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page 241

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CONTENTS

Members of Christ's Household.....	243
Those Who Constitute the Church of the Present Time.....	243
Those Who Will Have Their Portion With the Hypocrites.....	244
Progressive and Completed Justification.....	246
"Callesh Those Things Which Be Not as Though They Were".....	247
"The Better Sacrifices".....	247
Is Death Extinction?.....	248
The Camel and the Needle's Eye.....	249
The Blotting Out of Sins.....	250
"The Parable of the Talents".....	251
Keeping Ourselves in the Love of God.....	252
"Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled".....	253
Brother Russell's Reply to the Slander.....	253
Some Interesting Letters.....	254
Berean Questions in Scripture Studies.....	255

page 242

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MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S HOUSEHOLD

THE Church of Christ is an aggregation of individuals which may be viewed from different standpoints. In the "Divine Plan of the Ages" we show on a chart the Gospel Age and its various united elements. Above the line of consecration are two classes, representing the Great Company and the Little Flock. Below the line of consecration there is another class shown, the justified, who do not go on to complete their justification by consecration. Under the line or plane of justification is shown another class--hangers-on, denominated hypocrites. In the further development of the chart we show these last two classes--the justified, who do not go on to consecration, and the "tares" or hypocrites --both as falling away in this day of trouble, called the time of the harvest, being separated from the spiritual classes, the Little Flock and the Great Company.

However, during the Gospel Age, the "wheat" and the "tares" grow together, and together they represent the Kingdom of God, as the Lord Jesus shows in the parable. (Matthew 13.) In other words, God speaks of the Church as a whole, including in the appellation the baser adherents as well as the fully consecrated.

This is shown again in Revelation, where the Lord addresses the Laodicean Church, "Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock." (Rev. 3:19,20.) He thus indicates that from his viewpoint, which is all wisdom, he discerns in his Church what we may perhaps partially discern, but could not definitely determine and would not be allowed to specify. He sees, he determines, which are the fully consecrated, and which are not fully consecrated. We could ascertain that condition only by inquiry of the individual, and even then if he chose to misrepresent his position and to claim that he is a consecrated believer, we should not be in a position to judge him or decide against his expression, except his fruitage betray his words; as the Lord says, "By their fruits shall ye know them"--not merely by their professions, but by their fruits. But aside from any fruits that would be injurious, we are to accept the profession of all who claim to be believers and consecrated. Hence, if there is an election in the Church, in which only the consecrated would be invited to participate --and if there are any whose outward conduct is moral and who make profession of being consecrated--it would not be within our province to sit in judgment upon them and condemn them and say that they are not of the Church. Rather we should be obligated to accept their vote the same as any other.

THOSE WHO CONSTITUTE THE CHURCH OF THE
PRESENT TIME

In a complimentary sense all believers in Christ, who are approaching the Lord and who have turned from the world and have professed to have fellowship with God's consecrated people and who are giving indications of

R4654 : page 243

progress in that direction, and to whom the Lord is drawing near, may be considered probationary members of the Church. So the Lord says unto these, "Draw nigh unto me, and I will draw nigh unto you." (Jas. 4:8.) If they come together, then, with the Lord's people, the result may be their full consecration to the Lord and their begetting of the holy Spirit, thereby constituting them New Creatures in Christ. If they fail to go on, they fail to obtain full justification and the seal of sonship and covenant relationship with the Lord. Such will eventually be discarded entirely. The Harvest and the sifting process --the winnowing of the "chaff" from the "wheat"--will blow these away, as the Lord represented in the parable, and they will no longer even pretend to be of the true Church. The line of demarcation, before the close of the Harvest time, will become so distinct that it will leave no question as to who are and who are not of the Church.

Coming down, then, more particularly to the difference between "the more than conquerors," the "Little Flock," and the conquerors, the "Great Company," we recognize both of these as being of the Church of Christ, both as being represented in the original and preliminary type of the Church, viz., the Passover. On that night of passing over, which typified this Gospel Age and the passing over of "the Church of the First-borns," we find that all the first-born of Israel were passed over, and that subsequently the Lord exchanged these first-borns for the tribe of Levi, including not only the first-born of every family of that tribe, but all the Levites; and so all of the Levite class are passed over. And the types further show us that both the Little Flock, the Royal Priesthood, and the Great Company, the antitypical Levites, are "the household of faith," both constituting the "Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23);

R4654 : page 244

and, if not blotted out, their names will continue there, and they will have part in the heavenly inheritance.

THE ANTITYPICAL TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

The share of each of the above classes in the heavenly inheritance is shown in Revelation 7, where, first, the Little Flock is spoken of as constituting Israel--the twelve tribes of Israel. Those of the Jewish nation who maintained their relationship with God were not broken

off from that position, but instead, were transferred from natural Israel and became the nucleus of spiritual Israel. Inasmuch as this left many of the designed number yet to be provided for, God arranged, as had been shown through the prophets would be done, that the deficiency should be supplied from amongst the Gentiles. So, then, the work of this Gospel Age has been to fill up those twelve tribes with Gentiles to take the places of the Jews who were broken off from that special place or plane of privilege. And we, if we make our calling and election sure, shall be of these twelve tribes, though we may not know to which tribe we shall be assigned.

To illustrate: A man enlisting here in New York for military service might be sent to one or another of the different regiments to be filled up from time to time; so with us. The Lord in his providence fills up these tribes of Israel, the whole number being stipulated to be 12,000 for each tribe, or 144,000 altogether. It might make no particular difference to us to which tribe we belong, and yet there is a bare possibility that since our Lord is "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah," there may be some special gradation suggested in this tribe; so this Royal Priesthood may be divided into twelve different classes.

There is no revelation on this subject, and it behooves us "not to be wise above that which is written"; but since these tribes had different standings, as shown in the prophecies made respecting them, so there is seemingly quite a possibility that there will be twelve different stations or ranks among the saints.

THE GREAT COMPANY

Aside from the special class of overcomers, the "more than conquerors," as the Apostle calls them, those who voluntarily and willingly lay down their lives, presenting their bodies living sacrifices, and carrying out that consecration to sacrifice--aside from these, there is a large number of consecrated people of God. We do not know their number, which has not been predestinated, as is shown in Revelation--"Whose number no man knoweth." All are called to the Priesthood; all consecrate to be priests, but failing to make their calling and election sure as Priests, many of these fall back into this Great Company class, who not only made a consecration, but were begotten of the holy Spirit, and are, therefore, the Lord's, his children on the spirit plane. These are such as did not draw back in the sense in which the Apostle speaks when he says, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." We understand the Apostle here to mean a drawing back unto perdition--the words, "draw back," signifying to do despite to all the favors of God, to lose all relationship with the Lord, to turn back to wallowing in the mire of sin and to take pleasure in the works of the flesh and the devil--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife.

This Great Company, however, while failing to go forward voluntarily and gladly to perform their sacrifices, as they had covenanted to do, will not be cast away, because they are still at heart faithful to the Lord; but they will be dealt with in a special manner by the great Redeemer, the Head of the Church. His dealing with them will be, as Scripturally shown, to send them away "into the wilderness," into a great "time of trouble," where they will have special and severe testings, which will demonstrate their character definitely; and where they must give up their lives. Either they will renounce the things of the Lord and forsake him, or they will desire to be faithful to the Lord and to hold fast to him. If they thus hold fast they will be counted of that Great Company of whom the Revelator says (Rev. 7), "After this I beheld and, lo, a Great Company out of all nations and peoples and kindreds and tongues, stood before the throne. And the angel said unto me, Who are these? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest; and he said, These are they which have come up out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple"; and palm branches were given unto them.

Here we see a wide distinction between this Great Company of spirit-begotten ones, ultimately overcomers, who will be "before the throne" and have palm branches, palms of victory, and who will have washed their robes and made them white during the time of trouble, and the Little Flock who will sit with the Lord in his throne and who, instead of bearing palm branches of victory, will have the crowns of glory; and, instead of serving in the Temple, will be the Temple itself. As it is written of the "more than conquerors," "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God."--Rev. 3:12.

The differentiation, or separation, between these two classes in the "Church of the First-born" is marked, as indicated by the Lord's parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins--a parable which, by the description, we see is applicable in the end of this Age. According to this parable certain tests will come and some will be found "watching" with their lamps trimmed and burning, and will be listening to hear the Bridegroom's call, and will go forth, braving opposition and hostility and darkness of the night through which they must pass, to go with their beloved Bridegroom to his home and enter in. When the last one of these Wise Virgins shall have gone in, we are told that the door will be shut, by which we understand that the door of privilege to enter that class will be closed to all the rest of mankind. But we are to remember that the entire ten virgins represent the Kingdom of Heaven, or, in other words, the Church. Hence a part of that Church is shut out when the door is closed. Not merely is the world shut out, but the Foolish Virgins also, who, however, are not to be counted with the

world, because they are "Virgins." They are Virgins who have been associated with the Wise Virgins, and for a time without any distinction being apparent, but who in the testing time are not found worthy to be of the Bride class.

THOSE WHO WILL HAVE THEIR PORTION WITH THE HYPOCRITES

These Foolish Virgins, the parable shows us, will finally learn the way. They will get the oil and will trim their lamps. In other words, they will receive a larger measure of the holy Spirit, represented by the oil, and will have clearer enlightenment from the Word of God, represented by the lamp. They will trim their lamps and go forth then, that they, also, may enter into the Marriage; but they will find that the Wise Virgins have all gone in and that the door is shut. Then they will stand

R4654 : page 245

without and knock, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us" (Matt. 25:11); we desire also to be of the Bride class; we desire also to enter the heavenly glory. The Lord will answer them, however, and say, "I know you not." I do not recognize you. I recognize only one "Bride." My Bride class has already entered in, and I cannot recognize others as the Bride. These shall then go away into the time of trouble to wash their soiled robes and make them white.

This time of trouble, we understand, is the great "time of trouble" that is coming upon the world. It will also be upon this Great Company class, which will not "be accounted worthy to escape those things coming upon the earth." The Lord admonishes us prophetically that there would be some such; and he warns us saying, "Pray that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36.) The Little Flock watches and escapes and will stand before the Son of Man approved and will be received as the Bride of Christ. But this Great Company, although they are consecrated and spirit-begotten, and have never denied the Lord, have not, nevertheless, the proper zeal and spirit of self-sacrifice and will not be permitted to enter in with the Bride class,

R4655 : page 245

but will be thrust out and "have their portion with the hypocrites."

These are not hypocrites, however, but since the time of trouble is properly for hypocrites, they will have their portion with the hypocrites. The parable shows us nothing further respecting these, but we are shown elsewhere (Rev. 7) that in that time of trouble they "will wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the

Lamb." As a result they will be granted the palm branches and the place before the throne, to serve God in his Temple.

"THE KING'S DAUGHTER--THE VIRGINS, HER COMPANIONS,
THAT FOLLOW"

The same thought we find given us in Psalm 45, where the end of this age is pictured. There our Lord is shown as the great King in glory. The Church, the Little Flock, is pictured as the Bride, and the Great Company, as her virgin companions, that follow her. We are also told in that connection that the Bride will have special adornment, special beauty, and will have the special place of preference. Another Scripture tells us that there is but one Bride of Christ, saying, "My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her Mother." (Cant. 6:9.) Reverting to Psalm 45 again: We are told that after the Bride, adorned in golden raiment and fine linen, is received by the King, the Virgins, her companions, shall also be brought before the King and shall enter into the Palace. This is in perfect agreement with the custom of olden times, that when a wife was taken, the father would present with the wife, a maid-servant, who would accompany her mistress and would necessarily be associated with her. Sometimes more than one maid-servant would be presented, as pictured in this Psalm. Now, if a Bridegroom were alluding to his family, while he would speak of only the one person as his wife, he would include as a part of his family or household her maid-servants. So likewise in this family of Christ. Not only is the Bride to be the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, and joint-heir with him, but the Virgins, her companions that follow her, will be members of his general family or household, honorable servants, but not on the plane of the Bride, who will share the glory, the honor and the nature of the Bridegroom.

NEITHER PRIESTS NOR LEVITES HAD INHERITANCE
IN THE LAND

In the type of the Priesthood, and the Levites, Aaron and his sons constituted the Priesthood, and only these had to do with the offering on the Day of Atonement, and only these had special rights and privileges. Neither Priests nor Levites, however, had inheritance in the land with the others. (Num. 18:20; Deut. 18:1,2). Thus again was shown the fact that this Great Company, represented by the Levites, as well as the Little Flock, represented by the Priests, will have no inheritance in the earthly promises, in the earthly possession, in the earthly restitution. Their inheritance will be on the spirit plane, separate and distinct from all the remainder of the world, which will then come into blessing under the Royal Priesthood and this company of Levites or instructors. In the case of the Levites, we remember that they were set apart to serve

the Tabernacle. The Great Company are said to serve in the Temple, and the Priest Class, the Little Flock, we have said before, are the Temple. In other words, the Great Company class will be the servant-class on the spirit plane; so it was in the type. The Lord said to Aaron that he had given all the Levites to be servants of the priests in their ministry; so the two figures correspond.

Coming down then finally to the question, we see that in the present time it is not pertinent for us to attempt too closely to decide who will be of the Bride Class and who will be of the Great Company, as all are of the Ecclesia; but, as the Scriptures say, to "walk humbly," lest we ourselves should not be accounted worthy of the great prize.

It is for us to trust that we may be amongst those "more than conquerors," who by zealously laying down their lives in a sacrificial manner shall be reckoned worthy to be of the Royal Priesthood--to "sit with him in his throne, even as he also overcame and is set down with the Father in his throne."

Considering the Church, then, as those who will ultimately be accepted as of the Priesthood, it consists of the Bride class alone and no others; however, from another viewpoint, we may speak of the entire household of faith, including both the Great Company and the Little Flock, the real Church of the First-born, as antitypical Levites. The Apostle speaks of the Church in its present condition, saying, "Ye are a Royal Priesthood," referring, of course, to what is the ultimate aim, the ultimate hope set before us all, whether we make our "election sure" or not. Again the Apostle Paul speaks of the Church and likens it to the members of the human body, saying, "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; neither the head to the foot, I have no need of thee"; for every member is necessary. (I Cor. 12:21.) We understand the Apostle here to be speaking of all of the consecrated, and not specially differentiating between the Little Flock and the Great Company. Indeed, we are not at present competent to form such a distinction or such a classification. That is decidedly the Lord's work during this time in which we are living, the harvest time, and he will separate those who are sacrificers from those who are not sacrificers.

"Up, then, and linger not, thou saint of God,
Fling from thy shoulders each impeding load;
Be brave and wise, shake off earth's soil and sin,
That with the Bridegroom thou mayest enter in.
O watch and pray!

"Gird on thy armor; face each weaponed foe;
Deal with the sword of heaven the deadly blow;
Forward, still forward, till the prize divine
Rewards thy zeal, and victory is thine;
Win thou the crown!"

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PROGRESSIVE AND COMPLETED JUSTIFICATION

THE Court and the Tabernacle may properly be viewed from two different standpoints, the one representing the final accomplishment of the things typified and the other representing the tentative accomplishment of those things and the progress toward their full attainment. For instance, not every one who makes the consecration to death and passes beyond the first veil of consecration into the holy or spirit-begotten condition will be a Priest, and yet only the Priests were allowed in the Tabernacle. Those who come into this Tabernacle now by consecration and fail to become Priests will fail to keep their standing in this place. They purpose to live up to their consecration, but come short; hence they fail to maintain their standing as Priests, but fall back and become Levites.

Likewise some come into the Court and essay to be antitypical Levites who do not attain to all the privileges of Levites because they do not conform their lives fully to all that is required of Levites. Such are reckoned as coming into the Court condition for a time, but, failing to go on and make consecration, lose their standing, the prospective standing of Levites. As it is only a tentative standing, originally, they must come up to certain requirements to make it sure, to make their selection as Levites firm, positive, lasting.

STEPS NECESSARY TO BECOME A LEVITE

Whoever takes the first step of belief and turns from sin and approaches the altar, and then goes on toward the laver, is certainly evidencing the fact that he desires to be one of the Levite class; but he is a member of this Levite class, as yet, only in this tentative or prospective sense. The Levites must go further than merely believing in Christ and turning from sin. Every Levite must figuratively receive the anointing oil on his ear, his thumb and the great toe of his right foot. He must make his consecration the same as that of the priests; he must be fully consecrated in order to serve. The person, therefore, who has merely turned away from sin and has in antitype received no recognition of the holy Spirit either upon his ear, thumb or toe, has not become, in the fullest sense, a Levite and if he does not go on and become a Levite in full he will not, by and by, have a right to any place in the Court condition--when the testing time shall prove that he has not gone on to make good, to accomplish, his consecration as a Levite.

