

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

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OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"IF GOD BE FOR US"

"If God be for us who can be against us?"—Romans viii : 31.

What wonderful thoughts these words arouse! God *for us*! God on *our* side! It means almighty wisdom enlisted in our interest, almighty power to be exerted on our behalf, almighty love and infinite goodness watching over us and caring for and helping us. What immeasurable lengths and breadths, heights and depths of infinite grace are here so forcibly and so concisely set before the mind!

But we notice a limitation: The Apostle's suggestion is not that God is for every one, but for "*us*." To whom does he refer by this word "*us*?" Is it possible that divine love and energy, wisdom and power are not being exerted on behalf of the world, but only on behalf of the Church in this present time?

Yes, it is to a called and faithfully running class that the Apostle speaks as "*us*." He and those whom he addressed ("called to be saints"—Romans i : 6, 7) had first been "honoured" with the light; second they, by repentance and faith, had accepted it and been justified; third, they had been "called"; fourth, they had accepted the calling and given themselves wholly to the Lord. And with the Apostle and the early Church all who to-day can recognize themselves in this same position, as having taken these same steps, may properly apply to themselves the Apostle's words and say, God is *for us*; who can be against us!

All the "saints" throughout the whole world, who have taken the aforementioned steps, are probably altogether not a great multitude; but rather, comparatively, a "little flock": yet each one of these may say to himself, and realize to the very bottom of his heart as applicable to himself, these wonderful words—God is *for us*. He may endeavour to grasp the signifi-

cance of these words, but he will surely fail to get all of their wonderful meaning. It is not possible for the human mind to grasp the riches of divine grace and love and power. We cannot comprehend them, we can merely apprehend them. If God be *for us*, with all of His infinite wisdom and power, it implies also that Christ is for us, for He is one with the Father; it implies also that all the angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the heavenly powers of our knowledge and beyond our knowledge are *for us*—all enlisted upon our side, to do us good, to help us, to succour us in time of need, to uphold us in time of temptation, to strengthen us to do the Father's will. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

The view granted to Elisha's servant of countless horses, chariots and horsemen of fire or like fire, was of course merely a *vision*, nevertheless it represented a truth—that divine power is round about God's people on every hand for their protection and their deliverance. "The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are His and delivereth them." "Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i : 14.) Our Lord expressed the same thing, saying of His "faithful followers": "Their angels (messengers) do always behold the face of My Father." It matters not whether we shall understand this to signify that spirit beings continually surround those called to be the "elect" of the Lord, to guide and shape their interests for their highest good, or whether we shall understand it to be merely a figure of speech, signifying that divine power surrounds God's people; for the results would be the same; it matters not by which means

the Lord would deliver them from the evil and help them in trial and adversity. The fact that God is "*for us*," and that He is making all things work together for good to those who love Him, is the central thought, the essence, the strength of this message to "*us*."

How wonderful is all this! Oh, what riches of grace have come to "*us*" through Jesus Christ, our Lord! And yet, as the Apostle says, although we have all this blessing and favour, we have also with it certain trials, difficulties and painful experiences, which the Father sees necessary for our development in order that we may come up to the terms of His predestination, "*copies of His Son*." And in consequence of this, as the Apostle declares, "*We ourselves also [as well as the whole creation] groan within ourselves [while suffering with the world we suppress the groan, "We lay our burdens at His feet and bear a song away"] waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our Body—"the Body of Christ," the elect Church.*

The word *if* in this text does not signify a doubt or question on the subject; but quite the reverse. The Apostle has given the evidence that God is for "*us*," in the preceding verses, and now uses *if* as though he said, *If I have proved that God is for us, then who can be against us!*

Who can be against us, if God is for us? The Apostle does not mean that, having God on our side, none would dare to oppose our way. Quite to the contrary, we have bitter enemies and relentless foes. Who are against us? Their name is legion. The devil is against us; as the Apostle declares, "*Your Adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*" The Apostle Paul assures us that we must contend against "*the wiles of the devil.*" St. James declares that we must "*resist the devil.*" The Apostle informs us that Satan is cunning and deceitful, as well as desperately wicked; and says that therefore we must have a battle,

and as good soldiers we must have the armour of God and use it faithfully. Thus we are to resist the devil, and he will flee from us. We are to "*quench all the fiery darts of the Adversary*" in open attacks, and yet to remember that we battle not with flesh and blood but with a demon host; with "*principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places.*"—Eph. vi. 12.

Nor is this all: we have a great enemy in ourselves, the " *carnal mind*," "*the old man*," reckoned dead which must be kept in subjection. Perhaps the greatest battles and the greatest trials which we are called upon as "*new creatures*" to endure, are these battles of the new self, the mind of Christ, against the old fallen self, the mind of the flesh.

Furthermore: we have the "*world*" as "*children of darkness*" arrayed in opposition to us. They love the darkness and consequently hate not only the light, but also the "*children of the light*." This our Master declared saying, "*Ye are not of the world, for I have chosen you out of the world. Marvel not if the world hate you; you know it hated Me before it hated you.*" "*If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but now ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*" And the world's hatred is not conducted along honourable lines of warfare. It would be ashamed to declare that it loved darkness, and ashamed to declare that it hated us because of the light. Its policy, rather, guided by the great Adversary, is to "*put light for darkness and darkness for light*"; to misrepresent our best efforts as evil and selfish, and to misrepresent its own selfish efforts as honourable and good. "*Marvel not, if the world hate you. The darkness hateth the light.*"

Nor are these great adversaries the only ones to oppose us: we must expect to endure from still another quarter. As our Lord declared, "*A man's foe shall be they of his own household.*" Those whom you have dearly loved of your own family circle,

and with whom you have had Christian fellowship, may turn against you and hate you for the truth's sake. Nor will this always be because of wickedness of intention : sometimes at least the persecutions will come conscientiously ; as for instance, Saul of Tarsus, who afterward became the great Apostle Paul, was once a persecutor of " this way," and ignorantly did many things against Jesus and those who loved him. He himself tells us that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly, thinking that he did God service. And so doubtless it has been with much of the persecution that has come to the Lord's faithful ones in every age. Much of it has been inflicted conscientiously. It is quite remarkable too, how the Adversary succeeds sometimes in deceiving those who once knew better into thinking that anger, malice, hatred, strife, bitter words and slander, " works of the flesh and the devil," are "*duty*." Alas, how blinding is the spirit of the Adversary !

All these adversaries must be resisted unto blood, unto death, if need be ; must not be permitted to hinder our walking in the footsteps of Him who set us an example ; must not be permitted to prevent us from becoming copies of our Lord and thus making our calling and election sure. But while resisting them with all our might, we must avoid carnal weapons and not render railing for railing ; rather, so far as possible, we should use the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and, Michael-like, say, " The Lord rebuke thee." God is "*for us*," and declares that in His due time He will right present wrongs and falsehoods, saying, " Vengeance is Mine, I will render recompences." Indeed, toward the class who war against us ignorantly and conscientiously we should feel no bitterness, but rather sympathy, love and an earnest desire and effort for an opening of the eyes of their understanding.

The Apostle was not ignoring all of these great adversaries which, like " roaring lions," would terrify us, and if possible arrest our progress in the

path of consecration and sacrifice, which leads on to glory. This is not his thought when he says, " If God be for us, who can be against us ? " Quite to the contrary, his thought is, that *notwithstanding* all these things which are against us, we may realize that God is *for us*, that He has predestined a Church in glory and has justified and called us to be members of it, and brought us on the journey thus far, through all of these various steps. And if we can realize that God has thus been leading us up to the present time, to bring us to share His glory, and that all things thus far have been working for our good, this is our assurance that *all* wisdom, power and love shall be exerted on our behalf down to the very end of the race course, if we continue to abide in Christ faithfully.

What shall we fear ? What could oppose our way so as to hinder it, if God be on our side ? This reminds us of the adage, " God with one is a majority." So, God with us, and for us, and leading us, makes us mighty indeed, stronger than all these adversaries with all their arts and wiles and perversity, and able through His grace to come off conquerors, yea, more than conquerors through Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood.

We urge that each reader mark the various steps of progress through which divine grace has already led him, and that, whatever he finds to be his present standpoint, he go on as the Lord leads, not content with anything short of " the whole counsel of God." The reader has been " honoured " with a knowledge of the grace of God in Christ : if he has not yet accepted, let him quickly accept this grace by repentance for sin and with faith in the *ransom*. If he has done this and has received the grace of justification, and, as the Apostle expresses it, has " joy and peace through believing," then let him remember that still there's more to follow, and that the justified are " called." Not called to glory merely, but called to *obedience*, called

to present their bodies living sacrifices to God in His service, holy and acceptable through Christ.

Alas ! how many who have received the grace of justification stop there : they hear the call to suffer with Christ for the truth's sake, they hear the invitation to stand up for Jesus, in their thoughts and words and deeds, but heed not. They perceive that such a full consecration would necessarily mean not only the giving up of sinful pleasures, but also the giving up of some not sinful, that they might devote their words and thoughts and deeds as far as possible as He did, doing good to others. But of those who hear the call to present themselves, how few obey it, how few surrender themselves to Him who bought them with His own precious blood ! Yes, many are called ; though few are chosen. All the justified are called to self-surrender, full obedience, full trust in the Lord and full submission to His will. And of those who do accept the call and who have made the covenant, and who are therefore of the " us "

class mentioned by the Apostle, how many become " overcharged with the cares of this life, or the deceitfulness of riches," or the perplexities of poverty and so fail to obtain the fulness of heart-obedience, and consequently will fail to make their calling and election sure !

We are not now discussing what will be the *fate* of those who fail to be victors and to gain a crown and to sit with Christ in His throne ; we are considering, rather, the *privileges* of those who have been " honoured " of the Lord and led step by step up to present attainments of knowledge and privilege. We are seeking to bring before our minds at least a faint conception of the wonderful provisions of divine grace, and the full ability of every one so called to make his calling and election sure by laying hold of this grace of God, provided in Christ, by which, to them, all things shall work together for good, because they love God and are the called ones according to His purpose.

SPECIAL NOTICES

NEW YEAR GREETING.—At the opening of another year, with its unknown possibilities, we commend all of like precious faith to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among the sanctified.

CALENDARS FOR 1934.—We have special value to offer in delicate floral design, and with suitable texts attached, at 9d. each. There are a few left of the Palestine views in beautiful natural colourings at 2s. each.

WALL TEXTS.—We have four designs of the " Mildmay " series, specially chosen, at 6d. each.

THE PLAN OF GOD—IN BRIEF.—The first edition of this little booklet is now entirely exhausted. Should the orders reaching us by 14 January warrant it, a further edition will be printed.

ANONYMOUS.—We sincerely thank the giver of 10s. sent in " His Name." Also a further 10s. sent " for the Lord's service." These loving gifts encourage us.

SOMETHING OF INTEREST.—The friends in Warrington held a Convention at the end of November which was well attended, and was greatly appreciated by the visiting friends. On the Sunday evening a Public Meeting was held, when 35 adults, from the general public, attended.

GOOD HOPES.—The Committee are grateful to all Classes who have a " Good Hopes " box for assisting the work.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2s.) becomes payable in May each year. It is supplied free to the Lord's poor upon request.

To THE BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE,
204, BROADWAY CHAMBERS,
LETCHWORTH, HERTS.

I note with interest the privileges and opportunities that are still open for the spread of The Truth. I am deeply interested in the Spread of the Glad Tidings of the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of redeeming love expressed for us in God's great Plan of the Ages.

For the guidance of those entrusted with the arranging and carrying out of our mutual work for the Lord and His brethren (the circulation of The Truth, visitation of Classes, etc.) I desire to express my intention to contribute, if my circumstances permit, the sum of during the year 1934 ; to be expended in the manner those responsible deem best. I shall hope to forward this amount in Quarterly instalments.

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Name

Address

Date.....

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

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February, 1934

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

OUR HOPE

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised."—Hebrews x : 23.

Nearly all that God has given us as New Creatures is by faith or hope. When we become followers of Jesus and take up our cross to follow Him, a sacrifice is involved, if the step be taken intelligently—along the lines of Divine instruction and invitation. No one would voluntarily undertake to sacrifice unless he had a hope or a conviction of some blessing that would result or of some reward that would come to him as the outcome of that sacrifice. In every proper action there must be a motive or object. The fact that the Church has been invited to follow Jesus indicates that there was something in His course which brought the blessing and favour of God—some special reward; and that if we will follow Him, we shall share that same blessing and reward—glory, honour and immortality.

So when we take up our cross to walk in our Master's footsteps, it implies that we are inspired with the hope of thus sharing in the glory and honour conferred upon Him. The character of our God assures us that any offer coming to us from Him, with rigid conditions attached, must be infinitely worthy of our acceptance; and the "exceeding great and precious promises" accompanying this offer assure us of His assistance and sustaining power. So by availing ourselves of His strength and of His aid, we shall be able to meet all the conditions and to attain the glorious reward set before us. Hence our faith has a strong and sure foundation upon which to rest; "faith can surely trust Him, come what may."

We exercise faith in the heart before we make an outward profession—before we confess the Lord with our mouth. And we have no right to confess Him with our mouth

until we have believed "unto righteousness"; for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans x : 10.) So we have the declaration of the Lord that He will not consider that we have a proper faith or hope unless we confess it. He has declared that if we refuse or fail to confess Him before men, He will account us unworthy to be confessed before the Father and the holy angels. There is, then, no salvation without a confession of the Lord; the two are inseparable.

It is in vain that any entertain a hope of being accepted of the Lord and of winning His final approval who hides his light under a bushel and shrinks from the reproach of the Cross. "No cross, no crown," is the Lord's inflexible decision. All who have received the Truth in the love of it will be glad to let their light shine to the glory of God and the blessing of others. If the glorious Message of the Lord has filled our own hearts and blessed our lives, we shall rejoice to carry the living water to other thirsty souls. If the good seed has found our hearts fruitful soil, it will surely germinate and bring forth fruitage to the glory of our God.

In harmony with the terms of our consecration, we confess to men that we have a faith that reaches beyond the present life, a hope that "entereth into that within the veil," whither Christ, our Forerunner, has entered for us. We confess our hope that we shall have a part in His resurrection; that "we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and like Him be spirit beings, see Him as He is and share His glory on the Divine plane. We confess that we hope with Him to be instruments in

the Father's hands, bringing life and joy and blessing to all the world of mankind, the living and the dead ; that we hope to uplift them from death, to raise them from all the sin and blight and sorrow and tears that have oppressed them for these six thousand years. Truly ours is a wonderful hope ! Who would not rejoice to tell it !

If, then, we have this faith, this hope, and are properly confessing it before men, let us "hold fast." Tests of our loyalty will continually come. the flesh will be inclined to rebel strongly at times. The questions will present themselves : Are you willing to confess Christ ? Are you ashamed to own His name before the world, or do you esteem this your chiefest honour ? There will be temptations to become discouraged. Our weaknesses will rise up before us, and the Adversary will take advantage of these circumstances to further dishearten us. And not only will there come these temptations along the line of our faith and hope, but there will come certain reproaches and persecutions, permitted for the purpose of proving our loyalty. Ours is a marvellous calling, and only heroic souls are wanted to fill the places in this elect class—only those who have the Spirit of the Master.

If any are disloyal or weak, and fail to take a firm stand for the Lord and the Truth, for fear that they will be disesteemed amongst their fellow-men, or for any other reason, it will prove that they are not worthy to share with Christ the glories of His Throne as members of His Body. All who hope to be of this number have professed His Name ; and they must be steadfast, must hold fast their confidence and the profession of their faith unto the end.

The flesh needs to be dealt with rigorously, and be brought into subjection and held there. According to the inclinations of the flesh, the Lord's children would wish to refrain from what would bring contumely and adverse criticism. The flesh would

prefer to keep quiet, where the speaking forth of the Truth might bring reproach or persecution or ostracism. But the New Creature would feel "a burning fire shut up in his bones" if he were to withhold the Message of Truth when a suitable opportunity was granted, and he would find that he must be faithful and let his light shine. Otherwise, the light would grow feeble and would finally die out altogether, and he would be in utter darkness. And "if the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness !"

Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God which is within us. The Lord gives us a solid basis for our hope, for our faith. It is a hope which He has Himself inspired. This hope is backed by all His sure promises and by His Oath ; and He reminds us that "He is faithful that promised." (Hebrews x : 23.) It is as yet a promise only ; it is all of faith. We have now but the begetting of the Holy Spirit to this new nature, and the sealing of the same Spirit, "the earnest of our inheritance." But we have learned to know our God and to trust His faithful Word. We have proven His gracious promises in many a time of stress and danger, and we know that He will not fail us. And "he that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

If we were to let go this hope, this anchor to our souls, we should be adrift upon a shoreless sea, whose mighty billows would sweep us down to eternal death. A great Time of Trouble is now about to break upon the whole world, and any of the Lord's people whose faith and hope are not firmly anchored to the Rock of Ages, any who are fearful to trust His promises, will be overwhelmed in the storm. Shall this be our experience ?

