

Elders, and the Pharisees neglected the Word of God and held to the traditions. What are we as Christians doing today? "Let us hold fast the faithful Word," "The Word of God, which is able to make us wise." Let us search the Scriptures daily and critically, and let us abandon everything which conflicts therewith.

WHAT IS GOD'S KINGDOM?

Our text is frequently misunderstood to mean that God's kingdom consists in righteousness and peace and joy in the holy Spirit. The context shows that this is entirely a wrong thought. Let us follow the context and see.

Let us bear in mind what we have already seen respecting the kingdom mentioned in the Bible—that it is the glorious reign of Messiah for a thousand years, for the uplift of the human family, and that during that reign the church will be associated with Jesus in his kingdom glory, power and honor. The call of this Gospel age is to select this bride class and to develop them and make them "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

We have seen that in the present time these called out ones—called to be the "bride, the Lamb's wife"—are the kingdom in embryo or in an undeveloped state. These probationary members of the kingdom, the Scriptures tell us, are not under the Law of Moses, expressed in the Ten Commandments; they are not hoping for eternal life through them, but they are under Grace—under a gracious arrangement which God has made for them through the merit of Christ's death. St. Paul points out that while these are free from the various commands of the Jewish law they are not without law, but under the great divine law, as members of the body of Christ. He says that thus we, as new creatures, do fulfil the real meaning of the divine law when we "walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit," even though we be not able to walk fully up to the spirit of the law because of weaknesses of our flesh. It is the new creature, the desire, that is being judged and not the flesh.

Accordingly the Gentiles who came into membership in the body of Christ were not required to conform themselves to the demands of the Jewish law. For instance, a Jew, according to the law, might not eat fish that had no scales,

mackerel, etc., neither might he eat rabbit meat, nor pork, etc., and in a variety of other ways he was restrained and limited in his eating and drinking. But none of these restraints apply to Christians who had come from amongst the Gentiles and who never had been under the Law Covenant.

In our text St. Paul urges that these liberties respecting what they might eat and drink were not to be esteemed as the real blessings of this embryo kingdom class in the present life. Far from it; the real blessings of this class consisted in their enjoyment of righteousness and peace and joy in the holy Spirit. Transformed by the renewing of their minds, they had come to appreciate and love righteousness and truth; good things rather than evil things; pure things rather than impure things; spiritual things rather than earthly things; their citizenship now was in heaven instead of being an earthly one. They had come to appreciate "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and its rule in their hearts was one of the grand blessings which they enjoyed as members of the embryo kingdom class.

"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." "The wicked are like a troubled sea which cannot rest." Our heavenly peace and confidence in God are the result of our union with Christ as members of his kingdom class. This we prize and not specially the privilege of eating pork or some other thing forbidden to the Jews. Joy in the holy Spirit—fellowship with the Father and with the Son and with all who possess the spirit of righteousness—is the blessed privilege of every member of the embryo kingdom class, every member of "the church which is the body of Christ."

Thus the Apostle would have his hearers place a proper valuation upon the various favors which they had received, so that if the interests of the Lord's cause or the interests of the brethren in Christ should ever require them to forego their liberties in respect to food and drink, they would count such self-denials for Christ's sake and for the brethren's sake as nothing—as sacrifices they could make with joy, because they would not interfere with or disturb in the least the real value of the blessings and privileges which are ours in Christ.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."—Romans 13:12, 13.

The Scriptures call attention to the fact that there is a night of weeping in contrast with a day of joy. (Psa. 30:5) The "night" is that period of darkness which set in after Adam fell. By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death as the result of sin. (Romans 5:12, 19) Evil has brought sorrow and the darkness of ignorance and superstition among mankind until human affairs have become demoralized. As the Prophet Isaiah says, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people."—Isa. 60:2.

There is however a morning promised. That morning is to be ushered in by the Sun of Righteousness, rising with healing in his beams. (Mal. 4:2) That Sun of Righteousness is Christ and the church with him. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43)—Christ as the head of the church, which is his body.

Another Scripture speaks of the present as daytime: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." (John 9:4) While for many centuries there has been a period of darkness, nevertheless since the first advent of our Lord the glorious light of truth has had more effect upon the world than at any previous time; for with the coming of our Lord Jesus a blessing came upon the world. At that time so much light came in, that the Gospel age may be called day in contrast with previous experiences. This day, in turn, gave place to a long period known as the dark ages. Then, since the Reformation, a measure of light came in again, through certain influences which have brought blessings to the Lord's people. Now it is time for the Sun of Righteousness to rise with healing in his beams.

We believe that the day is actually at hand; that we are living in the early dawn of a new dispensation, and that as soon as the harvest of the Gospel age shall have been garnered, "the kingdoms of this world" shall, during a

great time of trouble, "become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."—Rev. 11:15.

The Scriptures inform us that the period of time during which the present dominion of Satan shall become the kingdom of God's dear Son, will be a specially evil day. It will be a season in which all the children of light shall be crucially tested; a day that will try every man's faith and work; a day of fiery trial through which only "the gold, the silver and the precious stones" will pass unharmed and in which all the "wood, hay and stubble" of error, sin and human tradition will be entirely consumed.—1 Cor. 3:12, 13; 1 Pet. 4:12.

"AND ALSO THE NIGHT"

While we observe the glorious dawn of the new dispensation, we notice clouds also. The Bible forewarns us that before the kingdom of heaven shall have been set up fully there will be a very dark hour for the world—a period in which sin will have great liberty in its operation, and during which the saints of God will suffer persecution. At the same time we can see the reflection from the "Sun," although it has not yet arisen; we are now in the early dawn. But the coming darkness will make matters appear as though the morning will not come, as though the night had again set in, as though the divine recognition of all things had ceased.

There is, however, a silver lining to the clouds. Soon the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in his beams. The church in glory with her lord will put down sin, will dispel the superstition and evil which now becloud the minds of men and will give clear light to the people respecting God and His Word. "I will turn a pure language [message] to the people, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. 3:9) The message was originally given in its purity, but this freedom from adulteration it did not retain. It has been more or less obscured by ignorance and superstition. When through

Messiah's kingdom the Lord shall make his message pure and plain to mankind, then every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Those who refuse, however, to develop heart-loyalty to the kingdom shall die the second death.—Isa. 45:23; Acts 3:23.

While the day has not yet come, there are those who Scripturally are called children of the light (1 Thess. 5:5), and who do not belong to the realm of sin. We who are of this class have laid down our lives in consecration for the purpose of becoming servants of righteousness. We are in harmony with God and are enemies of sin. We have been begotten of the holy Spirit to the new nature and are promised joint-heirship with our Lord in the future. Let us, who are of the day, cast off superstition and ignorance—the works of darkness—and put on the armor of light.—Rom. 13:12.

ARISE AND SHINE IN LIGHT ETERNAL

What, then, is the Christian's duty throughout this period of darkness? Shall we live in sin while our hearts are in harmony with righteousness? The Apostle says we must not live in sin. (Rom. 6:15) Let us put off everything which we think will be displeasing to the Lord, everything that is contrary to the light of the new day—the light which we have seen, but which the world has not seen. Let us put on the full "armor of light," the "whole armor of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day." And putting it on let us remember that it is not a useless weight, but a necessary protection in battle.—Rom. 13:12; Eph. 6:13.

No man ever puts on armor unless he expects to fight. If he is a soldier of the Cross, the "Sword of the Spirit" is the great weapon with which he will prove his loyalty and strength. The brethren should build each other up in the most holy faith, fighting the good fight and showing their loyalty to the Lord and to the truth. (Jude 20; 1 Tim. 6:12) Those who succumb to the influences of darkness show themselves unworthy of the new order of things, and they may not expect to be sharers with Christ in his kingdom, but to be amongst those rejected of the Lord as unworthy.

Let us remember that we are well along in the hour of temptation which was promised to come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. (Rev. 3:10) Higher Criticism, Evolution, Christian Science, Hypnotism, New Thought, Mind Cures and other works of darkness are casting a deep shadow over all who are not fully consecrated to the Lord and who therefore are not kept by his power, through his Word and his providences.

"WALK HONESTLY AS IN THE DAY"

While we are not yet fully in the day, yet we belong to the new dispensation, and therefore should live as nearly as possible in accordance with the perfect standard of the future. So to live will imply that we shall be misunderstood by the world: that we shall be thought foolish; and that we shall be considered enemies, not only by those in gross darkness, but particularly by those who, professing to be the Lord's people, really prefer darkness to light, error to truth.