What, then, is necessary to become a Levite? We answer: The same consecration is necessary to a Levite

that is necessary to a Priest, and those who will become Levites must make the consecration even unto death, and, if they fail to become Priests, it is because they do not carry out that consecration unto death. But though losing their position as Priests, if they still maintain their faith and a measure of obedience, they are counted as of the household of faith, typified by the Levites. In other words, the "Great Company" class is the Levite class, and no one can be of the "Great Company" class unless he has made a consecration; and he is counted an antitypical Levite only because of his failure to be of the priestly class, the sacrificing class. Those who never go on so far as to make a consecration, never get justification in full in the present life. Their hope will be the same as that of the remainder of the world, viz., a hope of actual justification during the Millennial Age --Restitution. In other words, this matter of faith-justification is merely an incidental feature connected with the consecration to death--for the selection of this special class which is now being called. To impute justification to any except these would be greatly to their disadvantage.

CHRIST'S MERIT NOT IMPUTED BEFORE CONSECRATION

To use an illustration: Suppose that Brother A had full justification accounted to him and was introduced to the Father, and suppose that Brother A then failed to maintain his justified standing; the result would be that he would fall into the Second Death, because he had had, in this faith-justification, all that Christ could give him; there would be nothing more to give him by and by. He could not come in with the world and get a share in the world's justification. Therefore the Lord has arranged that none shall have this complete faith-justification now except those who first turn from sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who, on the strength of that turning from sin and faith in Christ, present their bodies living sacrifices to God. God's arrangement for such is that Christ shall then step in, and that which they had been enjoying in a measure, previously, as regards relationship to God, etc., is brought to its actual fulness when Christ imputes his merit to that which they have fully consecrated to death--their earthly life, their earthly nature. He imputes his merit to them at the moment of their having presented themselves; and at that moment the Father accepts the sacrifice and seals or shows his acceptance by the impartation of the holy Spirit, begetting them to the new nature. So, then, none now get justification in this full sense except those who have made the consecration and been accepted, and they can never regain the earthly rights because these were given up.

To suppose that any during this age would be justified and maintain merely justification, while others would be sanctified, would be to suppose that God had called two

classes, which he has not done--"Ye are all called in the one hope of your calling" and that one hope and that one calling of the Church is to membership in Christ, to be of the Royal Priesthood.

Those who merely believe and fail to lay down their earthly life, their earthly nature, will not get the new nature, and therefore will have all the rights of that earthly nature by and by, during the Millennial Age, under the terms and conditions that God has provided for all mankind. They still belong to the human family, for whom Christ died. When the time shall come for him to make application of his merit on behalf of Israel, and all the families of the earth who become Israelites, these will be included. The only ones not included in this will be those who during this Gospel Age have accepted Christ by faith and have made consecration of themselves and, having died to all earthly interests, are begotten of the holy Spirit. Everyone else will have a share in the Restitution provisions of God's great plan, which will go into effect as soon as the High Priest shall make the second sprinkling of blood antitypically on behalf of Israel and the world.

Is it not true, then, someone may ask, that no one passes from death unto life until he has made his consecration and has his justification vitalized? Yes, we answer. No one passes "from death unto life" until he makes his consecration and until Christ imputes his merit to that consecration and the Father accepts it. Then he passes "from death unto life." As the Apostle says, "Hereby we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" and he evidently is speaking of the Church class exclusively.

R4657 : page 247

"CALLET THOSE THINGS WHICH BE NOT AS
THOUGH THEY WERE"

And, again, someone may ask, how can we understand the following in connection with the foregoing--"God is not the God of the dead but of the living"? (Luke 20:38.) Our Lord was not speaking of things as they are actually, but he was looking down prophetically to the end of the Age. At the time this was said, we remember, the Lord was referring to God's statement that he was "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." (Rom. 4:17.) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead; they were members of Adam's condemned race and were in the tomb and Christ had not yet died; therefore, they had not been justified to life and Jehovah's words were to be understood merely in a prophetic sense--that, in view of what he intended to do, these would have life and that he was their God, for he could not speak of himself as being the God of any who would be destroyed in the Second Death, those who would die like a brute beast.--2 Pet. 2:12.

From the time we begin to approach God we may have

proportionately a sense of relief, because we realize that he is merciful and gracious; and the Scriptures assure us that in proportion as we draw near to him, he will draw near to us. This is the attitude of all those who are approaching God, "feeling after God if haply they may find him," and who desire to know God and to do his will and to be in harmony with him. They have a measure of peace, a measure of joy, a measure of blessing. They are going in the right direction; but it is one thing to go in the right direction and another to reach the right spot; they do not reach the right spot until they have gone all the way to full faith and full obedience and the acceptance of the Lord's provision, that if they would be his disciples, followers of him, they must "take up their cross" and walk in his steps, and, as the Apostle says, present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, their reasonable service. Of this class it could be truly said, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1.) They are in Christ Jesus in the sense of coming into this relationship of begetting of the Spirit and of being members of his Body. These are walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, because they have been begotten of the holy Spirit. The others who turn from sin to God, but who never make consecration, are still under the Adamic condemnation because they have never "escaped the condemnation that is on the world," for there is only one way now in which we can escape and that is through the arrangement of this Gospel Age that we shall not only believe but consecrate. Thus we have the impartation of Christ's merit.

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R4655 : page 247

"THE BETTER SACRIFICES"

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"--Heb. 13:14.

MOSES took the blood and sprinkled it both upon the Book of the Law and upon all the people, for the institution of the Law Covenant. And this was repeated year by year, the repetition being necessary to maintain the cleansing and their Covenant relationship with God.

That a cleansing of a certain kind was accomplished is evident, because the nation which at the beginning of the Day of Atonement was counted unclean--the people being commanded

to repent in sackcloth and ashes and to fast and to "eat no pleasant food"--were thus symbolically represented as being in great distress through sin and Divine condemnation until the close of this day, when the High Priest came out and blessed the prostrated multitudes and they arose with a shout of joy. This institution of the Law Covenant at the hand of Moses and the repetition of it year by year by the priests of Israel, produced a cleansing effect in the sense that as a nation they were reckoned clean, as being justified for that year, which began with the Day of Atonement and would last 360 days, or until the following Day of Atonement.

But all the while the people of Israel realized that they were not actually cleansed from sin; that there was merely a covering of their sins for the year, and that this was the reason why, when the year was past, it was necessary for them to recognize again their defilement, individually and collectively, and to make use afresh of the provisions for sin-cleansing.

THE GREATER SACRIFICES THAN THOSE OF BULLS AND GOATS

The Apostle here goes on to show that the basis for that reconciliation was the sacrifice represented by the blood, and that this, being efficacious with God--a certain typical merit attaching to that typical sacrifice--it would be an easy matter for them to understand that he had now, as shown in the text, provided a better sacrifice; that a larger value attached to this greater sacrifice, and that this would be sufficient--not to typically cleanse the people and bring them back into a temporary reconciliation with God, but sufficient also to establish them fully and completely in the Divine favor.

This greater arrangement, then, is that Christ had offered himself through the eternal spirit to God, and this, to all who rightly accept him, cleanses from all consciousness of sin. We realize that it is not a covering for a moment, or for a day, or for a year, but a permanent covering, through faith, of all of our sins that are past. We have the basis for this in the fact that we are drawn of the Father and invited to approach him. When we do this and believe in Christ, God approaches us and thus he recognizes our step of justification; and when we come fully to him and give him our hearts, this Great One, who has offered himself as a Better Sacrifice, appears as our Advocate, to the intent that we may be accepted of the Father as members of Christ's Body--as members of the Bride class. He then applies the merit of his sacrifice on our behalf to make up for our Adamic

R4656 : page 247

sin and imperfection, that we may be acceptable sacrifices. Thenceforth our flesh, which is reckoned justified fully and freely through faith in Christ and consecration,

is considered dead--"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."--Col. 3:3.

And not only is the flesh counted dead, but the New Creature alone is thenceforth recognized of God. The New Creature is not the old creature; it has a new standing and is not responsible for the sins that are past, because those were all canceled when the old creature was accepted as a "living sacrifice" in conjunction with the merit of the Advocate. Hence the New Creature has

R4656 : page 248

a consciousness of absolute forgiveness of the sins of his mortal flesh reckoned dead--for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."--Rom. 8:1.

If he should turn again to walk after the flesh he would incur condemnation as a New Creature. For the New Mind to turn wilfully to sin would imply that it had died, and that the Old Mind had come to life again. Such are "twice dead--plucked up by the roots," as the Apostle says (Jude 12); they have ceased to have any relationship with God. All who are consecrated and begotten of the holy Spirit and who are abiding in the Lord Jesus through faith, seeking to walk in his footsteps, are privileged to know that their sins are forgiven and that nothing in the past can in any sense stand against them. As the Apostle says, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died;" yea, "It is God that justifieth." (Rom. 8:34,33.) The very One who "condemned sin in the flesh" has accepted us as New Creatures, has justified us and admitted us to his family as members (prospectively) of the Royal Priesthood.

The typical yearly cleansing of the Jews was not a faith-cleansing; it was an actual condition of things. God treated them, as a people, from that standpoint. They had privileges and favors which they would not have had, had they been Gentiles. "What advantage hath the Jew? Much every way, but chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1,2), and because of God's arrangement that if they committed a trespass the priest would offer a peace offering for them and cleanse them. All these were blessings and opportunities which they had as Jews by virtue of their covenant relationship established through Moses. But since their rejection of the Messiah that nation has had no relationship with God. They have been cut off completely from favor and "wrath has come upon this people to the uttermost."-- I Thess. 2:16.

But, God be thanked, we now see that their long period of disfavor and casting off is about ended, and they will soon be re-engrafted into the olive tree, from which, through unbelief, they were broken off (Rom. 11:17-24), and shall again share the fatness thereof, and, under the Christ glorified, will bring blessings to all the families of the earth.

IS DEATH EXTINCTION?

THE spark of animal energy which God supplied to Adam and which he in turn dispensed to his offspring and which was forfeited for him and his posterity by his act of disobedience, passes at death from the individual, as absolutely as it does from a brute beast. But the word "life" as used in a large number of instances does not stand merely for the spark of animal energy, but is a synonym for soul or being.

In God's purpose and arrangement this being has not in death become extinct, because he has provided for it a future. There is, however, no sentient being in the sense of consciousness, or knowledge, or appreciation of pain or joy, or of any other experience, but the Divine Creator who first gave being has declared that in the case of Adam and his children it is his purpose to provide a Redeemer through whom all may be restored as completely as before they came under the death sentence. The world, which does not recognize God or his power, and which has no knowledge of the promise of resurrection through the merit of Christ's redemptive work, might properly enough speak of one in death as being as extinct as a dead animal; and this is the standpoint of the agnostic; but by believers instructed of God respecting his purpose in Christ, and the resurrection of the dead, eventually, and the opportunity of eternal life to every one, this matter is to be viewed from the same standpoint that our Lord viewed it when he said, "To God all are alive"--that is, God purposes their awakening, and speaks of the present condition of Adamic death as merely a suspension of life, and not as extinction.

WAS CHRIST EXTINCT DURING THE PERIOD OF HIS DEATH?

It may be asked, Was not our Lord extinct from the time of his death until his resurrection? The Scriptures tell us that the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all--a corresponding price. Again they tell us that "Christ died for our sins," and that he "arose again on the third day." But we do not understand that the One who arose was the same in all particulars as the One who died. He was "put to death in flesh"; he was "quickened (made alive) in spirit." In his case, therefore, the matter may be viewed from these two standpoints, viz., he died in the flesh, as a man, and as a man has never come to life again, and he never intends to use again, for himself, those manhood qualities. He has been raised from the

dead a Spirit--"Now the Lord is that Spirit"--and this glorious Spirit Being whom "God has highly exalted and given a name above every name," is the One who will ultimately bless the world; he has the authority to do this great work in due time.

This power and authority rest in the fact of his sacrifice. The manhood that he laid down, in death, relinquished, he is to give ultimately to Adam and all his race in harmony with the Apostle's statement that "as by man came death, by man will come also the resurrection of the dead," and "as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive," all who will come into relationship and harmony with God, through Christ, during this age or the Millennial Age.

We see that the Church, the Body of Christ, has now the imputed merit of his sacrifice to cover all its imperfections and blemishes, enabling them to offer a sacrifice acceptable to God, holy in his sight, that we, by suffering with our Lord, might be accounted worthy to reign with him.

We see that God's arrangement was that our Lord Jesus should first sacrifice his human nature at Jordan. He was reckoned dead from that time forward, throughout the three and a half years of his ministry, as well as during the three days he was in the tomb. He was dead so far as his earthly life was concerned, for he had fully surrendered this. At the time he made his consecration God gave him the holy Spirit and the Scriptures explain that this impartation of the holy Spirit signified a begetting of the spirit to a new life; in other words, that a new life there began. That new life developed during the three and a half years; and so with us. From the time we make our consecration and receive the begetting of the holy Spirit, this new life develops and progresses, only that with our Lord the progress was much more rapid in the graces, in all knowledge and harmony with the Father and in the development of himself as a New Creature and in enduring all the necessary tests and trials, because we are handicapped by the imperfections of the flesh, while he was perfect.

R4657 : page 249

THE LIFE OF THE FLESH VS. THE LIFE OF THE NEW CREATURE

But as it is true with us that the New Creature thrives in proportion as the old creature dies, so it was with our Lord Jesus. He was coming nearer to perfection as a New Creature with every trial and every victory. He was approaching that standard which the Father would approve in the great High Priest and Head of the New Creation, until, at the time of his death, his words were, "It is finished"--his sacrificing of the flesh was finished, and that life which he had consecrated to sacrifice three and one-half years before and which was reckoned as

passed away at that time, actually ceased on the cross. The New Creature was not brought forth in the birth of the resurrection, until the third day, but it was there in the Divine sight; it was "not possible that he should be holden of death." The whole matter was in harmony with the Divine plan. As he was born from the dead on the third day he must have been begotten previous to that birth, and his begetting was, as we have seen, at Jordan, when the Spirit of God was seen descending in the form of a dove.

So, then, coming to the direct question, there are two standpoints of viewing the whole matter and to ignore either would not be wise. That physically our Lord died, lost the spark of life and all conscious existence as absolutely as any others lose it, or as any brute beast ever lost it, there can be no doubt. But the important point is as respects his soul or being. He never forfeited his right to life and it was when he made a consecration of it to death that the Father gave him the new life, and this resurrection life he lived during the three and one-half years of his ministry. The New Creature was counted alive from the Divine standpoint, as in the type he is pictured as the great High Priest in the Holy, offering incense. Just so it is with us, his followers. We are counted as risen with him from the time we make our consecration and are begotten of the holy Spirit. We are not only dead with him, but we shall reign with him, and we are risen with him through faith in the operation of God's power. If we were to lose faith in this operation of God's power we would then be taking our place with the world, for they ignore this power. It is for us to maintain the standpoint of faith, and, while recognizing the facts as respects the real spark of life and its extinction, to recognize also the Lord's Word and to count, as does God, the things that are not yet completed as though they were accomplished.

page 249

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs
And works his sovereign will.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;

God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

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R4658 : page 249

THE CAMEL AND THE NEEDLE'S EYE

--AUG. 7.--MATT. 19:13-26.--

Golden Text:--"Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

EN ROUTE toward Jerusalem the Master was met by mothers desiring to have his blessing upon their children. The Apostles, realizing the greatness of their Master and the importance of his time, forbade this and rebuked the mothers. When Jesus heard, he called them and said: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for such is the kingdom of heaven," and he put his hands in blessing upon their heads.

From this we are not to understand that the Kingdom of Heaven will be composed of little children. This erroneous idea has gone broadcast, and such an impression respecting the Kingdom has thus resulted. On the contrary, no little children can get into the Kingdom. Only those who have the hearing of faith are even "called" to the Kingdom and its glories. Our Lord's blessing upon little children merely signified his sympathy and love and his appreciation of the purity and innocence of childhood. Those who will be of the Kingdom of God must be like little children in the sense of being simple hearted, true, honest and trustful of their heavenly Father--of such-like will be the inheritors of the Kingdom.