"The Time of Trouble nears, 'it hasteth greatly,'

E'en now its ripples span the world-wide sea ;

Oh, when its waves are swoll'n to mountains stately,

Will the resistless billows sweep o'er me ?"

Some of the Lord's real children will have their part in this great trouble-time; yet none who are faithful, who are obedient, will suffer thus. These will be kept in perfect safety to the end of their course, and will, we believe, be gathered "within the veil" before the great storm breaks in its fury. Because of our faith in the Master, because of our strong confidence in Him, our knowledge that *He* has been an overcomer, and that the Father has rewarded Him and that He is now our Advocate, our great High Priest, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us," therefore our hearts have good courage. We know that He will shortly "stand up" in power and great authority to establish His Kingdom and to exalt all His faithful to reign with Him in that Kingdom; therefore our hope is firm; it is indeed an anchor to our souls. We are "strong in the Lord," and in the power of His might."—Ephesians vi: 10.

We shall never lose our courage if we keep our eyes continually fixed on Him, and our hand closely clasped in His. God's eternal promises are the foundation upon which all that we hope, either of character, or of coming glory, is built. And what a strong foundation! Let us be faithful to Him who hath called us. Let us hold the glorious Truth not only in the letter, but also in the spirit. Let us hold it in the love of it, because it *is* the Truth, as well as because of its matchless beauty and grandeur.

Let us remember the importance of patient endurance, constancy, that we may develop the fruits of the Holy Spirit, that we may take joyfully every trial, every persecution, every difficulty, which our God in His infinite Wisdom and Love may permit to come upon us for our testing and the ripening of that character which is of paramount importance, and without which we can never hope to see our Father's face, nor partake of the glory to which we have been called with Christ. Let us indeed "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful who hath promised." Let us "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end." Yea, "we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope" unto death.—Hebrews iii: 6; x: 23; vi: 11.

"Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,

When the clouds unfurl their wings of strife?

When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,

Will your anchor *drift*, or *firm remain*?"

Surely by the grace of God our anchor will *hold*; for

"We have an anchor that *keeps the soul Steadfast and sure* while the billows roll; Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!"

ANointed—ESTABLISHED—SEALED

"Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us."—2 Cor. i: 21, 22.

The Apostle is here addressing the Church at Corinth, recognising that this congregation are co-labourers with him—accepted of God as members of Christ, the Anointed. Christ is the great One foretold prophetically as the antitypical Prophet, the antitypical Priest, the antitypical King, who is to bless the world by His work

of healing, instructing, helping, uplifting. The Apostle says that the One who has brought us into the Body of the Anointed, and has set, or established us, is God. This implies that God does the calling of those who come to Him. It implies that there was a previous invitation—the Apostle says that no man taketh this honour to

himself. Even Jesus could not have taken to Himself the honour of being a Priest and King ; He could not say, I will be a Priest—I will be a King !

As God called Jesus to be the great Head over this Ecclesia, or Body, so through Jesus He has invited us to become its members. And as we conform to the terms and are made acceptable through our great Advocate, we are then set in the Body—anoointed. It is not a *happen-so*, but we are *set*. And we shall continue in this position unless, because of some unfaithfulness, we shall be blotted out and the crown appropriated to us be taken away.

He who *sets* us, *establishes* us, and has anoointed us of the Holy Spirit, and thus made us members of this holy company, is *God*, the Heavenly Father. It is not the province of even our Redeemer to set us and anoint us. As the Apostle says, " God hath set every member in the Body as it hath pleased Him." All things are *of* the Father, and all things are *by* the Son ; hence this anoointing that we receive comes from the Father. Nevertheless, the Channel is the Lord Jesus. This Holy Spirit which the Father has given to Jesus, He has shed forth upon us. The Father *authorises* it, the Son *sheds* it forth.

And God " hath also sealed us." It is not only important that we be begotten of the Holy Spirit, and set in the Body, but it is another precious thought that we are to be *sealed*, or *impressed* ; we are to receive a stamp. As we would set a seal into wax to mould the wax into its likeness, so with us who are desirous of knowing and doing God's will ; we are impressed by His Holy Spirit into the image of our dear Master ; and the channel through which we are sealed is the Truth.

So those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit have a considerable measure of appreciation of the Truth. All the promises come through God's Word ; it is a power that is now at work, so that all of God's people in all parts of the world are being impressed through the promises of God. God works in us to will and to do His good pleasure. This sealing is of the Father, because it is through His promises ; it is under the direction and care of the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus, that He may in due time present us blameless and unreprouvable before the Father.

" If I in *Thy likeness*, O Lord, may awake,
And shine a *pure image of Thee*,
Then I shall be satisfied when I can break
The fetters of flesh and be free."

SPECIAL NOTICES

CONVENTION.—The Morecambe Class propose holding a Convention at Easter time ; fuller particulars will follow later, or can be obtained at any time from Mr. W. H. Morrall, 4 Warley Drive, Morecambe, Lancs. Kindly note the date.

ANONYMOUS.—With many thanks we acknowledge the receipt of £5 for " Good Hopes " from X.Y.Z. This is very encouraging.

BOOKLET.—The Committee are very pleased to see so large a call for the little booklet " The Plan of God—in Brief," and are placing an order for a fresh edition of it, which it is hoped will be available early in February. You can place your order for these at any time now, price 5d. each, post paid.

GOOD HOPES BOXES.—The Committee are grateful to all Classes who make use of Good Hopes boxes in aid of the Lord's work.

A REQUEST.—As we have back numbers on hand, both of " The Herald " and the " Bible Students Monthly," we should be very glad to have names and addresses of dear ones who would like a small supply from time to time, particularly sick and lonely friends who cannot afford to subscribe for them.

WALL TEXTS.—We have four designs of the " Mildmay " series, specially chosen, at 6d. each.

PUBLIC WITNESS.—The very useful little " Kingdom " card is still available at 4/9 per 1000 ; also the " Kingdom " Tracts at 10/- per 1000, carriage paid.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2s.) becomes payable in May each year.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 10, No. 10

March, 1934

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

CONTRASTING PERFECTION WITH DEPRAVITY

"And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, 'They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.' And sitting down they watched Him there."—Matt. xxvii : 35, 36.

Here, in marked contrast, are seen the glory of moral perfection and the depth of human depravity. Here was the most sublime heroism, the most perfect self-abnegation, the most exalted benevolence, and the most devoted loyalty, in contrast with the vilest hypocrisy, the most cold-blooded hate, and the most abject cowardice. The meanest, vilest selfishness, pride and conceit delivered to ignominy and death the fairest flower of virtue that ever bloomed on earth, and wicked hands and fiendish hearts executed the dark designs of envy and hate, taking a morbid pleasure in the dying agonies of the Son of God, while He, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, opened not His mouth in self-defence, but meekly submitted to the terrible ordeal of suffering and death for the world of sinners, none of whom could then appreciate and understand His motives or His work. Truly, the contrast of such virtue, in comparison with such depravity, encircles the Cross of Christ with a halo of ineffable glory, the broken rays of which, falling upon us, express to us all there is of moral excellence and worth.

In the apprehension, arraignment and crucifixion of Christ three classes of criminals come to view. First, there were those who, *for envy*, delivered Him to death. They were the proud, boastful, self-righteous hypocrites, who, realizing their own inferiority, and aware of their own unfitness to be the leaders and saviours of the people, yet so anxiously craved the honours and praises of men and the emoluments of office that they could not brook the appearance of a rival of superior talents and ability. These hated the Lord without a cause, save that which originated in their own depravity.

These, the mighty men of the Jewish nation, the rulers and religious teachers, the educated men of the nation, the expounders of the law of God, and the interpreters of the prophets—these wickedly took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed; and in their counsels among themselves they acknowledged the superiority of the victim of their hate and expressed the real animus of it—their envy of His rising fame and influence among the people, which tended to their own speedy displacement.

Second, there were those cringing, hireling menials, too basely selfish to spurn a bribe, or to appreciate a principle, and who are ever willing to sacrifice principle for a trifle of present advantage or gratification. Of this class was Judas, who sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and also all of that infuriated mob which, incited by the priests, cried "Away with Him! Crucify Him! We have no king but Cæsar! His blood be upon us and upon our children!" Judas loved the money, and these loved the approval of the priests and rulers, and wanted to be on the popular side. How mean the bribe, how base the crime!

Third, there were those cold-blooded, cruel servants of the Roman state who, presuming to have no responsibility in the matter, cared nothing for the honour of justice or the vindication of right. It was their business to execute the mandates of their superiors, and they must do so at their own peril. Looking to their own interests, therefore, it was their business to drive the nails through the quivering flesh and to plant the thorny crown upon the victim's head. It was an awful business, but they were

schooled to it, so that the groans of anguish failed to reach their hearts. So, regarding the horrid transaction in the light of *business*, they thought only of their booty, and, with frigid indifference, sat down and watched the agony of the Lord, while they cast lots upon His vesture. And some even endeavoured to add to the sufferings by cruel taunts and fiendish exultation.

How strange it seems that humanity, originally in the likeness of God, can sink so low! and yet it is all too true. The depth of depravity to which an intelligent being can sink can be measured only by the height of the original perfection and glory. Satan fell from a great height to a corresponding depth, and so likewise man falls to the very depths of iniquity, unless he repent and be converted from the error of his way, and voluntarily submit to the healing influences of divine grace. Sin, with accelerating speed, ever tends downward to more and more vile conditions, until it ends in the shipwreck of everything that is noble and pure; and "sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

As we look at the various manifestations of wickedness on the part of those who crucified the Lord, it is a sad comment upon human depravity to notice that the very same elements have been in the world ever since; and alas! are present still. And the special victims of their hate have been, and still are, the meek of the earth, who have taken up their cross to follow in the footprints of the crucified One—the body of Christ which fills up the measure of His sufferings. (Col. i: 24.) All through the age there have been those anxious to deliver them to death, who, for envy, hypocritically assumed to be the representatives of God to condemn them, and to seek them out, and hunt them down, and kill their influence, and deliver them over to be crucified. This is the *Pharisaical class*—the class represented by the chief priests, and scribes and Pharisees. There has also always been

the hireling class, ready to sell their services to such leaders for the paltry bribes they have to offer—for the favour of their leaders, for the convenience of being on the popular side, or for a trifle of financial or social advantage. This is the *Judas class*—a class which, like Judas and like the priests and scribes and Pharisees, know, and secretly recognize, the truth and righteousness exemplified in the body of Christ, yet who nevertheless dislike them, hate them, and are ever willing to make merchandise of them—to deliver them over to scorn and contempt, if not, as in former times, to prison and to death, for the mean advantage of popular favour.

Then there are still the cruel *cold-blooded menials* who, with complacency and indifference, and yet with curiosity, sit down and watch the sufferings of the body, and wonder what will happen next. They are surprised and puzzled by the fortitude which daily takes up the cross and follows after Christ; they cannot understand the motives that inspire it; they have no faith in the rewards to which the consecrated look, and they curiously watch them to see if, perchance, their God will interpose and deliver them. And when they see no miraculous interposition in their behalf, but that instead they bear the cross to the bitter end of sacrifice, they regard them, like their Head, as "smitten of God and afflicted," and to the sufferings are added their reproaches. And so every member of the anointed body can say with the Head, "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me."

The important concern to all who are thus suffering with Christ in any measure is that they bear it with the same humility, benevolence and fortitude that characterized Him under the most crucial tests of endurance. He was not surprised by the exhibitions of human depravity: He knew that He was in an unfriendly world bound by sin and largely under the dominion of the prince of darkness, and

therefore He expected reproaches, taunts and persecutions, all of which He endured patiently while His great loving heart, almost unmindful of its own sufferings, was full of pity and of loving concern for others. Have we indeed so much of the Master's spirit that we can thus suffer with Christ, meekly bearing reproach and trusting to heaven's vindication of us in due time? "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Therefore let us "consider Him that endureth such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds." (1 Pet. ii: 20-23; Heb. xii: 3.) And let us also see to it that we bear the reproaches of Christ as He bore them—with pity and prayer for the erring and depraved, if perchance God may grant unto them repentance; and with humble fortitude esteeming it a privilege to prove our devotion to the Lord by enduring hardness in His service as good soldiers.

But what shall we say of those who hate the Lord's body without a cause, who for envy deliver them to persecu-

tion and death, or of those who for bribes betray the innocent, or of those who, with frigid indifference, but curious interest, calmly watch the sufferings of the body, as the Roman soldiers did of the Head, saying, "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save Him?" "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." Their way is the way of death. When the noble spectacle of loyalty to God, to truth and righteousness, and of Christian fortitude in enduring hardness and persecution meekly and patiently, fails to move and win the hearts of men, what more remains to be done for them? The goodness of God exemplified in His children as well as in other ways should lead to repentance; but if it only hardens the heart and steels it against the further influences of divine grace, sad indeed is the condition of such a soul. It is not ours, however, to judge such to condemnation: but it is our part to shun the company and counsels of all such. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. . . . For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish."—Psa. i: 1, 2, 6.

"LET HIM BUY A SWORD"

Why did our Lord say to His disciples, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" (Luke xxii: 36, 38), and then afterward say to St. Peter: "Put up thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword"?—Matthew xxvi: 51, 52.

We should remember the circumstances. Jesus knew that His hour was come in which He would be betrayed, made prisoner, and the next day be

crucified. It was necessary to show that His capture was not made by force, but that He voluntarily permitted Himself to be taken and crucified. The Father might know, the angels might know, and His disciples might know that He had power to ask of the Father legions of angels for His defence and protection from the hands of His enemies; but others could not know this. It was desirable that it should be clearly

manifested that Jesus and His disciples could have defended themselves, as St. Peter, indeed, started out to do when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus promptly healed the ear and instructed Peter to be non-resistant, and surrendered Himself, merely requesting that His disciples be not molested.

The circumstance demonstrated that our Lord surrendered Himself voluntarily, and therein was the lesson. Had there been no swords in the company of His disciples, it might have been claimed that no defence could have been made. The having of the swords made possible the exhibition of the courage of the disciples, and the willingness of Jesus to submit Himself.

When Jesus said that if necessary their garments should be sold to purchase a sword, the Apostles responded that they had in their company two

swords; and Jesus answered, "It is enough." They were intended merely for a demonstration, and not for a defence.

Nothing in this Scripture seems to give any warrant to warfare, nor to the implication of some that Jesus desired His followers to take the sword. True, not all who have taken to the sword have perished by the sword, and not all who have avoided the sword have preserved their lives, but it is a general principle which the Lord discusses. He who prepares himself for warfare and trouble will be pretty sure to get plenty of it, according to the general course of the fallen human nature. On the other hand, the Lord's disciples are enjoined to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."—Hebrews xii : 14.

SPECIAL NOTICES

MEMORIAL.—The suggested date for keeping the Memorial this year is Thursday, 29th March, after 6 p.m. Once again are we to enjoy communion (common-union) with Him: with all its sacred meaning for us. "For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

CONVENTION.—We make preliminary notification that the Annual Convention will (D.V.) be held at Whitsuntide in Nottingham, fuller particulars will be given later.

IMMERSION.—Arrangements will be made for an Immersion Service to be held on the Sunday afternoon during the Convention, if applications are received by us not later than 8th May.

CONVENTION AT MORECAMBE.—At Easter-time a Convention will be held at Morecambe, Lancs. Everything is being done to make it a refreshing time both spiritually and physically, and a warm welcome awaits all who can attend. It will be held in the Ambulance Hall, near Central Pier, from Saturday evening until Monday night. Full particulars of Mr. W. H. Morrall, 4 Warley Drive, Morecambe, Lancs.

HOME-GATHERING.—The friends in Sunderland are holding their Home-gathering at Easter-time again this year. Special meetings are arranged for Easter

Sunday from 2.30 until night: to be held in their rooms, 31 Norfolk Street, Sunderland. Full particulars of Mr. H. Quickfall, 8 Appley Terrace, Roker, Sunderland.

GONE FROM US.—Our dear Brother Palfreyman of Birmingham, for so many years one of the Lord's messengers for the comfort and help of the Church, has finished his course on earth, to enter into fuller service in another sphere. His loss will be widely felt. We know that all will unite with us in our prayer that the God of comfort, and Father of mercies, comfort the heart of our dear Sisters Palfreyman, and all who mourn with them.

AN OPPORTUNITY.—We are willing to supply, free of charge, suitable reading matter for inmates of hospitals, or to those who are sick at home. All applications will be attended to with pleasure. Blind friends, who can read Braille, may be included in this.

