

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

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OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

Jehovah is my Shepherd, is the Prophet's sentiment, and our Lord's explanation of the matter further is that the great Shepherd's Son has been given full charge of the sheep. (John x : 1—16.) Not all mankind, however, are sheep, or have the Shepherd's care. In the present time only those who have heard the Shepherd's voice and responded to His call to become His sheep are of His flock, and His word on the subject is that it is a little flock, to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure eventually to give the Kingdom in joint-heirship with His Son, their "Chief Shepherd." Then will come the time referred to by our Lord when "other sheep" will be found. The entire Millennial age, with all the forces and blessings of the heavenly kingdom, will be devoted to the finding of the other sheep. Our Lord's words are: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold [not of the little flock of this Gospel age]; them also I must bring [in due time to a knowledge of the Truth and to the full privileges of sheep], and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." (John x : 16.) Eventually all of God's creatures on various planes of being shall be recognised as one family of God, as it is written of our Lord, "In whom the whole family of God both in heaven and in earth are named." (Eph. iii : 15.) And again, "He shall gather together in one all things in Christ both in heaven and on earth." (Eph. i : 10.) However, though it may be interesting and helpful and profitable to understand something of our great Shepherd's generous plans for the future, our interest centres chiefly in the little flock of the present time, to which alone this lesson refers

in many of its particulars.

Doubtless, as the Prophet David penned this Psalm, his mind went back to his father's flock and to his own experience as its shepherd, concerning which we incidentally have the mention that while protecting it he slew a lion and a bear. Under heavenly inspiration the prophet pictures the Almighty One as the great caretaker watching over and protecting from harm all whom He recognises as His "sheep." Nothing can be farther from the sentiment of this prophecy and illustration than the growing prevalent sentiment which recognises Jehovah God as the shepherd and father of all mankind, and which is frequently voiced in the words, "Fatherhood of God, and brotherhood of man." This view ignores man's will and also ignores the Lord's Word, which declares that there are goats and wolves as well as sheep; that while some have become children of God, it is through faith and "adoption," and that many from the divine standpoint, so far from being recognised as children of God, are referred to as "of your father, the devil, for his works you do." (John viii : 44.) Originally our race, represented by father Adam in sinless perfection, was recognised as related to Jehovah, but the breaking of this relationship by man's wilful disobedience and departure from God is clearly acknowledged in the Scripture, so that none are recognised as sons of God to-day unless they have been begotten again, begotten from above. Nor is it our hope that any in the future will be recognised as sons of God or as sheep of the Lord's fold except as they shall heartily renounce sin, and, being

granted knowledge of divine grace, shall heartily accept the same and "follow on to know the Lord."

Applying the psalm to the little flock, all of its provisions fit most minutely. Because the Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want. Those who are proper sheep will submit their wills to the shepherd's will and trust wholly to His guidance, and so doing are relieved of that anxious craving so common to the children of the world and which is never satisfied, but the more it gets the more it wants. The Lord's sheep appreciate the heavenly things more than the earthly; they have given up every earthly interest in exchange for the heavenly, and, realising their own insufficiency and lack of judgment, they are trusting to the Lord to grant them such experiences, leadings, trials, difficulties, blessings, etc., in this present life as will be for their highest good, and as would work out for them a share of the glorious things of the future to which they have been called. The wants of this class are not of the kind after which the Gentiles seek, and for which they are anxious and strive.

Although the experiences of the Lord's sheep include many trials in the parched wilderness of sin, yet He graciously gives them restful experiences in oases of divine favour. These are not always accompanied with immunities from trial, as the world would view the matter, but certainly are seasons of rest and refreshment—to such an extent that the Lord's sheep may truthfully say that they have "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" ruling in their hearts, notwithstanding outward trials, difficulties, perplexities and adversities. Which of the Lord's sheep has not found such green pasturage of spiritual refreshment in his private devotions and studies of divine things? which of them has not experienced similar refreshment and rest and nourishment from the Master's provision that His sheep shall not forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is—for the study of the Word,

for prayer, for testimonies of the Lord's goodness and mercy? All these opportunities and privileges, whether personally experienced or whether they are yet only in the mind through the medium of the printed page, are provisions made for the sheep by the great Shepherd. Those sheep which find no enjoyment in such privileges and blessings and refreshments have reason to question their faithfulness in following the lead of the Shepherd. And those sheep which, finding such opportunities, decline to use them, thus give evidence of lack of harmony with the Shepherd's gracious intentions and wisdom.