Another account tells us of Jesus' further words to the effect that all who would be his disciples must become as little children--must be like little children in guilelessness, faith, etc. But those who will be heirs of the Kingdom will all be "overcomers." Such take up their cross and follow the Lord whithersoever he leadeth. As our Lord could not have taken up his cross when he was a boy of nine, so likewise children cannot become the followers of Christ in the Scriptural sense until they have reached the age of discretion, which with some may occur much earlier than with others. We have known children of twelve years or thereabouts to give excellent evidence of faith, obedience and consecration to the Lord's will and evidence of being begotten of the holy Spirit. These, of course, but no other children, could have hope of sharing with Christ in his Millennial Kingdom.

THE YOUNG NOBLEMAN'S TEST

On his journey our Lord was accosted by one who said, "Good Master, what good things shall I do that I may have eternal life?" He had the right idea, namely, that eternal life is the grand desideratum, the grand hope of all hopes before the human family. We are glad of the question, for it brought forth the inspired answer, in which everybody is interested. What is the value of the present life, except as it leads us up the passageway to eternal life? How utterly lost we should feel if assured that at death we would be blotted out forever! How little in this life would be worth consideration--how little it could do toward filling the longing of our hearts, which yearn for eternal life!

Our Lord parried the question, in order to draw out the young man and make him commit himself. "Why

R4658 : page 250

do you call me good?" Why do you acknowledge me as a good teacher? I am either the Messiah, as I claim, or else an impostor and far from good. Do you accept my Messiahship? If you do not, how can you call me good or acknowledge that anything could be good that does not proceed from God, the Fountain of all goodness? But answering your question; if you would enter into eternal life, keep the commandments. The young man replied, Which? The Master answered, "Thou shalt do no murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness, but honor thy father and thy mother and love thy neighbor as thyself." The young man replied, "All these things have I observed from my youth. What lack I yet?"

He was a model young man and Jesus loved him. Evidently he was keeping the Jewish Law to the extent of his knowledge and ability. He thought that he was loving his neighbor as himself; but this was a mistake which the Lord disclosed to him by the following suggestion: "If thou wouldest be perfect, go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" instead of on earth; sacrifice also your earthly reputation and become my follower.

Ah, how the Lord knew to put his finger on the sore spot! The young man had come to him very boastful, very sure that if any one in the world was seeking to be in harmony with the Divine arrangement he was that one. He came for the Master's approval, that he might hear him say, "You are the one exception to the rule." The Lord did not say, "If you love your neighbor as you love yourself you will at least put forth an effort to make that neighbor as comfortable as you desire to be comfortable." He was content to be very rich, while some of his neighbors whom he thought he loved as he loved himself were very poor--abjectly, sorrowfully so.

When Jesus discovered to him the difficulty of his situation, he grasped it at once. He saw himself as never before. It became a new test with him. Thus it is with all. A previous lesson showed us the Kingdom as a great prize, a pearl of great value, a treasure, which to possess, will cost all that we have; and this lesson points out the same fact.

Let us not make the mistake made by some, and suppose that the young man who lived so honorable a life and failed to gain heaven, would be thrust down into eternal torment because he did not sacrifice his all to become the Lord's disciple. His loss of the Kingdom was a sufficient penalty without suffering eternal torment in the future. Such members of the human family, under the blessed conditions of the Millennial Kingdom, will doubtless make very rapid progress and will obtain eternal life on the plane of human perfection, though not worthy of the Kingdom honors which belong only to the elect. And the elect are those only who are gladly sacrificing their lives and their all to gain the great prize.

PASSING THROUGH THE NEEDLE'S EYE

Our Lord commented upon the matter to his disciples and added that the rich must have great difficulty in connection with their endeavor to enter the Kingdom. He said, sympathetically, rather than in a denunciatory manner, "It is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye than for the rich to enter the kingdom of God." This astonished the disciples very greatly, for they knew that the majority of the religionists of their day belonged to the wealthy class, the Scribes and the Pharisees. They replied, "Who, then, can get into the Kingdom, if these cannot?" Our Lord's reply was, "With men this is impossible, but not with God." Men would be inclined to say that God would find no one for the Kingdom at all if he rejected the rich.

In a word, no rich man can get into the Kingdom. He must give up everything to the Lord or else be barred from a place in the Kingdom. The terms of acceptance are the same to the rich as to the poor. He who would have the "pearl of great price" must sell all that he has in order that he may obtain it. The rich must give up all to the Lord, and then as stewards of their riches will be held responsible for their stewardship.

The following little poem describes the needle's eye, or small gate beside the larger gate, through which the camels might pass into the walled city after sundown and without any of their burden. So the rich by unloading and becoming poor may get into the Kingdom:--

THROUGH THE NEEDLE'S EYE

"Tall was my camel and laden high,
And small the gate as a needle's eye.

"The city within was very fair,
And I and my camel would enter there.

"'You must lower your load,' the porter cried,
'You must throw away that bundle of pride.'

"This I did, but the load was great,
Far too wide for the narrow gate.

"'Now,' said the porter, 'to make it less,
Discard that hamper of selfishness.'

"I obeyed, though with much ado,
Yet still nor camel nor I got through.

"'Ah,' said the porter, 'your load must hold
Some little package of trust-in-gold.'

"The merest handful was all I had,
Yet 'Throw it away,' the porter bade.

"Then lo, a marvel! the camel tall
Shrank to the size of the portal small,

"And all my riches, a vast estate,
Easily passed through the narrow gate!"

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R4659 : page 250

THE BLOTTING OUT OF SINS

"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."--Acts 3:19.

ALL WHO have turned from sin and accepted Christ and made a full consecration of themselves to the Divine will, and have been accepted of God by the begetting of the Spirit, have their sins reckoned as covered or put away from Divine sight. So far as the New Creature is concerned, they commit no sin; but so far as their flesh is concerned, through which alone they can at present have conscious being, they are imperfect. These imperfections of the flesh, unwillingly theirs, are figuratively said to be covered with the Wedding Robe of Christ's Righteousness, imputed to them. The Church, however, hopes not to continue always in this merely imputed condition of righteousness, but to obtain eventually an actual righteousness. The Lord's Word guarantees that this shall be the Church's portion by virtue of a share in the "First Resurrection," "his resurrection."

When that which is sown in weakness shall have been raised in power; when that which is sown in dishonor shall have been raised in glory; when that which is sown

R4659 : page 251

an animal body shall have been raised a spiritual body, then, so far as the Church is concerned, the blotting out of sin in the most absolute and complete sense will have been effected--but not until then. At present the Church's sins are covered, by Divine arrangement, through the great Advocate, Jesus. So, then, we see that this blotting out of the Church's sins will give her precedence over all the world of mankind; and following the blotting out of her sins in the "First Resurrection," will begin the Restitution work for all Israel and through them for all mankind.

THE NEW COVENANT ISRAELITISH

It might be asked, would the two texts (Romans 11:27; Acts 3:19,20) prove that the New Covenant will not be made until the completion of the sacrifice of all the members of the Body of Christ, until after the merit of Christ's sacrifice shall have been applied, at the end of the Gospel Age, on behalf of the world?

It is most conclusively proved in these texts, as well as in many others, that the New Covenant cannot go into effect with the people of Israel until the end of this Gospel Age. We are to remember, however, that the Lord has made a distinct provision by which all the "called" ones of this Gospel Age may come into Covenant relationship with him through Christ, through faith in the precious blood and consecration unto death, through justification by the merit of the great Advocate. These, however, could not maintain their Covenant relationship with God were it not for their privilege of going to the Throne of heavenly grace and there receiving mercy through the intercession of their Advocate for those trespasses which are unwillingly theirs as New Creatures.

This expression, New Covenant, is not used in connection with any others of mankind than the Jews, because it is not true that God will make a New Covenant with the remainder of mankind. As the Apostle suggests, the word "New" here implies a previous Covenant which was counted Old, and this Old Covenant was not made with other nations or peoples than the Jews, of whom God declared that he "took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, which my Covenant they brake." (Jer. 31:32.) Hence, we should understand that all references to the New Covenant are references to God's arrangement with the Jewish people to supplant the old arrangement under Moses, under the conditions of which they are still condemned and bound. By this New, substitutionary Covenant, God will shortly release the Jew from

the condemnation of the Old Covenant.

It will be in an incidental way that other nations will be granted the privilege of coming under the same laws and arrangements with natural Israel, and of sharing with Israel in the blotting out of sin and in being restored to the Divine image and thus to full harmony and fellowship and Covenant relationship with God, which relationship all may maintain, if they will, throughout eternity. But we see that some of these who will thus be brought into Covenant relationship and turned over to God at the end of the Millennial Age will fail to maintain that relationship; and that under the testing incidental to the release of Satan at the end of the thousand years, some will manifest disloyalty and lose this standing and again fall into the condemnation of death--the "Second Death."

THE BLOTTING OUT OF SINS

We are not necessarily to understand the blotting out of sin to signify the blotting out of the recognition of sin. We may rather assume that through all eternity this great insurrection or rebellion--the reign of sin and death for 6,000 years upon this earth--will be a standing lesson to all of God's creatures throughout his Universe. True, it is said of Israel, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more," but this should be understood as signifying that their sins will be remembered no more against them in a condemnatory sense. In that sense of the word, and in every evil and unsatisfactory sense, these sins will be remembered no more; but as lessons of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of the Justice of God in punishing it, and of the love of God in providing redemption from it--in this sense sin will doubtless always be remembered.

The sense, then, in which this text applies to the blotting out of sins would be this: Sin and imperfection are written in all our mortal bodies. Not only does sin put its heavy hand upon us through death--the destruction of our physical frame in general--but it specially leaves its mark upon the mind, and upon the face--the index of the character. The blotting out of sin, therefore, or the lifting of individuals out of sin, out of imperfection, out of their blemished condition, will signify their uplifting to all those glorious qualities of heart and mind and body which were Father Adam's portion in the beginning, when he was in the image and likeness of God.

In the case of the Church and her change in the "First Resurrection" the blotting out will not be a slow and gradual process, but an instantaneous blotting out. Her change will be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." The Apostle tells us that the change effected thus in the Church will be glorious; that we shall be made like him who is the "express image of the Father's person." We shall see him as he is and share his glory.

"THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS"

IT IS supposable that some of the Lord's people may not be what is termed talented, in the sense of possessing large talents or many talents, but it is not supposable that any one in the Body of Christ would be without some talent, some opportunity for service. This parable of the Talents implies it. (Matthew 25:14-30.) Every one of these servants was called; every one of them received either one or more talents-- and the parable did not apply merely to the beginning of the age, to the Apostles, etc., but evidently was intended to be applicable down to the end of the age, until the Lord should return from the "far country." As those who lived at that time did not remain until the Lord's coming, therefore the parable must include all who would become his disciples down to his second advent. Otherwise we could not be viewed as "co-workers together with God."

We cannot be servants if we have nothing wherewith to serve; we could not bring forth fruitage, either in ourselves or others, without some ability and opportunity. It therefore becomes an important matter to each to recognize the fact that he must have had given him at least one talent, and that he will be held responsible for the use of what he has.

page 252

NOT MANY WISE, MIGHTY, NOBLE CALLED

In the case of some of the Lord's people it would seem wise to call attention to the propriety of making sure what talent they have, and to make sure that they are not trying to use one that they have not. It seems to be a general weakness or failing amongst mankind to try to do something they cannot do, and to scorn that which they are able to do. The Apostle Paul (I Cor. 1:26) said, "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called"--not that God objects to those having many talents serving his cause, but not many of these accept his call. Those who have many talents find many ways of using them and many people in the world to desire them; and, ambitious for place and preferment, they have an abundance of opportunity to shine before men; but in the Lord's service they would not, perhaps, find so good an opportunity for the display of their talents and, therefore, they would not gain the renown

that might be theirs in the earthly pursuits. They would be accounted foolish by the world should they be very energetic in serving the Lord and seeking to glorify his name. "Why do you not become rich? Why do you not live in style and hold up your head among men and get a great name, etc.?" are suggestions which attract those who have many talents; therefore few of that class are disposed to accept the Lord's call; while those who realize that they never could make a name for themselves in the world, appreciate more, perhaps, the great "High Calling."

However, many of these of small talents increase them by use and become quite proficient in the Truth in various lines in proportion as they are faithful in the use of the talents they possess. The Truth seems to have a brightening and clarifying effect upon all minds, great and small.

One of the important lessons, then, for the Lord's people to learn is to notice what talents the Lord has

R4660 : page 252

given them, whether time, or education, or special opportunities for service; and to keep them in use, that their brilliancy may increase and not become dimmed by neglect.

We can readily see that there would be, as already expressed, more difficulty with one of five talents, in making a consecration, than in the case of a one-talent man, although the man of one talent might have much cause for discouragement in feeling that his gift is insignificant and poor in proportion to what many others have. The man of five talents would have the opposite experience and be in danger of being puffed up, "heady and high minded." We might well reason that the Lord in these varying conditions would make his grace sufficient; indeed, he has promised so to do for all those who put their trust in him.

"GIVE ME NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES"

The man with the one talent has in some respects a better opportunity for making his "calling and election sure." However, Solomon undoubtedly was wise in requesting of the Lord, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." (Prov. 30:8.) In other words, probably the two-talent man would have a natural advantage, in that he would be neither so likely to be discouraged nor to be puffed up.

These conditions are not of the Lord's making. If the Lord made a man with one talent, and made another with two talents, and another with five talents, he would in some way doubtless have equalized the matter so that the talents of one would offset those of another. But he has not given our talents in such a way. These are merely what we have by nature and what we bring to

the Lord in consecration and devote to him, though they are, in another sense, all his gifts. The Lord, therefore, is not responsible for a man's having but one talent, nor for his having five, but at his consecration the Lord makes him steward over his possessions to do the best he can with them.

The force of the argument would be, then, that the man with the five talents would have more difficulty in keeping them fully employed, fully devoted and fully separated from worldly ambitions, etc., than would the man who had fewer. So if any of us were given a choice, it would, perhaps, be wise to choose the medium, because of the increase of responsibilities to those possessing more.

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R4660 : page 252

KEEPING OURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD

THIS thought of the responsibility of each child of God to keep himself, is set forth in various terms throughout the Scriptures. Our Lord said, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Our part is to do the watching and praying; to do our very best, and then it is God's part to overrule and direct and supervise our affairs so that all things shall work together for good to us, because we have come into this proper relationship with the Father.

We recognize that this Scripture and other Scriptures are not given to the world, but are addressed only to God's people, to "the sanctified in Christ Jesus." It is these sanctified ones who are to keep themselves. The unsanctified, unholy, have not made any start toward the Lord, and are not, therefore, in a place which they should wish to keep; they are rather in an undesirable place which they should seek to abandon. But those who have accepted God's terms, and have been begotten of the holy Spirit, and have experienced an entrance into this "grace wherein we stand, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God," are admonished that they must keep this place, must preserve themselves in this position, must "keep themselves in the love of God." If they do not thus keep themselves, do not keep their hearts with all diligence, they are not of the kind that God designs to keep; they are the kind that he designs shall fall, and for whom he has provided special snares and difficulties that they may fall--not into eternal torment, as some of us formerly thought--but fall away from the promises of God and the particular favors provided for the Elect.

The Lord has not predetermined what place we shall occupy in the future, but he is allowing our course to be influenced by conditions of the present life, so that all

those who choose to be in harmony with God may follow in the footsteps of Jesus. There are outward manifestations by which the Lord's people may know their own standing, and to some extent may be able to know of their progress. In proportion as one realizes the Spirit of Christ developed in himself, in proportion as he sees the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit, he may know of his own progress in the love of God, and may know also that unless he keep himself in the love of God,

R4660 : page 253

he will not stand, will not maintain his place, but will fall; as the Apostle Peter says: "If ye do these things ye shall never fall." If we conform to the Divine arrangement, if we keep ourselves in the love of God, we shall, therefore, be preserved.

All those who are thus in Divine favor have the Divine promise and all the Divine power behind the promise, necessary to keep them. So, then, our text is in full accord with other texts bearing upon this subject. Those who are begotten of the holy Spirit have the responsibility of keeping themselves in that holy condition of heart. They may not be responsible for some of the outward circumstances that beset them, nor for the condition of others, nor for the temptations that come to them. They may not in the fullest degree be responsible for all of their own course, because of the imperfections of the "earthen vessel"; but under the Lord's providential arrangement, if they keep their hearts, "that Wicked One toucheth them not," will not injure them, will not harm them. His besetments may serve to test, may be permitted of God to work out for them, if properly exercised thereby, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"; but the Adversary can do them no harm, because they belong to God, and he is pledged to defend in the highest sense the best interests of all those who have given their hearts to him in full consecration.

