling which our Lord enjoins represents our experiences throughout the entire night of his absence, until he shall establish his kingdom in the morning. It is for us to keep the feast, not merely in this special and commemorative manner once a year, but day by day, hour by hour, to feed upon the Lamb of God, to by faith realize and appropriate to ourselves his virtues and merits, and to grow in grace and knowledge and love and all the fruits and graces of the Spirit. Indeed, we remember the Master's words to be in the nature of a command, "As often as ye do this, do it in remembrance of me." There is no doubt in our minds now as to what we do in this annual celebration of our Lord's death—we are keeping the feast because we have come to realize that Christ was slain for us as our Passover Lamb.

"TAKE HEED LEST YE BE DEVoured"

"Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."—Gal. 5:13-15.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. This is illustrated in the world's history most remarkably. It was because the Jews had the instruction of the Law and more or less of its spirit that for centuries they were known as an unconquerable people. That is to say, they were conquered time and again, but were so dominated by the spirit of liberty that they made trouble for their conquerors and larger neighbors continually.

Similarly, though to a larger extent, the same has been true of Christianity: wherever the Word of God has gone the effect has been stimulation of the love of liberty in the same proportion. When during the "dark ages" the Word of God was "clothed in sackcloth," and false teachings of men took its place, the spirit of liberty slumbered and the world had a measure of peace and a general serfdom of the people. With the Reformation movement came the love of liberty afresh. The latest illustration along these lines is to be seen in Russia.

We do not mean to say that Christ and his apostles taught war, and discontent and strife,—neither did Moses and the law. Quite to the contrary; love, peace, brotherly kindness, gentleness, patience, meekness,—these were the teachings of our Lord and his servants. The influences which proceeded from the Word were of two kinds: Some, with the enlightenment and liberty, received also the divine instruction and sought to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit; others receiving the spirit of liberty through the knowledge received not the spirit of the truth, but engrafted the knowledge upon the selfish stalk of the fallen nature and were more discontented because of their increased intelligence.

Evidently no other time would be so appropriate as the anniversary. Whether that be reckoned by sun time or moon time, according to the days of the week or according to the days of the month, it is unquestionably an annual celebration; and as oft as we do it, every year as we do it, every year as the anniversary occurs, we do it not in remembrance of the type, but in remembrance of the grand antitype, Jesus, our Redeemer.

We trust that the coming celebration will be one very full of interest and profit to all. We urge that none overlook the privilege, and assure all who participate with honest intention of heart, as recognizing the Lord and the cleansing power of his sacrifice and the consecration which we have made to him, that a special blessing will surely result from the keeping of this feast, from the memorializing of the great central fact upon which the entire plan of God for this age and for the next is built.

We urge that the dear friends remember that this Memorial may best be celebrated in little groups, and not by having various companies of the Lord's people assemble together as in a convention. The Lord and his twelve apostles met alone, and this was after the pattern of the Jewish custom, each family alone. So each little group of the Lord's people is a family, a brotherhood. If unleavened bread cannot be procured, soda biscuits are easily obtainable, and they are unleavened bread—that is, bread made without yeast. If grape juice be not obtainable raisins may be stewed and thus fruit of the vine may be obtained: or, if any consider it preferable, wine may be used. Just what our Lord used is not possible for us to determine: for our own part we prefer the unfermented fruit of the vine, lest the taste of fermented liquor should arouse a dormant appetite for strong drink and thus prove a snare to some who might partake. As we meet we trust that each little company in prayer will remember all others of the Lord's dear people everywhere, asking the Lord for more and more of his Spirit in all of our hearts, which will enable us all the more acceptably and the more completely to partake of his cup of suffering, of sacrifice, of death, and to be broken with him as members of the one life, the one church, which is his body.

For the convenience of those desiring to symbolize their consecration to the Lord by baptism, such a service will be held in Bible House Chapel, Allegheny, on Sunday, April 8th, at 10 o'clock a. m. No doubt arrangements for baptism will be made by all the little congregations of the Lord's people everywhere, and those desiring the service as preceding their joining in the Memorial service of the evening here should communicate their desires, if possible, in advance.

EFFECT OF TRUTH ON THE CHURCH

There is a church nominal which is really part and parcel with the world, glossed with a little knowledge of the divine Word and plan and with some small endeavor to heed divine instruction; but the real church includes only those who have turned from sin and accepted Christ with a full consecration of thought, word and deed. What effect has the truth upon these? We answer that even these "new creatures" find that the knowledge they receive and the spirit of liberty which comes to them through that knowledge have one effect upon their flesh and another effect upon their wills, their hearts. With their hearts they desire to serve the law of God, to live peaceably with all, to cultivate all the fruits and graces of the Spirit of Christ and to deal gently, lovingly, not only with the fellow-members of the body of Christ, the church, but also to deal gently with the world. But they have, some more and some less, difficulty in contending with their own flesh and permitting the new mind to dominate it in word and in deed.