We are inclined to lay special stress upon the word honestly, for we believe that the Apostle used it advisedly and in a special sense. As we look about us we find that dishonesty is very prevalent, not only in the world, where we expect a certain amount of duplicity, misrepresentation, deception and hypocrisy, but even among professing Christians.

Every true child of God should see to it that he is honest, not only in money matters, but in his treatment of his neighbors and his brethren in the church, and above all, in his confessions respecting his faith. The test is being made along this line, and those who love the favor of men rather than the favor of God will be given opportunity to prove that they are unfit for the kingdom, whatever else they may be fit for. The Apostle tells us (2 Thess. 2:11) when speaking of this evil day, that God will send strong delusions that a certain class may believe a lie, because they were not honest, but acted deceptively, hypocritically.

HONESTY THE BASIS OF CHARACTER

Probably the most valuable trait of character is honesty. Where there is little honesty, there is little character; where there is great honesty, there is great character. We mean not merely honesty as to dollars and cents, pounds and shillings, but as to the very thoughts and intents of our hearts, as well as to our words.

We should always endeavor to do to others as we would that they should do to us, and not to retaliate. At the first advent the principal charge which our Lord made against the religious teachers of his day was that they made great

professions of holiness, when, as a matter of fact, they were not holy. He said that they devoured widows' houses—not that they literally ate the houses, but that they tried to get possession of the property because of the more or less defenseless position of widows. At that time widows and orphans fell an easy prey to the greed of those whose professions of godliness should have protected the weak and helpless.

Probably our Lord would denounce a great deal of the wisdom of today as he did of that day. But we have not the ability to read the heart and therefore cannot speak as positively as he did. In respect to the great ministers of today, however, we readily see that some of them hold their positions under false pretenses. They profess to receive their salaries as ministers of Christ, when they do not believe in the Bible at all. Some of them have written to us that they are in great trouble; that, realizing their position, they would like to get out of it, but they cannot easily get another position as desirable as their present one; and so they are dishonest enough to keep their charges.

The Apostle says, "Let us walk honestly." Let us take our proper stand for the truth. While we should always speak the truth in love, whether to our enemies or to our friends, while we should always have consideration for the opinion of others, yet we should take our stand firmly. We doubt that the Lord would care to take into the kingdom any who are not honest. We fear therefore, that those who have high positions are "deceiving and being deceived." (2 Tim. 3:13) There is such a thing as deceiving one's self by repeating a sentiment until one believes it.

The lesson to us is that, however others may walk, we must see to it that we "walk honestly as in the day" (Rom. 13:13), as though we were living in the broad daylight, so that if the world understood all about any transaction of ours they would realize that we are honest—even as the Lord understands all about it. Any other course is dangerous and is not "walking as in the day."—John 11:9.

QUALITIES INJURIOUS TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

The translators of the Bible seemed to forget that the Epistles were written "to the saints" (see dedication of the various Epistles), and not to the world; hence when mentioning certain sins they used English words which are applicable to the crimes of the most depraved class of people, instead of such language as would properly represent the misdemeanors that might be expected among saints. In urging the Lord's people to avoid chambering and wantonness, etc., we are not to understand the Apostle to mean the wickedness practised by the most depraved and benighted of the children of the world. Rather, we understand him to address the words to saints, urging them to continence in their social relations, that the thoughts of the kingdom should lift their minds to a large extent from the earthly affections.

By the general rules of language St. Paul would not begin his argument with the grosser sins and end with the less, but reversely he would conclude with the stronger, as evidently he does in enumerating the list of sins given in verse 13 of our text. Here he concludes with the exhortation that the saints, in walking as in the day, should avoid strife and envy. The other difficulties would be comparatively their own affair and might do no injury to others. But strife and envy are two qualities that indicate a wrong condition of heart on the part of the transgressor that would eventually bar him from the kingdom.

Be it noted carefully that the various dispositions mentioned in verse 13—rioting, drunkenness, chambering, wantonness, strife and envy—result from being intoxicated with the spirit of the world. Carelessness of life in any of the earthly affairs, and lack of self-restraint in the connubial relationship are very liable to go hand in hand with a wrong spirit in the church—a spirit of strife, contention, wilfulness, not submitting to the divine Word and providence, but on the contrary, arousing jealousy and ambition on behalf of self or others, for prominence in the body.

SOBRIETY COMMENDABLE

We yield to none in our opposition to intoxicating beverages and in abhorrence of the terrible results which they entail. No saint should ever be intoxicated. The Word of God says that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:10) The Scriptures do not say that a moderate use of liquor brings woe, sorrow, redness of eyes, etc., and we are not to add to their words. But we do well remember that "They that tarry long at the wine" probably reached that condition through habit, and that most of such began the use of liquor with the intention of becoming moderate drinkers only.—Prov. 23:30.

Beware of the slavery of habit! Even the force of the "exceeding great and precious promises" is not sufficient to hold in check our fallen appetites when they are constantly being fed and the chains of habit are being forged. Surely the new nature cannot thrive under conditions which deprave even the old nature! Let every new creature resist faithfully the seductive influences of evil, if he would make his calling and election sure to the kingdom.

There is a marked contrast between the spirit and sentiment of the world and that of a true Christian. With the world there is a general tendency to indulge at times in a little revelry, and with many of them there is a decided inclination toward drunkenness. Even among the abstemious there is a feeling that an occasional drink is not only permissible, but quite necessary.

The Christian, however, has set before him the high standard of a sound mind, with meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly-kindness, love. The more a Christian possesses the spirit of righteousness, the holy Spirit, the more he realizes that he has passed from darkness into light. The divine standard is to be his viewpoint always. Instead of looking forward to revelry, he is rather to turn away with regret that any such conditions prevail among mankind. The world considers the use of liquor to be proper if not too frequently indulged in. The Christian, on the contrary, considers drunkenness and revelry to be improper and to be resisted so far as he and his influence are concerned.

The Christian is to display increasingly the spirit of true holiness. The Apostle says, "Let your moderation be known of all men." (Phil. 4:5) The very promises made to us in the Scriptures tend to make us sober. Our God is most gracious!

"What more can he say than to you he hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?"

Hence anything that might lead our steps away from the spirit of holiness is to be regarded as something pernicious, for it might cost us divine favor, our eternal life and a share in the kingdom.

The world, on the contrary, have no such incentive to influence them. It is their custom to indulge in just as much revelry as would not be too seriously disapproved by society. Banquets are given for the very purpose of having a so-called "good time." When worldly people get together there is a general tendency to revelry and a certain amount of looseness. All this has a demoralizing effect upon society.

THE TRUTH A RESTRAINING INFLUENCE

The Christian has a restraining influence which is unknown to the world. Not only does he wish to have the approval of his neighbors, but more than all he desires the still higher standard of divine approval; for he is on trial before the Lord himself as to his manner of life. Hence, with him there is a principle to help him to shun rioting, drunkenness, reveling or similar conditions. The Apostle Paul admonishes the Christian to make straight paths for his feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. (Heb. 12:13) For instance, if a man have an appetite for liquor he should avoid everything that would tend to arouse that appetite. Thus he would make "straight paths for his feet," that he might walk pleasing to the Lord.

The Lord does not deal with his people along the lines of commands. In his Word he sets the standard of a sound mind, not only in respect to revelry and the use of liquor, but to all manner of conduct. Those who love him will strive to attain that standard. Whether therefore we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31) But we find that Christians called out from the world need to learn and to develop true character. At first they think nothing of what subsequently they would consider grievous error. As the Christian grows in knowledge and in love toward his fellow-men, he learns to measure things more carefully by the divine standard. So we find that those who have been Christians for a long time show good judgment in respect to everything in life. They use the spirit of a sound mind, which is the most desirable thing in the world.—2 Tim. 1:7.

The Christian has before him high standards and the hope of the high reward of association with Christ in the kingdom. We are glad to note that with the centuries there has developed a tendency toward morality and all the good things of life. And although there is much corruption below the surface of society, yet there is something which keeps that surface comparatively smooth, whatever may be below it.

When we compare civilization with heathendom, we do not find much more evidence of self-control in the former than in the latter. The heathen live as have their ancestors for

centuries, with very little rioting and drunkenness of any kind. In a journey around the world we saw only two intoxicated men, except in what we call civilized, or Christian lands. The vast majority of the heathen are temperate. Mohammedanism has done a great deal for mankind in respect to temperance. So has Buddhism. In one city we met a Christian brother who told us that he was a temperance missionary. When questioned as to his mission, he replied, "Oh, amongst those who accept Christianity there is much more need for temperance work than amongst others! I am spending my life in this way."