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R4660 : page 253

"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED"

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Of course you know that you have enemies and warm enemies as well as warm friends; and that the former manifest an evil, slanderous and back-biting spirit is only what we might expect, for thus we were forewarned of the Lord. I write you respecting one of these malicious endeavors to injure you and discredit the Lord's work which you are doing. The slander is that you inveigled a large sum of money, in some fraudulent manner, from a brother

named Hope Hay. Indistinctly I remember some years ago the statement published in THE WATCH TOWER that Brother Hay had donated to THE WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY \$10,000, and I infer that this is the transaction they have in mind.

I am sure, dear Brother Russell, that this is merely another endeavor of the Adversary to poison the minds of some against you and against the Truth, of which you are the prominent representative. I am not, therefore, asking on my own account, but merely seeking advice as to what reply I should make to those who thus slander you. I know very well that you never so much as solicit money of anybody; and hence, that nothing could be further from your course than to obtain money under false pretense of any kind. In strong bonds of Christian love,

Your brother in the dear Redeemer, C. A. OWEN.

BROTHER RUSSELL'S REPLY TO THE SLANDER

DEAR BROTHER:--I am glad to have your letter. How sorry we feel for those enemies of righteousness who in bitterness of spirit lend themselves as tools to the Adversary in an endeavor to oppose the harvest work! I presume that the Lord permits such things as tests of faith and loyalty to him, and tests to his people as to what spirit they are of. Anyway, dear Brother, you will be glad to know that the more my enemies assail and falsely charge me with evil, the more the Lord blesses me and his work under my care. I am reminded here of the words of St. Paul respecting the thorn in the flesh which the Lord permitted him to have, but which he assured him would do him no injury, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee." I answer, therefore, with St. Paul, "Most gladly will I rather glory in my afflictions that the power of Christ may rest upon me."--2 Cor. 12:9.

Your recollection that the matter of Brother Hay's donation to the Tract Fund was published in THE WATCH TOWER years ago is quite correct. Dear Brother Hay called upon me personally, saying that he had received a legacy of \$20,000 and that, as he had a pension from the Canadian Government, he thought he could not do better than donate the entire legacy to the Lord's cause--as a donation to the funds of THE WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

I replied that I appreciated very highly his generous spirit and that as the President of the Society I would not feel at liberty to refuse any gifts voluntarily tendered to it. However, as he had not yet made the donation and had asked my opinion respecting it, I gave that opinion. I said that if I were in his stead I would prefer to give only one-half of the sum at the time, and to retain possession

R4661 : page 253

of the remainder, with a view to using it so as to permit greater personal activities in the harvest field.

Brother Hay thanked me for the advice and said he thought it to be good and that he would follow it.

The Society's books show that from time to time subsequently he sent to us in all \$9,500. They also show that this donation was specially used in harmony with Brother Hay's knowledge and wishes for the relief of some of the hundreds of Colporteurs who had gotten into debt in their endeavor to serve the Truth. Credits were given to these harvest workers in Brother Hay's name and many of them, we know, acknowledged the matter directly to him. The entire matter was published in THE WATCH TOWER columns that all of the dear friends might know of Brother Hay's generous course. Since then we have abandoned everything akin to publicity in respect to those who make donations to the Society's funds, deeming this to be the wiser course--the Lord's will.

Brother Hay has been an invalid for several years. And we understand that he lost in various ways nearly all of the remainder of his legacy. Since we have none of Brother Hay's money in our possession, having expended every dollar of it in harmony with his wishes, we have not felt it to be our duty to take money contributed by others for the promotion of Christian knowledge to reimburse Brother Hay's losses. The Society has felt content in assuming the full responsibility of Brother Hay at a Canadian Sanitarium--selected by himself and his wife--paying all the charges of the same. This we did, not on the score of his donation to the Tract Fund, but on account of his having served in the Pilgrim work. We have assumed that his government pension, the amount of which we do not know, has been sufficient for the maintenance of his family, and that possibly the amount of the pension has been increased on account of his more serious illness.

We are glad to make these explanations, dear Brother, but you can readily see how useless it would be for us to

R4661 : page 254

attempt to chase after all the mean and contemptible slanders and misrepresentations which the Adversary could find people mean enough to scatter. To chase slanders would waste our time and hinder the Lord's work --the very thing the Adversary would like to accomplish. We have given ourself fully and unreservedly to the Lord. This includes not only all of our powers and talents, but also amongst these our reputation.

Yours in the love and service of the Redeemer,
C. T. RUSSELL.

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R4661 : page 254

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

MY DEAR BROTHER AND PASTOR:--

Father Time has tolled off another year for you--a year of living, loving, sacrificial service for our Father and the brethren. How we wish we could show forth our appreciation for that service! Our Father has certainly blessed us through you. And at this time--when many who once walked with us, no longer walk with us, but vilify and persecute and misrepresent your teachings--we are especially grateful to our Heavenly Father because we still have a hearing ear and can still see more wondrous beauty in the Divine Plan, as shown us through his own appointed channel.

In closing I desire to mention the Vow. When first you suggested it I resented it. One clause (which one I will not say) stood out before me in all prominence. At that time it was all that I saw in it; and, frankly, I opposed it and told myself and others also that I did not need it. Some months later, while in another city, I was walking along the street with a brother from a distant city and our conversation turned toward the Vow. Well, that night I made the Vow my own, and since then I find that above all things I needed most that particular clause that I objected to so strenuously. I thank God for the Vow. I desire an interest in your prayers to the end that I may be better able to keep it.

And now, dear Brother, as you have entered into another year of service, may the Lord bless your efforts; may he give you grace abundant for every time of need; may he give you much joy; may he strengthen you and keep you faithful unto the end, and finally may you be among those whom he is pleased to call "more than conquerors" in and through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Your brother only by his grace, H. W. MCALLISTER.

IN REPLY

DEAR BROTHER:--

I find your letter of the 13th ultimo awaiting me on my return from the Convention trip, and take this opportunity to reply.

Your kind words of love and fellowship in our dear Redeemer are very especially appreciated and reciprocated. The confidence and co-operation of all the fellow-members in the Body is a very valued aid to me.

I rejoice with you that the Lord graciously delivered you from any entanglement of thought in opposing the Vow, and that having made it to the Lord and acknowledged it in the presence of all his people you have found especial blessing therein. With the Psalmist we can say, "For thou, O God, hast heard my Vow; thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name."

Very sincerely your brother and fellow-servant.

GENTLEMEN:--

I found a copy of your PEOPLES PULPIT on my porch and am much interested in it. Enclosed find twelve cents, for which please send me the publication for one year. Also will you kindly send me sample copies containing the sermons, "Thieves in Paradise," "The Rich Man in Hell," and "Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom." These you say are free.

Yours truly, FRED S. LACKEY--N.J.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

I am requested to inform you of the number who memorialized at this place the death of our dear Lord.

I wish to tell you what a blessed time we had. I believe it was because we had all been praying for the presence of the Master. In the afternoon we had a prayer, praise and testimony meeting. The evening meeting commenced with a song service. As we looked at the faces of the dear friends we could see joy mingled with sorrow. We tried in our weak way to show the oneness of our Lord and his Church. Then Brother Durant addressed us on the Bread and Brother Jackson on the Cup. I think I can speak for all the friends when I say that we deem it an unspeakable privilege to be counted worthy to drink of his Cup, and by and by to share his glory.

We all pray for you, dear Brother, that the richest blessing of God may continue with you unto the end.

Yours in the One blessed Hope,
GEORGE LEE.--Fla.

DEAR SIR:--

I found one of the copies of PEOPLES PULPIT on a car one night on my way home and was so much impressed that I thought it wise to subscribe for it. Enclosed find 12 cents for one year, and send me the following sermons, "Gathering the Lord's Jewels," "The Most Precious Text," "Liberty, Liberty, Liberty," "Sin's Small Beginnings," "Sin Atonement," "The Value of Toil," "Foreordination, Predestination and Election," "The Rich Man in Hell," "Where Are the Dead?" "Thieves in Paradise."

A Brother in Christ, ROBT. COOPER.--Ill.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

I have been thinking for some time that I would write to you and tell you how much I appreciate "Present Truth." I have been in the Truth two years, through the volunteer work of some of the brethren; chiefly Brother Seth Moore of this town.

I had been a Baptist for twenty years and had been

ordained to the ministry of that Church. I withdrew from that denomination eight years ago, and began a prayerful search for the Church of Christ. God answered my prayer, and now I love my God, my Saviour and my Bible better than I ever did before, and I have felt more real satisfaction and joy in two years than in all my past life put together.

It was some time before I could get my own consent to send my name as one having taken the "Vow," but that "Vow" contains the sentiments of my heart, and may God help me to keep it!

I am praying for the good work at Brooklyn and all

R4661 : page 255

over the world. Find enclosed 50 cts. for which please send me ten copies of "The Plan of the Ages," WATCH TOWER form. I want to do a little volunteer work myself.

With much love, I am,

Your Brother in Christ, J. W. WILSON.--Texas.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Realizing that I owe you many thanks, and out of a motive of love to you, I will give you a little of my testimony. I have been a peculiar fellow--first, a Lutheran,

R4662 : page 255

then an Infidel and the last thing an Evolutionist; but now, thanks to the Lord and you and Brother Senger, I am a Christian and am rejoicing in the Truth.

Praying for you, dear Brother, that our heavenly Father will continue his care over you, I am

Yours in Christ to the Glory of God, E. SNYDER.

DEAR SIRs:--

We were very much interested in the copy of the PEOPLES PULPIT, which was delivered at our door, and would like to have the issues which contained "Where Are the Dead?" and "The Rich Man in Hell," as these are subjects of great importance to us and our friends.

Wishing you success in your undertaking, I remain
Respectfully, J. A. SLOCUM,--N.Y.

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page 255

BEREAN QUESTIONS IN SCRIPTURE STUDIES

Series VI. Study II: The New Creation.

SEPTEMBER 4

- (1) What terms are Scripturally applied to the Church of the Gospel Age and its ultimate members? P. 59.
- (2) Why have these terms not been appreciated by the majority of Christians? P. 59.
- (3) May we suppose the popular misconstructions of the Divine Word to be intentional? If not, how may we account for them? P. 60, par. 1, first half.
- (4) What were the "Dark Ages," and why so called? P. 60, par. 1.
- (5) What has been the difficulty amongst the followers of the Reformers during the past three centuries? P. 60, par. 2, first part.
- (6) What divinely appointed guides should the Church recognize and follow? P. 61.
- (7) What assistance should the Church now expect and accept from human instrumentalities? P. 61.
- (8) Give a resume of previous studies, leading up to our present topic, the New Creation. P. 61, par. 1.

SEPTEMBER 11

- (9) Does the creation of various orders of beings signify a dissatisfaction on the part of the Creator? P. 62, 7th line to end of par.
- (10) Will there exist jealousies or covetousness among the creations on the several planes of being? P. 62, par. 1.
- (11) When Jehovah purposed the New Creation, what did he determine respecting those who should constitute its members? P. 63, par. 1, first part.
- (12) Why are these "New Creatures" not created on the Divine plane, and subsequently tried and tested? Why so separate and distinct from all others? P. 63.
- (13) Trace the philosophy of the Divine arrangement for the selection of the New Creation. P. 64.
- (14) What was the Divine pre-arranged privilege and test imposed upon the "Only Begotten"? P. 65, par. 1.
- (15) What was the exceeding great reward, "the joy that was set before" our Redeemer? P. 65, par. 2.
- (16) Why are the "brethren" of Christ selected from among the human creation, rather than from others? P. 66, par. 1.

SEPTEMBER 18

- (17) What fact in the New Testament writings has caused many to infer, contrary to the Scriptures in general, that God's purposes are the same with respect to all mankind? P. 67, par. 1.
- (18) What are the "two salvations," and what confusion of thought results from failure to recognize the difference between these? P. 67, par. 2.
- (19) Aside from making their own calling and election sure, what two-fold work have the prospective New Creation to do in connection with the human family? P. 68, par. 1.

(20) Explain why no other class of beings could be found so well adapted to ruling and blessing the world. P. 69, par. 1.

(21) Is the work of uplifting, ruling, blessing and judging mankind the entire mission of the New Creation? P. 69, par. 2.

(22) Although the Scriptures do not explicitly declare the future activities of the New Creation, what may we reasonably infer or anticipate regarding them? P. 70, par. 1,2.

SEPTEMBER 25

(23) What constitutes these New Creatures "priests"? P. 71, par. 1, first part.

(24) What represents the new nature of these priests, and how is the victory of the New Creature attained? P. 71, par. 1.

(25) Explain in detail how the Aaronic priesthood of Israel typified the present condition of the New Creation, and Melchizedek, their future priesthood. P. 72, top of page, par. 1.

(26) Mention the apparent reason why the intimate relationship between the Only Begotten and the elect Church is so frequently referred to under various figures, and explain the significance of the "top-stone," as a figure. P. 72, par. 2.

(27) Explain the "temple" figure. P. 73, par. 1.

(28) Explain the beautiful illustration of the "human body with its various members." P. 73, par. 2.

(29) Give numerous other figures showing this relationship of Christ and the Church.

(30) What is perhaps the most perfect and complete figure of our Master's interest in and love for his brethren? Explain in detail. P. 74, par. 1.

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page 255

ITEMS TO BE REMEMBERED

EXCURSION--JAMESTOWN TO NIAGARA FALLS

We have already advised that all who would like to visit Niagara Falls should wherever possible buy tickets via the same. However, in the interests of others who might like to visit the Falls, we have special arrangements for a Round Trip excursion for \$1.50. Those desirous of making the excursion will please leave their addresses at Information Bureau, Celoron, on August 1.

SEND FULL PAY OR NOTHING

Conventioners are requested to send full payment for their accommodations or else send nothing. We cannot keep accounts with so many.

R4662 : page 255

AN IMPOSTOR NOTED

A man considerably below average height, slightly built, small, dark mustache, and with a noticeably crooked left leg, and walking with limp, good talker and well posted doctrinally and knowing names of many brethren, has been imposing upon the friends in many places. He is skillful. He tells of needs, but refuses money at first. Later he accepts money with many thanks and promises, and proceeds to look for other victims. Letters, especially from Ohio and Pennsylvania, tell of his good success as an impostor. Usually he wants a railway ticket, then later sells it. We should not be suspicious of everybody in distress; but we should generally content ourselves with supplying food or raiment needed.

R4658 : page 255

BROTHER EDGAR'S BOOK

Brother John Edgar, M.D., whose decease was mentioned in the July 1 issue and again referred to in the July 15 TOWER, a year ago, in company with his Brother Morton, visited the Great Pyramid and took measurements, photographs, etc. The result was the preparation of a book, of which we have seen a portion. It is gotten up in good style, good paper. Doubtless some of our readers will be interested in having it. We have placed orders for a quantity as soon as possible. The price will be \$1.35, postage prepaid, and it can be ordered through either our Brooklyn or our London office.

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page 258

STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES

THESE STUDIES ARE RECOMMENDED TO STUDENTS AS VERITABLE "BIBLE KEYS." PRICES ARE NET AND BARELY COVER COST OF PRODUCTION,

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page 257

SEMI-MONTHLY
VOL. XXXI AUGUST 15 No. 16
A.D. 1910--A.M. 6038

CONTENTS

"That He May Establish Your Hearts"	259
How to Increase and Abound in Love.....	260
The Object and Necessity for Such Development.....	261
That We May Be Established (Fixed) in the Presence of Our Lord.....	261
Did Our Lord Die for the Fallen Angels?.....	262
Are We Begotten to the Divine Nature?.....	263
"Go Ye Also Into the Vineyard"	264
The Greatest--The Servant.....	265

Israel's King Rejected.....266
 "Your House Is Left Desolate"267
 Some Interesting Questions.....267
 "Thy Dead Men--My Dead Body"268
 When Did Our Lord Become the Express
 Image of the Father?.....268
 The Great Company or the Ancient
 Worthies.....268
 Beginning of Melchisedec Priesthood.....270
 Some Interesting Letters.....270

page 258

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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS

UTICA, N.Y., AUGUST 21

Morning Rally for Praise, Prayer and Testimony at 10:30 o'clock. Discourse for the interested at 7:30 in the evening in Genesee Hall, corner Oneida and Square. Discourse for the Public by Bro. Russell at Shubert Theater at 3 P.M. Topic: "Hereafter."