What Christian does not know from more or less experience the meaning of the words of our text, "If ye bite and devour one another?" If the hearts of God's people, their wills, their intentions, could be appealed to, separate and distinct from the weakness and bias of their flesh, there would be no doubt at all that every one of them would agree perfectly in his desire to live peaceably with his brethren and to glorify God by his meek and quiet disposition, his gentleness, brotherly kindness. But we cannot have it thus, for the new will is in the old body that is sadly warped and twisted by selfishness, and it must "fight a good fight" against the flesh, and must conquer at least to the extent of loving,

striving for the right, the gentle, the good, however imperfectly it may attain to it.

The truth seems to take hold on the stronger characters rather than on the weaker ones. These have in their flesh more of the firmness, grittiness and the combativeness than have many others who are too pliable and wishy-washy to be acceptable to the Lord as members of the "little flock" of overcomers. Thus we see that the very quality which makes us acceptable to the Lord and which is one qualification of the overcoming position is a serious disadvantage in some respects, when a number of these of like strong character come together as a church. Even a diamond surrounded by mud would cut nothing, would scratch nothing; but place a dozen diamonds together, and the more you get rid of the mud element the more gritting, scouring and cutting there is likely to be. So it is with the Lord's jewels—the more they come together the more they get awakened up, the more opportunities there will be for friction, and the greater necessity there will be that they all be thoroughly imbedded and covered with the holy Spirit, which, like oil, is smooth and unctuous and tends to prevent friction.

TRIALS TEND TO INCREASE

On the one hand we may see that as the Lord's people grow in grace and in knowledge and in the fruits and graces of the Spirit, there should be less danger of friction in the church; but on the other hand let us remember that polished diamonds do more scratching than rough ones. Let us remember, too, that in our earliest experiences in the truth we were somewhat like babes—we knew not enough to quarrel and dispute with each other respecting the lessons we were learning. As each grows, therefore, in knowledge and appreciation of the truth he must likewise grow in the spirit of the truth, or else his growth in knowledge will mean that he will be that much more of a trial to his dear brethren than when he was a babe in knowledge.

From this standpoint it should not surprise us if in the light of our day on every subject, especially on the Word, there would be more room for friction year by year, and the greater need for our remembrance of our 1906 text, "Be patient, brethren." The context shows us that these words were intended to be especially applicable in the end of the age. The time of trouble is accurately described—the conflict between the rich and the poor, which is coming about on the lines of increased knowledge in connection with the selfishness of the fallen nature. Then comes the exhortation, "Grudge not one against another, brethren; the Judge standeth at the door," "Be patient, brethren, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

The lesson here is in full accord with the text we are discussing. We need patience; we need to remember that it is not in order for us to nurse grudges or hard feelings of any kind, especially against those who like ourselves are striving to walk in the narrow way and to attain joint-heirship with our Lord in the kingdom. Rather we should be willing to sacrifice something of our own rights and liberties and privileges in the interest of others. This does not signify that we should sit quietly and hear the truth misrepresented when we have the right and the opportunity to defend it. We should contend earnestly for the truth against the error, but we should not contend against the brethren. If there be any who deny the foundations of our Christian faith, the ransom, the Lord through the apostles has left us no room to doubt how firmly we should take a stand in respect to any kind of fellowship with them. (1 Cor. 5:11.) But there are a thousand and one occasions of friction amongst the brethren where no principle of truth is at stake; and these we are to be willing and glad to waive in the interest of harmony and peace and fellowship. This, however, need not mean that we should not present our understanding of the truth on proper occasions, but we need not insist upon them nor force them upon others if they cannot see them as we do.

In our text the Apostle seems to imply that such a condition might arise even amongst the Lord's people that some would not only be wounded to the extent of being "bitten" by the harshness and slander of others, but that the tendency to retaliate more or less in kind would arise, and that it would mean a general conflict unworthy of God's children and more nearly resembling a fight among dogs.

"Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another," urges the Apostle. What if in our appreciation of the liberty that is ours, and of which we know through the Gospel, we should reach the point where we would be so contentious for our liberties, great and small, that we would consume some brother for whom Christ died! What if in injuring another the spirit of strife should so react upon us as to poison our own spiritual lives and we also should be consumed—lost as respects the gracious things to which the Lord has invited us and for which we have been running in the race! Let the Apostle's words ring in our hearts, "Lest ye be consumed one of another."

With this thought before our minds let us more and more put on the armor of God to fight *against* our own fleshly weaknesses and to fight *for* our dear brethren, assisting them by example and by precept to war a good warfare also against the world, the flesh and the adversary.

SABBATH OBLIGATIONS AND PRIVILEGES

Matthew 12:1-14.—APRIL 8.

Golden Text—"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."—Exodus 20:8.

Few seem to get the proper thought respecting the Sabbath. Some consider themselves as Jews under the Mosaic Law: others go to an opposite extreme, and, declaring that we are not under the law but under grace, repudiate the Sabbath entirely. What we believe to be the correct view is the intermediate one between these two extremes, as we shall endeavor to set forth.

God adopted the Jewish nation—all the children of Abraham, through Jacob—as his special possession in the world. With them he made the Law Covenant through Moses at Sinai—to them he sent his messengers, the prophets, and, finally, his Son. With them and with no other nation it was his agreement that by the keeping of the law they would abide in his favor and have divine blessing upon flocks and herds, land and people, instead of sickness, pain, drouth and dearth. To no other nation was the law of Sinai given, with no other nation was that covenant made—as it is written, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth."—Amos 3:2.