ANONYMOUS.—We sincerely thank our anonymous friend who has kindly sent us 10s. "for use in the Lord's service."

GOOD HOPES.—The Committee are grateful to all Classes who have a "Good Hopes" box for assisting the work.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2s.) becomes payable in May each year. It is supplied free to the Lord's poor upon request.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

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OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

THE MEMORIAL

"For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."—1 Corinthians xi : 26.

Our Lord Jesus fully identified Himself with the Passover Lamb. On the same night of His betrayal, just preceding His crucifixion, He gathered His Apostles in the upper room, saying, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." It was necessary that as Jews they should celebrate the Passover Supper on *that night*—the night of the anniversary of the slaying of the Passover lamb in Egypt, of the saving of the typical first-borns from the typical "prince of this world"—Pharaoh—the same date on which the real Passover Lamb was to be slain. But as soon as the requirements of the type had been fulfilled, our Lord Jesus instituted a new Memorial upon the old foundation, saying, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

We recall the circumstances of the first Memorial—the blessing of the Bread and of the Cup, the fruit of the vine ; and our Lord's declaration that these represented His broken body and shed blood, and that all His followers should participate in presenting to the disciples the unleavened bread as a memorial, Jesus said, "Take, eat ; this is My body." The evident meaning of His words is, This symbolizes, or represents, My body. The bread was not actually His body ; for in no sense had His body yet been broken. In no sense would it then have been possible for them to have partaken of Him actually or antitypically, the sacrifice not being as yet finished. But the picture is complete when we recognize that the unleavened (pure, unfermented) bread represented our Lord's sinless flesh—leaven being a symbol of sin under the Law, and especially commanded to be put away at the Passover season. On another occasion Jesus gave a lesson which

interprets to us this symbol. He said, "The Bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world." "I am the Bread of Life." "I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven ; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever ; and the Bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—John vi : 33, 35, 51.

In order to appreciate how we are to eat, or appropriate, this living Bread, it is necessary for us to understand just what the bread signifies. According to our Lord's explanation of the matter, it was His flesh which He sacrificed for us. It was not His pre-human existence as a spirit being that was sacrificed, although that was laid down and its glory laid aside, in order that He might take our human nature. It was the fact that our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners—without any contamination from Father Adam, and hence free from sin—that enabled Him to become the Redeemer of Adam and his race, that permitted Him to give His life "a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—1 Timothy 2 : 3—6.

When we see that it was the pure, spotless nature of our Lord Jesus that was laid down on behalf of sinners, we see what it is that we are privileged to appropriate. The very thing that He laid down for us to "eat," appropriate to ourselves ; that is to say, His perfect *human* life was given to redeem all the race of man from condemnation to death, to enable them to return to human perfection and everlasting life, if they would ; and we are to realize this and accept Him as our Saviour from death.

It is this blessing that the Gospel Church of this Age receive by faith

in their Redeemer ; namely, justification by faith—not justification to a *spirit* nature, which we never *had* and never *lost*, and which Christ did not *redeem* ; but justification to *human* nature, which Father Adam *possessed* and *lost*, and which Christ *redeemed* by giving His own sinless *flesh*, His perfect *human life*, as our Ransom-sacrifice.

Now let us note that God's object in *justifying* the Church by *faith* during this Gospel Age, in advance of the justification of the *world* by *works of obedience* in the Millennial Age, is for the very purpose of permitting this class who now see and hear, who now appreciate the great sacrifice which Love has made on man's behalf, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, and thus to have part with the Lord Jesus in His sacrifice—as members of His Body. This deeper meaning of the Memorial He did not refer to directly. It was doubtless one of the things to which He referred when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now ; howbeit, when it, the Spirit of Truth, shall come, it will guide you into all Truth, and will show you things to come."—John xvi : 12, 13.

This Spirit of Truth, the power and influence of the Father bestowed through Christ, speaking through the Apostle Paul, clearly explains the very high import of the Memorial ; for St. Paul says, writing to the consecrated Church, "The Cup of blessing for which we give thanks, is it not the *participation* of the blood of Christ ? The Loaf which we break, is it not the *participation* of the Body of Christ ?"—the sharing with Christ as joint-sacrificers with Him even unto death, that thereby we might be counted in with Him as sharers of the glory which He has received of His faithfulness ?—"For we, being many, are *one Loaf* and *one Body*."—1 Corinthians x : 16, 17.—*Emphatic Diaglott*.

Both views of this impressive ordinance are very important. It is essential, first of all, that we should see

our justification through our Lord's sacrifice. It is proper then that we should realize that the entire Christ, the entire anointed company, is, from the Divine standpoint, a composite Body of many members, of which Jesus is the Head (1 Corinthians xii : 12—14), and that this Body, this Church, as a whole must be broken—that each member of it must become a copy of the Lord Jesus and must walk in the footsteps of His sacrifice. We do this by laying down our lives for the brethren, as Jesus laid down His life—directly for His Jewish brethren, but really for the whole world, according to the Father's purpose.

It is not our *spiritual* life that we lay down, even as it was not Jesus' *spiritual* life that He laid down. As He sacrificed His actual, perfect being, His *humanity*, so we are to sacrifice our justified selves, *reckoned* perfect through Jesus' merit, but not *actually* so. Likewise the Loaf and the Cup represent *suffering*. The grains of wheat must be *crushed* and *ground* before they can become bread for man ; they cannot retain their life and *individuality* as *grains*. The grapes must submit to the pressure that will extract all their juices, must lose their identity as grapes, if they would become the life-giving elixir for the world. So it is with the Christ company, Head and Body. Thus we see the beauty and force of St. Paul's statement that the Lord's children are participants in the one Loaf and the one Cup. But it is *His* blood, the virtue of *His* sacrifice, that counts. *Our* blood has virtue only because of His merit counted to us, only because we are members of His Body.

Our Lord distinctly declares that the Cup, the fruit of the vine, represents blood ; that is, *life*—not *life retained*, but *life shed*, given, yielded up—sacrificed life. He tells us that this life poured out was for the remission of sins ; and that all who would be His must drink of it, must accept His sacrifice and appropriate it by faith. They must receive life from this source. It will not do for any to



claim an immortality outside of Christ. It will not do to declare that life is the result of obedience to the Law. It will not do to claim that faith in some great teacher and obedience to his instructions will amount to the same thing and bring eternal life. There is no way to attain eternal life other than through the blood once shed as the Ransom-price for the whole world. "There is none other name given under Heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv: 12.) Likewise there is no other way by which we can attain to the new nature than by accepting the Lord's invitation to drink of His Cup, and to be broken with Him as members of the one Loaf, to be buried with Him in baptism into His death, and thus to be with Him in His resurrection to glory, honour and immortality.—Romans vi: 3—5; ii: 7.

We are shocked with the thought that it was Jehovah's professed people who crucified the Prince of Life and not only so, but that it was the leaders of their religious thought, their chief priests, Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law, rather than the common people, who were responsible for this dreadful deed. We remember the Master's words, "Marvel not that the world hate you; for you know that it hated Me before it hated you." We see that He referred to the religious world; and realizing this, we know that it will be the religious world that will hate us, His followers. We are not to be surprised, then, that opposition to the Truth and persecution of the light-bearers should come from the most prominent exponents of so-called Christianity. This fact, however, should not cause us to hate either our own opponents or those who persecuted our Lord to the death. Rather we are to remember the words of the Apostle Peter respecting this matter: "I wot that in ignorance ye

did it, as did also your rulers."—Acts 3: 17.

Ah, yes! Ignorance and blindness of heart and mind is at the bottom of all the sufferings of Christ—both Head and Body. The Father permits it to be so now, until the members of the Body of Christ shall have filled up that which is behind the afflictions of their Head. (Colossians i: 24.) Soon, as our dear Lord declared, those who now partake of His broken body and are broken with Him in the service of the Truth, those who now participate in His Cup of suffering and self-denial, will drink with Him the new wine of joy in the Kingdom, beyond the veil. With that glorious Morning will begin the great work for the world's release from the bonds of sin and death—the great work of uplifting, the "Times of Restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began."—Acts iii: 21.

The thought before the mind of each of those who participate in the Memorial service should be that expressed in the words of St. Paul, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him"; "for our light afflictions, which are but for a moment," "are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii: 18.) With these thoughts respecting the passing over of our sins as the First-borns through the merit of the precious blood, and our share with our blessed Lord in all His experience of suffering and of glory, we may indeed keep the Passover feast with joy, notwithstanding the trials and difficulties. So doing, continuing faithful as His followers, very soon we shall have the great privilege of leading forth the Lord's hosts—all who ultimately shall hear and know and obey the great King—out of the dominion of sin and death, out of Egypt into Canaan.

THE DEEPER THINGS OF PRESENT TRUTH

The Apostle Paul, when writing of these times, says: "This know, that in the last days perilous times will

come," and who amongst us would question the fulfilment of this prophecy? These are most searching

days, as our brethren everywhere are finding. The foundation doctrines (teachings) of Present Truth are being assailed by innumerable counterfeits and substitutes, frequently brought into the midst of our Classes. Consequently we would specially like to draw attention to a Booklet which will be found particularly helpful to a proper understanding of some of the important matters connected with our faith—the deeper things of Present Truth—which things we all longingly desire to have clear in our minds and cherished in our hearts, even though we may not be able to expound them to others.

The Booklet we refer to deals very fully with the subject of God's Covenants, both from the Old Testament and also from the New Testament point of view. Showing to whom these Covenants have their proper application, now, and in the future. Making quite clear the times when each Covenant operates, according to God's Plan of Salvation, and

showing what an important place is marked out by God for the Church—which is Christ's body. Demonstrating, too, the mighty power of God in the carrying out of His purposes according to His Covenants.

Further doctrines dealt with in the same Booklet are Ransom, Justification, and the Sin-Offering. These subjects are introduced in a way which might be considered somewhat unusual; enabling the student to obtain views upon them that may not have been fully understood before, although everything brought forward was endorsed by Brother Russell.

The Booklet, entitled "God's Covenants," is bound in stout paper covers. It has 48 pages printed in large clear type, and is priced at 6d. per copy, post free. We feel that anyone desiring to obtain a fuller and clearer view upon these matters will be wise to secure one. Classes and friends desiring to club together to order in quantities should write us for special terms.

SPECIAL NOTICES

ANNUAL CONVENTION.—The Annual Convention will be held at Whit-suntide in Nottingham. For accommodation apply to Mr. Geo. Absalom, "Halcyon," High Grove, Chilwell, Notts. Programmes can be had from this office.

CONFERENCE.—A Conference of Representatives will be held during the Convention—at 10 a.m. on Whit-Monday—when certain matters of interest to the Church will be considered. Any Class desiring to appoint Representatives can get full particulars from Mr. A. C. Essex, The Cottage, Park Road, Chilwell, Notts.

PILGRIM SERVICE.—It is with the greatest satisfaction we notify that Brother Ford, a member of the Committee, is free for Pilgrim Service at the present time. So as to take the fullest advantage possible of his welcome ministry, arrangements will be put in hand covering the whole of the time the funds available will permit. A letter has been sent out to all the Secretaries of Classes giving fuller particulars of this matter.

ANONYMOUS.—Will the dear friend who has sent us £5 for the "Good Hopes" fund, over the signature X.Y.Z., please accept our sincere thanks for the help and encouragement it brings us?

ON TOUR.—Brother Geo. Ford will be visiting the following towns. Particulars of meetings can be obtained from this office.

Rugby	March 22nd
Market Bosworth	" 23rd
Birmingham	" 24th—25th
Abertillery	" 29th
Pontnewynydd	" 30th
Pontardulais	March 31st & April 1st
Swansea	April 2nd
Cardiff	" 3rd & 4th
Chepstow	" 5th
Cheltenham	" 6th
Leicester	" 7th & 8th

It is hoped that our Brother will make a trip in the East Coast district during the month of April, but the appointments are not yet fixed.

Brother H. J. Shearn will also be visiting the following towns:—

Morecambe	March 31st to April 2nd
Barrow	April 3rd
Blackpool	" 4th
Preston	" 5th
Liverpool	" 6th
Latchford	" 7th & 8th
Manchester	" 10th & 11th
Sheffield	" 12th

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

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OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

THE SACRIFICE OF THE CHRIST

At Jordan our Lord made a consecration of Himself, even unto death. That is to say, He was baptised, immersed. He said, "Henceforth, I shall have no will of My own. Whatever is Your will, Father, shall be My will. I shall do anything that You will have Me do ; not merely those things required in obedience to the Divine Law—failure to do which would be sin—but all the things written in the Book. I have given up My life. Direct Me through Your providences and through Your words that I may see Your will and do it." This was not a giving away of life in the sense of giving it to the *world* ; for He was giving Himself to *God*. When He made His consecration unto God, He was prepared to face even death itself and to give up His existence if such should be the Father's will.—Psa. xl : 7, 8 ; Heb. x : 7.

Following His consecration He began His ministry. As He advanced in the service of fulfilling the Father's will, He submitted Himself to everything that was written in the Book. The language of His heart was, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x : 7), and in His submission of Himself He gave out His power, strength, to such an extent that it is stated that great multitudes of people out of all Palestine and beyond, "came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases ; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits ; and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him ; for there went virtue [vitality] out of Him and healed them all." (Luke vi : 17—19.) He kept back nothing for the purpose of recuperating His vigour, but was daily yielding His life in obedience to what He understood to be the Father's will ; He was, therefore, doing the things pleasing to God—everything that God

wished to have Him do, as well as the things written in the Law.

When on the cross our Lord cried, "It is finished !" He had "poured out His soul unto death" ; He had "made His soul an offering for sin" (John xix : 30 ; Isa. liii : 12, 10) ; He had permitted His life to be taken from Him in obedience to the Father's arrangement. These things had all been prefigured in the type. On such a day and in such a month the passover lamb must be slain. Our Lord recognised everything particularised in the Law—whether by direct command or in type—as *God's will*. He declared that *men* did not take His life from Him, in the sense of doing something that He was *unwilling* to have them do. He had truly said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God ; Thy Law is within [in the midst of] My heart" (Psa. xl : 8), and He permitted them to put Him to death, because He was submitting to *God's will*.

Our Lord realised that His life was taken away *fraudulently*. He did not resist, but allowed this to be done. He had agreed that He would not resist, that He would do whatever the Father sent Him to do. After He had once made a consecration could He have withdrawn? No ; for He had covenanted to submit to whatever Divine providence might indicate to be the Father's will. He had entered into a positive *contract* under which He had obligated Himself to be *faithful* to God's will, and God had bound Himself that He would give our Lord the exceeding great reward of exaltation to the divine nature because of that faithful obedience. God had given Him the Holy Spirit as a bond of that contract.

There is a wide difference between making an *exchange* and bestowing a *reward*. To *exchange* is to *part with* something in return for something else

regarded as an *equivalent*. To *reward* is to give something in acknowledgment of *merit*. This word conveys no idea of *obligation*. Whoever gives a reward acts altogether of his own free will.

The arrangement made between the Father and our Lord did not, therefore, involve our Lord's right to earthly life; for the Father did not contract to give Him life on the highest plane of existence in exchange for His life as a human being. Had this been the case our Lord would have had nothing to give to any of the human race—either to the Church or to the world of mankind.

On the contrary, the Father was to *reward* our Lord by exalting Him far above angels, principalities and powers as an acknowledgment of the Son's obedience even unto death. The earthly life-rights are still our Lord's. The fact that He is to give human life to mankind is evidence that He has the *right* to that earthly life.

The question has been asked, Did Jesus after His resurrection have human life-rights by reason of the fact that they were not relinquished in death, or by virtue of the fact that He had been appointed "Heir of all things"?—Heb. i : 2.

This, like many other subjects, is capable of various shades of thought and expression. Our Lord possessed a right to human life and to all earthly things. This right to life and all its blessings Adam had forfeited by disobedience, but Jesus had secured it by obedience and held it absolutely free from *risk of loss*. Then, if some one, contrary to Law, cut Him off from His rights, this *cutting off* did not cause Him to *forfeit* any of them.

In other words, we cannot see how anyone could deprive our Lord of His life-rights in a judicial way. To our understanding, Jesus was cut off from His life and from all the rights that pertained to it by a fanatical company of fallen men; but their action could not *destroy* any right which God's Law had given to Him. So, then, when God raised Him from the dead and

rewarded Him with a higher nature and certain wonderful blessings connected therewith, this exaltation could not interfere with the RIGHT which God's LAW had given and which He had neither *given away* nor *forfeited*. He had merely allowed men to take His *life* from Him, thus separating Him from His RIGHTS, which remained His.