PLAIN LIVING AND HIGH THINKING

In all parts of the world it is customary to use liquor in the so-called "upper-strata" of society. At hotels abroad nearly every person at the table is supplied with liquor. On the steamers the use of liquor is so customary that to ask for water is enough to create a sensation among the waiters. We are greatly blessed in America in that alcoholic beverages are held in disapprobation, although a great deal is used here in social circles. Liquor is justly regarded with opprobrium, for it is doing a great deal of harm and should be frowned down.

Christians are not to walk in reveling, nor in drunkenness, nor in rioting, but are to live on a high intellectual and moral plane. We are not to take pleasure merely in the animal appetites—in food, drink, etc.—but we are to live the higher life from our knowledge of God and his plan and of all things that pertain to our welfare. This course should include also a sanity and sobriety of mind in regard to religious matters.

The great "harlot" pictured in the Revelation (17:4, 5), has in her hand a cup, in which there is the wine of false doctrine, intoxicating the people who drink it. This drunkenness is upon all; but we are gradually emerging from its intoxicating effects. The hobgoblins that we saw when we were under its influence are disappearing, and sanity is returning to us. Now we have more pleasure in the Lord, more of the spirit of a sound mind. The Lord's people should be moderate, not only in respect to the temporal food and drink, but also the spiritual. Whoever finds it wise to be careful in the one, finds it best to be careful in the other. Whatever doctrine is not based upon the Word of God is to be rejected. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isa. 8:20.

WORLDLY WISDOM NOT LIGHT

From the divine standpoint there are two great principles in operation—right and wrong, light and darkness. All the children of God, so far as they have received the holy Spirit of begetting, are children of light. The world's condition is not that of light, but of darkness (Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5) There are different shades of darkness, however. The Scriptures declare that "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people"; "The darkness hateth the light"; "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own"; "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Isa. 60:2; John 15:19; Matt. 5:16.

Neither the philosophies of men nor their moral sentiments are light. The true light cometh down from above; and only those who are begotten of the Spirit of the Lord have that light. To these, old things have passed away and all things have become new. (2 Cor. 5:17) The elements of darkness that reign in our mortal bodies are to be discouraged and to be expelled therefrom. The clause, "If the light that is in thee become darkness," refers only to the church class and means, If the light of the holy Spirit of our begetting become extinguished, how great will be the darkness!—Matt. 6:23.

When the Apostle says, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30), he evidently is warning us against losing the light that has illumined us—the Spirit of our adoption. The caution, "Grieve not the holy Spirit," implies that it will not leave suddenly without being grieved. We can readily see that little things may be the entering wedge in the displacement of the Spirit.

SELFISHNESS LEADS INTO DARKNESS

"Love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. 13:10) We who are in Christ Jesus have the righteousness of the Law fulfilled in us, because we are walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Rom. 8:4) The fulfilment of the law is love supreme for God and love for our neighbor as for ourselves. Everything in the nature of selfishness tends to displace love. Selfishness in its various forms is the work of the devil. Selfish ambitions have a distracting influence

and in time will remove us from the Lord. The Apostle mentions as branches coming out of this root of selfishness, anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife—all of which are works of the flesh and the devil, in contrast to the fruits of the Spirit, which are meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly-kindness, and love.—Gal. 5:22, 23.

To whatever extent those begotten of the holy Spirit as dear children of God allow that Spirit to be displaced in their hearts by an evil spirit, to that extent darkness comes in. A little anger dispossesses a proportionate amount of love; a little envy, jealousy or contention is very injurious. Love cannot dwell where strife is found. Whoever, therefore, having received the Spirit of the Lord, allows a wrong spirit of the flesh to return and to displace the Spirit of the new creature, will in that proportion go into darkness.

This darkness will not only cause the person to become more quarrelsome in disposition, but will affect him also in respect to his spiritual vision. As the enlightenment of the holy Spirit gives him a better knowledge of the deep things of God, so, in proportion as this Spirit is lost, the knowledge of the deep things will vanish, until there will be gross darkness. The individual will then be in the same condition as the world in respect to spiritual things. No matter what he once knew and saw, he will not henceforth be able to understand these things; for "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."—reverence him. (Psa. 25:14) To whatever extent we lose the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of love, loyalty and obedience, to that extent we lose its illumination.

The Apostle Paul speaks of the "mystery," which is explained as the peculiar relationship existing between Christ and the church. (Eph. 3:3-6) No one can appreciate this mystery unless he is begotten of the holy Spirit. If one loses the Spirit of his begetting and goes into darkness, how great is that darkness! He loses all knowledge of that mystery.—Matt. 6:23.

Perhaps all have noticed that we may sit in a room dimly lighted and not particularly heed the darkness. But if we go to an adjoining room which is brilliantly lighted, and then re-enter the dimly lighted room, it will seem darker than when we left it. For a time at least we cannot see anything. The eye must become accustomed to darkness gradually. So it is with those who receive the light of truth and afterwards lose it. They seem to go into grosser darkness than before they had the light.

CHRISTIAN STANDARD VERY HIGH

In the heathen world there is gross darkness. With every step of civilization comes a clearer view of the difference

between right and wrong, and a general progress toward the right. Sometimes we find people in the world who have not been begotten of the holy Spirit and who, not having the light in them, are still in darkness, but who try to regulate their conduct by certain principles. They say, "This is right and that is wrong. We will do this, but not that." They make rules of righteousness for themselves, although they are not willing to live up to the drastic laws which the Lord has established as his standard. They say, "We will do what the majority of people think is right." These people form a moral code of their own, based upon what others think. They have no standard other than public opinion. Wherever they go they practise what the majority of their neighbors think to be right.

But the Christian takes the extreme view which God sets before him—full consecration unto death. He is considered an extremist, a fanatic, by the world who hate his course and think it foolish. They say, "You Christians raise the standard too high. We are willing to live up to the standard of the majority in our community, but not to yours. You have such peculiar views."

The Lord's people gauge their views, not by what others think, but by what the Word of God teaches. They say, "To my Lord I must be true." To everything else they decline to conform. Thus they are led by the holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of love, which actuates them. But if this Spirit be extinguished, a mind once under its control will be in a worse condition than that of a worldly mind; for the latter, not having the special direction of the Lord's Spirit, has for its standard the opinion of others. The Lord's people have lost the fear of man, and if they lose also the mind of the Lord, they have no fixed principle to govern their course. Then their natural disposition will assert itself; and the light in them having become darkness, "how great is that darkness!"

St. Paul tells us (Heb. 6:4-6), that "It is impossible . . . to renew again to repentance" any who are wilful sinners against full light and knowledge. These have committed the "sin unto death"—the second death—from which there will be no recovery.—1 John 5:16.

Let us then, while rejoicing in divine favor, see to it that we act circumspectly. Our walk in life is not to be "after the flesh," which leads more or less directly to death, but "after the Spirit," which leads to everlasting life with our Great Redeemer. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."—1 Thess. 4:3.

THE TWO WORDS

PROVERBS 18:8, 21.

"One day a harsh word rashly said,
Upon an evil journey sped,
And, like a sharp and cruel dart,
It pierced a fond and loving heart;
It turned a friend into a foe,
And everywhere brought pain and woe.

"A kind word followed it one day,
Flew swiftly on its blessed way;
It healed the wound, it soothed the pain,
And friends of old were friends again;
It made the hate and anger cease,
And everywhere brought joy and peace.

"And yet the harsh word left a trace
The kind word could not quite efface;
And though the heart its love regained,
It bore a scar that long remained.
Friends could forgive, but not forget,
Or lose the sense of keen regret.

"Oh! if we could but learn to know
How swift and sure our words can go,
How would we weigh with utmost care
Each thought before it sought the air,
And only speak the words that move
Like white-winged messengers of love!"

TO THE JEW FIRST

MARK 7:24-30; MATT. 8:5-13.—OCTOBER 20.

"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."—John 6:37.