The "still waters" are contrasted with the rushing torrent of the mountain slope—still, not in the sense of stagnancy, but rather smooth flowing. At the latter only could the sheep receive proper refreshment. The streams of truth and grace are living, but comparatively quiet, waters. As the Prophet intimates, these are not to be found by the sheep alone; to find them requires the leading of the Spirit. Let us give diligence to His voice, remembering His Word—that His sheep hear His voice and follow Him. Let us discriminate, discern His voice, with its truthful accent, so different from the voice of error. Strangers true sheep will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. They do not like its money ring, or its worldly ambition ring, or its priestcraft tone, or its contradiction of the spirit of the divine message and method.

"He restoreth my soul." The prophet does not refer to a restoration of body or of physical health, but a restoration of soul, being. Some of the Lord's most precious saints have been weary and faint and troubled—even the dear Redeemer fainted under His cross, and was neither kept whole or made whole miraculously on the occasion. The application of the Prophet's words to the Christian experience would make these experiences, called restoring of soul or being, to correspond with our justification to

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life. All our lives were forfeited under the divine sentence, and by faith a complete restitution or restoration of soul is granted to the believer, that he might have something to offer in sacrifice to the Lord, "holy, acceptable" (Rom. xii: 1), and that in this sacrifice service he may walk in the footsteps of the great Shepherd who lay down His life for the sheep. Thus are the true sheep led in right paths, in proper paths, advantageous to their spiritual development, though frequently trying and difficult to them according to the flesh. This favour and blessing and opportunity comes to them not for their own sakes or worthiness, but through the Lord's grace—"for His name's sake."

The whole world is walking in the valley of the shadow of death. Mountain tops of life, of affection, were left by the race six thousand years ago, when Father Adam fell from his harmony with God to the plane of sin and death. The valley of sin carries with it the shadow of death, the penalty of sin. In the broad road the whole human family still walks; and even though the Shepherd leads His flock upward, and in the reverse direction from the course of the world, nevertheless, according to the flesh, they are still in the world, in this valley of the shadow of death. However, the true sheep, hearing the voice of the good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, have learned to be neither careless and indifferent as are some, nor to be in fear and doubt and perplexity as are the majority. These, on the contrary, fear no evil. The sheep of the little flock fear no evil because of the Lord's favour, because He is with them, on their side, and has shown His favour in the redemption price already paid. He is with them, too, in His word of promise—His assurance that death shall not mean extinction of life, but merely, until the resurrection, an undisturbed sleep in Jesus. What wonder that these can walk through the valley of the shadow of death singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord, calling

upon their souls with all that is within them to praise and laud and magnify His great and holy name, who loved us and bought us with His precious blood, and has called us to joint-heirship with our dear Redeemer.

"His rod and His staff, they comfort me." As the Shepherd's crook was used to assist the sheep out of difficulties, to defend it from its too powerful enemies and to chasten it when inattentive, and as all of these uses of the rod were for the sheep's interest and welfare, so with the Lord's little flock and their Shepherd and His rod of help, defence and chastisement. The true sheep learn to love the providences of the Shepherd and are comforted by them. Knowing the Shepherd's power and his watchful care, they realise that all things are working together for good to them because they are his sheep. Why should they not be comforted, strengthened, encouraged by the generous, bountiful supply of divine Truth which the Lord Himself is dispensing to the household of faith, "things new and old," but all of them pure, sweet, delicious, grand. This table is open to all those who love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength—better than they love houses or lands, parents or children, husband or wife, lodge or society or sectarian system or self.

Is it strange that those so highly favoured of the Lord and recognised as His guests and fed at His table should be hated by enemies? It would seem strange to us if it were not for the assurance of the Master Himself, that whosoever will live godly will suffer persecution in this present time, and for the illustration of this in the Master's own experience, that it was the professedly godly, influential, great and nominally religious that persecuted him to death. We are not surprised, then, to find that our table is spread in the midst of enemies that now surround us on every hand.