When the Jews rejected Jesus, and when Jesus made an end of the Law Covenant on the cross, it did not imply that that law was then extended to the other nations of the world as some seem to imagine: quite to the contrary. Nor did the Law Covenant extend to the church—the followers of Christ selected from the Jewish nation and other nations—for we read, "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:4.) Whoever sees this point clearly has the foundation for correct views respecting the Sabbath and every other feature of the law; those who cannot see this will remain in confusion.

"KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD"

Accordingly it is not for us to demand of the nations of Europe and America that they shall enforce the Jewish Sab-

bath or any other Sabbath. True, the civilized world is called "Christendom"—Christ's kingdom; but this is a misnomer. The kingdoms of earth are still under the dominion of the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4); they are kingdoms of this world and not kingdoms of God. True, God is aware of their existence and permits them for a time, but he has never attempted authority over them nor made himself responsible for the imperfect governments which they represent—they are not his kingdoms. When the God of heaven shall set up his kingdom in the hands of the glorified Messiah, Head and body, during the Millennial age, its conditions and arrangements will be greatly in contrast with those of the kingdoms of this world. God, therefore, is not commanding the nations of the world to observe the Sabbath day, etc., etc.; whatever they do in this line is of their own volition, without command, for they are not under the Mosaic Law, and no other law has been given them.

Christian believers, followers of Jesus since he made an end of the Law Covenant, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:14), are not under the Law Covenant but, as the Apostle declares, "We are not under the Law but under grace." (Rom. 6:14.) Our relationship to God is of the same character as that which prevailed before Sinai's Law Covenant was effected at the hands of Moses over Israel—after the same order as that enjoyed by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—grace under the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant: we are the real seed of promise. (Gal. 3:29.) Did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob prosper without a law? Yes! Much more can Spiritual Israel prosper under the same conditions, because we now have much advantage everywhere through our special relationship by faith to the great Redeemer, and to the exceeding great and precious promises which centre in him, and which apply to all those adopted by him as members of his body—members of his bride class.

"WHOM THE SON MAKES FREE"

Some are inclined to feel alarmed at the very thought of being free from a law covenant based upon obedience to a law. Such should be comforted with the thought that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were approved to the Lord without the law. Their faith in God constituted an obligation to do the divine will to the extent of their knowledge and ability; and the same is true of us, for the Scriptures assure us that, as children of God and adopted into his family, made partakers of his Spirit, our rule of action must henceforth be love, and that to us love is the fulfilling of the law. That is to say, if we receive the spirit of adoption into God's family it implies that we possess the spirit of love, because God is love; and this love for God as it develops signifies love for all that are in accord with him, and a love like his in respect to all of his creation—a sympathetic love. Such a love permits us to be and to do in harmony with the divine will to the extent of our ability; and the Lord, who is dealing with us according to our intentions and endeavors, and who is covering our unwilling weaknesses and imperfections, counts this service of the heart and intention as a perfect keeping of the divine law. Thus the Apostle says: "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not *after* the flesh but *after* the Spirit." (Rom. 8:4.) However short we may come of the full spirit of the divine law, we are counted as fulfillers of it so long as our daily walk is in that direction to the extent of our ability.

From this standpoint we see that God is no longer dealing with Israel, nor has he adopted the other nations as his. Rather he is forming a new nation, gathering its citizens out of every nation, kindred, people and tongue. This new nation is the church, of whom the Apostle says, "Ye are a Royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." (1 Pet. 2:9.) Presently this nation will be completed, and be ushered into glory, honor and immortality, to rule and bless and uplift all the families of the earth. God's dealings, instructions, tests, etc., are upon this new nation—yea, as we have seen, he has placed no law upon us except the law of love—for God and for our neighbor. Before our adoption into this holy nation we accepted its law of love, and recognized selfishness as part of the works of darkness; and in the school of Christ we have been learning more and more the full meaning of the word love in its application to God and to our fellowmen. These lessons still continue, but must reach a certain completion or fruition before we can be accounted worthy of transference to the heavenly and eternal state as members of this kingdom.

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD

Have we then no relationship to the law given to natural Israel, as expressed in the ten commandments, etc.? No, we are free from the law—thank God! Nevertheless, we may derive a great blessing through an examination of that law from which we are free, because we recognize that it was just and holy and good—that it was not set aside because the law was imperfect, but because man was imperfect and unable to keep that law and to gain life thereunder. Looking, then, at that perfect law, we should seek to get not merely its outward form and letter, but especially its inner meaning, its spirit, to determine just what it did signify. Then, having ascertained its significance, we as new creatures—while not depending upon it for our life, but recognizing that the precious blood of the Lamb of God has compensated for all of our unwilling weaknesses and deficiencies and imperfections—we should strive, nevertheless, to conform our lives to all the blessed thoughts we can gather respecting the spirit of the law.

We should do this, not thereby to merit salvation, but that having obtained the salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and having gone further and been begotten of the holy Spirit to a new life, a new nature, we no longer seek to justify ourselves by the law, because justified by the blood of Christ. We now seek as New Creatures to please our heavenly Father, and rejoice to find anything in the law given to natural Israel that would furnish us clearer conceptions of the divine will, that for love to God we might do with our might everything in our power.