Since our Lord therefore had neither forfeited those rights nor given them away, then when God highly exalted Him because of His obedience unto death, this right to human life was amongst the things that He possessed. This right was His irrespective of anything which the Father *gave* Him. It is because He holds this right to human life as an *asset*—His *legally* and not as a *gift*—that He is said to be the LIFE-GIVER.

During the Millennial Age, in fulfilment of the Divine promise, our Lord will give mankind restitution to perfect human nature. In doing this He will not be giving something that the Father has given Him, but He will be acting in a special sense in His own name. If He did not have this right to everlasting life to give, then He could not be spoken of as the LIFE-GIVER. But since He possesses this right to human life, it is His to bestow during the thousand years of His reign.

At the end of the thousand years our Lord will no longer be the Life-Giver. He cannot be the Life-Giver to angels nor to any other than mankind, for His right appertained merely to Himself as a perfect *human being*. What He will *give away* to humanity in general, is what He now imputes, or *loans*, to the Church, to permit us to share with Him in sacrificial work and in His glorious work of the future.

We do not see how as "Heir of all things" our Lord could gain any additional control of His *earthly* nature and *earthly* life-rights which were His by obedience to the Law. As Heir of all things He will be the representative of the Father to all eternity. He takes the position at the right hand of authority on High. In

THE SACRIFICE OF THE CHRIST

3

due time, every knee shall bow to Him, and even the angels shall be subjected unto Him.

All these things came to our Lord as a part of the reward which the Father promised. But this one particular feature, the restitution of all things lost by Adam, is a special privilege coming as His own gift to humanity—that which He purchased at His own cost ; that is to say, the laying down of His earthly life is the basis upon which He obtained the new nature and the right to control that earthly life, which shall be applied in restitution in behalf of the world.

If He had already applied that life and had actually given it up, then we do not see how He could accomplish anything special for mankind. But since He has this asset of earthly rights and privileges to give away, the process of bestowing it will continue during the Millennial reign ; and what He will give is what He has by reason of His obedience to the Law.—Lev. xviii : 5.

The word "sacrifice" may be used from different standpoints. If an animal were killed for some benevolent reason or purpose, it might be spoken of as a sacrifice, particularly if it were something done in harmony with the Divine arrangement. But the mere killing of an animal would not be sacrifice. A dog might be killed without being sacrificed. But if the dog's life were surrendered for the purpose of scientific experiment, we might say that it was given in sacrifice to science. From this standpoint we should view the matter of sacrifice. The lives of God's consecrated people are surrendered for a purpose.

At our consecration we present our bodies as living sacrifices. We give up to the Lord our life, our human bodies and everything that we possess. It does not follow, however, that God accepts this sacrifice to be put to death in some *special* manner. Some may spend their lives in serving the Lord's Truth, and may be said to be *sacrificed* as truly as though they had died at the stake. We may say to the Lord, All my life is in Your hands ; do

with it as You please. If it means joy or pain, sacrifice or pleasure, we surrender our own will in the matter and become like unto Jesus, who said, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."—John vi : 38.

The sacrifice of Jesus was made at Jordan, but it was finished at Calvary. His consecration was absolute. The killing of the bullock is symbolical of what Jesus did when He surrendered His *will*. And so with us. Following in His footsteps we become dead in the sense that we sacrifice our wills. But in what manner the Lord may accept that sacrificed will is His affair. We give it freely, that the mind of Christ may dwell in us richly.

We part forever with the right to our wills, but we do not sacrifice our lives, although we know that the giving up of our wills ultimately leads to the giving up of our lives. But we have nothing to do with the *parting with our rights*. When Jesus becomes our Advocate, He takes us in charge. From the time we give up our wills, our bodies are counted as His Body. We merely give up our wills in the matter and leave everything for *Him* to dispose of. *He* attends to the *sacrificing* ; for He is the High Priest ; *we* are not.

Similarly, the great *outcome* is in the Lord's hands. During the Gospel Age He imputes of His merit to the Church. When He has finished the work of sacrificing He will apply the merit of this great sacrifice, which He calls His own, for sealing the New Covenant for the world. But we have nothing to do with the *sacrificing*. We leave it all to our Attorney, or Advocate.

The New Creature is certainly the owner, or controller, of the body and is made so by the Lord. We as New Creatures have a work to perform with our body. When our Lord accepts us as His servants, we are to use all our talents as His stewards. In that sense of the word, the body will be under the control of the New Creature until death.

Our position is somewhat different from that of our Lord. We had no earthly life-rights to begin with ; and we had, therefore, none to give away. They were forfeited by Adam's sin. But if we become the Lord's disciples, if we surrender all to Him and accept the merit that He is willing to *impute* to us, our great Advocate will *count* us as members of His Body and permit us to share in His sufferings. When He imputed His merit to us *all rights passed to Him*. He gave His members whatever right they have and whatever privilege of earthly right comes to them.

When it shall be necessary for our Lord to use these rights in the future for the world, He will be quite competent and privileged to do so. Having never violated the Divine Law He will have the full right to use, command and direct in respect to all of His earthly rights, which He did not

forfeit, but which He laid down with the understanding that He should *use them again* in giving life to the world, so that He would be called the Father of mankind, in respect to their future life.

Nowhere in the Scriptures is the statement made that Christ came to *sacrifice Himself*. What the Scriptures say is that He came to *do the Father's will*. He did not refuse to drink the "cup" which the Father prepared for Him, but drank it to the dregs. And for His obedience to this Will, even unto death—no matter how long or how short a time the Father should be pleased to have that life continue—He received the reward. He gave over *all* into the Father's hands. *This* was a *sacrifice* ; for He had a right to use His life. But His obedience to His Father's will led to the sacrifice for which He obtained the reward.

SPECIAL NOTICES

CONVENTION.—As the date draws near for the Annual Convention we know how greatly our brethren are looking forward to the helpful time in store ; these happy gatherings seem more precious every time we meet, and more necessary as the days become the more difficult. It only remains for us to meet in His Spirit, and all will be well.

ON TOUR.—Brother Geo. Ford will be visiting the following towns. Particulars of meetings can be obtained from this office.

Burton-on-Trent	May	7th
Nottingham	"	8th
Mansfield	"	9th
Wombwell	"	10th
Dewsbury	"	11th
Harrogate	"	12th/13th
Cleckheaton	"	14th
Leeds	"	15th
Huddersfield	"	16th
Sheffield	"	17th

VOLUME XI.—With the June issue we commence our eleventh year of publication, and are sending a letter to all Classes suggesting that a special effort be made to double our subscribers during the year. To accomplish this will bring us much encouragement, and considerable help as well.

SPECIMEN COPIES of "The Herald" and of the "Bible Students Monthly" may be had free of cost at any time on application.

BRAILLE LIBRARY.—Our Librarian would specially like you to assist her in getting the Braille volumes into fuller circulation. The following is available : Vol. 1 S.S., parts of Vol. 2, Vol. 5 S.S., Tabernacle Shadows, and some thirty-six Tracts and Discourses. Cannot you think of some likely Braille reader ?

LENDING LIBRARY.—The following volumes are loaned free upon application : The six volumes S.S., P.R. Sermons, What P.R. Said, What P.R. Taught, Photodrama of Creation, Revelation of Jesus Christ (vols. 1 and 2), Daniel the Beloved.

TRACTS.—Those dear brethren who desire to spread abroad a comforting message will be glad to know that the Tract "Thy Kingdom Come" is now available at 10s. per 1,000, carriage paid. Any quantity can be supplied.

KINGDOM CARDS.—When on holiday one of the most useful ways of witnessing is by the use of the Kingdom Cards. They are handy and cheap. Price 4s. 9d. per 1,000, carriage paid.

GOOD HOPES.—The Committee are grateful to all Classes who have a "Good Hopes" box for assisting the work.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2s.) becomes payable in May each year. It is supplied free to the Lord's poor upon request.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 11, No. 1

June, 1934

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

FEET-WASHING AS A LESSON

"Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."—John xiii : 14.

We remember the occasion on which our Lord washed the feet of His disciples. The Lord and His twelve Apostles had met in the upper room to commemorate the Passover Supper. This feast was followed by the inauguration of the Memorial Supper, the bread and wine of which represented the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus. The disciples, full of the enthusiasm which had been incited for some days previous, were all at a loss to understand the sadness of our Lord Jesus. While He was saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. xxvi : 38), and desiring that His baptism might be accomplished, they were inclined to think that He was taking a pessimistic view of matters.

During the five preceding days the disciples had witnessed the feast in the house of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, the breaking of the alabaster box of ointment, the riding on the ass, and the spreading of palm branches for the little animal to walk on, and the demonstration of the people, who had cried, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest !" (Matt. xxi : 9.) They had heard the Pharisees ask Jesus to put a stop to this demonstration. But He had said to them that if these people should hold their peace the very stones would cry out. (Luke xix : 40.) To fulfil the prophecy (Zech. ix : 9) there must be a *shout*, and there was a shout.

We remember that the little company went to the Temple, that the whole city was in commotion, that the rulers were impressed, and that they were afraid of the people. We remember that Jesus had gone into the Temple and had driven out those who sold merchandise ; that when the

Pharisees, the Sadducees and others tried to make Jesus appear confused, He had wisely turned all their arguments upon themselves ; and that they dared not ask Him any more questions, for by so doing they would only make a bad matter worse.

From all these things it must have seemed to the Apostles that they were on the eve of attaining great prominence and that Jesus would be exalted. Therefore, they could not understand His attitude of sorrow. As an evidence, we have the fact that James and John went to Jesus and asked about the place they might occupy in the Kingdom. Could they be *next to Him*? There was no doubt in their minds that the Kingdom was near. They specially loved Him and would like to have the favour of being near Him. Others might not care so much where they were placed, but James and John would like to be *close to the Master*.

These were the thoughts uppermost in their minds. As a result, when they came to the upper room, they had not the humility of mind to take thought of serving. No doubt it was the custom of the Jews to have a *servant* to minister to the comfort of the guests. But there was no servant here and not one of them had the humility of mind to offer to be the servant. Apparently they not only did not have the disposition to serve one another, but they did not desire to wash even the Master's feet.

Since it is difficult for us to gauge our own hearts thoroughly, we should use great charity in measuring the hearts and intentions of others, and should err on the side of too great sympathy and leniency rather than on that of too strong condemnation. Doubtless had the Apostles been asked as to their motives and conduct, they would have

denied that these were selfish, and would have spoken only of their zeal for the Lord and their desire to be near Him. This illustrates to us what the Scriptures declare, that the human heart is exceedingly deceitful, and that it requires careful scrutiny, lest under the cloak of good motives, it harbour qualities which, if recognised, it would spurn.

Apparently our Lord let the matter go to its full limit to see whether or not any of His followers would improve the opportunity to make himself servant of all. He waited until supper was being served (not ended as in our common Version); then, arising from the table, He laid aside His mantle and got a basin and a towel. Then, girding up His garments to keep them from getting into the water, He proceeded to wash their feet.

We can well imagine the consternation of the Apostles as they watched the procedure, and then saw the Lord go from the feet of one to those of another, as they protruded from the couches on which the Apostles reclined. The method of feet-washing at that time was different from that of to-day. The water was poured from a pitcher in a small stream upon the feet, which were washed and rinsed. The basin was merely a receptacle for receiving the soiled water.

This act was a pointed reproof for their neglect to wash *His* feet and *one another's*. They were all silent until He came to St. Peter. When our Lord paused before him, St. Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" St. Peter had too much reverence to wish the Lord to be his servant. He had as a natural trait, more than had some of the others, that courage, or boldness, which led him to speak out. But the Lord said to him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." (John xiii : 8.) St. Peter did not understand how this washing would give him a part with the Lord, but he said eagerly, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," if this gives me a more particular part with You. The Lord answered

him, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." I am doing all that is necessary. What I am doing you do not understand now, but you shall understand hereafter.—See verses 7—10.

In all this the Lord was giving a deep spiritual lesson — that no one is naturally fit for the Kingdom. Each one needs to be washed, to be cleansed, before he can be a joint-sufferer, before he can be a joint-heir. He must be a joint-sacrificer in order to become a member of The Christ. Jesus said to His disciples, You have witnessed My humility in this matter, and now I want to tell you that you ought to have this attitude toward one another. You should have been careful for even the humblest one in your number. Whether or not it was by washing My feet and those of all the others, you should have done whatever was necessary for the refreshment of the company.

We are to remember that things were different then from what they are to-day. Because of the wearing of sandals, the feet would be considerably soiled even after only a short journey and would, therefore, need refreshing. It was the custom that the servant should come forth and make the guests comfortable—not to the inconvenience of the traveller, but to his further comfort. This was a menial service, which afforded Jesus the opportunity to impress upon His Apostles the lesson of the necessity of humility in all the members of the Body of Christ.

We do not get a lesson of the institution of a formal ceremony. It was only a case of *necessity*, of which the Lord took advantage to give a lesson of humility. No such need exists with us to-day. Our streets are paved and we wear shoes that are closely laced and are sufficient protection. So there is no necessity to wash each other's feet, at a public gathering, to have a public exhibition of feet-washing.

The incident affords a lesson in humility to us as well as it afforded one

to the Apostles. We should be glad to do any service, even to the humblest of the members of Christ, in whatever way the opportunity may come, but this washing of feet has a deeper meaning. Throughout His ministry Jesus indicated the deeper thought by His treatment of others ; He lightened the burden and happified the condition of those with whom He came in contact. So we should do all in our power for the consecrated ones, members of Christ's Body.

This lesson suggests that the members of Christ's Body should have a mutual watch-care over one another's welfare ; to keep each other pure, holy, clean and to assist one another in overcoming the trials, temptations and besetments of this present evil world, arising from the three sources of temptation—the world, the flesh and the Devil. Only as we cultivate the various graces of the Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly-kindness, love—can we hope to be specially helpful to others in putting on these adornments of character and purities of life, and in getting rid of the defilements of the world and of the flesh.

It requires peculiar qualifications to enable us to assist each other in this respect. Before we can help others to cleanse their way of life in every little particular, so that every thought, word and deed shall be brought into subjection to the Divine will, it is necessary that we have experience along the same lines. Only as we cultivate purity of thought, word and deed in our lives, only as we put on the various graces of the Spirit, can we wash the feet of the saints.

Many who would reject well-meant

criticism of conduct, who would resent well-meant offers of assistance to a higher standard of character, as interferences with their private business, would be very amenable to the influence of the same person if he approached them with such evidences of true devotion and loving interest as would be indicated by the performance of some menial act. It is the sympathetic ones who are most successful in helping the various members of the Body of Christ out of the besetments and difficulties incident to the following of the Lord in the present time. Oh, let us study and strive and pray that we may be very successful in obeying the Master's injunction, "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet!"

How many opportunities we have for comforting, refreshing, consoling and assisting one another in some of the humblest affairs of daily living or in respect to some of the unpleasant duties, experiences or trials of life ! By love we are to serve one another, but not as a mere formality. Any service done or attempted to be done in love, with the desire to do good to one of the Lord's people, has, we may be sure, the approval of the Head of the Church.

Let us lose no opportunities of this kind ; let us remember the Master's example. Let us not merely assume the guise of humility, but let us actually have that grace of character which will enable us to do kindnesses and service to all with whom we come in contact. Then we shall all the more enjoy this privilege as we find the needy ones to be members of the Body of Christ—The Christ.

SHORT REPORT OF ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Convention at Nottingham this year is a recent and very sacred memory. Throughout the entire series of Meetings the spiritual aim was very high, and the solemn nature of these closing days was emphasised. From the first address, in which we were reminded of the Plan of God as revealed to His people for their special

guidance and comfort in "the last times," to the final exhortation based on the words "be thou an example of the believers," the thoughts of the speakers had clearly been directed by the Master to the ideals for whose fulfilment He prayed in His last hours, and which are recorded for us in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's

Gospel. The unity—oneness—not forced or mechanically produced by human means, but “of the Spirit,” which is so necessary here and now if we hope to be of the company who will be eternally united to the Lord and to one another beyond the veil: the need for the “shield of faith” constantly upon our arm to protect from “all the fiery darts” of the invisible foe in the evil day: the realisation that God Himself, our Lord, and all creation, *waits* for the completion of the New Creation before the Divine Plan can further progress, and hence the vital importance of what is now being accomplished as we “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling” whilst God works in us: the necessity of absolute concentration—“this *one* thing I do”—if we would win the prize of our High Calling: the thought that although every Scriptural evidence, as well as all the “signs of the times” point unquestionably to the near culmination of our hopes, still the end is not yet, and all for which we look is not fulfilled, was expressed, with a grave

exhortation to therefore “hold fast” with watchfulness and prayer: and as a climax the *practical* aspect of our consecration was impressed upon us with earnestness and power—the essential, vital *necessity* of “that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.”