The anointing of the head of the guest with oil was a part of the

hospitality of olden times. The anti-type of this with us is the outpouring of the holy Spirit upon all this class—this little flock, the body of Christ, of which He is the Head, Chief, the Shepherd, the Leader.

The fulness of the cup, running over, has a double significance. It is a cup of joy and a cup of sorrow, and in both respects it overflows. He who would partake of the joys of the Lord must also partake of His cup of suffering; we must suffer with Him if we would reign with Him. But we count the sufferings of this present time as not worthy to be compared with the glories that shall be revealed in us, and hence we are enabled to rejoice in tribulation, so that as the tribulations will overflow the rejoicing likewise overflows, and with the Apostle we can say, Rejoice, and again I say rejoice!

The goodness and mercy which we anticipate beyond the veil has its beginning here already and is thus to be appreciated. Whoever knows nothing of the joys of the Lord in the present time will evidently not be prepared for the joys of the Lord in the

Kingdom, whatever blessings and joys He may attain to under the administration of the Kingdom during the Millennial age. There is then joy and rejoicing granted to the Lord's faithful ones, not a momentary matter connected with their first acceptance of the Lord and their consecration of themselves to Him. The goodness and mercy of the Lord is not to be looked back to as a thing of the remote past, but is to be recognised and appreciated as a thing of the present. Day by day God's goodness and mercy follow us, refresh us, strengthen us, bless us.

The highest hope to which we dare aspire is that of final union with our great Shepherd, our heavenly Father, and the good Shepherd His Son, in the heavenly state, in our Father's house on high, one mansion or plane of which is intended for the little flock, separate and distinct from the mansion or plane provided for the restitution class of the Millennial age. The end of all our highest ambitions will be attained, and far more than realised, when we shall be like our Lord, see Him as He is, and share His glory in the Father's house.

SPECIAL NOTICES

A HAPPY NEW YEAR! To the Lord's dear ones, who have fled from the voice of all strangers, and are resting quietly and contentedly in His tender care, we send our love, and wish them every joy and abiding peace amidst all the varied experiences of this life.

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 extend our sincere thanks to the giver of 10s., sent anonymously for our use in the work of the Master.

POCKET MANNAS.—Cloth bound, 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, is now available. It is published by "Dawn Publishers" Brooklyn, and the price is 10d. (less for quantities). Please send your orders to us.

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.

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.

"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."—Ezek. 33:33.

"PERILOUS TIMES AT HAND

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."—2 Tim. 3:1.

"Realizing that we are now living in the very times referred to by the Apostle, some may inquire, How can this be? Are not these times, in comparison with times past, especially favorable to the prosperity of the Church? Time was when fire and sword and guillotine and rack were systematically employed to exterminate the true saints of God, when the Word of God was a book prohibited, and when the prison and the dungeon rewarded the faithful searching of the Scriptures. And is there not also more Truth due and understood now than formerly, as well as full liberty (if a man is pleased to exercise it) to believe and teach, either in private or public, whatever he believes to be Truth?

"Yes, such are the favorable conditions of our day. Never, in all the history of the Church, has there been a day of such privilege and blessing—such increase of knowledge and general intelligence, such facilities for the general diffusion of knowledge and such breadth of individual liberty—of conscience, of speech and of action—as today. The spirit of liberty is abroad in the earth, and though the wily enemies that once fettered and handcuffed and imprisoned it still live, and would fain imprison it as before, they regretfully realize that the soaring eagle is on the wing and may never be pinioned again. But hand in hand with all these advantages, strange to say, comes the Church's greatest peril. True, there is little peril to physical life, or earthly property; but these, to the true saints, are of minor importance, for they count not their earthly life dear unto them if by any means they may attain the divine nature and glory to which they are called.