There is general confusion prevalent amongst God's people respecting the relationship between the Gospel of Christ and the Jewish nation and between the Jewish nation and all other nations. In the past we have been too free to guess, to imagine, to suppose, and have not carefully enough studied the clear statements of the Bible on this subject. The Bible tells that until the coming of Christ—yea, until three and a half years after Jesus died, arose from the dead and ascended on high, the divine dealings were confined to the Hebrew race—to Abraham and his natural posterity. The whole world is involved in the penalty that came upon Father Adam because of his disobedience—the whole world is under divine sentence as being unworthy of everlasting life or of relationship with God—the whole world, therefore, as St. Paul

describes, "are by nature children of wrath," and all were strangers, foreigners and aliens from God.

The Jews were no better than the remainder of the race, so far as the Scriptures tell, but God, having from the first determined to provide a Redeemer for mankind, through whose kingdom all the world ultimately should be blest and have the privilege of return to divine favor, made a selection of Abraham's posterity, because Abraham himself was a noble character whose faith and obedience to God were thus rewarded. It was not, therefore, anything of which the Jews might boast that their nation and not another nation came into relationship with God through the Law Covenant. It was of divine grace or favor. According to divine prophecy this

favor was to continue with the Jew for a definite period of time, namely, until three and a half years after the cross.

THE GOSPEL OF CORNELIUS

As soon as the limit of time expired God manifested his favor toward the Gentiles by sending the Gospel message to Cornelius, a reverential and holy and generous Gentile. Since then God's favors are as open to the Gentile as to the Jew—"the middle wall of partition" has been "broken down." The Gentiles and Jews are now both received on the same terms, viz., faith in Jesus and consecration to walk in his steps.

It is from this standpoint that we should read the Apostle's statement that the Gospel of Christ "is preached to every creature under heaven." He did not mean nor would it have been true that the Gospel had been preached to every creature in the sense of being proclaimed to all. For now, eighteen centuries later, it has not yet been proclaimed to all mankind. What the Apostle did mean is that the Gospel is now unrestricted, free to be preached to every creature under heaven, no matter what his nationality—that it is no longer confined to Jews as at first. Now, whoever has "an ear to hear, let him hear" the good message of the kingdom. Now, whoever hears and has a heart to accept God's gracious message, let him present his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God through Christ. (Rom. 12:1) Now, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

THE SYRO-PHENICIAN WOMAN'S FAITH

The narrative of today's study fully confirms what we have said about it, namely, that at the time of our Lord's ministry, and for three and a half years after his death, all God's favors still belonged to the Jews only. The Syro-Phenician woman of our study was a Greek—not a Jewess. Her daughter was possessed of an evil spirit, a demon—"obsessed." She heard that Jesus was near the border of Judea, near her home, and she sought him out, imploring that he would cast out the demon.

But Jesus said to the woman, "Let the children first be filled, for it is not proper to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." She understood the force of this statement. The Jews claimed to be God's people, and the Gentiles were styled "Gentile dogs," because they had never been in covenant-relationship with God. Yet the poor woman's faith in Jesus and her earnest desire for the relief of her daughter moved her to press her case and she answered, "Yea, Lord, but the little dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." She was one of these "little dogs"; might she not have the crumb of comfort and blessing which she craved—the healing of her daughter? Jesus replied, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." She got the crumb, her faith prevailed.

Today the Israel of God, to whom belong all the blessings and promises and favors of God, are the Spiritual Israelites. These, through full consecration to the Lord and through the imputation of the merit of Jesus' sacrifice, begotten of the holy Spirit, are embryo sons of God, partakers, inheritors of the divine nature and kingdom.

Have we not, however, from time to time heard of some outsiders—Gentiles—who have never come into covenant-relationship with God and who are therefore strangers and foreigners to all the blessings which belong to the "household of faith"—have we not heard of some of these receiving occasional crumbs of comfort and of blessing? We have. But surely these will be exceptional cases. The door to come into Natural Israel was barred, but the door into Spiritual Israel

is open, and as our text declares, him that cometh unto Jesus he will in no wise reject. Hence there is no excuse today for any being in the attitude of "dogs," receivers merely of an occasional crumb of God's blessing. If they will, the door of favor still stands open that they may become "sons of God without rebuke."

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED

A Centurion in the Roman army service corresponded to a captain in our military service today. Palestine, as a province, was subject to the Roman Empire, and little garrisons of Roman soldiers were stationed here and there, usually under a Centurion. They were Gentiles, of course. One of these knew of Jesus and his mighty works, and when his faithful and appreciated servant fell sick he went to Jesus asking for healing. In our Lord's metaphor this was another Gentile dog desiring a crumb from the children's table.

The Centurion's faith, our Lord declared, was superior to anything that he had found amongst the Israelites, God's favored people. He was so confident of Jesus' power that while he urged that, being a Gentile, Jesus would not wish to honor or recognize him by coming under his roof, yet he besought him simply to say the word and he was sure it would be sufficient to heal his servant. He explained that he had this faith because he himself was a man of authority and could command his servants to come and go, and that as Jesus had still higher authority, his messengers, whatever they were, by which he healed sickness and pain, could be commanded and would obey. He got his request.

Jesus took the occasion to say that the Israelites, who were counting so much on their relationship to God as the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, would find themselves greatly mistaken in the end. Being the children of Abraham did indeed mean that they would have special privileges and opportunities, but these they were enjoying and were not appreciating them. They should not think that God would take them for his elect people regardless of their character, their faith, their obedience, or their likeness to Abraham. They were indeed the children of the kingdom—the ones to whom it was properly first offered, but God would not thrust it upon them.

God did take out of their nation the "Israelites indeed"; meantime the rest were blinded, and for the past eighteen centuries he has been completing the elect kingdom church, out of all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues. But he is selecting none except such as have the faith and obedience of Abraham and the spirit of his Son Jesus—none but the holy, the loyal, the true. These will be associated in the kingdom, while the natural Israelites, over-confident, let the privilege go by.

Nevertheless the Scriptures most clearly declare that the natural seed of Abraham, the Jews, are still heirs of a certain promise of God, which in due time will come to them. To their nation will come the great privilege of being the foremost nation amongst men during Messiah's glorious reign, when the church glorified, spiritualized, will be with him in his throne, invisible to men. St. Paul thus explains that the full number, to complete the elect kingdom class, must be first found amongst the Gentiles, and then, these being glorified in the first resurrection, natural Israel will obtain the great earthly blessings which are still theirs and which were promised to their fathers. Natural Israel will receive blessings from spiritual Israel. "They shall obtain mercy through your mercy."—Rom. 11:25-34.

THE NEW CREATURE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DIVINE LAW

PART II—EXPERIENCE OF THE NEW CREATURE EDUCATIONAL

The new creature is represented by the will, the mind; but there can be no new creature without a body. God does not give the new creature its own body in the present life, but permits it to practise on the old body. And according to the new creature's faithfulness in the old body will be its reward—either as a member of the little flock or of the great company or—for unfaithfulness, its punishment, second death.

The new creature owns the mortal body, possesses that body. The body is not the new creature's body except in a possessive sense. If one were living in a cabin temporarily while his house is being built, and someone else were to ask, "Is that your house?" he would say, "No; I am staying here merely until my house is built." So the new creature occupies the old body. That body is dead because it has been devoted to God in connection with the sin-offering.—Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20.

The Lord knoweth our frame. He knows that we are all fallen, imperfect—mentally, morally, physically. His message

to the new creature is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) This means perfection of will, of intent, of endeavor. But God knows that we have this treasure of the new will in a mortal body, which is imperfect. Through Christ he has made provision that every imperfection of our flesh may be forgiven on condition that we come to him for that forgiveness in the name of our Advocate, Jesus. This arrangement is to our advantage for it leads us to watch the more carefully in respect to our trespasses and to note the more carefully that they cannot be forgiven except through the merit of our Redeemer.

THREE BLESSINGS RESULTING FROM FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE

The experience of the new creature in coming to the Throne of Grace for help is, therefore, educational. It will strive the more diligently, the more earnestly, the more perseveringly, to live according to the will of God, not only in mind, but

also in body. The result of faithfully following this course of daily scrutinizing our thoughts and words and doings must be the strengthening, the fortifying of the new creature against the wiles of the world, the flesh and the adversary.

Additionally, this course must mean not only a higher and nobler earthly life, even though still imperfect, but a great sympathy for others of the human family and for the church, who similarly strive against the weaknesses of heredity in the flesh, and also a general enlightenment of the heart sympathetically toward the members of the human family—born in sin, “shapen in iniquity.” It must mean thus much in preparation for the future kingdom—for helping poor humanity up out of the degradation of sin and death.