We sincerely hope, and we believe, that all who listened to the messages of encouragement, warning, comfort and admonition which were spoken during those three memorable days—both from the platform, and in the interchange of conversation—were truly stimulated and blessed. To the Giver of every good and perfect gift we offered our hearts’ deep gratitude, and our pledge to strive the more faithfully to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,” honouring the Name we profess—not only with our lips, but with our lives.

The special message to absent members was voiced in the words of Joshua i: 8—9, and Hebrews x: 25, and we are glad to take this opportunity of passing it on to some who might not otherwise be reached.

SPECIAL NOTICES

ON TOUR.—Brother Geo. Ford will be visiting the following towns. Particulars of meetings can be obtained from this office.

Middlesbrough	May	29th
Darlington	”	30th
Coxhoe	”	31st
Newcastle.....	June	1st
Dundee	”	2nd & 3rd
Carnoustie	”	4th
Edinburgh	”	5th
Glasgow	”	6th
Greenock	”	7th
Dumfries	”	8th
Sunderland	”	9th & 10th
Ashington	”	11th & 12th

Brother H. J. Shearn will also be visiting the following towns:—

Welling.....	June	3rd
Leigh-on-Sea	”	4th
Gravesend	”	5th
Tunbridge Wells.....	”	6th
Eastbourne	”	7th
Gosport	”	10th
Bournemouth	”	11th
Bristol	”	12th & 13th
Chippenham	”	14th
Oxford	”	15th

CONVENTION.—A General Convention of Bible Students will be held in London, 4th—6th August, in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Be assured of a warm welcome. Full particulars of Mr. A. O. Hudson, 20 Darwin Road, Welling, Kent.

HOME-GATHERING.—The friends at Portsmouth and Gosport extend a cordial invitation to attend Special Meetings in Gosport on Sunday, 10th June. At 2.45 in Shakespeare Hall, Queen’s Road; at 6 o’clock in Nicholson Hall, Stoke Road. Hot tea (only) at 12.30 in Nicholson Hall. Tea provided free at 4.30 in Shakespeare Hall. Full particulars of Mr. T. Stracy, “Patmos,” Strathmore Road, Gosport, Hants.

SERVICES OFFERED.—The Committee are willing and glad to render service to the best of their ability whenever, and wherever, possible. The conduct of funerals can usually be arranged for, and speakers for special meetings provided.

ANONYMOUS.—We sincerely thank the dear one who has sent us 10s. “to be used in the Lord’s service.”

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 11, No. 2

July, 1934

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

THE NEW CREATURE'S RESPONSIBILITY

PART I.

With our Lord it was the same as with Adam. Jesus was perfect at the time of His baptism; therefore, no one could question His right to life. Consequently, God dealt with Him as with One who had life rights. But as Adam was placed on trial to see whether he would prove faithful, so our Lord Jesus was on trial during the three and a half years of His ministry, to prove His worthiness to retain His life rights. If He had failed to keep the Law any time during His ministry, He would have failed to have Divine approval. Likewise if He had failed to keep His Covenant of sacrifice He would have failed to make His calling and election sure.

What our Lord did in this matter is on a parity with what each one of us does. We come to the Lord in the beginning and present ourselves for sacrifice; His acceptance of us and the imputation of His merit to us makes us perfect beings from the Divine standpoint. Everyone who is perfect in the flesh has a right to life, according to the Divine Law. But the fact that we have a right to life for the moment, does not prove that it will be everlasting.

At the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign the world will be actually perfect. They will then be subjected to a testing to prove whether or not this perfection is deep and abiding, whether or not it is the permanent condition of their hearts. So it was with our Lord. Before His consecration He certainly had no such trials and contradictions of sinners against Himself as He had afterwards. "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself" (Heb. xii. 3.) Practically all His trials began at the time of His consecration. We have no reason to

suppose that our Lord was undergoing a trial for life or death before His consecration.

When our Lord was thirty years old, He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. His trial, which was to prove His worthiness, began at His consecration and continued until His death. For three years and a half the spirit of His mind was being tested. If during that time He had committed any sin whatever, would He have been accepted of God then? Surely not! He was on trial, not as an old creature, but as a New Creature, and His trial did not end until on the cross He cried, "It is finished!" This did not alter the fact, however, that He was still under the Law. The Law had dominion over Him as long as He lived. As a New Creature He did not have a body of the spirit kind. He had a human body, and was, therefore, responsible for everything that His human body would do.

It is just so with us. The body is reckoned dead in one sense of the word. As the Apostle says, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Does this refer to us merely as New Creatures? Yes. Is not our flesh reckoned dead? Yes, but we are *figuratively* raised from the dead. (Rom. vi. 4, 5; Col. iii. 1.) To whatever extent our bodies fall short of perfect obedience, Christ, as the great Advocate, offsets. So if any of us sin, we have an Advocate with the Father. No matter how *trivial* the sin may be, it is a *sin*. God keeps no accounts with the flesh, but holds the New Creature responsible. It is for these weaknesses of the flesh that the New Creature goes daily to the Lord and says, "Forgive us our trespasses." We have an Advocate with God, and

if we sin we may come to God and obtain grace in every time of need.—1 John ii. 1 ; Heb. iv. 16.

As we have seen, when our Lord made His consecration at His baptism, He was a perfect human being. When the Father accepted His sacrifice, He was begotten again ; and He was to this degree a new soul, a New Creature—spirit. But He had this treasure of the new mind in an earthen vessel, and the New Creature was responsible for all that the old creature did. If the old creature had gotten Him into trouble, the New Creature would have been responsible.

As previously stated, our Lord was under the domination of the Law as long as He lived. The question then arises, How long did He live as a man ? Our answer is that in a very important sense of the word He died at the time of His baptism ; that is to say, He died so far as His *human will* was concerned, but His human *body* did not die. His human body, therefore, was still as liable to every Law as it had been before. He became a New Creature in the spirit of His mind, but a New Creature without a new body ; and in the Divine arrangement the New Creature accepted and used the old earthly body, with all the responsibilities of that earthly body, whatever they might be.

In other words, the flesh has its law and its responsibilities. But as a New Creature our Lord was under an additional law. We are not to understand that as a New Creature He was released from the Ten Commandments. In His flesh He was a perfect human being, under the Law. As a New Creature He undertook to do more than merely keep the Law ; and so the New Creature was on trial—not merely to prove whether the flesh would live up to the requirements of the Law, but whether the flesh should be brought into subjection to the higher law of the New Creation. Thus our Lord *more* than kept the Law—not *less* than kept the Law.

Jesus died to the *Law Covenant*, but not to the *Law*, at the time that He

made His consecration. He was not relieved from His responsibility to the Law according to the flesh, but as a New Creature He gave up all hope, all anticipation, as respects that Law Covenant. When He gave up the human nature He would have no use for that which applied to the human nature, which He was giving up in order to get something better. Therefore, He died to the Law Covenant, not because He could not keep it, but because by becoming dead to that Covenant He might become alive to the Covenant of sacrifice. The blessings of that Law Covenant would have been merely earthly life. So when our Lord consecrated Himself, He sacrificed everything that went with the Law Covenant.

If our Lord's human nature had failed to keep the Law, the New Creature would have been held responsible. It is the same with us, as we have illustrated before in the case of a man and his dog. The New Creature is like the man and the old creature like the dog. But the man is responsible for the dog. If the dog does damage or bites anyone, the owner is responsible. God has made a special arrangement for us, however, by which we may go to the throne of heavenly grace for the imperfections of the flesh, because we have an *Advocate*. But Jesus had *no Advocate*; and therefore any misdeed on the part of His flesh would be charged to Him directly, as He would be responsible for all the flesh might do.

As we have seen, our Lord at thirty years of age was a perfect man, accountable under the Law Covenant. When He had made a consecration and when that consecration had been accepted by the Father, He was counted alive as a New Creature and reckoned dead as an old creature. These facts should not cause us to lose sight of the other fact that He was not really a New Creature, but merely begotten to a new nature, and that He would not be entirely free from the earthly nature until He was actually dead.

So, then, as a New Creature our Lord was responsible for all of God's laws that applied to Him as a man. The fact that He had given up all the earthly hopes and ambitions and privileges did not give Him liberty to violate the Law of God ; and therefore His passing from under the Law Covenant did not give Him liberty to break the Law.

Even so with us. We cannot trespass against our neighbour in any degree. The fact that we have become New Creatures in Christ makes us still more responsible for good behaviour. We have need of the Lord's covering merit for every fleshly imperfection that we have. The very fact that we have need of that covering for our fleshly imperfections shows that our every thought, word and action are taken cognizance of by God ; and since we are still imperfect, an arrangement is provided for us by which we may go to the Throne of Grace and have our weaknesses covered by our Lord.

PURPOSE OF OUR LORD'S SUFFERING

The Scriptures give us to understand that our Lord's sufferings produced a variety of results. First of all, those sufferings were in fulfilment of the Law, and by them He testified His obedience to the Law of God. He suffered for well-doing and not for evil-doing. Second, it was appropriate that He should prove to God His loyalty and faithfulness, so as to establish His worthiness to be made the great Messiah and to be granted the great power and glory which Messiah will exercise.

The Apostle Paul gives us this particular thought, when he says that it pleased God to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering. (Heb. ii. 10.) At the same time this suffering would demonstrate our Lord to be the great Messiah who would eventually lead the people out of sin and death. The Apostle also intimates that His sufferings were expedient and wise for the assistance of those who would be His followers, when he says

that this High Priest was touched with a feeling of our infirmities, that He might be able to sympathise with those who are in trouble. He was faithful Himself, having gone through various trials and testings.—Heb. iv. 15.

When mankind come to know how it was that Messiah assumed control of the world, all humanity will have full confidence in Him—not only in the power with which He will rule His Kingdom, but also in His justice, His love and His mercy. He has been tempted in all points as the Church is, and therefore, not only can *we* have the benefit resulting from His experience, but the whole world in the future may also have an opportunity to appreciate it.

The sufferings of Jesus became a witness both to angels and to men. He gave the demonstration of the full extent of loyalty even unto death. As a reward the Father did not give Him merely the high position that He had at first, but exalted Him to His own right hand in the heavenly places, "Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. i. 21); even to the *divine nature*. All this was a part of the Father's great Plan ; and by our Lord's experiences we see that the Heavenly Father has demonstrated His Justice, His Power and His Love in a *most marvellous way*.

Our Lord's perfecting, indeed, was a little different from ours, and yet there is a similarity between the two. He was perfect before He humbled Himself ; He was still perfect as the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself ; but as a result of His consecration He received a begetting of the Holy Spirit to the divine nature, and His development as a New Creature required that He faithfully carry out His vow, or Covenant, of sacrifice, in the doing of the will of the Heavenly Father. By such faithfulness He perfected Himself on the divine plane—that is, He proved Himself worthy according to the Covenant—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and

riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing."—Rev. v. 12.

Similarly the followers of Jesus are to be sharers with Him of the sufferings of this present time and in the glories which shall follow, for "If we suffer (with Him) we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) Although we are imperfect in the flesh, while He was perfect, yet the Robe of His Righteousness, the merit of His sacrifice, covers all of our blemishes and makes us, as His footstep followers, holy and acceptable before the Father, as joint-sacrificers with Jesus.

The begetting of the Holy Spirit starts us in the life divine. We are not to be perfected in the flesh, but in the spirit; and our perfection and acceptance with the Father will be demonstrated by our loyalty of heart and the fulness and thoroughness with which we submit our all to the Divine will and seek to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are His. Our justification comes to us as a reward of faith, our glorification will follow only as a reward for faithfulness—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. ii. 10.

(Continued in next issue.)

SPECIAL NOTICES

HOME - GATHERING.—A hearty welcome is extended to all brethren to attend a Home-gathering to be held in Leicester on Sunday, 15th July, 1934. The meetings will be held in the Rechabite Hall, 19 Seymour Street, Leicester (near L.M. & S. Station, London Road), commencing at 10.30 a.m. It is expected that Brother Luttichau, from Denmark, will be one of the speakers. Please bring lunch; tea provided free. Full particulars of Mr. R. Thurman, 79 Stafford Street, Leicester.

CALLED FROM US.—Sister Morrall, the beloved wife of Bro. W. H. Morrall, formerly a member of the Committee, died suddenly on Monday, 18th June. Our Sister rejoiced in acts of service for the refreshment of God's people, and her steadfast faith and loyalty to her Lord was an example to all.

ANONYMOUS.—Our sincere thanks go to the anonymous friend sending us 10s. for the Lord's service, "to be used as you think best."

Additionally, we are grateful for the gift of £5 from X.Y.Z. as "Good Hopes"; and for £2 from "One of the Lord's little ones by His grace."

We thank you, brethren, for the encouragement this means to us, and assure you of our prayers.

SERVICES OFFERED.—The Committee are willing and glad to render service to the best of their ability whenever, and wherever, possible. The conduct of funerals can usually be arranged for, and speakers for special meetings provided.

TRACTS AND "KINGDOM" CARDS.—At the present time the Tract "Thy Kingdom Come" is available at 10s. per 1,000. There could hardly be a more suitable subject to broadcast in these days. The "Kingdom" Card at 4s. 9d. per 1,000 draws attention to the "signs of the times," and the coming of Our Lord.

ON TOUR.—Brother Geo. Ford will be visiting the following towns. Particulars of the meetings can be obtained through this Office.

Sheen	July 10
Windsor	" 11
Oxford	" 12
Cheltenham	" 13
Bristol	" 14 15
Swansea	" 16
Pontardulais	" 17
Abertillery	" 18 19
Chepstow	" 20
Llanover	" 21 22
Kingswood	" 23
Bath	" 24
Bristol	" 25

Brother Carl Luttichau, of Denmark, will be visiting similarly:

Anerley (London)	July 11
Letchworth	" 12
Kettering	" 13
Leicester	" 14 15
Dewsbury	" 16
Darlington	" 17
Sunderland	" 18
Glasgow	" 21 22
Greenock	" 26
Barrow-in-Furness	" 28 29
Morecambe	" 30
Warrington	" 31
Manchester	Aug. 1
Nottingham	" 2

BACK ISSUES.—We are in a position just now to supply used copies of "The Herald" and the "Monthly," and a limited number of used "Towers," all free of charge.

GOOD HOPES.—The Committee are grateful to all Classes who have a "Good Hopes" box for assisting the work.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2s.) becomes payable in May each year. It is supplied free to the Lord's poor upon request.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 11, No. 3

August, 1934

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

THE NEW CREATURE'S RESPONSIBILITY

PART II.

The New Creature is represented by the *will*, the *mind*; but there can be no New Creature without a body. God does not give the New Creature its own body in the present life, but permits it to practise on the old body. And according to the New Creature's faithfulness in the old body will be its reward—either as a member of the Little Flock or of the Great Company or—for unfaithfulness, its punishment, Second Death.

The New Creature owns the mortal body, possesses that body. The body is not the New Creature's body except in a possessive sense. If one were living in a cabin temporarily while his house is being built, and someone else were to ask, "Is that your house?" he would say, "No; I am staying here merely until my house is built." So the New Creature occupies the old body. That body is dead because it has been devoted to God in connection with the Sin-offering.—Col. iii, 3; Rom. vi, 3, 1 Cor. 15: 29-30.

The Lord knoweth our frame. He knows that we are all fallen, imperfect—mentally, morally, physically. His message to the New Creature is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v, 48.) This means perfection of will, of intent, of endeavour. But God knows that we have this treasure of the new will in a mortal body, which is imperfect. Through Christ He has made provision that every imperfection of our flesh may be forgiven on condition that we come to Him for that forgiveness in the name of our Advocate, Jesus. This arrangement is to our advantage, for it leads us to watch the more carefully in

respect to our trespasses and to note the more carefully that they cannot be forgiven except through the merit of our Redeemer.

The experience of the New Creature in coming to the Throne of Grace for help is, therefore, educational. It will strive the more diligently, the more earnestly, the more perseveringly, to live according to the will of God, not only in mind, but also in body. The result of faithfully following this course of daily scrutinizing our thoughts and words and doings must be the strengthening, the fortifying of the New Creature against the wiles of the world, the flesh and the Adversary.

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

Although the New Creature cannot consent to sin, cannot sin wilfully, cannot sin with deliberation, and still be a holy mind, it can become slack, careless, inattentive, overcharged with the cares of this life—not sufficiently loyal and alert to fight against the Great Enemy. In this condition it may become more or less stupefied, while the will of the flesh may gain the ascendancy in some particular. The flesh has its cravings, its demands;

and it has a plausible way of urging what it thinks to be its rights and privileges. Sometimes the flesh is very persistent along these lines.