FALL RIVER, MASS., AUGUST 28

BROOKLYN, N. Y., SEPTEMBER 4

OLD ORCHARD, ME., SEPTEMBER 11

DETROIT, MICH., SEPTEMBER 18

35 CENTS--ANY VOLUME, ANY LANGUAGE--35 CENTS

Hereafter this will be the Office price of DAWN-STUDIES by mail or express, prepaid. The colporteurs are authorized to charge 5 cents additional on Volumes IV., V. and VI. WATCH TOWER subscribers are granted a wholesale rate on books for their own use or to give away or to sell as sharp-shooters at the regular rates. This wholesale price is 25 cents for Volumes I, II., III. and 30 cents for the others, IV., V., VI.--postage or express prepaid.

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BROOKLYN BETHEL HYMNS FOR SEPTEMBER

After the close of the hymn the Bethel Family listens to the reading of "My Vow Unto the Lord," then joins in prayer. At the breakfast table the MANNA text is considered: (1) 4; (2) 61; (3) 236; (4) 280; (5) 215; (6) 9; (7) 286; (8) 152; (9) 110; (10) 334; (11) 105; (12) 141; (13) 139; (14) 328; (15) 155; (16) 117; (17) 119; (18) 8; (19) 35; (20) 130; (21) 47; (22) 273; (23) 7; (24) 125; (25) 246; (26) 19; (27) 194; (28) 14; (29) 88; (30) 71; (31) 325.

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R4662 : page 259

"THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS"

"The Lord makes you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at [in] the presence [parousia] of our Lord Jesus

Christ, with all saints."--I Thess. 3:12,13.

NOT TO SINNERS are these words addressed, but to saints. Not those who have not the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, and who therefore, are none of his, does the Apostle exhort; but those who already have been begotten of the holy Spirit of love. Increase in love signifies that love already has attained an ascendancy in the heart, a mastery in the mind, by which it is progressing, conquering and bringing into subjection all the thoughts and conduct of life. And this thought, that love is to increase in the hearts of God's people, is in full accord with the general testimony of the Scriptures, that we are to grow in grace and in knowledge and in love; approaching more and more and attaining and maintaining the "mark" which God hath set before us as the standard of character for which he will be pleased to award the prize in due time. It is as though a cistern were being filled more and more with pure water from hidden springs, until, increasing and increasing, it overflows with its abundance. Thus the Lord's people are to increase in love continually, until the love abounds or overflows in all the thoughts and words and conduct of life; not only carrying blessings to their own refreshment and to the refreshment of all with whom they come in contact, but also redounding to the glory and praise of God from whom this blessing is derived.

The Apostle specifies only abounding love toward the brethren and toward all, but this presupposes the love which, first of all, is due to God our Father. Nor is it to be expected that any man will love his fellow-creatures to the extent indicated, unless he has first learned to love his Creator, has been taught of him, and has to some extent become a copy of his dear Son. This is in thorough accord with the Lord's statement of the full meaning of the Law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, heart, soul [being], and strength, and [then] thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." No man can love his neighbor in this Scriptural sense, until he has first loved his God to such a degree as to be not only willing but anxious to do those things which are pleasing in his sight; for God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God.--I John 4:16.

One reason why love does not increase more rapidly, and abound more thoroughly amongst God's people, is that so many of them have been blinded by the Adversary to the real character of God, and under the misrepresentations of his character have been unable to worship and love him in spirit and in truth. Thank God for the light of the knowledge of himself now scattering the darkness and permitting his children to see him in his true light, in his glorious character! Thank God, the eyes of our understanding have been opened so that we can now

see through the deceptions of the Adversary!--Rev. 20:3.

The Apostle's words, "Even as we do toward you," are full of meaning and force. Paul and his associates were not teaching a Gospel which they did not appreciate and practise; on the contrary, they were exemplifying in their daily course of life this very abounding love, which, overflowing, was leading them to sacrifice their own interests and rights and privileges for the sake of the Lord's people everywhere. They were laying down their lives for the brethren--daily, hourly; they were sacrificing for the sake of others, opportunities and privileges as respected their earthly life, earthly pleasures, etc. It is with particular force, therefore, that they exhort fellow-Christians to follow after them in the same way of self-sacrificing, loving obedience, as imitators of Jesus. And so it should be with all who exhort others to walk in the way of righteousness and love: In order that their words may have force and meaning they must exemplify them in their own lives. As they point to the "mark" of perfect love they must approximate that mark in their own daily lives, and certainly possess it in their hearts, their wills, their intentions. So whether they occupy pulpits, or whether they exhort others merely by the influence of their daily lives, they are living epistles read and known of all men who come in contact with them. The darkness may hate them, and say all manner of evil against them falsely, yet it must "take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus" and have learned of him; that they have the same spirit, the same disposition of heart, however crooked their natural dispositions may be.

R4662 : page 260

HOW TO INCREASE AND ABOUND IN LOVE

Ah, says one, I have been desiring to increase in love and to overflow it upon others for these many years; but I know not how to cultivate it. What shall I do that I may have this overflowing love? The Apostle impliedly answers this question--that it is not what we can do, but what the Lord can do in us and for us. His words are, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love." It is the Lord's doing; we can accomplish very little for ourselves, and the sooner we learn this the better. The springs of our love must come from the fountain of love and grace and truth--from God, for "God is love." We began to receive of his spirit of love from the time we made our consecration to him, and began to live unto him, and not unto the flesh. He has various agencies and channels through which he is pleased to increase our love, and to cause it to abound and overflow and cleanse away the natural selfishness against which we, like all others, must contend.

These channels of grace are represented to us under various figures in the Scriptures. One channel or agency is the Word of God; another is Divine Providence;

another is the fellowship of the Body of Christ, the saints. The Lord uses all of these agencies in causing our love to increase and to abound. First, his Word, the basis of our faith and hopes, is also the basis of our love; for by giving ear to his Word, we taste and see that the Lord is gracious; that the Lord is loving; and in proportion as we see his love manifested, and discern his gracious character, in that same proportion we have before us the pattern toward which we are to aim, and love serves as the incentive to our emulation; as our Lord expressed it, "Be ye holy, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is holy." He is the pattern, and we are to copy that pattern as much as possible in our daily lives; but especially are we to have it as the accepted standard of our wills, our minds.

The Apostle refers to the Word of God as water which cleanses us from defilements of sin and selfishness; speaking of "the washing of water through the Word," by which the Bride is to be cleansed and made fit for joint-heirship with the heavenly Bridegroom. (Eph. 5:25-27.) The Word of Truth cleanses our hearts by showing us our imperfections, in contrast with the divine perfections. And more than this, it encourages us with

R4663 : page 260

certain promises, the object of which the Apostle Peter declares, saying, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature." Were it not for these promises, these hopes held out, our strivings for increasing and abounding love would no doubt succumb before the adverse influences of selfishness and sin in the present time; but by these promises of the Word the Lord incites us to press along the line "toward the mark for the prize."

Divine Providence comes to our aid at various times, to assist us in making progress "toward the mark"; to assist us in increasing and abounding in love; for if, peradventure, one who at heart is fully consecrated to the Lord should tarry by the way, and become overcharged with the cares of this life, the Lord, in much mercy and love, will perhaps permit affliction or disaster of some kind to overtake him, to be a chastisement, a lesson, an assistance, and thus, as the Psalmist expresses it, "His rod and his staff they comfort us." (Psa. 23:4.) It is by these providences of God that we are frequently taught lessons which we could never learn from the instructions of his Word alone. The lessons are impressed, or embossed, so to speak, upon the tablet of our hearts, and do us lasting good.

Another channel of blessing and instruction which the Lord has provided and commended for the saints, and which surely has proven a blessing to all of the household of faith in running for the "mark," is the assistance which the Lord supplies to us through the "brethren."

Sometimes it is "A word in season; how good it is!"-- perhaps a word of counsel, perhaps a word of reproof, perhaps a word of instruction. Perhaps it is merely the testimony of daily lives of the brethren, as we see them patiently enduring hardness as good soldiers, without murmuring--taking with joy, with thankfulness, with faith, with confidence, all things which Divine providence may permit, assured that they are all working out future blessing. Although this channel of blessing might at first seem to be of the brethren, we are sure, nevertheless, that it is of the Lord, though through the brethren. It is because the brethren who render such assistance in the way are the brethren who themselves are receiving assistance from the Lord; and so it has been from first to last; the Elder Brother, and all the brethren, as they become advanced members of the Body of Christ, joyfully assist, even to the extent of laying down their lives for the brethren, and all this is the work of God--the effect of his spirit. By all these various agencies God is working in us to will, and working in us to do his good pleasure--that we may increase and abound in love.

But who are the "you" referred to by the Apostle? Does he mean that God makes all men to increase and abound in love? Surely not. The vast majority of men have no knowledge of the love of God here referred to. At the very most they know only the natural love, and frequently very little of that. When the Apostle says, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love," he refers to the Church; not nominal Church members, but the members of the true Church, "whose names are written in heaven"; those who trust in the precious blood of Christ, and have made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, and been begotten again by the holy Spirit of love. These, and these only, are referred to. So long as we continue to be in and of this class we will be subject to the Father's discipline and instructions, for "What son is he that the Father chasteneth not? If any be without chastisement ...then are they spurious and not sons."

WE NOW JOIN THE CHURCH--THE BODY OF CHRIST --ON PROBATION

These chastenings, providences, disciplines, instructions in the word of righteousness, and assistances through the brethren, will be ours as long as we are members of the Body of Christ; and here we are to distinguish between the Body of Christ in its embryo condition in the present life, and the Body of Christ in its perfected condition in the resurrection. We now join the Body of Christ, the Church, on probation; with the understanding that if we are faithful we shall be accepted fully, and be members of the Body of Christ in glory; and that if unfaithful to our vows, our covenants, we cannot be members of that glorified Church. We are pupils in the School of Christ, and it is necessary for us

to proceed to learn all the lessons appointed of the Father, else we shall never be permitted to graduate-- to enter into all the rewards which he has promised to those who attain to the character-likeness of his dear Son.

It is to this end that we are all exhorted to make increase of love, until it shall abound in our hearts. Any

R4663 : page 261

who refuse to make increase in love and to permit it to abound, will necessarily be cut off from this Body of Christ, whatever portion theirs may be. As the Lord explains in his parable of the Vine and the Branches: every branch, every individual member of Christ, that beareth fruit, the fruit of the spirit love--will be pruned of the Father that it may bring forth more and more of this precious fruit; and every branch that fails to bring forth the fruitage of love within a reasonable time, will be cut off and no longer be recognized as a branch of the Vine, as a member of the Body, and will have no opportunity of participating in the glories of those who make their calling and election sure.

It is very important, therefore, that we not only become members of the class here addressed as "you," but that we continue in this class, and maintain our standing by faithfulness and progress under the Lord's leading and instruction. We are to remember that our part in the work is to fully submit ourselves, our wills; and to let the Lord work in us to will and to do his good pleasure. Submitting our wills does not mean stupor or indifference; but the setting of our energies in line with the direction which the Lord from time to time will give us through his Word, through the brethren, and through his providences, which shall shape our ways. We do not need to take anxious thought as though the Lord might forget to give us the needed lessons and experiences to bring us on, and to cause us to abound in love. All we need to do is to remember that he is faithful, and to seek grace and strength to walk in his way, as we shall see it pointed out to us by his providence and Word, step by step. "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet; a lantern to my footsteps."

THE OBJECT AND NECESSITY FOR SUCH DEVELOPMENT

The Apostle in our text tells us why it is necessary that we progress. It is "to the end," or with the object in view, of our hearts being established, fixed, settled, rooted, grounded in holiness. It is not sufficient, from the Divine standpoint, that we learn something about love, and have the feeling of love thrilling our hearts, and that generous emotions shall occasionally be ours; what the Lord seeks is "a peculiar people," "a royal priesthood," thoroughly established, firmly fixed in love for righteousness--so that all unrighteousness, all sin,

all injustice, would be an abomination to them. Not only will they not love iniquity, but, as the Scriptures declare, they will hate iniquity. And whoever truly loves righteousness must in the same proportion hate iniquity. But this is only the result of fixed character, and time and experience and many lessons from the Word of God and from the book of experience are necessary before character becomes so settled, so crystalized, that it is fixed and unwavering in its loyalty to righteousness. It is for this reason that the Lord has hedged up the way of his people during this Gospel Age, and made the way of life, the way to the Kingdom, a "narrow" one, full of difficulties, full of trials, which thereby become tests, and sift out those who do not develop the character which the Lord approves, and for which he promises a share with Christ in his Kingdom.

Some may say, Alas! If the standard of character is so high as to be unblamable before God, who is perfect, how can I ever hope to attain it? And so all of us might say, if the perfect standard were a standard for the flesh; for all of us have learned, as did the Apostle, that "In my flesh dwelleth no good [perfect] thing"; and we have the inspired Word for it that "There is none righteous; no, not one." So, then, we may rest assured that God is not seeking to find in any a perfection of the flesh, and that if he should seek perfection in the flesh he would not find it. It is not such an unreasonable and impossible thing that the Apostle teaches; but something quite reasonable, viz., as he says, that our hearts may be established, fixed, in holiness before God our Father. Ah, yes! To have a heart [will--motive--intention] that is blameless, is a very different thing from having flesh that is blameless. The heart standing for the will, the intention, the desire, represents the "new creature." The flesh stands for itself. In its imperfection and its six thousand years of degradation as the slave and servant of sin, the flesh has become so imperfect that it is impossible to have it serve the law of God perfectly; impossible to have it obey all the good desires of our consecrated hearts unblamably. It is the new creature, the new mind, that must reach this stage of development where it will be unblamable before the Father.

Not only is this a possible attainment, but we cannot conceive of any other condition being acceptable to God, in harmony with our calling. He has called us to be his Church, his Royal Priesthood, that he might fit and prepare us for the great work of blessing all the families of the earth as members of the Body of Christ, otherwise called the Bride, called to association with the heavenly Bridegroom during his Millennial Kingdom. Surely God could ask nothing less than that our hearts, our intentions, should be in accord with the principles of righteousness,

R4664 : page 261

and that these principles should control our

daily lives to the extent of our ability; and that thus we should seek to put away all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect holiness in the reverence of the Lord. (2 Cor. 7:1.) Anything less than this good desire and endeavor could not possibly be acceptable in the sight of God; without these we could not hope to be of the finally acceptable elect Church. But how reasonable is this arrangement! How gladly do we accept the Divine will! How earnestly we wish that every imperfection and blemish of the flesh were done with, that the testings of our new minds were accomplished in their full establishment in righteousness! How we long to have our new bodies, promised to us in the "first resurrection" --bodies in which the new mind can act perfectly, without hindrance, without restraint, and glorify God perfectly in every act and word, as well as in our hearts, intentions! This is acceptable to God. He counts it, through the merit of Christ, exactly as though we were absolutely perfect in word and in deed, since such a condition is the desire of our hearts, our wills; he is merely waiting until this character is fixed, permanent.

THAT WE MAY BE ESTABLISHED--FIXED--IN THE
PRESENCE OF OUR LORD

We perceive that this lesson comes up to date, in the sense that while it has been applicable to the Lord's people all through this Gospel Age, it is specially applicable to us who are now living in the "harvest" time, in the time of the presence of the Son of man. For mark the Apostle's words in our text, that all this development in the spirit of love is to the end that we may be established, fixed, "in the presence [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all saints." We are now in this time of his presence, and it behooves us to inquire carefully of our hearts to what extent we are established in righteousness, in love for it, or to what extent our loyalty to righteousness is still unsettled--wavering.