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL DECLINE

Although the new creature cannot consent to sin, cannot sin wilfully, cannot sin with deliberation, and still be a holy mind, it can become slack, careless, inattentive, overcharged with the cares of this life—not sufficiently loyal and alert to fight against the great enemy. In this condition it may become more or less stupefied, while the will of the flesh may gain the ascendancy in some particular. The flesh has its cravings, its demands; and it has a plausible way of urging what it thinks to be its rights and privileges. Sometimes the flesh is very persistent along these lines.

If the new creature become overcharged, become weak through a failure to eat the strengthening food which the Father has provided, it may be almost helpless for a time, until at last it becomes non-resistant to sin. To whatever extent the new creature is to blame for this condition, it will receive stripes, not merely as a matter of justice, but also as a matter of correction, for if it were not corrected it might go on to greater carelessness as to its responsibilities.

We all need to be disciplined in order that we may stand firm for the principles of righteousness. To whatever extent the new creature fails to resist the flesh, there will be stripes, punishment of some kind, retribution. But even when those punishments come, there will be the manifestations of the Lord's favor.

The experiences of the Prophet David were not altogether like those of the saints, for he was on a different plane from us. But we may apply the general principles deduced from his experiences. David sinned and the Lord allowed certain chastisements to come upon him. David was contrite and asked forgiveness for those sins. Although he had the light of the Lord's favor, yet the Lord declared that he must be punished for doing those things which he knew were wrong, even though all the while his heart was set on the Lord. The after experiences of the man proved his contrition. He committed sin; he repented; he was forgiven; he was restored to the Lord's favor. Yet in due time he received chastisements for those very sins; and when he received those chastisements, he recognized that they were a just recompense of punishment upon him.

STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WILFUL SIN

Inattention or carelessness on the part of the new creature does not necessarily mean the second death, unless that carelessness went to the extent of intelligent choice of sin—wilful sin. The wilful sinner cuts himself off entirely from divine favor and lapses into the condition of condemnation to death, out of which he had been lifted. Of this the Apostle speaks, saying, “We are not of those who draw back unto perdition,” destruction—second death. Furthermore, it should be noted that none ever steps suddenly from loyalty to disloyalty to God and to righteousness.

Wilful sin coming upon the new creature destroys him so gradually that he seems not to be conscious of its development at the time. First, the wish, the desire, the pride or the ambition develops; he is not submissive to the divine will. Later on, an attempt is made to acquire the gratification of the pride of life, the lust of the eye and of the flesh and a corresponding neglect of the heavenly things—of the hope set before us in the Scriptures and of the covenant of sacrifice which we have made.

A later development of this wrong spirit by and by finds opportunity, under one pretext or another, to put the person into opposition to the Lord, to the truth and to the brethren. He thus gradually passes from being a soldier under the banner of Christ to becoming a co-laborer with the adversary in opposing the things of God.

As the Apostle says, “Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” (James 3:5) Behold what a great destruction of all the work of grace may be accomplished speedily by a little pride or fond desire or self-gratification!—not that the little beginnings mean the second death, but that they will surely lead on toward it unless the individual be recovered. St. James emphasized this thought, saying, “When lust

[desire] has conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished [completed] bringeth forth death.”—James 1:15.

THREE METHODS OF ADMONITION USED BY THE LORD

Meanwhile, while one of the Lord's sheep would be thus straying, would the Great Shepherd be inattentive and allow him to wander without warning? Surely not! Through some divine providence, such as sickness or the coming to the attention of some message from God's Word, directly or indirectly, or through faithful testimony and witness of the brethren, the Lord will speak to all such straying sheep, pointing out to them the danger of the path they are taking. If they heed well, they shall be recovered fully, and ultimately attain to the highest state as overcomers. But the Lord will not coerce.

In the beginning the Lord appealed to our wills, and he continues to do so. The Lord will not use force in the selection of the present time; for He seeketh only such to serve him as worship him in spirit and in truth. The same will which he accepted and which brought us such great blessing can reject God's favors—can receive the grace of God in vain and gradually draw back out of fellowship with the Lord and with the spirit of the covenant and toward the second death.

If the admonitions of the Lord's providences, including the counsel of the brethren, etc., fail, and if there be a measure of ignorance connected with the perverse course, the Lord may give severe chastisements to awaken thoroughly such a person, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, through those chastisements. (1 Cor. 5:5) Many such, the Scriptures assure us, will come up out of great tribulation, washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:14) But while they may attain to a good position on the spirit plane, they have lost the great, pre-eminent prize of joint-heirship with the Lord in the Messianic kingdom, unto which they were called.

ALLOWANCE MADE FOR IMMaturity OF CHARACTER

It seems to be a correct principle, however, that a person begotten of the holy Spirit, who had not yet developed strength of character sufficient to qualify him to be a child of God on the heavenly plane, would not have judgment passed upon him until he had enjoyed the opportunity of coming to a knowledge of present truth and of demonstrating his loyalty.

This thought seems to be borne out by the Apostle in Hebrews 6:4-6. There, where he says in substance. If those who have tasted of the good Word of God and been made partakers of the holy Spirit, shall fall away, it will be impossible to renew them, he implies that those who have not had this opportunity for development are not responsible to such an extent and would not be liable to the second death. If a babe had done something worthy of stripes, he would be treated according to his infancy. The Apostle Peter says, “As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.”—1 Peter 2:2.

These texts seem to suggest a process of development. If one made his consecration today, he would not be counted worthy of the kingdom today; for only through trials and tribulations shall he become worthy. A certain period of probation would be granted to him, an opportunity to make good his covenant of sacrifice. Then if he failed to make good that covenant of sacrifice, he would be responsible in one of the two ways, as we have seen; either he would receive chastisements of the Lord which would bring him to a realization of his privileges, or if wholly unworthy of God, he would go into the second death. Anyone becoming a Christian will have a long enough time in which to make his calling and election sure, if he so run in the race as to obtain.

SELF-IMPOSED DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED

Sometimes God's people, appreciating their own weaknesses, the blemishes of their flesh, properly feel themselves unworthy of the glorious things which God has in reservation for the elect. It is their duty to do the best in their power, but not to attempt to judge, to decide their own cases. There is One that judgeth them, even God. Whatever the sin, whatever the circumstances, it should be taken promptly to the throne of heavenly grace in the name of Jesus, to obtain the mercy of God provided thus, and to find increasing help for future times of need.

We must not become discouraged and lose faith and hope, even though obliged to come to that throne, repentantly, seventy times seven times. To whatever extent, however, the sin be repeated as the result of earthly weaknesses of heredity, to that extent there is forgiveness, in the divine arrangement. But to whatever extent the sin contained a measure of wilfulness, or to whatever extent we failed to use our knowledge and ability to resist it, to that extent the new creature will be held responsible, and will have certain chastisements imposed. Happy are those people who seek to punish themselves

by some discipline, such as fasting. The Apostle says, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" [chastened of the Lord].—1 Cor. 11:31, 32.

We should all keep in memory, however, the fact that God expects of us a demonstration of loyalty to him and to the principles of truth and righteousness—in an overcoming degree. It will not do simply to stand still from week to week and from year to year and to say, "These are my weaknesses and I take them to Jesus." Overcoming is the gaining of some victory by the new creature over besetting weaknesses as well as over trespasses. Only such as strive will be crowned and acknowledged of the Lord as overcomers. And their overcoming will be, not of themselves, but of God's grace and the assistance of the Great Advocate.—1 John 5:4.

THE NEW CREATURE'S RIGHT TO LIFE

From the time that we become new creatures in Christ, a right to life on the spirit plane is given us, just as a right to live on the human plane was granted to Adam when he was created. But as he lost that right to life by disobedience to God, so we, as new creatures, if we sin wilfully, would forfeit that right to live, and we could not be redeemed again, for "Christ dieth no more." (Rom. 6:9) Those who really accept God's proposition as laid down, heartily consecrate themselves, have passed from death to life, and the Apostle says that these are alive.

That right to life, according to the divine record, is a very different matter from anything we had before. Formerly, we had a right to die. Since we became new creatures we have a right to live, unless we take some adverse step. Therefore, it is a very different thing with the church from what it is with mankind. The world will gain the right to life under the opportunities offered to them during the thousand years of Christ's reign. We have that right to live now. Our "life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3) Men can kill the body, but no man can take from us the right to live. Our eternal life has already begun in a sense. We are on trial now, and if we pass the trial successfully, we shall forever possess that right to life.