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

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

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

Inattention or carelessness on the part of the New Creature does not necessarily mean the Second Death, unless that carelessness went to the extent of intelligent choice of sin—

wilful sin. The wilful sinner cuts himself off entirely from Divine favour and lapses into the condition of condemnation to death, out of which he had been lifted. Of this the Apostle speaks, saying, "We are not of those who draw back unto perdition," destruction—Second Death. Furthermore, it should be noted that none ever steps suddenly from loyalty to disloyalty to God and to righteousness.

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

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

As the Apostle says, "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James iii, 5.) Behold what a great destruction of all the work of grace may be accomplished speedily by a little pride or fond desire or self-gratification!—not that the little beginnings mean the Second Death, but that they will surely lead on toward it unless the individual be recovered. St. James emphasized this thought, saying, "When lust (desire) has conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin when it is finished (completed) bringeth forth Death."—James i, 15.

Meantime, while one of the Lord's sheep would be thus straying, would the Great Shepherd be inattentive and allow him to wander without warning?

Surely not! Through some Divine

providence, such as sickness or the coming to the attention of some message from God's Word, directly or indirectly, or through faithful testimony and witness of the brethren, the Lord will speak to all such straying sheep, pointing out to them the danger of the path they are taking. If they heed well, they shall be recovered fully, and ultimately attain to the highest state as overcomers. But the Lord will not *coerce*.

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

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

SELF-IMPOSED DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED

Sometimes God's people, appreciating their own weaknesses, the blemishes of their flesh, properly feel themselves unworthy of the glorious things which God has in reservation for the Elect. It is their duty to do the best in their power, but not to attempt

to judge, to decide their own cases. There is One that judgeth them, even God. Whatever the sin, whatever the circumstances, it should be taken promptly to the Throne of Heavenly Grace in the name of Jesus, to obtain the mercy of God provided thus, and to find increasing help for future times of need.

We must not become discouraged and lose faith and hope, even though obliged to come to that Throne, repentantly, seventy times seven times. To whatever extent, however, the sin be repeated as the result of earthly weakness of heredity, to that extent there is forgiveness, in the Divine arrangement. But to whatever extent the sin contained a measure of wilfulness, or to whatever extent we failed to use our knowledge and ability to resist it, to that extent the New Creature will be held responsible, and will have certain chastisements imposed. Happy are those people who seek to punish themselves by some discipline, such as fasting. The Apostle says, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (chastened of the Lord).—1 Cor. xi, 31, 32.

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

At the time of our consecration the old creature dies in the sense that the old will dies. The old will, in the Scriptures termed the "old man" (Col. iii, 9, 10), is reckoned dead at the time of our consecration. But this is

not *real* death ; and hence there is a continual mortifying until the time of actual death. The Apostle says, "I die daily." (1 Cor. xv, 31.) His old will was given up. The body of flesh which had belonged to the old creature and which had been reckoned dead since consecration, was not really dead. He was not only reckoned alive as a New Creature, but the flesh body was reckoned to be his body until such time as in God's providence, by the power of the First Resurrection, he should be clothed upon with his new body. Hence his flesh is the flesh of the New Creature, and his body that belonging to the New Creature.

The New Creature is responsible for the flesh body, and the weaknesses of the old creature are charged up against the New Creature. There is an arrangement, however, by which the New Creature can have the appropriation of the merit of Christ for the weaknesses of heredity. So St. Paul exhorts the Church to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, there to obtain mercy for the short-comings of daily life.—Heb. iv, 16.

The New Creature never dies, unless it forfeits its right to life and goes into the Second Death. What dies is the

human body, which was consecrated to death, but which has been loaned to the New Creature to practise on, as it were. God gives the New Creatures their new bodies in the First Resurrection.

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

SPECIAL NOTICES

ON TOUR.—Brother Carl Luttichau, of Denmark, will be visiting the following towns. Particulars of the meetings can be obtained through this office.

Swindon	Aug. 8
Bristol	" 9
Bournemouth	" 10
Portsmouth	" 11/12
Eastbourne	" 13
Tunbridge Wells.....	" 14

Brother Geo. Ford will be visiting similarly :

Brentwood	Aug. 9
Leigh-on-Sea	" 10
Braintree	" 11/12
Haverhill	" 13
Downham Market	" 14
Brigg	" 15
Beeston, Leeds	" 16
Harrogate	" 17
Darlington	" 18/19
Sunderland	" 22
Ashington	" 23/24
Newcastle.....	" 25/26

CONVENTION.—We would remind our brethren of the General Convention to be held in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London, on 4th to 6th August. Our prayer is that it may be a season of spiritual refreshment for all privileged to attend.

"PLAN OF GOD—IN BRIEF."—Friends might be interested to know that this little booklet is now available in the Swedish language, price 1s.

ANONYMOUS.—A dear friend has sent us 10s. "As a thank-offering for His goodness and mercies.—Psa. lxx." We accept in His Name, with gratitude.

SERVICES OFFERED.—The Committee are willing and glad to render service to the best of their ability whenever, and wherever, possible. The conduct of funerals can usually be arranged for, and speakers for special meetings provided.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2s.) becomes payable in May each year. It is supplied free to the Lord's poor upon request.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 11, No. 4

September, 1934

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"BE YE CONFORMED"

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—2 Cor. 3: 18.

The Scriptures were indispensable to our Lord through all His life and pilgrimage; from the beginning to the end His life was the fulfilment of what had been written of Him in the Volume of the Book.

It is scarcely necessary to adduce proofs of this. Under Satan's attack in the wilderness we find Him saying repeatedly, "It is written," and thus He conquered the Adversary. In His conflicts with the Pharisees He continually appealed to the word "What saith the Scriptures?" "Have ye not read?" "Is it not written?" In His intercourse with His disciples it was always from the Scriptures that He proved the certainty and necessity of His sufferings and resurrection, and in His intercourse with the Father during His last sufferings, it is in the words of the Scriptures that He expressed His feelings in His darkest hour. Again, when commending His Spirit into the Father's hands it is the same thing. All this has a very deep significance. He was Himself the living Word, and was given the spirit of understanding without measure. If anyone could have done without the written Word surely it was He, and yet we see that it meant everything to Him. Jesus could not have been what He was, could not have done what He did, had He not yielded Himself step by step to be led and sustained by the Word of God.

The Words of the Father were to the Son the life of His soul. What He stated in the wilderness was spoken from His inmost personal experiences: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." His whole life was a life of faith—a depending on the Word of the Father. The Word was to Him not instead of the Father, but a vehicle for living fellowship with the living God. He had His whole heart and mind so

filled with the written Word that He could at any moment find the right word to use just as He needed it.

Beloved, would you become an overcomer like Jesus? Be strong in faith, full of blessing, rich in fruit to the glory of God? Then be filled with the Word of God. Like Christ, make the Word your bread. Feed on it. Have your heart full of it. Believe it. Obey it. It is only by believing and obeying that the Word can enter into our inward parts, into our very being. Take it day by day as the Word that proceedeth, and is proceeding, out of the mouth of God, as the Word of the living God who, by it, holds living fellowship with His children and speaks to them in living power.

Jesus, by studying the things written aforetime, saw inscribed there His own image and likeness, and He gave Himself up to the fulfilment of what was written. It was this knowledge which encouraged Him amidst the bitterest sufferings, and strengthened Him for the most difficult work. Everywhere He saw, traced by God's own hand, the divine waymark—through suffering to glory. He had but one thought—to be what the Father foretold of Him as He found it written in the Word of God.

Beloved brethren, in Him as portrayed in the Bible is to be found a picture of what the Father desires each one of us to be. Seek therefore to have a deep and clear impression of the example and the instruction God has set before us in His Word. If this is once fully understood and appreciated, it is hardly conceivable what courage it will give to overcome every difficult experience: to know that it is all ordained of God, and in His Word for our personal guidance. We can all say—I have seen in Jesus the image of what I am called in God's counsel to become: this thought inspires

the soul with a faith that will conquer the world.

The Lord Jesus then is the pattern for believers in the Gospel Age. It is especially in Him and His example that we must find our desired image set forth in the Scriptures. "To be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." We must in the scripture-glass gaze upon that image as our own. In order to accomplish His work in us the Spirit teaches us to take Christ as in very deed our example, and to gaze upon His every feature as illustrating what we can become. Blessed indeed the one who is truly doing this; who has not only found Jesus in the Scriptures, but also sees in Him the image of what he may hope to become.

Beloved, it was according to the Scriptures that Jesus Christ lived and died; it was according to the Scriptures that He was raised again. All that the Scriptures said He must do or suffer He was able to accomplish, because He knew and obeyed them. All that the Scriptures had promised that the Father would do for Him, the Father did. O, what a lesson for us upon whom the ends of the ages have come! Let us with an undivided heart seek earnestly to learn from the Scriptures what God desires for us. Let the Scriptures in which Jesus found every day the food of His life, be our daily food and meditation: let us go to God's Word each day with the joyful and confident expectation that, through the Holy Spirit which God has promised, the Word will indeed accomplish God's will in us. Yes, beloved, every word of God is full of divine power. And we can rest assured that when we seek to use the Scriptures as Christ used them they will do for us what they did for Him. Nothing can make each one of us more strong and courageous than the happy assurance that we are daily living out the will of God.

If like our perfect Pattern we do but fully surrender ourselves to God's will as seen in Jesus and the Word, and make this the highest object of our lives, we shall thus become conformed to His image eventually.

It is a law of nature that the eye exercises a mighty influence upon the mind and character. The education of a child is carried on greatly through the eye: he is moulded very much in the manners and habits of those he sees continually. To form and mould our characters aright the Heavenly Father shows us His divine glory in the face of Jesus. He does it in the expectation that it will give us great joy to gaze upon it

and because He knows that gazing upon it, we shall in due time be conformed to the same image. Let every one of us earnestly strive to be like Jesus, and note how we can attain to His glorious image.

Here is one appointed way: gaze on the glory of God in Him. Look into His face as that of a loving friend in whom we see the express image of the Father's person: look to Him in adoration: bow before Him in deep reverence and in silent contemplation. His glorious character has the almighty power to impart itself to us, to pass over into us, and to fill us. Look to Him in faith; exercise the blessed trust that He is ours, He has given Himself to us. It is His purpose to work out His image in us. We have a claim to all that is in Him.

Look to Him with strong desire. Do not yield to the slothfulness of the flesh, which is satisfied with less than the full blessing of conformity to the Lord. By prayer and supplication let us ask God to free us from all weaknesses of the flesh, and to fill us with that deep unquenchable longing for His glory. Pray most fervently the prayer of Moses: "Show us Thy glory." Let nothing discourage us, not even the apparently slow progress we make, but let us press onward and upward with ever growing desire after the blessed prospect that God's Word holds out to us.

We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory. And as we behold Him, above all, let the look of love not be wanting: tell Him continually how He has won your heart, how you do love Him, how entirely you belong to Him. Tell Him that to please Him, the beloved One, is your highest, your only joy.

"Like Christ," we can become, we shall become, each in our own measure. God's Word has said that we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is the pledge that it shall be.

In the art of photography we see two things which help to illustrate our point: the understanding and realization of the power and effects of light; and the wise adjustment of everything in obedience to its laws. With what care the sensitive plate is prepared to receive the impression: and with what precision its relative position to the object to be portrayed is adjusted: how carefully it is then held face to face with that object! Having arranged all this, the photographer leaves the light to do its wonderful work. Beloved, may we learn the precious lesson. Let us believe in the light,



"BE YE CONFORMED"

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in the power of the light of God, to transcribe Christ's image upon our heart. "We are changed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord." Let us not seek to do the work which the Spirit must do, but trust its power. Our duty is, to submit the prepared heart, waiting, longing, praying for the likeness; to take our place face to face with Jesus, studying, gazing, loving and believing that the wonderful vision of that crucified One is the sure promise of what we may become; and then, putting aside all distracting thought, in stillness of soul, silent before God, allow the Holy Spirit, as the light of God, to do the necessary work.

Seeking to become like Christ we must not forget the necessity for, and the power of, earnest prayer. Jesus says: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Moses gave neither command nor regulation with regard to prayer: even the prophets say little directly of the duty of prayer; it is Christ who teaches us to pray. And amongst the first things which the Lord shows to His disciples is the importance of having a secret place for prayer; every one should have some solitary spot where he can be alone with God. Every teacher requires a place set apart for giving instruction, and we have learnt to know and accept Jesus as our only teacher in the school of prayer. He has shown us in His conversation with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, that worship is no longer confined to times and places; that worship, true spiritual worship, is a thing of the spirit and the life; and yet He wants each one to choose for himself the fixed spot where He can daily meet him. That inner chamber, that solitary place, in Jesus' schoolroom. It may be anywhere, its location may change from day to day if we have occasion to change our place of abode, but that secret place there should be, and a quiet time daily during which the pupil may find himself in the Master's presence, there to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, and there to present our petitions and our thanks in private solitude.

In His words on prayer in the sermon on the mount, Jesus seeks to set the inner chamber before us in its most attractive light. Three times He uses the name of the Father: "Pray to thy Father," "Thy Father shall recompense thee," "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of." So then the first longing in private prayer is to meet

my Father: the light that shines in the secret of His presence is the light of the Father's countenance. Each thought or petition we breathe will express a simple, hearty, childlike trust in the Father, for this is how the Master teaches us to pray. He brings us into the Father's very presence and what we pray for there must at all times prevail. "Pray to thy Father which is in secret." God is a God who hides Himself from the carnal eye; if during our worship of God we are chiefly occupied with sordid or selfish thoughts we shall not meet Him who is a spirit; the unseen One: but to the one who withdraws himself from all that is of the world and of man, prepared to wait upon God alone, the Father will reveal Himself.

"The Father which seeth in secret." In these words Jesus shows us where God is always to be found. Some complain that private prayer is not always what it should be to them; they feel weak and sinful, the heart is cold and dark; they feel they have so little to pray about, and in that little no faith or joy: they are discouraged, and kept from prayer by the thought that they cannot come to the Father as they ought or as they wish. Child of God—listen to your Teacher, He tells you that when you go to private prayer your first thought must be, the Father. Just because your heart is cold and prayerless, get you into the presence of the living Father, for as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth you. Do not be thinking of how little you have to bring to God, but of how much He wants to give to you, just place yourself before Him, and look up into His face; think of His love, His wonderful tender, pitying love, tell Him all your troubles and failings and the Father's loving heart will give light and warmth to yours. O do what Jesus says, shut the door, and pray to the Father which is in secret. Is it not wonderful—to be able to be alone with God, the infinite God, to look up and say—"My Father!"

Jesus says: "And thy Father, which seeth in secret will recompense thee." Here He assures us that acceptable prayer cannot be fruitless, its blessing will shew itself in our life sooner or later. On our part there should be childlike simplicity of faith, the confidence that our prayer will bring us a blessing. Are we not told that "he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Not upon our words or thoughts does the blessing of the closet depend, but upon the love and the power of the Father to whom we entrust

our needs. Remember your Father sees and hears in secret: go thus to Him frequently and retire in the confidence that He will provide. He will recompense, trust Him for it; depend upon Him; acceptable prayer to the Father cannot be in vain: He will reward openly. Jesus speaks a further word: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." At first sight it might appear as if this thought made prayer less needful, but does it? God knows far better than we what is for our good, but as we get a deeper insight into the subject of prayer it will help much to strengthen faith. It will shew us that we do not need, as the heathen, to pray with the multitude and urgency of our words, and thus to compel an unwilling God to listen to us. It will lead to a holy thoughtfulness and silence in prayer as it suggests the question to us—does my Father really know that I need this? Then when the Spirit reveals to us the

certainly that our request is really for something that, according to the Word, we need for God's glory it will give us wonderful confidence to say: "My Father knows." If there be any delay in the answer, it will teach us to hold on in faith and patience waiting His good time.

And now, beloved brethren who have entered into the school of Christ to be taught to pray, take these lessons to heart, practise them, and trust Him to fulfil them in each one of us. Dwell much in the inner chamber, with the door shut—shut away from men, shut up with God, waiting upon God in full assurance of faith, just as did our great Example: laying bare the heart before Him that it may become a fitting abode for the Holy Spirit in ever increasing measure. Thus shall we "be changed." "We shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord," and in God's due time be forever with the Lord.

SIMPLY TRUSTING

Trust God in all you undertake—He never fails His own.

Just do your best, and leave the rest. You'll reap where you have sown.

SPECIAL NOTICES

ON TOUR.—Brother Geo. Ford will be visiting the following towns. Particulars of the Meetings can be obtained through this Office.