Accordingly, as we look at the Decalogue we say, "Yes, those laws are perfect," and the more closely we examine them the more do we grasp the depth of their signification. As, for instance, in the first and second of these commandments we see prohibited not merely the making of images and the worshipping of the same, but equally prohibited the having of any object of worship aside from God—wife or children or mammon or self, etc. Applying this to the fourth commandment respecting the Sabbath, Spiritual Israelites will realize that they are not under bondage to a day, but will nevertheless desire to know what was the Spirit or intent or

object of this command, and to be in harmony, in accord, with all its spirit. The Israelites, as today's lesson shows, got merely the outward form of these three commandments, but wholly missed its real purport; and similarly, many Christians today merely take the Jewish view of the command and entirely overlook its real import.

"WE WHO BELIEVE DO ENTER INTO REST"—A SABBATH

The Apostle refers to the real meaning of this Sabbath rest of faith into which we spiritual Israelites enter so soon as we accept the Lord Jesus as our Redeemer, the expiator of our guilt—our Life-Giver. As soon as we begin to believe we begin to enter into this rest, and thenceforth, if we are faithful to the Lord and abide in his love, our Sabbath never ends—"We which believe do enter into rest."—Heb. 4:3.

Our lesson of faith should continue throughout all the days of the week, and thus spiritual Israel keeps Sabbath every day—resting in the finished work of Christ, resting from our own works, from all endeavor to justify ourselves through the law. Was not our Lord's ministry a perpetual Sabbath? and may not all of the Lord's people today so rest in the Lord by faith, and so continually seek to work the works of him that hath sent us as his ambassadors to the world, that every day with us should be a Sabbath day? Thus all the labor of life is sanctified to us. Whether we eat or drink, scrub or dig, write or talk, sleep or wake, we are to do all to the glory of God—to do all as unto him, and in all of our doings to maintain the Sabbath rest in our hearts—rest in divine love and care, which applies to us through our relationship to Christ Jesus our Lord.

PROPRIETY OF SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

The question comes, then, Should the Lord's people who see the true rest and who are enjoying it—should they observe the Sabbaths or Sundays appointed by the civil laws of Christendom? We answer, Yes! for three reasons:

(1) It is the divine command that we should obey all the ordinances of human law that do not conflict with our conscience as Christians; and clearly nothing in the human law on this subject could violate our conscience.

(2) Surely if others can afford to rest from their labor one day in seven the Lord's people can afford to do so as well, and indeed to better advantage than the world, because through our better knowledge of God and his Word we can make wiser and better use of the time thus taken from worldly affairs.

(3) Spiritual Israelites are greatly advantaged by the fact that the world, nominal Christendom, has made a mistake in the matter, and is under the impression that the Jewish law obligates the keeping of one day in seven as a religious rest day. Thus all things work together for good to them that love God—even the world's mistakes and ignorance.

Not only should Spiritual Israelites rejoice to have the privilege of one day in seven for a special rest from physical labor and for special engagement in spiritual works, pleasures and refreshments, but additionally they should realize that the world is watching them, and that their influence for good would be greatly interfered with by their violation of this civil law, which the world supposes to be backed by divine command. Our advice, therefore, to all true Spiritual Israelites is that they be as strict or more strict in their observance of Sunday as a Sabbath of rest than are their neighbors—that all works except those of necessity or mercy be avoided, that this precious day be considered a boon from the Lord, a great privilege and opportunity for growth in grace and knowledge and love. Let our homes be the most quiet of all in civilized lands on the appointed day of rest, let no sounds of labor or of worldly pleasure be heard in our habitations, but let our joys of hope and love and faith abound, and let our happy hearts manifest themselves in cheerful words and tones and looks, that thus our moderation as well as our joy in the Lord may be manifest to all with whom we have to do, that they may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of him. (Acts 4:13.) To those of our neighbors and friends with whom we are very intimate we might explain that from our standpoint every day is a Sabbath day of rest in faith—that though upon some days it is necessary we should labor also for the meat that perisheth, our hearts are resting still in the great Lord of the Sabbath and his finished work.

This would not signify that we of today should attempt an observance of the outward forms of the Jewish law, according to all that is proper and required of the Jew. For instance, no doubt it would be a violation of the fourth commandment to operate a street-car line; and if the Jewish law were in force upon us it would be absolutely wrong and sinful for any of us to ride in a street-car, much less to operate the same. But since we are not under the law but under grace, and since Sunday riding is not prohibited by the civil law

nor regarded as evil by our fellows, there is no reason why in this and in similar matters we may not enjoy reasonably and with profit the conveniences of transportation on the Sabbath.

THE PHARISAICAL SABBATH

Our lesson applies to a time when the Jewish law was still in force, and shows us that even then the right, the true, the proper interpretation of the fourth commandment was much more in accord with our observation of it than with the extreme observances accorded today by the Jewish teachers. The difference between then and now would be that the Jews under the law were forbidden to do work of an earthly kind on the Sabbath, while we are not forbidden, except as earthly laws may limit without a commandment, and that we may delight to abstain from temporal labors that we may the more fully enjoy our spiritual privileges.