Not so with the world. There is no provision by which the world has a right to life. "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. 20:5) Therefore the church gets eternal life at least a thousand years before the world will be given the right to everlasting life; it is ours now and forever if we continue faithful unto death. Mankind will all be awakened from the tomb, but we do not know what proportion of them will get everlasting life. We hope that many will obtain it. But there is a difference between having and hoping. We have a right to

life because we are in Christ; because the Father so decreed for us.

DEATH OF HUMAN WILL AT CONSECRATION

At the time of our consecration the old creature dies in the sense that the old will dies. The old will, in the Scriptures termed the "old man" (Col. 3:9), is reckoned dead at the time of our consecration. But this is not real death; and hence there is a continual mortifying until the time of actual death. The Apostle says, "I die daily." (1 Cor. 15:31) His old will was given up. The body of flesh which had belonged to the old creature and which had been reckoned dead since consecration, was not really dead. He was not only reckoned alive as a new creature, but the flesh body was reckoned to be his body until such time as in God's providence, by the power of the first resurrection, he should be clothed upon with his new body. Hence his flesh is the flesh of the new creature, and his body that belonging to the new creature.

The new creature is responsible for the flesh body, and the weaknesses of the old creature are charged up against the new creature. There is an arrangement, however, by which the new creature can have the appropriation of the merit of Christ for the weaknesses of heredity. So St. Paul exhorts the church to come holdly to the throne of grace, there to obtain mercy for the shortcomings of daily life.—Heb. 4:16.

DEATH OF THE HUMAN BODY

The new creature never dies, unless it forfeits its right to life and goes into the second death. What dies is the human body, which was consecrated to death, but which has been loaned to the new creature to practise on, as it were. God gives the new creatures their new bodies in the first resurrection.

Speaking of the first resurrection, St. John says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2) This statement is satisfactory to the Lord's people, for though they might without impropriety be curious to know full particulars respecting their spirit bodies—shape, size, elements, etc.—they can well imagine that the new conditions will be so different from present conditions as to be beyond the power of the human brain to comprehend, no matter how particular the description given. But the whole question is settled with the assurance that the church shall be like her Lord, and see him—not as he was in the days of his humiliation, the man Christ Jesus, nor as he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, robed in flesh in various forms, with various garments—but see him "as he is," behold his glory, and be like him, sharing his glory.

To be concluded in our next issue.

"HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL"

MARK 7:31—8:10.—OCTOBER 27.

"He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."—V. 37.

In previous studies we have noted the fact that Jesus invariably, in connection with his miracles, impressed the healed ones in particular, and all the witnesses in general, with the fact that the healing power was divine, thus to establish faith in God. Today's lesson gives a special illustration along this line. A person was brought to the Savior to heal who was deaf and who had an impediment in his speech. They besought him that he would lay hands on him.

From this it seems evident that most of the miracles were performed by the laying on of hands, although the record also is that some were healed by touching Jesus or touching his garments. In the latter case it is evident that the healed person exercised faith, otherwise he would not have touched the garment in hope of healing. In another case we read that Jesus could not do many mighty works at a certain place on account of their unbelief. Hence, willingly or unwillingly, the power of healing was associated with the exercise of faith; it was either on the part of the sick, or for him by his friends.

The instance under consideration is peculiar. (1) Because Jesus took the man away from the multitude and healed him privately; and (2) it is peculiar as to the means used. He put his fingers into the man's ears, as though to start some life current through them; then he spat and touched the man's tongue. We cannot suppose that the Master's power was limited to these means, when on other occasions he exercised other means. It seems preferable to understand that these methods were used in order to attract the man's attention and assist him in the exercise of faith.

As the man could not hear, nothing said to him could

explain the situation; he could see the spitting, he could feel the touch, he understood what was going on, and incidentally the healing of his person. These matters meant the submission of his mind, or the exercise of a degree of faith. Additionally, after having given those lessons, and while the man still looked at him, Jesus looked up to heaven, and thus the patient had a third lesson on the subject, namely, that the power for his cure was expected from God. Jesus sighed, and said, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened," and immediately the man's ears were opened and the difficulty of his speech was gone.

The statement that Jesus sighed is worthy of note; we can only surmise that it indicated His deep sympathy with the man before him and with the groaning creation in general. We remember another occasion on which it was said that Jesus "groaned in spirit." That was when he stood by the tomb of his friend Lazarus, and saw Mary weeping and the Jews weeping with her. "He groaned in spirit and was troubled," and wept also. The general lesson seems to be that he was

TOUCHED WITH A FEELING OF MAN'S INFIRMITIES,

as had been prophesied. The fact is, he was perfect—he did not have an imperfect body with aches and pains and blemishes, such as other men have, but this did not make him cold and unsympathetic, rather the reverse. His perfect mind would make all his sensibilities more active than ours, his sympathy would be stronger, his sense of pain keener. We, as a fallen race, have become so accustomed to many of our surroundings that they are commonplace and we are inclined to consider them natural—forgetting that the natural

order of man would be the perfect order, and that the blemished state is the unnatural.

In yet another way may we suppose our Master was touched with a feeling of our infirmities, namely, by reason of his losing vitality on the occasion of each miracle. Is not this the meaning of the Scripture which declares that "he poured out his soul unto death"? Daily, hourly, his vitality was being exhausted in the healing, blessing, comforting and instructing of those with whom he was in contact. We have a very clear expression on this very subject, in the case of the poor woman who had an issue of blood for years, and who quietly and unostentatiously touched the hem of his garment, saying within herself, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be healed." She was healed instantly, and Jesus turned himself about and asked, "Who touched me?" for he perceived that virtue, vitality, had gone out of him.

This thought, that the Master was not merely using a divine power as an agent of God, but that he was using up his physical power for man's relief, should properly bring our hearts into very close touch and sympathy with him, and give us that much clearer view of the Savior's love, and that much better foundation for confidence in him in respect to all our affairs.

In the miracle under consideration in this lesson, our Lord's sigh may also have been, as with us, an evidence of physical weakness—the result of his bestowing of his vitality and energy in the cure of the patient. We are not to think of the death of Jesus, therefore, as having been entirely accomplished at Calvary. Rather are we to understand that it began at his consecration, at thirty years of age, at Jordan, and that it continued day after day, and year after year, and merely culminated and was finished at Calvary.

The day before his crucifixion our Lord intimated this. Speaking of his consecration unto death, he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" It was accomplished fully the following day, on Calvary, when he cried, "It is finished!" His baptism into death was accomplished.

"HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL"

It is following the account of this miracle that we read that the multitude declared the words of our text. We are not, however, to understand that merely this one healing was the basis of their comment, for the account of these same instances by St. Matthew (15:29-31) tells of great multitudes gathered, having with them many lame, blind, dumb and maimed and many others, and they cast them down at his feet, and he healed them, insomuch that the multitudes wondered when they saw the dumb speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk and the blind to see, and they glorified the God of Israel.

"MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY"

Let us never lose sight of the great central thought connected with our Lord's miracles. His mission was not to heal the sick and to cast out devils, but to "give His life a

ransom for all, to be testified in due time." The secondary feature of his work was the calling of the "Israelites indeed" to be his footstep followers, who would be received of the Father and begotten of the holy Spirit, at and after Pentecost. The miracles and cures performed were merely incidentals and not his real work. They were incidental in the sense that they were illustrations on a small scale of the great work which his kingdom will accomplish during the thousand years of his reign. Then "all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped."

It would have been a still greater and grander work for Jesus to have expounded the divine plan, and to have opened the eyes of the understanding of the people, and their deaf ears; but this work could not be accomplished to any extent until after he had ascended up on high, and had appropriated the merit of his sacrifice to the justification of believers. Hence it was that Jesus said to his disciples, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father."

And so it is today that the followers of Jesus are permitted to do greater things than he did, greater than any of those miracles, because it is surely a greater miracle to open the mental eyes than to open the physical; to unstop the mental ears is more wonderful than to open the physical ears; to cause the dumb to sing praises to God in the spirit of their minds is still greater work than the giving of natural speech. It is not that we can do greater works than Jesus of ourselves, nor that we could do as great, for without him we could do nothing. As it was Jesus who did the cures accomplished by his apostles when he sent them forth to heal the sick and to cast out devils, so it is Jesus now who is doing these greater things through his consecrated people.