Birmingham	Sept. 1/2
Warwick	" 3
Wolverhampton	" 4
Market Bosworth	" 5
Kettering	" 6/7
Nottingham	" 8/9
Beeston	" 10
Mansfield	" 12
Sheffield	" 13
Huddersfield	" 14
Accrington	" 15/16
Preston	" 17
Blackpool	" 18
Morecambe	" 19
Barrow-in-Furness	" 20
Cleckheaton	" 21
Dewsbury	" 22/23
Wombwell	" 24

PILGRIM SERVICE.—So far as can be seen at present Brother Ford's services cease at the end of September.

HOME-GATHERING.—The friends at Dewsbury send a cordial invitation to all who can do so to attend a Home-Gathering to be held in Speight's Dancing Academy, 6 Old Westgate, Dewsbury, on 29th and 30th September. The first Meeting at 3.15 on Saturday and at 10.30 on Sunday. All particulars to be had from Mr. A. Carrington, 6, Greenmount Street, Beeston Hill, Leeds. 11.

GONE FROM US.—Our dear Sister Court of Birmingham passed away on Sunday, 19th August, after a serious operation. Her memory will remain with us as an incentive to steadfastness and loyalty to our Lord, and our sincere sympathies are extended to our beloved Brother Court and his family.

GOOD HOPES.—The Committee are grateful to all Classes who have a "Good Hopes" box for assisting the work.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2s.) becomes payable in May each year. It is supplied free to the Lord's poor upon request.



BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 11, No. 5

October, 1934

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

THE MARK OF CHARACTER

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii : 13, 14.

PART I

In the Epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul expresses his full appreciation of his opportunity to gain a prize, something worthy of laying hold upon, of grasping fully, of getting possession of. What was that for which the great Apostle was striving and which he had not yet attained? He spoke of this thing as a *prize*, which he was pressing along to win.

We may view "the mark for the prize of the high calling" from two standpoints, both of which are correct. From one standpoint, this mark is that of *heart-likeness* to God's dear Son, of perfection of intention, of love for righteousness, for God, for the brethren of Christ, and for the world, even our enemies. This degree of character-development should be attained as early as possible in our Christian experience, and should be such that, were we to die at any time after its attainment, God would count us worthy of a share in the First Resurrection.

From the other standpoint, this "mark for the prize of the high calling" is that of crystallization of character in the likeness of our Lord. After having attained a heart-likeness to Christ, we must *hold it fast*, and see that in all the testings which the Lord permits to come upon us, we are counted by Him as overcomers, not in our own strength, but in that of our Redeemer. This mark of *crystallized* character is not attained so early in our Christian experience as is the mark of character-development. But by fighting the good fight until the end of our course, we *crystallize* our characters in

love for the principles of righteousness, for God, for the brethren and even for our enemies. If thus faithful, we shall win the prize of glory, honour and immortality.

There is no reason to think that our *consecration* is the mark; for our testing, our proving comes *after* our consecration, and not *before* it. No one would be at the mark merely because he is consecrated, but because he had endured the testing, thus proving that his consecration was from the heart and that he was sincere in the devotion of his every power to the service of God. We cannot suppose that the mark is reached the next moment after consecration. Some degree of character-development must be possessed; there must be some mark of character in order that God may count that person worthy of everlasting life.

God's standard of character is perfection, which must be manifested by loyalty and obedience under whatever tests He permits to come to individuals upon *any plane* of life. No one will get the prize of everlasting life unless he successfully passes those tests. We realize that the Church has been under trial throughout the Gospel Age, as to her worthiness to obtain "glory, honour and immortality"—joint-heirship with her Lord.—Rom. viii : 17.

From the Scriptures we learn that throughout the Messianic Age the world will be tried by The Christ, and that even after passing that test they will not receive the reward of everlasting life until God shall have proved

them at the end of Christ's reign by loosing Satan for a "little season." (1 Cor. xv : 24 ; Rev. xx : 7—10.) The fact that the world is thus to be tried by both The Christ and God confirms the thought that God has a standard, or mark, of character to be attained by all those who are loyal and obedient to Him—on any plane of existence.

While this mark of character to be attained by the world during Messiah's reign is not the one to which St. Paul refers in our text, nevertheless there is such a character-mark to be reached by mankind. Those who then attain the mark will have everlasting life on the human plane. But those who attain the mark to which the Apostle refers will be given eternal life on the divine plane.

The Apostle was a noble example of one who had reached the mark. So far as we know, he was ready to die at any time ; hence it was not this mark of character-development to which he had not attained. He had not yet attained to the *prize itself*, and could not do so until his change should come. He was constantly pressing along, trusting that God would give him all the things that are in reservation for "them that love Him." (1 Cor. ii : 9.) We could not think the Apostle to mean that he would reach this mark of character-development *just at the moment before death*. This would be an absurdity of thought.

Our Lord Jesus was at the mark of perfect character at the time of His consecration ; and He maintained Himself at the mark. As a sacrifice He would have been acceptable at any time. It was His part to consecrate His life and not to hold it back. It was the Father's part so to arrange matters that the Jews might not take our Lord until the Father's hour for Him had come. In everything that He did He submitted Himself to the Father's will. Our Lord spoke of His "cup" as the one which the Father had prepared for Him.—John xviii : 11.

If our Lord had determined for

Himself the time and the manner of His death, then *He* was pouring the cup. If the Jews had determined these points, then *they* were pouring the cup. But neither our Lord nor the Jews did so, for both time and manner were foretold by the Prophets. Our Lord took the cup and accepted it as *the Father's providence for Him*. If the Father's providence had led to His death a year sooner or two years sooner, if the Father's will had been expressed in our Lord's crucifixion at an earlier time, even then it would have been well with Him. But He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered."—Heb. v : 8 ; ii : 10.

At Jordan our Lord was shown to be perfect and to have made a perfect consecration, both by the descent of the Holy Spirit and by the voice of Jehovah. (Matt. iii : 16, 17.) He had also a perfect body—though it was earthly—in which the New Creature operated. But His *obedience* must be *tested*—His *loyalty even unto death*. Whatever the degree of testing to which our Lord might have been subjected, it was just the *right amount*, according to the Father's wisdom. Our Lord would have been just as much an overcomer had He died at any time after His consecration. But if He had died sooner than He did, it would merely have proved that the Father did not require as much *evidence* of our Lord's faithfulness and loyalty as He did require.

A good illustration of the process of character-development and crystallization is afforded by the work of a potter. First, he must select the right kind of clay, for some clays would produce very coarse ware, others would crack or warp in the drying, and still others would not stand the intense heat. Having selected the proper clay the potter subjects it to very many processes of grinding, mixing and wetting until it comes from the mill a soft, plastic mass of the consistency of tough dough, ready for the potter's use. Then comes the moulding into the article desired. The dish is formed, or shaped, with care and



dried. Next it is placed in the kiln and fired with an intense heat for two or three days and nights. Then it requires a long time to cool before it can be removed from the kiln. But even then it is only a porous, leaky vessel, altogether unfit for use until it has been dipped into a liquid glaze, or slip, which it readily absorbs.

Again it is subjected to the heat of the glaze kiln, which not only melts the glaze, but converts it into a perfectly transparent glaze all over the surface, making the article beautifully smooth and comely. But if the vessel is of very choice porcelain, to be made still more attractive to the eye by decorations, the ornamentation and gilding must be done at this stage, and the vessel must again be placed in the kiln for a third firing. Some vessels which have stood all the other tests, fail at this point and are cast into the waste heap. But if the vessel passes successfully the last test, it is ready for the service for which it was designed.

So in our Lord's case. Not only was He perfect as a man, but His own *will* was in complete subjection to the *Father's will*. When trials came, there was no swerving, no twisting, no bending. He was of the proper material. His heart (applying this word to the mind) was of the proper character. So must it be with us. Those who will be accepted and found worthy of the great reward will be of His character-likeness in this respect; they will be *loyal to God's will*. Not only will they endeavour both to ascertain and to do the Father's will, but they will be in heart submission to that will *in every degree*. The "cup" they will be required to drink is the same that our Lord drank—and "*all of it!*"

To follow in His steps, we must first reach this mark of character-development; and having done all, we must *stand* there. It is well to repeat the thought that it will not do for us to think that one reaches the mark of proper character-development just at the *moment of death*. Character should be attained as soon as possible. But having reached this character-develop-

ment called the "mark," it is for us to *stand faithful*, and not be thrust away from it by the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Devil. All such opposition must be endured before we can win the prize. Some of the noblest characters, who have been in an acceptable condition, and used of the Lord, did not get to the *mark* until they had passed through certain severe experiences.

The thought of the Apostle seems to be, here is a certain line of conduct and character-development which God has marked out; and it is the same for all who are in the race. The life of Christ is the rule. If we would attain the mark, obtain the prize, we must follow this line, or rule, or mark.

The Apostle Paul had but one mind or will. "*This one thing I do,*" he said. He was not a double-minded man, at one time thinking he would like to serve the Lord, at another time himself, and then again the Adversary, etc. He had accepted the Divine proposition to give *all* his talents to the service of the Lord. He had before his mind the great promise that God had made. For him there was but *one thing* in life.

The Scriptures tell us that during the Gospel Age God has sent out a special call, or invitation, and that those who have accepted that call have "exceeding great and precious promises" of wonderful things to look forward to. All who accept the call should practically forget all the trifling things of life in order to attain these promises. There is but one way to win the prize—by manifesting to God faithfulness, obedience and loyalty. *Character, not talent, makes us acceptable.* God could give any one intellectual powers as good as ours or better. He will not grant anyone a place in the Kingdom on account of physical strength or endurance. He will not admit anyone to the Kingdom because of worldly prosperity or honour of men, or because of riches.

What then is God seeking? To what has He called us? The Apostle Peter says that God has "called us to

glory and virtue." (2 Peter i: 3.) Certain conditions God requires of those who will run in the race. He requires that none be proud, but that they possess humility. And He will have no one in the Kingdom of His Elect who is weak, vacillating, so far as his *mind* is concerned. He may not have a strong *intellect*; but he must manifest to God that he has a strong *will* and *firm determination*, and that he has cut off everything in life in order to win the prize. He must also demonstrate his *loyalty* to God. He must not merely seek glory, but he

must recognize and appreciate his responsibilities to God.

Loyalty is one of the great tests of character—loyalty to God, to His Word, loyalty to principle. Whatever follows, the Christian must be submissive to God, trustful and faithful. To such alone could we expect God to give the great blessings promised to overcomers. Hence we see that the Apostle was quite right in giving up *all* that he might serve God, that he might please the Father, and thus attain to this glorious reward of joint-heirship with His Son.

to be continued.

HIS REST

Be all at rest my soul, O blessed secret
Of the true life that glorifies thy Lord :
This shalt thou learn to wait and watch and labour,
Strengthened to bear, since Christ in thee doth dwell.
Be all at rest, so shalt thou be an answer
To those who question, " Who is God, and where ? "
For God is rest, and where He dwells is stillness,
And they who dwell in Him that rest shall share.

SPECIAL NOTICES

ON TOUR.—Brother H. J. Shearn will be visiting the following towns. Particulars of the Meetings can be obtained through this Office.

Leicester	Oct. 6/7
Beeston, Leeds	" 8
Harrogate	" 9
Darlington	" 10
Sunderland	" 11
Newcastle.....	" 12
Edinburgh	" 13/14
Carnoustie	" 15
Dundee	" 16
Greenock	" 18/19
Glasgow	" 20/21

GOOD HOPES.—The Committee are grateful to all Classes who have a " Good Hopes " box for assisting the work.

HOME-GATHERING.—The brethren at Mansfield extend a warm welcome to all who can attend a Home-Gathering in the Y.M.C.A. Hall, on Sunday, 30th Sept. commencing in the morning at 10 o'clock, and continuing throughout the day. Full particulars from Mr. H. W. Jones, 29 Harrington Street, Mansfield, Notts.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2/-) becomes payable in May each year. It is supplied free to the Lord's poor upon request.

SERVICES OFFERED.—The Committee are willing and glad to render service to the best of their ability whenever, and wherever, possible. The conduct of funerals can usually be arranged for, and speakers for special Meetings provided.



BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 11, No. 6

November, 1934

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

THE MARK OF CHARACTER

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii : 13, 14.

PART II

Not necessarily all who *make* a consecration, but all whose consecration God *accepts*, all whom He begets of His Holy Spirit to become New Creatures, will have the opportunity of reaching this mark of *crystallization* of character before they die. These will have full testing—"Every son *whom He receiveth*." (Heb. xii : 6.) This promise guarantees that they shall have trials and difficulties to develop them in the proper character-likeness of our Lord; and that none of their experiences will be cut short of this attainment. God will see to it that they have the full opportunity to develop character-likeness to Christ. Those who turn to sin wilfully, deliberately, will fall into the Second Death. Others may fall from the priestly class into the Great Company. But even these must have sufficient time to manifest their loyalty to God.

At the time of His consecration, our Lord was at the mark by virtue of His *perfection*. We are not at the mark at the time of our consecration; for we are *imperfect*. But we wish to do the Lord's will; and we have given ourselves to ascertain what that will is in order that we may render intelligent obedience thereto. In our Lord's case He had no such imperfection to overcome as we have. At the time of His consecration He loved His neighbour as Himself, and He loved God with all His heart.

When we consecrate ourselves, we agree to do this; but we do not know what it means; just as St. Peter "wist not" what he said at the time of the

transfiguration in the Mount: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." (Matt. xvii : 4.) Neither did the two Apostles know what they were asking when they requested Jesus that they might sit the one on His right and the other on His left hand in the Kingdom. Our Lord said to them, "Ye know not what ye ask."—Matt. xx : 22.

Since at the time of our consecration we do not fully understand what we do, therefore we do a great deal of running to reach the mark. This our Lord had no need to do; for He was perfect. At consecration He was at the mark of perfect character, so that had He died at any subsequent time He would have received the reward of the Father, who said, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii : 17.) At His baptism our Lord was at that mark of character which merited the promised reward of the Father, and to which we must attain before we can secure everlasting life, either on the plane of glory or otherwise.

Stephen, who was martyred very soon after Pentecost, must have lived habitually near to the Lord; for he, like Nathaniel, was an "Israelite indeed" in whom was no guile. The fact that the Truth of God came to such as these men means that so far as their heart attitude was concerned they had been very near to the Lord under the Law as their schoolmaster (Greek; pedagogue), so that when brought to

Christ they could quickly learn of Him. So it appears to be with us now. The differences in our natural education in right and wrong, in truth and error, are such that we cannot tell just how long it will take for each to attain to the character-likeness of our Lord and thus to prove worthy of eternal life.

We have suggested that the Lord's people, at the time of their consecration and begetting of the Holy Spirit, are not ready for the Kingdom, but require development, which time alone can accomplish. Notwithstanding this suggestion, is there not a sense in which God's people are regarded *perfect* at the time of their consecration—at the moment of their acceptance? Our answer is, Yes; they are *counted* so, but are not so actually. The flesh is reckoned perfect so that God can accept their offering.

But at this time the New Creature is merely a babe in Christ and has not yet attained to the stature of manhood. Therefore, the necessity exists for entering the School of Christ and for "putting on Christ," as the Apostle expresses it. We begin to put on Christ after consecration, and after our begetting of the Holy Spirit. The babe grows into a child, and the child into a man. (Eph. iv: 14, 13.) The work of growing up into Christ is necessary before the child of God would be fit for the Kingdom. The difference between a babe in Christ and one fit for the Kingdom is that the latter has been tried and tested and has proved himself to be an overcomer.

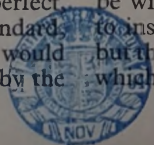
The possession of perfection necessarily means that one is at the mark, as in the case of Adam. The test is, not whether one can *reach* the mark, but whether one will *remain* at the mark—"having done all, to stand." (Eph. vi: 13.) When we reach the mark of character which God approves in every sense of the word, let us *continue there*. When our Lord came into the world He was perfect, loyal, at the mark—God's standard, perfection. Whether or not He would be moved away from the mark by the

contradiction of sinners against Himself, was to be proved. But none of these tests led Him to abandon His determination to continue at the mark. So it should be with us—to the best of our ability.

The Spirit of God is the same whether manifested in Himself or in angels or in men or in New Creatures. We do not find the Spirit of God manifest in the majority of men, because of sin. We would find the Spirit of God manifest in angels. We should find the Spirit of God very manifest in the saints, who should carry with them into the new relationship all that they have naturally of the character-likeness to the Lord. The graces of spirit exhibited in the Lord's people are properly to be considered fruits of the Holy Spirit; for their possessors have become New Creatures, have entered into the race for the prize of the high calling. Some saints might be able by reason of natural qualities to make more rapid progress than would others in developing and perfecting these fruits and graces of the Spirit.

Sometimes the question arises, Should not the Lord's people preferably strive for character-likeness to Christ, with no particular desire as to what the Lord's reward will be? We answer, No. We should have "respect unto the recompense of the reward." In order to have the proper respect for the reward which God promises, it is necessary that we hold it up before us continually, and that we never lose sight of the prize.