"The peril of these times is to the spiritual nature of the saints and to their valuable inheritance in the exceeding great and precious promises of God, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Subtle influences are now at work seeking to dwarf and extinguish the spiritual life and to rob the saints of their glorious hope, to sap stealthily the very foundations of Christianity, and thus effectually to overthrow the whole superstructure of the Christian faith in the minds of many, causing them thus to stumble and lose their glorious inheritance as joint-heirs with Christ.

"The present besetments, being of this subtle character, are the more calculated to delude and ensnare, so that if one allows himself to be for a moment off his guard, the agencies of the Adversary will gain an advantage and use it to entrap the unwary one. And God will permit such snares because only those who are loyal and faithful, and therefore ever watchful, are counted *worthy to escape* their strong delusion. 'Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.'—Luke 21:36.

"MANNER OF APPROACH OF THESE TIMES

"The Apostle forewarns the Church, not only of the certainty of such perils, and of their character, but also of their manner of approach. On one occasion he said, 'For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. (Such were the great and destructive papal powers.) Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.' (Acts 20:29, 30.) Some of these Paul and the early Church encountered in their day.

"Paul was often in peril amongst false brethren who, concerning the faith, had made shipwreck, and who greatly withstood his words—his efforts to build up the Church in the most holy faith. (2 Cor. 11:26; 1 Tim. 1:19; 2 Tim. 4:14-17.) And he shows that from such false brethren, brethren who have erred from the Truth and become teachers of false doctrine, will come the Church's greatest peril in these last times. (2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3:5.) And in order that we might recognize

and beware of them, he very minutely described them, though the clear significance of the warning is somewhat beclouded by a faulty translation, which reads as follows:

“‘For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, * truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.’

“The description as here translated, the reader will observe, is incongruous; for men of such villainous character could have no form of godliness. Read the description again and consider, How could a proud, covetous, boastful blasphemer, a truce-breaker, a false accuser, incontinent and fierce, a despiser of those that are good, a heady, high-minded, pleasure-loving traitor, have any form of godliness whatever, or deceive any one in this respect? Such a fierce character and bold blasphemer could not possibly palm himself off as a child of God; nor would he attempt it. The fact is that our translators did not fully comprehend the Apostle’s language, and in rendering it into English they put the heaviest possible construction upon the Greek words, and thus the picture of these persons is overdrawn. Thus, for instance, the Greek word here rendered ‘blasphemers’ (V. 3) is *blasphemos*, which signifies *one speaking injuriously, or an evil-speaker*.

“Now, judging merely by the word, regardless of the context, we would not know whether in this instance the evil-speaking is carried to the extent of revilings or not; but as it stands related to the context—in view of the after statement that these have a form of godliness (V. 5), though lacking its real power—we must conclude that those milder or more subtle forms of evil-speaking, which would be consistent with hypocritical forms of godliness, are here referred to, and therefore that our English word *blaspheme*, though it means evil-speaking, is too strong a term by which here to translate the Greek word *blasphemos*; for the full and generally understood significance of the English word *blaspheme* is—‘To speak of the Supreme Being in terms of impious irreverence, to revile or speak reproachfully of God, Christ, or the holy Spirit—to speak wickedly of, to utter abuse or calumny against, to speak reproachfully of.’—*Webster*.

“So also the word *apeithes* rendered ‘disobedient,’ signifies *not persuaded*; and the expression ‘disobedient to parents’ would consequently signify *not of the same persuasion, or not of the same mind as were the parents*. The word *anosios*, rendered ‘unholy,’ which signifies *unkind, or unholy*, would likewise, in view of the context, be better rendered by the milder English term, *unkind*. The word *aspondos* rendered ‘truce-breakers’ (V. 3), signifies *irreconcilable or implacable*—i. e. stubborn or constant in enmity. The word *akrates*, rendered ‘incontinent,’ signifies more properly, *without strength, or without self-control*. Though this thought is also in the English word ‘incontinent,’ a coarser meaning generally attaches to the word. The word *anemeros*, rendered ‘fierce,’ signifies *not mild, savage*. That is, it may be a great or a small lack of mildness, amounting in some cases to savage bitterness. But, again, the fierce or savage idea is not compatible with any pretensions to godliness, as intimated in verse 5. The word *aphilagathos*, rendered ‘despisers of those that are good,’ would thus be better rendered *not friendly to the good*.