We may be sure that all who do not speedily come to this condition of establishment in righteousness will be

R4664 : page 262

tested, sifted and rejected; for the time for the completion of the Body of Christ is at hand. The Apostle asks, "Who shall be able to stand?" This is the question: Who shall be so thoroughly established in love that the trials and testings, necessary to prove him so, will be passed successfully? According to this we are not to wonder if various special trials are permitted now to come, thick and fast--trials which will test and prove our loyalty to the Lord and to the principles of love. Yet we are not to be discouraged with this thought of testing, but are to remember that he who began the good work in our hearts, began while we were yet sinners, by giving for us the great ransom price; that if he so loved us then,

while we were yet sinners, much more does he love us now that we have accepted his grace, and are justified from all sin by faith in his blood, and are seeking to walk in his footsteps. And all who have this desire to receive the Lord's lessons, and to profit by them, and to become more and more copies of Jesus--all such have the assurance that it comes, not by their strength, but by the Lord's strength; and that if they submit themselves to him, he will perfect in them his spirit of love and righteousness and holiness; that they may be "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

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R4664 : page 262

DID OUR LORD DIE FOR THE FALLEN ANGELS?

THE expression, "The wages of sin is death," is one which refers to the Divine Law in its general application. These words are not applied to angels, but to the children of men. To them, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23.) This sentence or penalty of death was not pronounced against the angels, either before their sin or subsequently, so far as the records show. They, therefore, are not under such a sentence. The only sentence placed upon them was exclusion from God's favor and from the company of the holy angels, and to be restricted in their intercourse with humanity. They are now suffering the penalty put upon them.

If we should inquire the reason why God should deal differently with the angels than with mankind, we might say that, evidently, he has been making a great example or setting a lesson in his dealings with the human race, showing what would constitute the extreme penalty of wilful sin--a sin against light and the Divine command. No such Divine command, so far as we know, was given to the angels. They received a law in their nature; they perverted that law; they were created on the heavenly plane and they used their power for another purpose than that for which it was given. But in man's case matters were different: Adam knew definitely what was the command of the Lord--that he should not partake of the forbidden fruit; if he did partake of it the penalty would be death. This was a fair proposition and well understood.

GOD'S DEALINGS NOT MORE SEVERE WITH MEN THAN WITH ANGELS

However, God is not unkind or unjust toward men, and we may in some respects say that the dealings of

the Almighty with the human family have been more gracious than with the fallen angels. Let us see: These angels, condemned to exclusion from the righteous, have undoubtedly had a terrible time for the past 4,000 years. At least, any of them who had any love for righteousness or sympathy with righteousness and preserved to any extent their proper standard of character, must have had a fearful time in their intercourse and dealings with those more depraved or fallen. We must assume that some of them, especially since our Lord's death on the cross and his resurrection, have striven to do God's will and have been opposed to everything that would be contrary to his will, and that they would be subjected to severe torment from the others, to all sorts of evil communications, etc. We know that some of these wicked spirits take opportunity to exercise themselves thus toward those of humanity who come under their power, and so we must suppose that these same evil, fallen spirits would be against those who would favor righteousness.

We must suppose, therefore, that for several hundreds of years at least, some of these angels have been suffering severely for their attempt to obey God under the conditions in which they have been for so long. Even though they are blameworthy, we think they are suffering a great deal more than humanity, because in Father Adam's case it was a matter of more or less suffering for 930 years, but at the close of the 930 years his sufferings were at an end; neither did he have to endure torment from demons during the 930 years. Now if we would compare 930 years of the angels' experience with Adam's 930 years, we would think that his experience was the more preferable. Adam was given to understand, too, vaguely, that a Redeemer would be provided, while the angels were kept in suspense and did not know what was God's purpose respecting them, and for more than 4,000 years they could but wonder what the outcome would be. During all this long period they have suffered more than any human being could suffer. God thus shows the variety of his wisdom and his knowledge and power under various circumstances and conditions.

He could have dealt with mankind in a somewhat similar way as with the angels, and merely put certain restrictions upon them, but he chose to make an illustration in mankind, for the benefit of angels and men, to show what would ultimately be the character of his dealings with all his creatures. And now since these repentant angels have had a sufficiency of punishment for their disobedience, an opportunity for release is to be granted to such as will stand their test faithfully, in the "Judgment of the Great Day." We understand that those angels who will not then desire to live righteously, will be cut off in death, the Second Death, and those who remain faithful will be restored to their former standing. Thus God's wisdom is manifest in the whole transaction.

Now regarding the second part of the question, as to our Lord's death having any effect relative to these

angels: We see no way in which the redemption provided by God through Christ applies to the angels, as Jesus died for the race of Adam only. Justice never pronounced a sentence of death against the angels as far as any record shows, but merely pronounced a certain penalty against them for the course they took, and God will not restore them to his favor without a full, complete test. They will never recover their former standing otherwise, and those who do not stand the test will, in the end, receive the death penalty.

So, then, our thought is that the only way in which Christ's life had any effect upon them was as an illustration

R4664 : page 263

of the principles of Divine dealing. They have had the opportunity to see that God is just and by no means clears the guilty; and they can see, too, that in the case of the guilty race of man God has had mercy, has provided for them a Redeemer, and that all who are under condemnation of death are to be released from that sentence. This is all a provision of the grace of God in that he sent his Son to be the Redeemer of the world of mankind and to give them an opportunity of being restored to his favor.

R4665 : page 263

FALLEN ANGELS NO SHARE IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

The question is suggested, could it be said that any of those fallen angels who have for a time, some perhaps for many centuries, lived separate from sin and striven to do God's will and suffered persecution from the wicked spirits, have a share in the sufferings of Christ?

We answer that they could not be said to be sharing the sufferings of Christ, because only the Body of Christ can share in these sufferings. It might, perhaps, be said that they have, in a way, been suffering for the sake of righteousness, but that would not be the proper expression, we think, but, rather they are suffering on account of their sins. If they had been righteous they would not have needed to suffer, but it was because they did wrong--because they sinned--that these sufferings were brought upon them.

A question might present itself in respect to this text. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Col. 1:19,20.) We do not understand this passage to intimate, in any sense of the word, that "the blood of the cross" had anything to do with the salvation of the angels. It was the Father's good pleasure that in Christ all fulness should dwell, in the sense that he

should have complete authority--not merely authority over man, but over all things--both heavenly and earthly. It was the Father's pleasure, originally, that through him he would reconcile all things unto himself. Man was out of harmony with God. It was God's will that Christ should harmonize man with God. And these fallen angels were out of harmony with God and it was God's will that they also should be brought into harmony. Everything out of order was to be placed in order. Jehovah has entrusted it all to Christ to set right, just as a King might say to his Minister of State or his General, "Now you attend to this whole matter, putting down all insurrection wherever it is; see that no rebellion is left; bring everything into subjection, so that there will be peace and order throughout my entire domain." So likewise the Father tells the Lord Jesus to put everything in order as his representative, in respect to things earthly and things heavenly.

This work of reconciliation was made possible only "through the blood of his cross"; not that the blood of his cross was necessary for the effecting of all this reconciliation, but the blood of his cross was necessary so far as he was concerned; only by his proving faithful unto death, the death of the cross; only by such display of faithfulness, could our Lord be determined to be the right one to accomplish all these things. So, then, the blood of the cross had not merely its effect upon mankind, but the primary effect was upon the Lord Jesus himself, because he received the first blessing from the blood of his cross.

Another blessing from the blood of the cross was its imputation to the Church, the household of faith, to enable them to become joint-sacrificers with him, by participating in his sufferings; and the third blessing from this blood will be as respects the world of mankind during the Millennial Age. And it is his own exaltation through this that gives him rightful authority in God's Plan to be the one to execute God's purposes during the Millennial Age. This is the One who is to be the blesser of angels and men; he is to have full control of things both heavenly and earthly.

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R4665 : page 263

ARE WE BEGOTTEN TO THE DIVINE NATURE?

IN THE WORDS "beget" and "begetting," which are frequently used in the Scriptures, an analogy is drawn between the spiritual begetting and birth and the human begetting and birth. We are not, however, to understand the spiritual begetting and birth to be like the natural in every particular. It is merely an illustrative figure to give

us a thought. The thought is that we are begotten of the holy Spirit of God with a view to our becoming partakers of the divine nature and that all who are spirit-begotten in the present time are begotten with that hope, with that object and end in view. It is to this end that the Apostle Peter says, God "has given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature."

We see the great Pattern, our Lord Jesus, in whom was illustrated all these various features that are applicable to us. We ask ourselves, To what was he begotten? The answer is that undoubtedly he was begotten to the divine nature; that he could not have reached perfection on any lower spirit plane; that if he had not come off "conqueror" in the fullest sense of the word he would have had nothing; and only those who attain his character-likeness and are overcomers--conquerors in the highest sense of the word--will be with him to share his glory and partake of his divine nature. Those who will constitute the "great company" class are such as fail to come off "more than conquerors"; they are those who, in other words, would have made "shipwreck" of the whole matter had it not been for the Divine provision which we find outlined in the Word of God to the effect that these, "who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage," and who therefore fail to go on in the most approved manner, courageously, in the footsteps of Jesus, "shall be saved so as by fire"; they shall be saved by being forced to the point where they must either deny the Lord or else battle for righteousness.

We find this "great multitude" accorded the name of "overcomers," victors, as the palm branches granted to them indicates (Rev. 7:9), and we read that "they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They attain to a lower station than the divine. Evidently they attain that station through stress rather than through the voluntary walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Had Jesus been in their position; had he not come off "more than a conqueror," he would have made failure altogether, because there was no provision made to force him into anything or to make good for any lack of zeal on his part. Hence he was begotten to the divine nature and could not have received anything else. But what he

R4665 : page 264

does for the "great company" class is something aside entirely from that to which they were called and to which it was their privilege to attain had they reached this fullest degree of character-likeness to their Lord.

WERE ALL THE CONSECRATED BEGOTTEN TO THE
DIVINE NATURE?

We answer, we might use an illustration from the

earthly plane that would help us to some extent. We might say that a father desired to beget a son in his own likeness, his own nature; and in the begetting of this son, suppose that there were also begotten two other children. We will suppose that the birth was a birth of triplets--one son and two daughters. The son, we will suppose, was the objective point, the desire, the intention, at the time of the begetting, but the result yielded more than this. Now, the two female children thus born were born of the same begetting and were begotten to the same nature, and yet there is a difference between these in the birth. Just so in the spiritual birth. The begetting of each was to the divine nature. In the original purpose the "great company" did not enter in. They were, of course, foreknown, but they were not of the original design, if you please.

Now what constituted the difference between the birth of the male and of the female child? We realize that this is dealing with a delicate subject which is little understood, and which is considerably in question, but as far as we understand the latest deductions of Science, they teach that the nourishment of the newly begotten infant, during the early portion of the period of gestation, decides as to whether it will develop as a male or a female, and for a certain time nothing can be determined as to the sex; but as time goes on the development takes one or the other form. As to what may be the elements that would tend to produce the one more than the other or the kind of food that would be best suited to produce either kind, we need not discuss, but we can see from this an illustration of the spirit plane and can see that those who partake most abundantly of the grace of God ministered to us through the Truth will be the ones who will be born on the divine plane. These exceeding great and precious promises that are given to us are the spiritual food upon which we, as embryonic New Creatures, must feed. No matter how much food may be supplied, if, for any reason, we fail to appropriate the necessary spiritual nourishment, we will be deficient to some extent. The Apostle's words seem to corroborate this thought--"To us are given exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature" --that is to say, If we do not use these we will not be partakers of this nature, but by the use of these exceeding great and precious promises we may "make our calling and election sure" and become joint-heirs with Christ on this highest plane and not on the lower plane.

We will supplement the thought respecting the begetting and birth of two different classes during the present time--the "little flock" and the "great company"--and suggest two other illustrations that have been brought to our attention as illustrating the possibility of differing results from similar begettings, depending upon the nourishment.

One of these illustrations is in the case of bees and the other in the case of ants: In the case of bees, from the same begetting come three different classes--the queen bee, the working bee and the drone bee--and the difference seems to be in the amount of feeding that each class gets. Those which are intended to be queen bees are specially fed, and those which are to be the working bees have another kind of food, and similarly with the drones.

There are also three classes of ants, and it is supposed that while all the eggs have the same appearance and there seems to be no difference whatever in these, the various results seem to be produced to some extent by the different feeding of the larva during their development.

Both of these illustrate very well what we are speaking of respecting the Church and the Great Company. The Church class is specially fed on the Truth of God's Word, the great and precious promises. Such as feed upon these may be developed to the highest plane, the divine nature, while others not so fed, not so nourished, will be born on the lower plane.

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R4666 : page 264

"GO YE ALSO INTO THE VINEYARD"

--MATTHEW 20:1-16.--AUGUST 14.--

Golden Text:--"Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."--Matt. 19:30.

GRAPE CULTURE was one of the main industries of the days of the Great Teacher. The stony hillsides of Palestine were once terraced and extensively used as vineyards. On our recent visit we noted with particular interest the revival of this custom, as one of the evidences of the beginning of restitution in the Holy Land.--Acts 3:19-21.

The grapevine was honored of the Master, in that he used it in a parable to symbolize himself and the Church, saying, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches"; "My Father is the husbandman"; "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit"; "Every branch in me which beareth fruit he pruneth it that it may bring forth more fruit"; "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away."

Our present study, The Parable of the Laborers, is in full accord with the foregoing, but shows the matter from a different standpoint. It shows how each one of the Lord's consecrated Church, each heir of the Messianic Kingdom shortly to be established, is privileged to be a co-laborer with his Lord and Master, and with the Heavenly Father in the vineyard work--tending the vine, looking

out for the injurious pests, keeping the soil in good condition, assisting every way in the production of "much fruit" and of fine quality. Evidently many Christian people do not appreciate the privilege of being laborers in the Church of Christ--"building one another up in the most holy faith" until we all come to the full stature of a man in the Anointed One.

St. Paul appreciated this privilege greatly, saying, God hath made us qualified servants of the New Covenant. So then we, as ambassadors for God, beseech men, be ye reconciled to God. (2 Cor. 5:20.) Whoever is negligent of his opportunities to serve others who manifest a hearing ear, a humble heart and a teachable spirit shows his own lack of appreciation of God's message.

He thus indicates that he has not fully come to a knowledge of God nor to a knowledge of the Truth

R4666 : page 265

respecting the Divine Plan. And, indeed, the Scriptures declare that a deep knowledge of God, his Word and his purposes, is attained only as a gift of God, bestowed only upon those who are in a humble, faithful, zealous attitude of mind--"To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God."

The things pertaining to God's Kingdom, in its future operation toward the world for a thousand years, will be openly manifested to every creature, shortly. But now it is appropriate, and is the Divine will, that these things should be known only to the Church, the consecrated, the spirit-begotten sons of God. Likewise there are important truths pertaining to the Kingdom class, the Church, which is being prepared to be the Bride of Christ and his joint-heir in the Kingdom. And these things are likewise intended to be comparatively secret--to be clearly and fully understood only by such as have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5.) "The Secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him, and he will show them his Covenant." (Psalm 25:14.) All such in close sympathy with the Divine purposes will be anxious to serve the Lord, the Truth and the brethren. And such from time to time will be specially sent into the Vineyard, and will be specially used of the Lord for the assistance of his consecrated people in various ways.

AGREED FOR A PENNY A DAY

The word "penny" here is from the Greek denarius, a silver coin of about 17 cents value. But the value of money has so changed in recent years that today a laborer's wage in proportion to other things would be considerably more. The denarius was the Roman standard of that time, as the lira is the Italian standard, the mark the German standard, the franc the French standard,

the shilling the English standard, and the dollar the American standard. It is worthy of note that in one of the fine old English cathedrals the records show that its excellent chisel work, superior to anything of today, cost "a penny a day and a bag of meal for each laborer." The parable of our lesson is evidently intended to teach that God will give all that he has agreed to all who labor--that he in generosity gives more than he has stipulated.

At the close of the day we read that those first hired murmured against their lord. We cannot suppose that any who would be counted worthy of a share in the Kingdom would murmur against the Giver of all Good. The rewarding is to be expected at the close of the harvest day and the murmuring may be expected there also. The "penny" or reward would thus seem to be something of the joys, blessings, honors and privileges of God's people in the present life, at the close of this age. Those who murmur that they do not receive a sufficiency of honor and distinction and of Divine acknowledgment will be thereby proving themselves unfit for the future service "beyond the veil," as members of the Church in glory. This would seem to point a warning to those of God's people who have been long in the Truth, and who have had great privileges of service, that if they murmur against the blessings and rewards coming to them, it will mean that they were laboring for the reward merely and not appreciating the privilege of being laborers with Christ and with the Father; it would imply that they had failed to enter into the spirit of the wonderful privileges granted them of serving the Lord, the Truth and the brethren. The right spirit, the proper interest in the Father's work and in the brethren should prompt all to rejoice with every new laborer and to be glad that all such should receive of the Lord's favors, blessings and enlightenment as fully, as freely, as themselves. Surely any who have not this spirit have not the Spirit of Christ on this subject at least.