Our Lord Jesus does not deprecate this looking at the prize. Listen to His words: "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (John xvii: 5.) Thus He prayed to the Father for the reward which the manifestation of His obedience would bring. So it should be with us; not that we have a right to insist that our efforts be rewarded, but that we should think of the blessing which God has promised those who



love Him, as "exceeding great and precious." Many in the nominal church do not see these things.

Let us keep the goal distinctly before our eyes. Doubtless the Lord meant the knowledge of the prize to serve as a stimulus for our upbuilding and strengthening. We look for "glory, honour and immortality"; and it is right for us to seek for them. Any other attitude would be false modesty. If the thought that it is presumption for us to aspire to the high calling comes before our minds, let us remember that our Lord wants us to be so inspired by the "great and precious promises" that we will work for these things which He has set before us, and that it would be presumption for us to *refuse* what He offers to us.

Character may be viewed from two different standpoints. When Adam was created, he was a man of great and good character—"crowned with glory and honour." He was perfect, the image of God. There is a difference, however, between a character thus *given*, and one that is *developed* and *tested* by the exercise of *free will*. Our Heavenly Father desires that His intelligent creatures exercise their wills. Therefore instead of giving Adam a part of His own character-likeness and eliminating that which we call moral choice, He chose to give Adam His character-likeness, including free moral agency. "So God created man in His own image." God foreknew the fall of man and all the circumstances connected with it. He knew that the permission of evil for a time would ultimately result in great blessings for all. He knew that the time would come when every creature in heaven and in earth would be obedient to Him, not only because there was no opportunity of doing otherwise, but from *choice*.

Those who are appreciative of God's character should desire to have this character-likeness. Only such will merit everlasting life amongst either angels or men. God is testing along these lines the worthiness of those who

are on trial for life eternal. Hence, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" as "worship Him in spirit and in truth"—intelligently.—John iv: 23, 24.

In the formation of character, we see that the lessons which we learn in the School of Christ are very helpful to us. Originally, man was made in the image of God. Yet in us the image is blurred, indistinct. Those who learn the lessons now and appreciate them to the full will be given no further trial. Those who have not had a sufficiency of opportunity will have a full trial in the Age to come. Under the discipline, the chastenings and the rewards of that time, they will learn how much better is righteousness than sin, Truth than error. They will develop in the character-likeness of God, which Adam lost, and will see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. They will learn both to *will* and to *do* righteousness. All who fail to learn this lesson will be judged unworthy of eternal life.

We see that the angels willed of themselves whether they would be obedient, or be disobedient and enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. All the holy angels, who are now in favour with God, are such as have had their testing and have come off victors. Their example will prove more and more a lesson to us as we come to understand it. As a result of this knowledge, we see in God the noblest sentiment that could actuate our Creator and Father in dealing with His creatures; and we are glad that we have chosen to do His will concerning us.

Finally it is important that we should keep in mind the fact that since true love on our part will manifest itself in *obedience*, then *disobedience* is an evidence of a *loss of love*, as viewed from the Lord's standpoint, a deflection from loyalty, a failure to endure the tests. We must agree that the Lord's standpoint of judgment is a reasonable one. Should one ask, How would it be if we should disobey through ignorance? The answer is, that the Lord has made provision

against our ignorance : first, He has given us the Word of Truth, "that the man of God may be perfect (perfectly informed), thoroughly furnished unto all good works"; and second, He has promised to supply such helps to the spirit of holiness and the understanding of His Word, as will enable us to do what is pleasing in His sight.—2 Tim. iii : 17 ; John xvi : 13, 14.

Love is the crown of all graces, "the fulfilling of the Law." Without a fervent, glowing love, it will be impossible to render obedience or to stand the tests for development and crystallization of character arranged for by Divine Love. Our Lord tells us that He was beloved of the Father ; and the Father Himself declared, "This is My beloved Son." We can readily see why our Lord Jesus was greatly beloved, for He expressed and fully manifested the Father's love. But it astounds us to know that this same love is exercised by the Father toward us ! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God !" "The Father Himself loveth you !" —1 John iii : 1 ; John xvi : 27.

Let us, dearly beloved, be more than

ever careful respecting the Word of the Lord ; let us not by negligence give evidence of a decay of love. Our Lord points out that His continuance in the Father's love, as the well-beloved Son, with all which this implies, was because of His obedience to the Father's will ; and that following the same line, He must require that we should be obedient to Him if we would abide in His love and share His Throne and glory.—John xv : 10.

Our Lord's instructions and commandments are not intended to terrify us, nor to deprive us of happiness. On the contrary, "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy might be filled full." (John xv : 11.) Those who give surest evidence of living nearest the Lord well know that obedience to the Lord's words, together with the privilege thus obtained of abiding in Him and His love, is the greatest joy, a joy which wholly outweighs all the trifling pleasures which the world has to offer. It is the joy and peace which "passeth all understanding," which rules in the heart, and which brings with it the promise, the assurance, "not only of the life which now is, but also of that which is to come."—1 Tim. iv : 8.

SPECIAL NOTICES

ON TOUR.—Brother H. J. Shearn will be visiting the following towns. Particulars of the meetings can be obtained through this office.

Brigg.....	Nov. 7
Downham Market.....	8
Sutton	9
Ipswich	10—11
Haverhill	12
Braintree	13
Brentwood	14

ANONYMOUS.—We are very grateful to the dear friend who has sent us 10s. "to be used in the Lord's service."

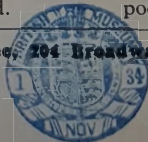
POCKET MANNAS.—We are hopeful of being in a position to supply orders for these in time for Christmas gifts. They will be cloth bound, and the same size as before, price 1s. 9d. each. Orders will be supplied in the rotation received.

"GOD AND REASON."—This useful book, introducing the Truth in a very readable form, will shortly be available. It is published by "Dawn Publishers," Brooklyn, and the price is 10d. (less for quantities). Please send your orders to us.

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GOOD HOPES.—The Committee are grateful to all Classes who have a "Good Hopes" box for assisting the work.

RENEWALS.—The subscription for this paper (2s.) becomes payable in May each year. It is supplied free to the Lord's poor upon request.



BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

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OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

IMMANUEL AND HIS DOMINION.

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."
Matt. i : 21.

The story of Jesus' birth and whole life and death, and resurrection even, would be of comparatively slight importance if disconnected from the prophecies of His glorious Kingdom power and reign, under which all the families of the earth shall be blessed. It was in view of this grand consummation to be accomplished by the Kingdom that the angels sang at our Lord's birth of peace on earth and good will toward men, and proclaimed "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people"—"in due time."

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." After the Hebrew idiom this statement pertaining to the future reads as though it related to something only in the past, just as we read, "Unto us a child is born," whereas Jesus was not born at that time nor until several centuries later. The standpoint of the shining light is still future, the great light is not yet shining upon the people, they still dwell in the land of the shadow of death. The shadows of our demoralized, sinful, dying condition affect all of life's interests for the world of mankind. As the Apostle explains subsequently, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, waiting." (Rom. viii : 22.) The world is still waiting for this great Light, which the Scriptures promise shall in due time shine forth, "The Sun of righteousness with healing in its beams." (Mal. iv : 2.) Our Lord refers to the same great event, still future, and assures us that when that Sun of Righteousness shall shine

forth it shall include not only Himself, but all of His faithful disciples, the ripened wheat of this Gospel Age. He distinctly portrays this in the parable of the wheat and the tares, telling us that at the close of the age He would gather the wheat crop of this age into the garner—the heavenly state—and He adds, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear."—Matt. xiii : 43.

We are still in the time when darkness covers the earth [civilized society] and gross darkness the people [the heathen]. True, there is a measure of light in the world: True, also, that light emanated from our dear Redeemer, His words and His works, and still shines forth from all those who are truly His and whose hearts are illuminated by His promises and His spirit. But this is not the light of the world scattering all of earth's darkness and causing all to appreciate the glory of God. It is merely "the light that is in you," in believers; it is a light of faith, a light of hope, a light of love ignited in the hearts of the little flock, who shine as lighted candles in the world. Our Lord's light shone into a little corner of the world called Palestine, and from His lamp many followers have lighted their lamps. The Master's instruction is, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven," "Put not your light under a bushel, but on a lampstand, that it may give light to all in the house." But He adds, "The darkness hateth the light because its deeds are evil and are made manifest thereby," "Marvel not

if the world hate you ; ye know that it hated Me before it hated you."—Matt. v : 15, 16 ; John iii : 20.

That the True Light is not now shining, that the Sun of righteousness has not yet arisen with healing in His beams, is fully evidenced by the gross darkness of heathendom and by the lesser darkness of Christendom. In proportion as the true followers of Jesus have kept their lamps trimmed and burning, in that proportion a measure of enlightenment has spread throughout the world. But all this is merely the shining of light in the midst of darkness, and their light at the present time and under present conditions is wholly inadequate to dispel the night and to bring in the glorious day for which the whole creation groans and still waits. That glorious day cannot come until the Lord shall first have found the members of His body who together with Himself are to constitute the Sun of righteousness. Meantime, as the Apostle declares, the god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the goodness of God should shine into their hearts.—2 Cor. iv : 4.

The prophet, speaking of the Church during this Gospel Age appropriating the Word of God, the message of life eternal, the basis of our hopes and joys, declares, "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, a lantern to my footsteps." (Psa. cxix : 105.) The need of this lamp is most evident. Those who have it not stumble on in the darkness : we who have the light of the divine Word are not in darkness even as others—"Ye are all the children of the light and of the day." (1 Thess. v : 5.) We belong to the new dispensation and our citizenship is in heaven. By faith we are dead to the world and live toward God, and are therefore counted as children of the light even in the present darkness ; and the eyes of our understanding are enlightened by the hopes and gracious promises of the divine Word, while others rejecting this lamp are in corresponding darkness and ignorance.

The light, as the Apostle says, has shone into our hearts already through faith. If we look from the outward and natural standpoint of affairs, we would be as the remainder of the world. It is in proportion as we close our eyes to the things that are seen, and that we know by faith to be but temporary, and open the eyes of our understandings to the things unseen as yet and which are eternal, only in that proportion does the light by faith shine into our hearts. The glorious prospect is that soon the Church will be complete, soon the Sun of righteousness will shine and its rays will light to the uttermost parts of the earth, and every child of Adam, sharer in his curse, shall ultimately be a sharer in Messiah's great work of blessing by being brought under the influence of that great Light which shall constitute the Millennial age, a day of blessing and of glory and of knowledge of the Lord. "This is the True Light which [ultimately] lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John i : 9.

The prophecy of this verse goes beyond the living of that time and assures us that the light will shine to those who are in the shadow of death—in the deadly shade, properly a title of hades—those who are in hades, in darkness. Upon every member of our race the light must shine, because Christ hath redeemed us once for all. As all of Adam's children were condemned before their birth, so all of them were redeemed, and the majority of them before their birth. They are as sure to get a blessing from Christ's redemptive work as they surely did share in the curse that came upon Father Adam.—Rom. v : 12.

"Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy : they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." This, the revised version rendering, is evidently the correct one. Leeser's translation also agrees. The picture before us represents the world of mankind during the



Millennial age, brought forth from the bondage of death, released from the Adamic curse, rejoicing as those who are dividing a spoil, sharing in something which has fallen to them. It will be just so: the blessings of the Millennial age will be distributed as divine bounty, the curse will be rolled away, the Sun of righteousness will shine for all with healing in His beams, bringing restitution to all, and none will escape the blessings except they wilfully refuse them and do despite to God's favour. The same is true now to those who receive God's mercy. It is a gift; they can do nothing for it; they are merely assured that they are forgiven. The difference is that now a very few have the eye to see and the ear to hear and the heart to appreciate God's mercy as it is told to us in the good tidings which can be understood only by the hearing of faith. By and by, after the selection of the elect class, the Church, sight and knowledge will largely take the place of faith. The world, then, realizing the grace of God in Christ Jesus forgiving their sins and providing them with life eternal if they will accept it, will generally rejoice to divide the great spoil, the great gift of God.

The cause for the rejoicing will be because the great oppressor, Satan, will no longer have control; his yoke of sin, pain, sorrow and death, his rod and staff of affliction and slavery, will be broken and that forever, as the Lord explains, "That old serpent the devil, Satan, shall be bound for a thousand years that he shall deceive the nations no more until the thousand years be finished." (Rev. xx : 3.) The victory over the great Adversary is not to be a slow and gradual one, not to be by missions or any power of ours, but the Lord Himself shall interpose His power.

"AS IN THE DAY OF MIDIAN"

The day of Midian was the day of Gideon and his little band, when suddenly at the breaking of the pitchers

and the blowing of the rams' horns the Lord overwhelmed the powerful hosts of the enemies of His people and granted them a great and miraculous deliverance. Gideon evidently prefigured our Lord Jesus, as Gideon's little band prefigured the little flock of Christ, the saints, the very elect. It was after the testing, the sifting, of this little company that the Lord granted the great deliverance. And thus it will be in the end of this age: as soon as the Gideon band, the Royal Priesthood under the captaincy of the glorified Christ, shall have given their message and let their feeble lights shine out, the Lord will grant the great victory for truth and righteousness through a time of trouble which shall come upon the world, but which will eventuate in a great blessing upon all people, the binding of Satan and the release of all the oppressed. We read of the grand consummation of the matter, the end of sin and trouble, in the figure of the fifth verse, which in the Leeser translation reads, "For all the weapons of the fighters in the battle's tumult and the garments rolled in blood shall be burned, become fuel for the fire." The interpretation of this is that all the weapons of Satan, all the accessories of sin and death, everything that pertained to this great conflict which for centuries has prevailed in the world between righteousness on the one hand and sin on the other, all these shall be utterly destroyed. The picture shows us the world cleansed of every evidence of opposition to the divine government and law of righteousness, and accords well with the statement, "All voices in heaven and earth and under the earth and in the sea heard I saying, Blessing and glory and honour and dominion and right and power unto Him that sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb."—Rev. v : 13.

The word "for" in our text signifies because: hence we read, "Because unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." The because is an

explanation of the process by which the foregoing gracious prophecy of blessing and release from the oppressor shall be accomplished. The Lord would draw the attention of all who had the hearing ear of faith to the fact that no such Kingdom of righteousness, no such enlightenment and blessing of the world could be possible until first Messiah should come. He would show also that Messiah would be born after the manner of mankind, and would nevertheless be the Son of the Living God. How beautiful, how simple is the entire statement from the standpoint of faith, yet how possible it is for the wisdom of this world to stumble over even such simple statements as these and to claim, as higher critics do, that this prophecy was wholly to the Jews of Isaiah's day and that the one of promise was King Hezekiah. Blessed are our eyes if they see and our ears if they hear the true meaning of this prophecy, and thus permit us to recognize in it the Messiah, the Sent of God, Immanuel, God with us, to be the great deliverer to accomplish for us all the wonderful things which God

has spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, confirming His promise made to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Continuing, the prophecy pictures the child grown to manhood and the government placed upon His shoulders—the responsibility falling upon Him as a royal mantle from the heavenly Emperor, Jehovah. The prophecy steps over the earthly trials and sufferings of our Redeemer, the Head, and of the Church, His body, throughout this Gospel Age; it ignores the names Beelzebub, prince of devils, man of sorrows, etc., and points us to the complete and glorified Messiah at His second advent, as viewed from the standpoint of Jehovah and from the standpoint from which ultimately the whole world shall recognize Him, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to Him to the glory of the Father. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God [or mighty Lord], Everlasting Father [or giver of everlasting life], the Prince of Peace."

SPECIAL NOTICES

ON TOUR.—Brother H. J. Shearn hopes to visit the following towns. Particulars of the meetings can be obtained through this office.

Rugby	Dec. 10
Birmingham	" 11
Market Bosworth	" 12
Burton-on-Trent	" 13
Wombwell	" 14
Dewsbury	" 15 16
Huddersfield	" 17

ANONYMOUS.—Our warm thanks are extended to the giver of 10s., sent anonymously for our use in the Master's work.

HOME-GATHERING.—The brethren at Letchworth offer a cordial welcome to a Home-Gathering in the Settlement, Nevells Road, Letchworth, on Sunday, 30th December. Meetings at 11 and 2 o'clock. A cup of tea will be provided between the meetings, but visitors are asked to bring their own food for lunch. A tea meal will be provided. Secretary, Mr. W. Bishop, Sherwood, Redhood's Way Letchworth, Herts.

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REPRINTS.—The whole seven volumes of reprints of old "Watch Towers" can be obtained for 10s. 6d. at the present time, carriage paid. Apply to W.T.B. & Tract Society, 34 Craven Terrace, London, W.2.