“Thus revised, the Apostle’s language reads as follows:—‘For men shall be lovers of their own selves (selfish), covetous, boasters, proud, evil-speakers, not of the same mind as were their forefathers (i. e., devisers of new doctrines), unthankful, unkind, irreconcilable, false accusers, without self-control, not mild, not friendly to those that are good—traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (i. e., preferring their own will or pleasure to the will or pleasure of God); having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.’

“‘MEN OF YOUR OWN SELVES SHALL ARISE SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS’

“It should be observed also that the word *men*, in verse 2, is emphatic in the Greek text, as shown in the *Emphatic Diaglott*, thus indicating that a particular class of men is here referred to, which, according to the description, can be none other than those mentioned in Acts 20:29, 30, viz., men ‘of your own selves (men of your own company, men whom you have hitherto regarded as members of the Body of Christ, and who

*The Siniatic, the oldest and most reliable MS., omits the words, “Without natural affection,” they being no part of the original text.

still claim to be such), who shall arise speaking perverse things (perverting the Truth.

"But why, you ask, should any one who had once received the Truth desire to pervert it? The Apostle answers that their object is) to draw away disciples after them.' And for this purpose, of leading away disciples after them, they keep up the form of godliness, although they deny its power—the only power by means of which any of the fallen race can be reckoned godly or righteous in God's sight, viz., the power of the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth us from all sin, as long as we appreciate and accept this salvation through faith in his blood.

"Well may we inquire, as we realize that we are living in the last days here referred to, Is there such a class of enemies to the Truth and to the Church actually in existence today? Truly, the voice of prophecy has never set up a false alarm, or foretold an uncertain event. The perilous times have come and the foretold perils are all about us. Side by side in the same communities with the humble, faithful, consecrated saints—in the same little assemblings together of those who have escaped from the bondage of Babylon, in the same households, and often at the same table of the Lord, there has also been developing a class who are 'lovers of their own selves (selfish), covetous (of honors and distinction and the praise of men—ambitious), boasters (as though the credit of the Truth now due and received were in some way due to them, and as though they had a right therefore to alter and amend it at their pleasure), proud' (of that knowledge which should be received with only humility and thankfulness, and which can be retained only under these conditions).

"Because the light of the newly unfolding Truth has dawned upon their pathway, they, in common with the faithful saints, no longer are of the same mind as were their parents; but the goodness of God thus manifested to them, instead of cultivating in them a spirit of thankfulness and co-operation, which is its design, seems to arouse a spirit of pride and ambition, which does not long hesitate to make merchandise of the Truth for ambitious ends, however trivial and foolish these ends may be. And in pursuance of the ambitious policy, by degrees they become 'evil-speakers (against the doctrine of Christ and those who believe and teach it), unkind, unfriendly to those that are good (who hold fast the Truth in righteousness), and false accusers' (of such). As they proceed in this way they seem to lose all former strength of Christian character. They become irreconcilable to the Truth, so that neither Scripture, nor reason, nor the example of the faithful, has power to restore them. Loving their own wills more than the will of God, they grow more and more proud and boastful of their attainments—high-minded and heady. Not submitting themselves to the Head of the Body, Christ Jesus, they are ambitious to head new factions themselves, and thus they turn traitors to the Truth.

"They claim, too, to be very earnest students of the Word of God; and so they are, but they never come to a knowledge of the Truth. They are after something new, some new and peculiar 'find' in the mine of God that will attract the wondering gaze of many curious disciples. But, alas for their purposes! There are no such real curiosities in the blessed Word of God; but the zeal of these ambitious ones is equal to the emergency, and one after another the actual truths are beclouded, distorted and perverted to this ignoble end and presented as newly-found truths. And the unwary receive them as such, not recognizing at first that they are subversive of the entire system of Divine Truth. Thus their faith in the truths already learned is unwittingly undermined; they are caught in the snare of the Enemy; and as they continue to give ear to these seductive influences they become more and more entangled, until, having lost their anchorage, they find themselves adrift on a vast sea of unbelief, floating they know not whither. Like their leaders, they may retain the form of godliness, but have lost its power.