The general lesson is that God is so just, so generous, so bountiful, in his dealings that all those who appreciate matters from his standpoint will rejoice in the blessings which overflow upon others. A failure to appreciate the Lord's generosity was one cause of stumbling to the Jews eighteen centuries ago--they were offended that the Gospel message should go out beyond them to the Gentiles. Similarly today some Christian people are stumbling over the fact that the Word of God shows that, whereas Divine blessings are now confined to the Church, "the elect," the servants and hand-maidens of the Gospel Age, yet the time is near at hand when "God will pour out his spirit upon all flesh," and when all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

All who have the privilege of bearing the labor and heat of the day in the Lord's service must be glad of the privilege, in order to be worthy of participation in the Kingdom. Thus some who seem to be first in their promptness to respond to the Lord's call for laborers may

be amongst the last to receive special blessings of grace and Truth, and this may serve as a special test upon them--as respects their loyalty, and the motives which actuated them in engaging in the Vineyard work. "Let us take heed, lest a promise having been left us any should seem to come short."

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R4668 : page 265

THE GREATEST--THE SERVANT

--MATTHEW 20:17-34.--AUGUST 21.--

Golden Text:--"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."

AMBITION moves the world--selfish ambition. A certain kind of ambition--to please God and to have his rewards, is encouraged by the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word. Think of the promise held out to the consecrated, self-sacrificing followers of Jesus--that, if faithful unto death, they shall receive the "crown of life," immortality, and attain a place with their

R4669 : page 265

Master in his Throne--as participants in the glories and honors of his Kingdom! There is no earthly appeal to ambition so strong as this, which comes from the Creator to such as have the hearing ear of faith. Nevertheless, the ambitions awakened by these promises, we are warned, might become our snares. The very condition upon which we may attain the Kingdom is our faithful endurance of shame, contempt, misunderstanding, and our demonstration to the last of humility and absolute loyalty to God and full resignation to his providences. Whoever would reign with Messiah in his approaching Kingdom, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven," must humble himself under the mighty hand of God, that he may be exalted in due time.--I Peter 5:6.

The prospect of the Kingdom was bright before the minds of the Apostles, even when Jesus was foretelling

R4669 : page 266

his ignominious sufferings and death; so that two of his beloved followers, James and John, through their mother, importuned a promise that they should sit, the one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of the Great King when his Kingdom should be established.

This request drew from the Great Teacher the suggestion

that his loving and ambitious disciples had, perhaps, not fully counted the cost of such exaltation. He inquired if they were willing to drink of his cup of ignominy and reproach, and if they were willing to be baptized with his baptism, into his death--the sacrifice of all earthly interests. They had counted the cost, and promptly responded as to their willingness. They had learned well the lessons of the Great Teacher. He assured them that with this willingness of mind the privilege would be theirs of sharing his ignominy and his death and of sitting with him on his Throne. But as respects the chief positions, they were not at his disposal. At the conclusion of the testings of his people, those positions of highest honor in the Kingdom next to himself will be given according to the just standards which the Father has prepared and established. How we can rejoice with those Apostles in the fullness of their consecration and in the assurance of the Master! And we also should strive by faithfulness to attain a place with the Master in his Throne, as members of his Body, the Church.

The ambition of James and John was shown in their desire for places of special nearness to the Lord. Jesus did not reprove them specifically, but indirectly. When the other ten heard how these two had sought to bespeak the chief places of honor they were indignant. The Master took advantage of the incident to show how different is God's judgment from that of men. With men the aggressive and powerful hold the lordship and dominion over the others, but in the Divine arrangement the order is reversed. God will honor most and put in the highest positions, the humble, the submissive, the meek. On this incident the Lord based a general instruction to his followers on the necessity for humility. We are to take the Divine standpoint and honor most in the Church those who most serve the Church, and not those who demand service and honors and seek self-exaltation. Our Lord pointed to his own course as an illustration: they acknowledged him as their Master, and yet no one served them so much as did he. Indeed, he came into the world not to be served, but to serve others, even to the extent of laying down his life as the ransom price for many, for the world, to be applied for their release from sin and death condemnation in God's time--during the Messianic Kingdom.

BLESSING THE BLIND AND THE POOR

Journeying on the Master had an opportunity of exemplifying his position as a servant. Two blind men, learning that he was passing, exercised such faith that they hailed him as the Messiah, the Son of David, entreating Mercy, Help, Relief. Instead of passing them by, saying, You are only blind beggars, anyway, the Master stopped and called them to him and, in response to their request, touched their eyes, and immediately they received sight. Other Scriptures indicate that the Great

Teacher's miracles were not performed without cost to himself, "Virtue (vitality) went out of him and healed them all."--Luke 6:19.

He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, humbling himself to serve the humblest and poorest unfortunates! Here we have an illustration of the spirit of meekness, the spirit of service, which must characterize the hearts, and, in some degree, control the lives of all true followers, disciples, of the Great Teacher. If it is not in our power to open the eyes of the physically blind, it is in our power to help many to a clearer insight into the things of God which the natural eye hath not seen, nor ear heard--the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him and that, loving him, follow in the footsteps of Jesus. (I Cor. 2:9.) Let us, then, seek the true, God-given ambition; but let us specially seek to know and to do the will of our Father in heaven.

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R4669 : page 266

ISRAEL'S KING REJECTED

--MATTHEW 21:1-17.--AUGUST 28.--

Golden Text:--"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!"

WHILE God foreknew and the prophets foretold that the Jewish nation would reject Jesus and not receive him as their King, nevertheless, everything was done as though the results were not foreknown and foretold. The prophecies were fulfilled. Today's study illustrates this. Jesus offered himself to Israel as their Messianic King, just five days before his crucifixion, and on the exact day upon which, as the Lamb of God, he should have been received by them, in order that they might have been "passed over" and, as a nation, become the antitypical Levites from amongst whom would have been selected the antitypical priests. Their failure to receive Jesus at the appointed time did not at all interfere with the Divine arrangement, for all of the Jews found worthy to be of the spiritual Levites and spiritual priests were selected, although the nation was rejected. The remainder of those spiritual, antitypical priests and Levites God has been gathering from amongst the Gentiles ever since. By and by all these, of whom Jesus is the Chief Priest, will be glorified on the spirit plane. Then will begin the great Messianic work for Israel, and through Israel for all the nations of the world. Thus in due time Israel's expectations will be realized on a grander scale than they ever dreamed of. Abraham, Isaac and all the prophets shall be made princes or rulers

in all the earth. Israel restored to Divine favor shall "obtain mercy" of God through the glorified Church, and shall become the channel of God's favor for pouring out upon mankind riches of grace.

SABBATH AT BETHANY

The Sabbath day prior to his crucifixion was spent by the Great Teacher at the home of Lazarus and Martha and Mary. His fame had spread by reason of the miracle performed upon Lazarus. A feast was given in his honor on Sabbath night after sundown. It was then that Mary anointed him with the precious perfume which Jesus said was an anointing for his burial. The fragrance of this perfume has come down to us through the ages. The next morning, to fulfill the Scriptures, Jesus sent for the ass and its little colt to be brought. The ass was probably a white one, for it is reputed to have been the custom of the kings of Israel to ride upon white asses. The multitude who had come to see Jesus, and Lazarus

R4669 : page 267

whom he had brought from the tomb, filled with admiration, hailed Jesus with shouts, as "The Son of David!" The Great King! The Messiah! Certain Scribes and Pharisees called attention to this and suggested that Jesus rebuke them. His answer was that, had the people refused to acclaim him, the stones would have cried out; because it had been prophesied centuries before, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold thy King cometh unto thee. He is meek and having salvation; lowly, and sitting upon an ass, with its colt, the foal of an ass." The little procession headed for Jerusalem, the multitude shouting and strewing their clothing and palm branches for the ass to tread upon, as marks of honor to the great King whom they imperfectly, indistinctly, recognized--not realizing the still greater glory and honor of his later revealing in the end of this Age, when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to him."

"YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT DESOLATE"

Four months ago--on April 24--we passed over the historic road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, thinking the while of the great incident of this lesson. The road sweeps around the side of the Mount of Olives on a reasonable grade until suddenly a turn of the road and the sharp declivity of the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) brings Jerusalem into full view in a moment. Time and again we walked over part of the road and noted where the Master halted the little procession and wept over the city, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings

[for safety], and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till [that day when] ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."-- Matt. 23:37-39.

R4670 : page 267

Our heart went out in sympathy for the Jewish people. We recalled how they have been nationally "left desolate" for eighteen centuries, and have been persecuted, even, alas, by those who have named the name of Christ! We specially rejoiced to think that "the time of Jacob's trouble" will soon be over--that the time when they will enter into the New Covenant relationship with God will soon be at hand. (Jer. 31:31; Rom. 11:27.) We rejoiced to think that soon Immanuel in the glory of his Kingdom will be revealed, and that all flesh shall behold the glory of that Kingdom. Then the Lord will pour upon Israel the spirit of prayer and of supplication, and they shall look upon him whom they pierced. (Zech. 12:10.) We rejoice to think that "that day" when they shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," is nigh at hand. But, we reflect, that the time of special favor to spiritual Israel must be correspondingly drawing to a close.

That spot where Jesus stopped to prophesy Israel's future was the same one over which, a little later, the army of Titus marched to the destruction of Jerusalem, and, amidst famine, finally accomplished the destruction of the city, taking, according to records, ninety-seven thousand prisoners. One million, one hundred thousand were said to have perished through famine and war. The ground around the City of Jerusalem the Romans planted thick with crosses, on which Jews were crucified, until there was room for no more, says history.

CLEANSING THE TYPICAL TEMPLE

The Great Teacher's entry into Jerusalem caused considerable commotion. He went directly to the Temple and ordered from it the money-changers and dove-sellers, who had no right within its hallowed precincts. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy, "The zeal of thine house has consumed me." The poor, the blind, the lame, again had his ministries. Again the chief religionists of the times were vexed and considered him an intruder upon their arrangements, and were displeased with the multitude's shouting his praise as the Messiah, the Son of David. They rebuked the Teacher, who answered, Scripturally, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."--Matt. 21:16; Psalm 8:2.

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R4666 : page 267

SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS

WHY WERE NOT JOB AND OTHERS PRIESTS?

QUESTION.--Since it was the priests who were to offer the sacrifices and since no one could be a priest except he was called of God, how was it that some of the Ancient Worthies, Job and others, who were not priests, offered up sacrifices?

Answer.--The sacrifices which these offered were not sin offerings. They did not offer up sacrifices according to the types of the Law, as the Day of Atonement sacrifices, for instance. This whole arrangement of the Jewish Law, by which the sacrificing was taken out of the individual's hands and put into the hands of the priests, was

R4667 : page 267

a new departure in God's dealings.

Abraham, we know, presented offerings before the establishment of the Priesthood. The exact time in which Job lived we do not know. We merely know that he was Job of Uz, and walked before God with a perfect heart; but we think we are justified in supposing that he did not live during the Law dispensation, with its typical sacrifices. If this be true, his course was in full line with Abraham's course when he offered up sacrifices. When Abraham was stayed from offering his son, he offered up the ram caught in the thicket, as the Lord directed.

What these patriarchs did in the matter of offering up sacrifices was evidently a token on their part of appreciation of God and of the fact that a sacrifice for sins was necessary, just as Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and offered them to God, though he was not called to be a priest; but none of these sacrifices was accepted in the same sense that the sacrifices were accepted under the Law. None of these sacrifices ever made the offerers themselves perfect, nor did they atone for anyone else; they were merely the same as a prayer would be, a manifestation of a good desire of heart and of appreciation of God and a desire to reverence him, and a recognition of the fact that sin required some atonement. So when the Lord showed how this sin-atonement was to be made he pictured the work of this Gospel Age. He appointed a priest to represent the Lord Jesus, and under-priests to represent the Church. A work of sacrifice was done on a particular day of the year--the Atonement Day--representing the work of this Gospel Age in which these "better sacrifices" for sin are offered; and under this larger arrangement no one is permitted to offer the sacrifice

R4667 : page 268

except a priest, God thus indicating that the work is entirely under his supervision and direction.

"THY DEAD MEN--MY DEAD BODY"

Question.--What is meant by "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise."-- Isa. 26:19.

Answer.--Seemingly the addition of a few words by the translators has caused difficulty in connection with this text. They inserted the words to make the passage clear, as they thought, but instead they obscured it, through failure to see that God's dead men are those who are members of the Body of Christ.

Omitting the words "together with," and "men," the passage reads properly enough? "Thy dead shall live; my dead Body, they shall arise," thus referring, we believe, to the resurrection of the Church, the Body of Christ, the Lord's peculiar people. And this is a general signal, as it were, for the blessing of all mankind. In due time all the dead shall be awakened. Moreover, they awaken not to suffering and to torment, but to sing. They shall come forth to learn of the goodness of God, his merciful provisions, and shall avail themselves of these provisions, in the "Times of Restitution of all things." "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust" of the earth.

WHEN DID OUR LORD BECOME THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF THE FATHER

Question.--When did Christ become the express image of God, as recorded?--Hebrews 1:3.

Answer.--Surely our Lord Jesus was an express likeness of the Father's person before he came into the world; he left that glory, however; he became a man--"he humbled himself." It was from this standpoint that he prayed, "Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." There is a glory of human nature which our Lord possessed while he was a man, "the man Christ Jesus"--a perfect man in the likeness of God. However, the Apostle's reference in the above text was not to his prehuman existence nor to his earthly glory as a perfect man, but to the glory which he attained in his resurrection, as the Apostle declares, saying, "Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things on earth and things under the earth." (Phil. 2:9,10.) This, we believe, was the particular time to which the Apostle referred.

We are not to understand that he began to purge our sins when he left the heavenly glory nor when he made

his consecration, nor when he died on the cross. In all these sufferings our Lord was demonstrating his worthiness of the high exaltation. Having fulfilled the Law and laid down his life, our Lord had the human life, the earthly nature and earthly rights, to dispose of. He had not forfeited these by sin. They were his, therefore, to give away. When "he ascended up on high" he presented this merit of his as the satisfaction for our sins, the sins of his followers, to purge or cleanse, not only those who were waiting in the upper room at Pentecost, but also all others of the same class down through this Gospel Age, till the full number of the "elect" should be found.

THE GREAT COMPANY OR THE ANCIENT WORTHIES

Question.--Will the Ancient Worthies have precedence of resurrection over the "Great Company" class of this Gospel Age?

Answer.--In the light of what we have been discussing of late in THE WATCH TOWER, it is evident that the merit of Christ is applied, on behalf of the Church during this Gospel Age--on behalf of all who essay to be of the Church; it is used to impute to those who desire to become sacrificers and who consecrate themselves to God that they may present an acceptable sacrifice and thus become members of the spiritual class and joint-heirs with Christ. This applies to the "great company" as well as to the "little flock." It applies to all who are begotten of the holy Spirit because they could not be begotten of the Spirit except by the imputation of Christ's merit to their earthly sacrifice.

It follows, then, as a matter of necessity that before the merit of Christ's death could be applied on behalf of the Ancient Worthies or Israel, under the New Covenant arrangement for Israel and the world, it must be released as respects all those to whom it is now imputed for the purpose of giving them the opportunity of attaining the spiritual station. This would prove conclusively, we think, that the "great company" class will be resurrected before the Ancient Worthies will be brought forth.

"GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND"

Question.--What does this text signify?

Answer.--In olden times when they wore flowing garments, girdles were constantly worn for two purposes; one was to gird up their garments--as, for instance, we sometimes sing, "Gird thy bridal robes around thee." The girdle, therefore, was useful in keeping the garments in their proper place, or position, so that they would not be disordered in appearance, nor cause one to trip and

fall. Then, secondly, the girdle was used for its effect upon the loins during active labor. For instance, when one was engaged in a strenuous occupation, such as lifting a heavy weight or carrying a heavy burden or running a race, the muscles of the abdomen would play an important part.