ANOTHER MULTITUDE MIRACULOUSLY FED

The account in the conclusion of this lesson, of the feeding of four thousand people with seven loaves, and the taking up of seven hamperfuls of fragments, was another manifestation of Jesus' power, or as he would express it, of the divine power in him. When the five thousand were fed, five loaves and two fishes were used, and they were gotten from a small boy. In this case the disciples themselves had seven loaves, and gave their all for the feeding of the multitude, and all had sufficient; and the fragments, according to the Master's direction, were again collected.

It is worthy of note that in both cases the Master displayed frugality and encouraged economy on the part of his followers. No doubt it would have been just as easy for him to have created more delicate viands and in great variety. The loaves used then were the same as are used in Palestine today by the natives; they are about the size of our large buns and are made of the entire wheat, ground. Many of the strong natives of Egypt and Palestine seem to live almost exclusively on this bread, about two such small loaves constituting a meal. Quite possibly some of us would find ourselves equally healthy and strong on similarly plain food. It is for us to exercise faith in God and to partake of our daily bread with grateful hearts; there will be a blessing in it, however plain.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES THE SOURCE OF TRUE WISDOM

It is possible that even the Lord's people may sometimes fail to appreciate the value of that great Book, the Bible, which has exerted more influence in the world than all other books combined. Few realize that the Bible has been in the hands of the public for only about one century. When our oldest Bible Societies were organized, Bibles were possessed by the rich alone. Now they are to be found in every house and can be obtained free of cost by the destitute. Additionally, many helps to Scripture study are in print and people are learning the value of some of these and the usefulness of Bible Concordances.

Furthermore, we are prone to forget that general knowledge has just begun to reach the masses. It is not more than a dozen years since education has been made compulsory in all the most civilized lands. Thus God has favored our day in a two-fold manner—by giving us the Bible and by giving the intelligence necessary to its study.

HIGHER CRITICISM THE MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY TO FAITH

But just as these most precious opportunities are in the hands of the masses, just as these blessings of increased knowledge are being given to humanity, just as Christendom is prepared for Bible Study, the Lord has allowed the adversary to bring forward the most subtle influence in opposition to the Scriptures. The foul-mouthed infidelity of the past has been supplanted by a far more dangerous enemy to Christian faith—the infidelity generally known as "Higher Criticism," especially dangerous because of its insidious character.

Higher Criticism has entrenched itself in nearly all the colleges and theological seminaries of Christendom. While all of our churches of all denominations ostensibly stand as defenders of the Bible, yet the citadel of faith is being captured by the great adversary of God and the truth—Satan—who is deceiving, estranging and misleading the hosts of Christendom through the very theological professors and doctors of divinity to whom they have been led to look for spiritual light and direction and whom they had supposed to be staunch defenders of the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

This arraignment is severe, but it is a generally truthful one, as each may demonstrate for himself. Most regretfully we are persuaded that four out of every five of all the ministers and Sunday School superintendents of Christendom have ceased to believe in the Bible as the Divinely inspired revelation of the will and the purposes of the Almighty. Some of these, nevertheless, claim to be earnest followers of Jesus, as the Son of God and of divine origin. Yet how weak is their position! If Moses did not write the law, if that law is not inspired, what shall we think of Jesus and his apostles, who accepted these writings as inspired and founded all their teachings thereupon? Most evidently, Higher Critics who still believe in Jesus as the divine Son of God have not thought logically on the proposition, and upon further reflection will reject everything pertaining to the Scriptures.

THOUSANDS ARE FALLING INTO INFIDELITY

While sorrowfully we behold the fulfilment of the Scriptures in the falling away of these our friends who have been ensnared by the great fowler (Psa. 91:3), we are not compelled by anything either in reason or in the Scriptures to suppose that their punishment for such infidelity will be eternal torment. We feel sure that the Lord's people are growing stronger in their faith day by day; even though as foretold by the Scriptures a thousand shall fall at their side and ten thousand at their right hand.—Psa. 91:7.

The study of the Bible with the assistance which God now provides is clearing up the mysteries which have perplexed us all our lives and is bringing us to greater appreciation of his glorious purposes, to greater loyalty to him and to a more earnest desire to serve his cause of righteousness and to lift up the standard of the Cross of Christ. Truly, as the Lord through the Prophet has promised, our feet have been kept from stumbling, because the greater intelligence of our day has lifted us up to a higher plane of devotion and appreciation of the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of God, which passeth all understanding!

SOME MAY BE RECOVERED FROM THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER

We are not speaking harshly nor unkindly of our dear friends who are stumbling over the educational opportunities of our day. On the contrary, we sympathize with them. Once we stood exactly where they stand. Once we repudiated the Bible as the Word of God. We were as honest then as we are today, and feel bound to give credit to others for equal

honesty. We explain their position by the realization of the fact that they are blinded by the dazzling glare of the earthly science of our day. If they ever knew the Scriptures, they have forgotten and have dropped the Science which comes only from above. We trust that some of them may be recovered from the snare of the adversary, as were we.

There is, however, a marked difference between the position of the so-called Higher Critics and that of ourself. The majority of them seem to exult in their unbelief and to pride themselves upon opposition to the Bible, while our position was the very reverse of this. We deplored the necessity for abandoning the Bible. We considered it the rational thing to expect from the Supreme Creator some revelation of his purposes respecting mankind—the object of their creation, the purpose to be attained by the permission of evil and kindred themes. This revelation we had hoped the Bible to contain.

We have no doubt that many of you have had experiences similar to our own. Let us hope that as we have been recovered from the snare of the fowler, so also may some others be. Let us be prompt to lend the helping hand and to give an encouraging word. Let us realize that to the honest-hearted the loss of the Bible must mean disaster to faith and hope, as it was in our own case. Let us trust that there are many others as honest as ourselves, who will yet be recovered. Let us be encouraged to help them by a remembrance of how great a blessing came to us through the proper understanding of the Word.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS**WILL GREAT COMPANY HAVE PART IN FIRST RESURRECTION?**

Question.—Will the great company have part in the first resurrection?

Answer.—Those in the first resurrection will live and reign with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4, 6) Therefore those of the great company will have no part whatever in the first resurrection. The Apostle Paul speaks of Christ's resurrection—"That I might know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made comfortable unto his death." (Phil. 3:10) This is the first resurrection.

There are, however, two other Scriptures which include the great company: Heb. 12:23, where the Apostle speaks of the church of the first-borns whose names are written in heaven, and Rev. 21:27, where mention is made of those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. All will attain life on the spirit plane, whose names are written in the Book of the Lamb, and the Lord said that he would not blot out the names of any overcomers.—Rev. 3:5.

Do the great company overcome? Yes. God has no blessings to give to those who are not overcomers. What is the difference between the great company and the little flock? The difference is that the little flock are those who are more than loyal to God. The great company will be loyal to God in that they will not withhold their lives when the test shall come. They will perish rather than deny the Lord; and thus they will experience the destruction of the flesh. But they did not go forth with sufficient zeal to carry out their consecration. They were loyal to God, but they did no more than maintain their loyalty.

Then we have our Lord's statement as recorded in John 5:28, 29: "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." This will include both the little flock and the great company; both classes will get eternal life. If this statement includes the ancient worthies, then it means three classes: the little flock, the great company and the ancient worthies, though there will be different planes of perfection—human perfection, then the perfection that will be like that of the angels, and lastly the perfection that will come to those who shall be like Christ, namely, that of the divine nature.

"WISDOM—RIGHTEOUSNESS—SANCTIFICATION—REDEMPTION"

Question.—In what way was our Lord made unto us wisdom, righteousness [justification], sanctification and redemption?—1 Cor. 1:30.

Answer.—In a great variety of ways our Lord was made unto us wisdom. He is the Head of the church which is his body. And as the head is the center of knowledge, so the Lord Jesus is the Head of his church. But the particular thought of the text seems to be that of a progressive order. Looking, then, to see how Jesus was our wisdom before he became our justifier and sanctifier, we perceive that the

Scriptural declaration is that "no man cometh to the Father but by" our Lord.

Previous to justification the Father draws, for none can come to Christ except through the Father. After the Father has drawn, the wisdom comes from Christ, who instructs us how to come to the Father. Just as the disciples were instructed by our Lord, so it is all the way down throughout the age. There is no other way by which men may be saved—"None other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Sinners could not be acceptable to the Father except by the way of justification such as the Father has provided. This justification means their blessing. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28) We need to be instructed. The light was not prior to Jesus Christ; for we read that he is the light. He makes that statement himself: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—John 1:9; 8:12.