Our lesson pictures to us Jesus and his disciples in a public pathway across a wheat-field (in old English called a corn-field). The wheat was ripe or nearly so, and the disciples, feeling hungry, had plucked a few of the heads and rubbed them in their hands to remove the chaff for the eating of the wheat. The Pharisees, appreciating the shell rather than the meat of the divine law, were very particular for outward observances of it, while entirely overlooking and neglecting its real sentiment or spirit. Here they thought they saw an opportunity for showing off their religious devotion by calling attention to the disciples of Jesus as being law-breakers, and to Jesus himself as being little better, in that he as their teacher had not reproved them. We see frequently this same spirit in our day: Some today would be scrupulously careful not to ride in a street-car on the Sabbath who would think nothing of allowing their minds to rove not only after the worldly things but worse, to dwell upon evil subjects, or perhaps meditate how they could take advantage of their neighbor the day following. This is hypocrisy, one of the worst sins from the divine standpoint.

It is really amusing how the Jews, while neglecting the real essence and spirit of the law toward God and man, exaggerated that law as respects the trifling and unessential matters. For instance, the ruling of the Rabbis was that catching a flea on one's person was hunting, and therefore prohibited on the Sabbath; that rubbing the grain in both hands and blowing away the chaff constituted winnowing and threshing, and violated the rest of the Sabbath. Our Lord did not accept the reproof, but, on the contrary, pointed out that his disciples not only had his approval in their course but that they were fully justified by the course of others whom the Pharisees recognized. Our Lord's illustration of what constituted necessity and mercy was drawn from the Bible narrative of David's eating the shew-bread, lawful only for the priests to eat, because of the necessities of his position, his hunger. Also the labor performed every Sabbath in the Jewish Temple, in connection with the worship there, by the priests and Levites. Our Lord held logically that these approved matters showed the proper principle governing the Sabbath. He did not claim that reaping, threshing and winnowing on the Sabbath day would be justifiable; his argument was that no such interpretation should be put upon the law as would make the satisfying of hunger, as the apostles did, a crime, a violation of the Sabbath commandment.

"LORD ALSO OF THE SABBATH"

But after convincing them from the Scriptures that their position was untenable, our Lord asserted to them his authority as an interpreter of the law, saying, "I say unto you, One greater than the Temple is here." If it was right for the Levites to perform the Temple services on the Sabbath, Jesus was greater than the Temple in that he was the Son of God, the mouthpiece of God, and his disciples might therefore rest secure in anything done in his service and with his approval. What a personality our Lord must have possessed that he could make such a statement before his enemies without its being challenged! We are convinced that he not only

spake as never man spake, but that his appearance must have been superior to that of members of the fallen race.

Mark his statement again (v. 8)—"The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." As the Lord of the Sabbath, as the great Teacher, he had not indeed the right to abolish this feature of the law except by fulfilling it, "nailing it to the cross"; but as the Lord of the Sabbath he was the proper Teacher to set forth its real significance to the Jew. Our Lord called the attention of his critics to the testimony of God through the prophet, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." (Hosea 6:6.) Our Lord declares that if they had given heed to this direction their thoughts would have been more merciful, more in line with the divine sentiment, and this would have hindered them from condemning the disciples, who the Lord declared were entirely guiltless of any violation of the Sabbath day commandment.

Similarly we may say today that the great lack of many critics and fault-finders is their lack of mercy, lack of love. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and whoever has most of it will come nearest to the standard. The possession of love is always indicated by mercy—toward our friends, toward our brethren, toward the world, toward our enemies. Proceeding to the Synagogue the same question was raised—the predominance of love above any law was manifested. A man there had a withered hand, and the Pharisees, seeking to prove Jesus and to catch him, inquired whether or not it would be right to heal on the Sabbath day. They fain would condemn him on some score; his defense of his disciples was complete—would he now commit himself to a matter of healing on the Sabbath?

Our Lord's answer was along the lines of the prophecy he had just quoted, namely, that mercy was higher in God's estimation than sacrifice, and he proceeded to show mercy to the afflicted man. First, however, he showed them from their own course in life that they were inconsistent: that if they owned but one sheep and it fell into a pit on the Sabbath day it would be rescued—not for love of the sheep but for fear of the loss of its value. Our Lord inquired, "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." This question, as to the superior value of a man over a beast, is one that the world seems to find difficult to answer, but one which should be quickly answered by the Lord's people of spiritual Israel. The Lord set the value of a man when by the grace of God he gave himself a ransom for man. Those who receive of his Spirit should more and more count it a privilege to do anything they can for the relief of their fellow man in matters temporal or spiritual.

The Pharisees were answered at every point, and, less popular in Galilee than in Judea anyway, they felt that their influence before the people had been lessened by their conflict with the Lord, the great Teacher. So when Jesus had healed the withered hand by word they went out of the synagogue angry, to take counsel against him how they might destroy him. They were rabid sectarians, fully convinced of their own importance. They felt that anything that discredited them must be injurious to the Lord and to his cause, that they were the orthodox body, and that they would be fully justified in murdering anyone whose words and conduct so overmatched them as to hinder their influence from spreading more and more over all the people of Israel. A similar spirit prevails today, we aver, amongst many who are outwardly very zealous for religion. They are so deficient in mercy, love, so bound by the sectarian systems with which they are identified, that they would be willing to persecute as thoroughly as opportunity would permit any of the members of the Master's body whose presentations of the truth today would seem to diminish their honor and standing before the world. Let us, dear friends, remember the Master's word, and understanding and appreciating our relationship to the Lord, let us be obedient to the very spirit of it.