Even in speaking we find the muscles of the abdomen contract, and thus give us the more force and strength of voice. In any kind of manual labor this is found to be the case, and these muscles become comparatively rigid. It is the custom, therefore, among workmen, even today, to wear a belt. When they have particularly severe tasks they take another "hitch" in their belt--that is, they pull it up a few notches more, making it a little tighter around the waist, the object being to support the muscles of the abdomen and to enable them to accomplish more labor with less fatigue; and when they are at rest they slacken the belt.

This seems to be the special thought of the Apostle here--"Gird up the loins of your mind." As there are loins in the body and they have their important part to perform and we strengthen them in time of exercise, or necessity, so with our minds. We who have devoted ourselves to be the Lord's people, to do his service, realize that our minds need to be strengthened. We need to be of good courage. We need to be fortified against all disposition to lassitude.

When we undertake to gird up the loins of our minds it signifies that we have determined upon a course of activity; that rest and ease are put aside and that we are now engaging in an important work which we realize requires all the strength that we possess. The Christian has a great task before him, to lay down his life in the Lord's service, to accomplish all that he may be able to accomplish in respect to the use of opportunities which

R4667 : page 269

the Lord has provided us as his servants, his followers, that we may have a good report to give when he calls us to render our account; that we may say, Thou gavest me two; or, Thou gavest me five talents and I have gained, two; or, thou gavest me five talents and I have gained, beside, other five.

WHY FORBID GOD'S SERVICE?

Question.--Why did the disciples forbid the man whom they found casting out devils? Why did they not allow him to go on and do the best he could in casting them out? What was the ground of their objection?

Answer.--Evidently the Apostles when sent forth had very similar sentiments to those which prevail today. Our Catholic friends, for instance, would say, You do not

have the Apostolic ordination; therefore, you cannot preach. You cannot serve in any religious capacity. Our Episcopalian friends would seem to say, No, you did not have the holy hands of the Episcopal Bishop laid upon you.

A little disposition of the same nature is manifested by nearly all of the denominations--What authority have

R4668 : page 269

you? So the disciples, finding a man who was casting out devils in Jesus' name, said, What authority have you to cast out devils? Jesus did not send you out as one of the twelve; he did not send you out as one of the seventy. You have no business in this work.

Our Lord's answer to them showed that they were laboring under a mistaken view. While they were specially commissioned to perform miracles, yet if anyone else could do the same things, it was not their province to hinder or object in any sense of the word, but rather they should have taken the broad, sympathetic view, and said, My dear friend, I see you are casting out devils. You are doing a good work. We are glad you can cast them out because of all the poor people you can relieve. The fact that you have not followed with us indicates that you do not know our Master, and we should be glad to have you come and get acquainted with him, too.

And so, we think, it should be with us. Whenever we find anyone doing a good work, helping the world in any sense of the word, whether it be by keeping a mission or helping the heathen or helping a newsboy, or by some other work, to oppose sin or relieve suffering, we should be sympathetic to the extent that we see they have good hearts, good intentions, good desires. Instead of working against them or hindering them in any manner, we should speak an encouraging word and endeavor to lead them to fuller light. This does not mean that we should follow with them and leave our special commission of teaching the Truth which the Lord has given us, but that we should not object to the Lord's using various agencies for accomplishing his work. We should not think that we alone have the privilege of engaging in his work; that we have patent rights on his work, and can hinder others from doing what they may be able to do and take pleasure in doing.

UNACCEPTABLE WORKERS FOR JESUS

Question.--Our Lord declared that many in that day shall say, "Lord, Lord, have we not taught in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" And his declaration continues that he will then say to such, "I never knew you.

Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." (Matt. 7:22,23.)
How shall we understand this in harmony with the above statement of our Lord that his disciples should not forbid him who followed not with them, but who cast out devils in his name?

Answer.--We would understand that God may permit people to do certain good works who are not fit for the Kingdom class, who are not fully submissive to the Lord Jesus and his Headship, who are not fully taught and used of him. They may be exercising a certain amount of faith and the Lord may recognize them to that extent, but he will not guarantee that anybody who has power to work miracles and preach publicly, will be granted a place in the Kingdom. We are therefore not at liberty to say that everyone who is engaged in mission work or slum work will be in the Kingdom. He may be doing a good work; but he may not be of that special class which the Lord is now seeking. We are not to object to his work, if it is a good work. It is not ours to interfere with him, for the Lord is able to take care of his own work. It is our work to take care of ourselves, although we are not to acknowledge or co-operate with those who we believe are associating error even with good works. We should not in any sense lend our influence to the assistance of evil.

We are to take the standpoint of leaving to the Lord the management of his own affairs, the interests of his cause in general. He is abundantly able to attend to the whole matter. We are to see to it that our hearts are fully submissive, and that our heads, our wills, are under the Headship, Leadership of the Lord; that his will is done in us, and that our sacrifices are not made to be seen of men, but are made as unto God; thus we shall have his approval in that day. To such he says he will be glad to give acknowledgment, and to confess them before the Father and his holy angels.

DOES CHARACTER DETERMINE THE KIND OF RESURRECTION?

Question.--From the Scriptural standpoint, does the character of the individual's death indicate the kind of his resurrection?

Answer.--The Apostle's argument (I Cor. 15) respecting the resurrection is that God will give to every seed its own kind of body. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." Mankind in general, therefore, in the resurrection, will come forth with natural bodies-- "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" and that which is born of the flesh dies or "sleeps" for a time, and will be awakened "flesh." That which is born of the flesh and subsequently begotten of the holy Spirit is reckoned as a New Creature, and when the New Creature falls asleep, it is asleep as a spirit being--is asleep waiting for the

resurrection change. In this case the resurrection change is thus expressed by the Apostle: "Sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown an animal body, raised a spirit body"; but anyone not begotten of the holy Spirit will, of course, not change his nature in the grave. There is no change in the grave either for good or evil: "As the tree falleth so shall it lie"; the awakening will be according to the character of the individual. If he has become a New Creature in Christ he will be raised or perfected as a New Creature, in the resurrection. If he is a good natural man he will be awakened a good natural man; if he is a bad natural man he will be awakened a bad natural man; if he is one of the Ancient Worthies, we understand he will be awakened a perfect man.

R4668 : page 270

BEGINNING OF MELCHISEDEC PRIESTHOOD

Question.--When did our Lord become a Priest after the order of Melchisedec?

Answer.--Our Lord entered upon his Melchisedec priesthood individually, personally, at the time of his resurrection, when, as the Apostle declares, God announced, "Let all the angels of God worship him." In this individual sense he became the Melchisedec Priest, although only the "Head" was yet formed. Since the intelligence is in the head, we can see how the head might stand for the body, as could no other member of the body. A hand stretched forth might represent the body, but it could not have the intelligence of the head, and we could not say that the presence was there, but as soon as the Head was born from the dead, as soon as the Head was accepted as the Melchisedec Priest, that soon the whole matter would have a standing with God, the intelligence residing in the Head. We agree, however, that we shall not exercise our full office as a Melchisedec Priest until the whole Church shall be with their Head in glory, members of his Body. A Melchisedec Priest is a blessing Priest, a Priest who has the power to bless. Melchisedec was able to bless Abraham. Far superior, therefore, to the Aaronic priesthood is the Melchisedec priesthood.

Our Lord could not have been this Melchisedec Priest until his resurrection, evidently, because he had nothing with which to bless. Before he could do any blessing he must himself lay down his life, and by laying down his human life in obedience to the Father, he would thus receive or have to his credit the merit which he could draw upon in the blessing of us, and ultimately all the families of the earth.

Question.--How long will this Priesthood of the order of Melchisedec last?

Answer.--"Thou art a Priest for the age," or rather, a Priest ever, an ever-Priest, a lasting Priest; not one who would pass away by death; not one who would drop

his office in some unsatisfactory manner, but one who would fully accomplish all the purposes for which he was appointed as a Priest. Our Lord was appointed a Priest because there was necessity for a Priest. It is not an office that would be necessary amongst the angels, who are perfect, but it is an office necessary amongst men, because of their imperfection. To be a Priest, therefore, to the end or completion, would mean that he would be a Priest, Mediator, Reconciler, Harmonizer in this matter of estrangement between God and man. Therefore, this office will end with the Millennial Age, when he shall have accomplished all this work and will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father. Then he will be a Priest no more. There will be no need of a Priest of any kind, sacrificing or reigning. The very significance of the office is that of intercessor or mediator, or assister in some manner of those who are in some difficulty.

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R4670 : page 270

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

We have had a very delightful visit from our dear Brother Bundy, who stopped with us for several days in Jacksonville, and I am writing to say that the Lord has blessed his visit greatly--to me at least.

As you know, I have not been in harmony with the Class here for more than two and one-half years; had many objections to many things, "the Vow" included, and now, after this long and unpleasant experience, through which the Lord has brought me, and from which he has saved me, I may be qualified to sound a note of warning to some others who, perhaps, are now under a similar cloud, or who may be harboring in their hearts some wrong thoughts that may sooner or later develop and blind them, and God only knows what the result may be.

Satan succeeded in getting a kind of sugar-coated poison in my heart, but the sugar coat soon wore off, and I found myself in mighty bad company--people whose principal business seems to be not to advance the Lord's cause and to develop the Christ-like character with the fruits of the Spirit, being more and more manifest; people whose business seems to be the destruction of the faith of the Lord's "little flock" and the discrediting, to say the least, of the one whom the Lord has been pleased to use in bringing us all into the light of the "Present Truth," even yourself, dear Brother. And only to think, I found myself, when I was roused to the fact, in this company, and I praise the Lord that he enabled me to get a good square look at myself and then at the company I was in, and I saw the positive earmarks in myself, as well as in

them, of an unclean and unholy spirit, which, however well concealed, savored not of the sweet, kind, humble spirit of our Lord and his true followers.

After the Lord had opened my eyes to see the great danger that I was in, I went back to the Class and tried real hard to be sweet and to take up things where I had left off. It was a hard task and crucifying, indeed, to the flesh. I made a clean, frank statement, as honest as I knew how to make, and the Lord blessed it to my good. But the weeks that have followed have been weeks of veritable torture. Satan has withstood me to my very face and has tortured me through both men and women who are under his control, even using some of the Lord's own people to this end along almost every line. I have faced financial ruin as well, and from worse to worse until I thought I would lose my mind--driven almost to the very verge of suicide, Satan daring to take liberties with me that he never thought of taking before; but the Lord did not let me go. He has used our dear Brother Walter Bundy to show me (and, strange to say, against my will), that, as peculiar as it might seem to me, there was really a blessing, and not only so, but a positive means of safety, in that little "Vow." It had been the experience of many others, as well as his own, he said. After twenty-four hours of real struggle the Lord showed this to me very clearly. And now, dear Brother, if you would care to have it there, I want you to put my name on that Vow list, for I have made "the Vow" my own before the Lord and for the first time in nearly three years I have peace. Praise His Name!

I am now able to see how foolish I was, and how I presumed to criticise you and tried to disprove some of the things which you taught--you, whom the Lord had used to teach me all the real knowledge that I ever had concerning the Scriptures! You, who are so far ahead of me in every respect! Could I possibly have been in my right mind to thus presume?

I do not consider you infallible, dear Brother, and I and I am sure that you do not so consider yourself, but I am very sure that you are a mighty safe one to follow, and by the Grace and help of the Lord I am going to

R4670 : page 271

humbly follow until the Lord shows me positively that I should cease. Am trusting that I shall never again be deceived by the Adversary or listen to any of those whom he may be using in trying to injure the Lord's dear servant--no matter who they may be or how well they may mean in their own poor, deceived hearts.

Yours in the Precious Name,

J. J. MCNAMARA.--Fla.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

I have wanted so often to write and tell you how much I appreciate and enjoy the Lord's blessings through the precious WATCH TOWER visits. My heart is full to overflowing with gratitude and praise to note how our great Captain is gloriously leading his people on safely even in the midst of Satan's oppositions and misrepresentations. And, dear Brother, you don't know how much I am rejoicing as I see your loving zeal and faithful care for the best interests of the Lord's true sheep.

I am glad to say I have always recognized in you the Lord's chosen servant to give us the meat in due season. Some who have once rejoiced with us, but see no beauty now that they might desire, are watching your every word that they might accuse you, but we know why Satan is so vigorously opposing you. It is because of your loyalty to God and his Truth. Your face is set as a flint to do his will, and you shall not be ashamed. (Isa. 50:7.) So, dear Brother and Pastor, accept my humble appreciation of your faithfulness and zeal in serving the great Captain's orders.

Faithfully yours in our Redeemer and Advocate,
MRS. LYDIA MESSNER.

page 271

BELOVED PASTOR RUSSELL:--

With sweet recollections of the refreshment enjoyed at the Chicago Convention I am daily plodding away at the accumulated work on my desk. I was fortunate in taking some notes at the Convention, as it gives us a second course in reviewing the discourses, etc.

In presenting a partial review of the Convention to the ecclesia here last Sunday, I stated your kind offer of sending one of the little heart souvenirs to each of the Lord's people present, or represented at the Convention. I therefore asked each one desiring one of these emblems to indicate by raising the hand. Nineteen expressed such desire, and we shall indeed be pleased to have you send that number.

It was a pleasure to observe the spirit of love manifested at the Convention, although some thoughts presented were not accepted by all. It was considered, however, that the invisible Lord, now present, would overrule all to the upbuilding of the saints. We were particularly pleased to see and hear you, and trust that the good words heard may remain with us to our spiritual development.

It was also a sweet occasion for me to see my dear wife and daughter symbolize their consecration. Our son Edwin was also along, but he has not been able to see these things to the point of consecration, but he is, no doubt, doing a great deal of thinking.

I was very glad to read in the last TOWER Brother Clarence E. Fowler's letter. May the dear Lord bless

him, and may he help others also who at heart mean to do right; want to see this error. I am from time to time troubled with some of the seceders' literature. What I cannot harmonize is this: If they are earnest, why should they be afraid or ashamed to have their names attached to their publications.

My earnest prayer is that the love of Christ may always fill my heart, and that I may grow in grace and knowledge in the School of Christ. Pray for me, dear Brother; I always remember you at the throne of Grace.

Congress has passed the Postal Savings Bank bill. At first thought, it would seem to be an expected check on panics, but in giving the matter further thought, it is possibly right along the line of adding fuel to the fire, when a panic is once started. I passed through the 1893 panic as a bank teller, and was lately associated with the accountings of the Government. Its necessarily slow workings convince me that the effects of the Postal Savings Banks in time of panic will prove disastrous. Suppose, for instance, in our city the banks having on deposit some \$22,000,000, the U.S. Depositories preparing to receive deposits from the local Post Office, would in all probability not expect 5 per cent. of this amount to be deposited through the Post Office, and would, no doubt, consider a guarantee deposit with the Government to such an amount more than ample for the expected deposit.

It should be noted that the matter of approving presented securities takes considerable time. Suppose "a run" made on the banks, the money redeposited with the Post Office, and in turn redeposited with the bank by the Post Office, the guarantee deposit limit would soon be reached, and the matter of presenting and approving additional securities, especially when the same conditions prevail at hundreds of places, would take weeks. A day or two sometimes with a bank will play havoc. The Post Office would not have sufficient vault capacity for the deposits, so it would prove an incentive for burglaries, etc. So we see how unsatisfactorily it might work.

Praying the Lord's continued favor, upon you, dear Brother, and all interested in the setting up of the Kingdom of God's Son, and that his grace may be sufficient for us in all of life's varied, and sometimes trying experiences, is the earnest desire of the writer. With sincere greetings from my family and self, I am,

Yours in the love of the Master. _____.

R4670 : page 271

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Although it is several months since we appropriated to ourselves a share in "the Vow," we are reminded that we had not written you to that effect, and believing that it will be pleasing to you, we proceed to do so now.

While from the first we believed "the Vow" to be of the Lord, we were inclined to look upon it as simply a test of our love for each other, because of the conflicting opinions of many.

Believing beyond doubt that we were safe on that score, we tried to dismiss the matter from our minds without making a very careful study of it. We were, however, led to consider it more seriously by your comments in THE TOWERS. Then it dawned upon us that we should not treat lightly anything which we believed came from the Lord. We are happy to say that we now understand what are some of the blessings experienced by those who have taken "the Vow."

Assuring you, dear brother, of our increasing love for you as we become better acquainted, and witness your unselfish zeal and devotion to the Lord, the Truth and the friends, and wishing you our Heavenly Father's continued blessings, we are by his grace,

Yours in Christ,

J. L. CAIN, WIFE AND DAUGHTER.

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