This wisdom was first promulgated by our Lord. So the same wisdom which instructed his disciples guides men back to the Father, instructs them as to what discipleship means, makes them wise in order that they may take the steps by which that discipleship is to be gained. Whoever will be his disciples must take up their cross and follow him. No matter in what way one may get the wisdom, it comes to him from our Lord Jesus Christ; and without this wisdom we could not know how to come to God. No one can ever come to God without this wisdom. And so his wisdom instructs what will be the reward of discipleship.

Our Lord appeared in the presence of God for us—on our behalf. Thus, according to the Father's plan and arrangement, he became the justifier of those who come to the Father by him, and none can get the justification except by assisting them in everything necessary to their sanctification. They have the will to do, and as they have this will, so now he works in them a sanctified character in life.

This course being followed, the one who has the wisdom of the narrow way first obtains justification through our Lord's blood and then justification through following in the Lord's footsteps. Finally comes the deliverance [redemption] by the first resurrection. The One who led us all the way is the One who leads us still and who will finally lead us into the New Jerusalem, the glorious condition beyond the veil.

FORGIVENESS OF ALL SIN

Question.—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) How comprehensive is the word "all" here used?

Answer.—Except sin against the holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31, 32), all manner of sin amongst the sons of men shall be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. The holy Spirit here denotes a light, an intelligence, respecting God's

purpose. Whoever wilfully and intelligently would sin against Jesus, would be guilty of blasphemy against the holy Spirit. But if he blaspheme the name of Jesus, being deceived in some way, then the sin is not blasphemy against the holy Spirit and may be forgiven. In the case of the church, these forgivable sins will be forgiven through the Advocate, who has appeared for us in the heavenly court and can restore us to favor with the Father, unless we sin against full light and knowledge. To do this would be to take ourselves out of his hands.

But there might be a sin partly wilful—a sin in which both superstition or weakness and a certain amount of wilfulness had a part. As to how this would be possible we answer that there is a difference between the forgiveness of the moral obliquity and the sin. For instance, a child has committed some trespass and the parent says, "I will punish you for what you have done." There might be two parts of the punishment, one corporal punishment, the other the displeasure of the parent.

With some children the latter part of the punishment, the cloud between the child and parent, would be unbearable. Then the parent might say, "Since you tell me that you are sorry and that you will never do it again, I forgive you. But I told you that there would be a penalty attaching to disobedience. I will make the penalty as light as would seem best in my judgment, but you must still bear punishment." And that which would be proper for an earthly parent we may consider might be done by the Heavenly Father.

In the case of the Prophet David: he committed two very serious, grievous sins—one in respect to Uriah and Uriah's wife, and the other in respect to Uriah's death. But we remember with what perseverance David pleaded with the Lord; and though the Lord indicated His forgiveness, yet there must be a punishment. David's child died.—2 Sam. 12:15-22.

Again, Satan provoked David to number Israel, contrary to the command of the Lord; God was displeased and smote Israel. Again David repented and prayed earnestly for forgiveness. The Lord offered him three things, one of which he must choose as the punishment for his sin. "Thus," saith the Lord, "Choose thee either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel." (1 Chron. 21:10-14) Realizing his own weakness, David, in humility declined to make a choice. The three days' pestilence was sent upon Israel, and there fell seventy thousand men; but in the meantime, before the punishment reached David, he had received the Lord's forgiveness for his sin.

So with the sins of the Lord's people. If there is more or less of ignorance, then the punishment is in proportion to the amount of wilfulness. Temptations come to us and to all mankind. Christ died for man's sin, from which he freely absolves the whole human family—the church now, and the world in their day of trial.

INTERESTING LETTERS

MY DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL:—

We are now paying our 15th annual visit as evangelists to our native county of Worcestershire, and being supplied from your London depot with two large parcels of your publications, we are entering upon a new phase of the Mission. We have already distributed large quantities in Sydenham and London. I regard them as direct and powerful weapons of destruction against (1) Darwin's doctrine of Evolution; (2) Roman Catholicism; (3) John Calvinism; (4) The natural immortality of the soul; (5) The ferocious doctrine of eternal torment in hell; (6) The monkish teaching of an eternal devil;—and reconstruction in favor of (1) A Scriptural mode of exegesis of the Bible; (2) The true science of geology and the creation of the earth, involving its perpetuity; (3) The divinity of Christ on which doctrine the ransom-price is paid; (4) God's "plan" of destroying evil and establishing everlasting righteousness as one Jehovah; (5) Making future life depend on resurrection; (6) The doctrine of restitution "of all things spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets since the world began."

In these books issued by your Society there is a grace and power of expression which, accompanied by high intelligence, makes them most suitable to place in the hands of all classes, the religious and the irreligious alike, and therefore the uncompromising spirit of toleration and the absence of offensive dogma breathed through every page of these writings reflect great credit upon both the publishers and the author. They are well adapted to accomplish the work for which they are intended. I am pleased, even delighted, at having discovered such labor and laborers in the Master's vineyard and I hope heartily to co-operate in such labors until "the laborer's task is o'er" and we are called to higher services.

The teachings are not new to me as you will have observed from my publications, but although David and Solomon were closely related, and deeply interested in God's purposes, what David was not called upon nor permitted to do, Solomon in due time accomplished.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

He is the Great Supreme. Praise His Holy Name!

Yours in the hope of Christ, (Rev.) J. MARTIN.

DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL:—

I have been enjoying the light of present truth for two and a half years. The vow did not appeal to me when first I read it, but as time passed I realized the narrowness of the way and in November last I decided to take the vow, and have been greatly blessed by so doing. In times of trial it has been a great help to know that others of like precious faith are praying for me. The part that helps me most is scrutinizing my thoughts and words.

Before coming into present truth I was a member of the M. E. Church. When my husband received present truth I felt very much worried about him and asked my Pastor if he had ever heard of MILLENNIAL DAWN books. He told me that the books were worse than poison; if they were branded poison, no one would touch them. As my husband attended the church with me I asked the minister to call and have a talk with him, but he never came and I thought he did not do his duty; so I left the church and went to a mission. My friends and I prayed earnestly for my husband and at last I pleaded with our Heavenly Father to show me if I was wrong and my husband was right.

In a short time I got the "hell" theory cleared up; having a dear brother burned to death who did not profess to be a Christian, and, having asked fully one dozen ministers where he was and gotten ten different answers, it almost made me an unbeliever in the Bible!

May the dear Father continue to bless you! Grace be to you, and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ!

Brother Moody and I send our names, as we have taken the Vow.

With Christian love,

MR. AND MRS. EDWIN R. MOODY.—Can.

BROTHER RUSSELL'S ITINERARY

Lv. Halifax	I. C. Ry.	8:00 a. m.	(A. T.)	Mon. Sept. 30
Ar. Hamilton	G. T. Ry.	5:43 p. m.	(E. T.)	Mon. Oct. 1
Lv. "	"	3:45 p. m.	"	Wed. " 2
Ar. London	"	6:30 p. m.	"	" " 2
Lv. "	"	11:35 a. m.	"	Thu. " 3
Ar. Flint	"	2:10 p. m.	(C. T.)	" " 3
Lv. " P. M. Ry.	"	3:35 p. m.	"	" " 3
Ar. Saginaw	"	4:20 p. m.	"	" " 3
Lv. " "	"	12:30 noon	"	Fri. " 4
Ar. G'd Rapids	"	4:20 p. m.	"	" " 4
Lv. " "	"	11:30 p. m.	"	" " 4
Ar. Chicago	"	6:55 a. m.	"	Sat. " 5
Lv. " C. & A. Ry.	"	9:00 a. m.	"	" " 5
Ar. Springfield	"	2:25 p. m.	"	" " 5

SPECIAL INTEREST TO VOLUNTEERS

In view of the world-wide discussion of the "Hell-fire and Brimstone" question, as a result of the public repudiation of certain erroneous ideas connected with that subject by the I. B. S. A. in recent convention at Washington, D. C., a special edition of the PEOPLE'S PULPIT, Vol. IV, No. 7, has been prepared. It consists mainly of press comments and expressions from eminent clergymen, Catholic and Protestant, respecting the I. B. S. A. Anti-hell-fire Resolution. A large quantity of said issue are now being printed for general use as a supplementary volunteer number for this year. We would not discourage the output of our regular volunteer edition, but believe this to be an opportune time to immediately cover again your territory with this "Hell-fire and Brimstone" edition. Order freely as many as you can use.