RESURRECTION POWER IN JESUS

Luke 7:1-17.—APRIL 15.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life."—John 11:25.

Resurrection power resided in our Lord Jesus because in the divine plan it was he who was to redeem the world by the sacrifice of himself and consequently to restore it. This included not merely an awakening from death, but also such vitalization as would overcome the dying processes of disease and ultimately bring the revived one up, up, to the full perfection of being originally enjoyed by our first parents in Eden but forfeited because of disobedience under the sentence, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4.) This is the most important feature of all the plan of God

revealed to us, and if we discern it clearly it assists us in the understanding of every other feature of that plan. We must see that death is the absence of life, the loss of life—that it is a penalty upon our race because we are judged unworthy of life.

All references to a future life imply a redemption from the curse or sentence which came upon us because of the original sin. The cancellation of the debt or sentence, however, does not revive or restore mankind, but it does remove the legal barrier to man's restitution to all that was lost.

Hence it is that our Savior's work is to follow. First, it is to be a redemptive work: the redemption was accomplished at his first advent—though he has used this Gospel age as the period in which to accept also some of the redeemed ones as his members, his bride, his church, under him as their Head, to be his associates in the great work of restitution which belongs to the next age.

Second, restitution is to be our Lord's work at his second advent, when his church, his members, will have been selected, polished, prepared, glorified and associated with him in glory, honor and immortality. Then the full work of the redemption will be granted to the world of mankind—not by raising them from the dead to absolute perfection in an instant, but by first awakening them from the sleep of death, and then, under the disciplines and instructions of the Millennial age, lifting them gradually in harmony with their own wills and coöperation, step by step, out of sin and death conditions into life eternal, as they may respond to these mercies and opportunities. The disobedient, being counted unworthy of life eternal, will be cut off in the second death.

JESUS, THE LIFE-GIVER

The words of our Golden Text, although specially applicable to our Lord in the future, at the beginning of his Millennial reign, when he will abolish death by lifting mankind out of its power, out of the great prison-house and out of the weaknesses that are associated with the fallen condition, nevertheless were applicable also in some degree at the first advent. True, our Lord's own sacrifice was not finished until he died at Calvary, and the sacrifices of the members of his body would not be finished for centuries; but when our Lord at thirty years of age made a full consecration of himself to do the Father's will, to lay down his life, etc., that divine plan which he there undertook to carry out included all these subsequent features—the completion of his own sacrifice and that of his completed body, of the church.

That our heavenly Father so regarded his sacrifice was evidenced by the impartation of the holy Spirit, which anointing upon him constituted him the Messiah, the Christ, and the hope of the church, which is his body, as well as ultimately the hope of all things. Hence, since our Lord had never abrogated that covenant of consecration, sacrifice, since he was still in line with his covenant, and since the Father still so recognized him, it was proper for him to think and act and speak from that standpoint, which not only looked down to the end of his own course with faith, but also looked down to the end of this Gospel age with confidence, and to the end of the Millennial age with assurance that all the good purposes of God would finally be accomplished in and through him. From this standpoint, therefore, he said, "I am the resurrection and the life." He knew that the sacrificial work he had undertaken would secure to him the privilege of being the Life-Giver to the world, and that in the exercise of that right he would raise up not only from the tomb, but completely out of death conditions up to perfection, all who would come unto the Father through him—all who would have the right desire of heart to return to loving obedience to the Creator.

OUR LORD'S MIRACLES ILLUSTRATIVE

Our Lord's miracles were performed with a view to proving him to be the Life-Giver, not merely as having the right or privilege of giving life but as having pleasure in so doing. From this standpoint our Lord's miracles were small illustrations on a limited scale of that much grander work which he, with and through his glorified church, will accomplish for mankind during his Millennial reign, when all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped, and all the mentally, morally and physically lame shall be healed, and all the dead in trespasses and sins will be revived and, through obedience, gradually obtain full restitution of all things lost, as promised through the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:19-23.

Our present lesson follows the Sermon on the Mount—the thought evidently in the minds of Matthew and Luke in thus arranging matters being to show that he who had given the wonderful teachings on the mount was fully attested by the miraculous powers shown to reside in him. He had returned to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, the home city of Peter and others, and now the home city of Jesus, since he had been spurned and rejected at Nazareth. We remember that on a previous occasion at Capernaum he had healed many, and cannot doubt that his fame had reached all classes. A centurion, captain of the Roman guard, with a company of soldiers, resided here, and a much-prized servant having been taken sick the centurion was anxious to have Jesus cure him. That he was a man of humble mind, as well as full of faith and benevolence, is clearly shown by the narrative. Indeed, so

far as we remember, all three of the centurions mentioned in the New Testament were evidently reverential: this one, the one who put Jesus to death and who subsequently declared, "Surely this man was the Son of God," and the centurion Cornelius, the first Gentile convert.—Matt. 27:54, Acts 10:1.

THE NOBLE CENTURION

The centurion of our lesson was both wise and humble. He realized that as a Gentile he could have no special claim upon this Jewish Prophet and the work he was doing for the Israelites, and hence he secured the coöperation of some of the elders of the city—not the elders of the Synagogue, but the chief men of the city—to present to Jesus on his behalf a request for the healing of his servant. A man of less humble mind would doubtless have thought of the dignity of his own position, and would have ignored the distinctions which the Jews and the Scriptures both fix, the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile excluding the latter from the divine mercies of the former. He was like the Syro-phenician woman who desired a crumb from the children's table without claiming to be one of the children.

The elders, his representatives, besought Jesus on his behalf, testifying that although he was not a Jew he was a noble character, a lover of Israel; he had built them a synagogue for their worship, in which he himself could not engage because a Gentile. Had he taken any other position, had he ignored the fact that he was not one of the "children," doubtless it would have been necessary for our Lord to have impressed this lesson before granting the request; but since all this was conceded in the request our Lord promptly acceded thereto. A lesson for each of us in this connection would be humility of mind in approaching the Lord on any subject, which would make us ready for his favors and blessings. We, too, should concede that we have nothing of right or of merit to demand, that we should approach the Lord from the standpoint of unworthy suppliants, seekers of grace and mercy, not justice, at his hands.

Then the centurion bethought him of the fact that, being a Gentile, according to Jewish custom it would be an impropriety for a Jew to enter his house, that a certain measure of defilement would be implied. Doubtless, too, he thought of himself as a sinner, and that here was a representative of the Almighty, whose power he acknowledged. His feelings, doubtless, were akin to those of Peter when the latter cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."—Luke 5:8.

The centurion reasoned that if the Lord could exercise the power when present he could also exercise the power of healing though absent, and possibly he had heard of the healing of the son of the nobleman of his own city, Capernaum, when Jesus was at Cana and merely spoke the word. For these reasons the centurion at once sent a messenger to Jesus, explaining his own disinclination to incommode the Master, his unworthiness to have him under his roof, and his complete faith that a word from him would be sufficient. He explains this faith in the Lord's word by the illustration that he himself had been given a certain amount of authority by which he could tell his servants to go and to come, and that, recognizing Jesus as the Lord's anointed, he was sure that he had control over the influences of nature as his servants, so that he could bid the disease go from the servant and he should be well.

MARVELLOUS FAITH OF AN ALIEN

Jesus took him at his word and went no further, but he expressed his astonishment at the amount of the man's faith, saying to the multitude with him, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Only in one other place do we read that Jesus "marvelled," and that was at the instance of the unbelief of the people of Nazareth. (Mark 6:6.) The people so long favored, so greatly blessed, so richly fed with divine promises and instructed by divine providences, lacked the faith that might have been expected of them, while the Gentiles, unfavored, were possessed of faith in many respects remarkable. No wonder our Lord contrasted the people of Capernaum with the heathens of Sodom and Gomorrah. No wonder that he declared that if the mighty works done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah they would have remained—would never have been destroyed—would have repented in sackcloth and ashes.

How glad we are that the Scriptures assure us that it is the divine plan to give all the heathen peoples—yea, and all the Jews—the favorable, gracious opportunities of the Millennial age whereby to rise out of sin and death conditions and to restore to the obedient the life conditions lost through sin, redeemed by the precious blood. Are we not sometimes surprised today, likewise, to find that some prominent in religious affairs seem to have less faith in the Lord

in his goodness, in his power, in his wisdom, in his love, than have some who are of the world? What surprises there may be in this respect by and by when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth and the eyes of understanding of all mankind shall be opened to appreciate the knowledge of the glory of God. How many who were not God's people shall then become his people; and how many who now have much advantage every way, and who have forms of godliness without the power, may then be seen to be inferior to some who now appear to be their inferiors.

Soon afterward (R. V.) our Lord, the disciples and quite a multitude of followers were approaching the little city of Nain, when forth from the gateway of the city came a funeral procession, a widowed mother and mourning friends, pall-bearers, and a bier or litter on which lay a dead young man, the widow's only son. Our Lord was touched with compassion as he saw the widow's tears, and he said to her, "Weep not," and, approaching, the pall-bearers stood still and Jesus touched the bier and said, "Young man, I say unto thee arise." The dead man stood up and began to speak. In a manufactured story it would be considered the proper thing to suppose that the widow fell at the Lord's feet, praised him in a loud voice, and that the whole multitude would join in acclaiming him; but in the simple narrative of our lesson, "there came a fear upon all"—a realization that God was very near to them as represented in the power of Jesus.

The very thought of the imminence of God is very sure to bring awe to mankind as they realize the holiness, the absolute perfection of the Almighty and their own blemishes and imperfections in contrast. The multitude glorified God, not with loud hosannas, but with a reverential appreciation of the fact that a great Prophet, a great Teacher, was in their midst, and that God was thus with him, saying, "God hath visited his people." The Jews at that time looked back to God's special dealings with their fathers, in which miracles attested the Lord's favor. They remembered also the promise that a Prophet like unto Moses would be raised up to them with still greater power than Moses. They expected to some extent what Peter refers to in Acts 3:19-21, that "times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord"—that the Lord Jehovah would manifest his favor toward his people in reviving them, blessing them, sending them times of restitution spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets.

PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING

Their anticipations were quite correct: Jesus was the great Prophet, the representative of the Father and of his favor. And yet how long the test of faith! How long the period necessary for the raising up of the members of the body of Christ, and until the heavenly Father's plan should thus be fully developed and the times of restitution fully ushered in at the second advent of the Lord. Our Redeemer's work of healing and of awakening from the sleep of death were merely premonitions or foreshadowings or illustrations of the great universal blessings coming to mankind through the merit of his obedience even unto death as our sin offering. No wonder the message of Jesus and his work spread over all parts of the country.

A greater work was being accomplished by our Lord's miracles than was apparent at the time. We are inclined to be surprised that only about "five hundred brethren" were gathered during the Lord's ministry—that only that number were counted worthy of the name brethren and of the privilege of meeting our Lord after his resurrection during the forty days. However, we may reasonably suppose that under the new dispensation, under the ministries of the apostles from Pentecost onward, a large fruitage was found to our Lord's ministry. For instance, we would think it very probable that this widow of Nain and her son would ultimately become followers of Jesus, and that others in that multitude who witnessed the miracle and who were in proper condition of heart would therein find a sufficiency for a foundation to their faith in the Messiah. We cannot doubt either that after "the middle wall of partition" had been broken

down, and Cornelius the first Gentile convert had been brought into faith-fellowship, this centurion, whose servant was healed and who manifested every way so noble a character, would be one who would be specially susceptible to the message of grace and truth. One lesson we may learn from this is that we must not at once look for the full fruitage to our own efforts in the Lord's service. We must be content to labor and to wait, and must realize that the Lord himself is behind his Word, his message, making the selections of those whom he esteems worthy of joint-heirship in his kingdom. Another thought would be that there may be worldly persons who may come to some knowledge of the truth and yet not be blessed fully by it—who will by and by, under the trials and difficulties of the time of trouble, or later on during the Millennial age, be profited through our ministries of the truth and our present endeavors to glorify the Lord in our bodies and spirits which are his.

Let us then scatter the good seed everywhere as we have opportunity, for we know not which shall prosper, this or that. Sometimes that upon which we bestowed the greatest zeal and effort proves fruitless, and sometimes that from which we expected the least proves very fruitful. Let us remember that the Lord will reward us according to our zeal or efforts, and not according to results; and indeed the chief results he seeks are in ourselves, in the development of the graces of his spirit, which will manifest themselves in so many ways in connection with our love for him, for his message, for the brethren, yea, for the whole world of mankind, even for our enemies.

"QUICKEN YOUR MORTAL BODIES"

Our Lord's ministries of healing lasted but a few years and reached comparatively few of the Jewish people, but since he ascended he has been carrying on a work of healing on a still higher plane—through his disciples whom he acknowledges as "members of his body." (1 Cor. 21:27.) Operating through these, many eyes of understanding have been opened, many deaf ears have been unstopped, many morally halt and lame have been cured, and many have been raised from the dead in the sense that the Apostle refers to when he says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins"; and again, "If ye be risen with Christ seek those things which are above"; and again, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."—Eph. 2:1; Col. 3:1; Rom. 8:11.

If we are inclined to marvel that the Jews rejected Jesus after seeing his mighty works, what might be said of us if for any reason we become doubters or unfaithful to him who has so clearly spoken to us from heaven, by whose stripes we have been healed and who have realized him to be indeed the resurrection and the life? Whoever, therefore, has experienced this quickening to newness of life, this begetting of the Spirit, has come under so clear a demonstration of the divine power and goodness and wisdom and love operating through Jesus as to be without excuse "if they fall away." Hence the Apostle tells us that it would be "impossible to renew them again unto repentance." (Heb. 6:6.) He tells us that in their case such a falling away would be a wilful act, not one of ignorance or weakness, and that to thus fall away would imply the same attitude of heart which the Jews entertained toward our Lord when he was with them—that it would be virtually crucifying the Lord afresh and putting him to an open shame.—Heb. 6:6.

But, dearly beloved, to use the Apostle's thought, we have more confidence in each other than to surmise such an unworthy ending to our call, such an unworthy response to the mercies and favors which we enjoy at the hands of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. Let us be faithful, let us remember that the resurrection work begun in us as new creatures is the one which is to be completed by the grace of God in the First Resurrection, when in a moment of change we shall be like our Lord, see him as he is and share his glory.

A VOICE FROM OVER THE SEA

FROM OUR SOCIETY'S LONDON REPRESENTATIVE

Dear Brother Russell:

I have noticed that which seems to be a pointed corroboration of the parallel which you gave in the TOWER a little while back when you showed that the culmination of the "time of trouble" might be expected in 1915, since the Gentile powers have a lease which runs to the end of 1914. I refer to the first dispensation and its culmination in the

year of the flood. I think this year with all of its particularized events is intended as a forecast of the year of trouble, 1915, A.D. I will put my thoughts as briefly as possible.

Since our Lord said, "It shall be in the days of the Son of Man as it was in the days of Noah," we have his authority for a comparison of the times, and this has led to the thoughts:—

(1) That the whole of the first dispensation is a minia-