"THEIR POLICIES SHALL BE VERY SEDUCTIVE

"But there is another feature of the description of these false teachers, whose ambitions place so many perils in the pathway of the saints, which should not be overlooked. Verses 6 and 8 describe, or rather illustrate, the manner in which the influence of such teachers will be brought to bear upon the Church. Their opposition is not expressed in bold, defiant terms, and emphasized and enforced with vehemency. As here intimated, their policy is crafty, deceitful, sly, under pretensions of godliness, love of truth and zeal for the truth. Their influence will be exerted somewhat after the manner of a vile class mentioned in verse 6, who 'creep into houses and lead captive silly women, laden with sin, and led away by various inordinate desires.' Not that such will be the actual immoral character of these teachers, but that their policy will be similarly seductive.

"Their actual course is more particularly described in verse 8 thus: 'Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth—men of corrupt minds (corrupted or turned aside from the Truth), reprobate concerning the faith.' Thus we are shown that the opposition to the Truth will be manifested in a subtle,

deceptive course similar to that of those opposers of Moses. They opposed Moses by doing something similar to what he did, thus confusing the people. God had given Moses power to do certain miracles in order to prove to Israel that Moses was his Divinely empowered agent. And Satan forthwith empowered his agents to duplicate those miracles, which they did to some extent, not perfectly, thus endeavoring to confuse the people and unsettle their confidence in Moses and his leading and teaching.

"Just so it is today. The studied effort of false teachers—false brethren developing in the very midst of the Church—is to offset the Truth by plausible forms of error, to unsettle confidence both in the Truth and in all teachers of the Truth, thus to lead away disciples after them and their theories. And in consequence of the allurements of these false teachers, and of the unfaithfulness of many to the love and service of the Truth which they have received, a class in the midst of the Church will give much encouragement to the ambitions of these false brethren; 'for,' says the Apostle (2 Tim. 4:3, 4), 'the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own desires (desires for something new) shall they gather to themselves teachers, having itching ears (for new and strange things); and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables.'

"Nor will this class be only a small minority; for, in order that the faithful may not be discouraged when brought face to face with these things, they are forewarned (Psa. 91:7) that before this conflict ends, a thousand shall fall at their side and ten thousand at their right hand. Thus, realizing that God foreknew it all and that the accomplishment of his glorious purposes is not in the least endangered thereby, they may still have confidence and joy in view of the glorious consummation of his Plan, and of their promised position in it.

"FROM SUCH TURN AWAY"

"But how shall the faithful believers act towards these false brethren in their midst? Shall they take them by the hand, as formerly, and bid them God speed? Shall they recognize them as brethren in Christ? Are they owned of God as sons? Shall we indeed walk with them and be guiltless? What does the Apostle say we shall do? He says, 'From such turn away.' (V. 5.) 'Be not ye partakers with them; for ye were formerly darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' (Eph. 5:6-11.) And the Apostle John (2 John 11) emphasizes Paul's counsel, saying, 'If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds.'

"Such 'evil men,' says Paul (V. 13), 'shall wax worse and worse (more and more bold and aggressive as they receive encouragement from that rapidly increasing class who will no longer endure sound doctrine), deceiving (others) and being deceived' (themselves—becoming more firmly intrenched in the snares of their own weaving, so as to make it impossible to extricate them). But, nevertheless, the time is coming when they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifested unto all men, as was the folly of Jannes and Jambres, who could not forever withstand the teachings of Moses, the servant of God.—V. 9.

"Then Paul proceeds to call attention to the ground of Timothy's confidence in himself as a faithful teacher of Divine Truth, saying, 'But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me.'—Vs. 10, 11.

"Such are always the marks of a true teacher. His doctrine will be that which the most thorough investigation of the Scriptures most clearly proves and establishes beyond all peradventure. His manner of life will be consistent both with his faith and with his consecration to the Lord. His purpose will be the building up of the Church in the most holy faith. His faith will be positive and clear—not mere guesswork, but knowledge based upon the sure Word of God, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. And his great love for the Church will be manifest, as was Paul's, and as was Moses' love for Israel, by long-suffering, patience and meek endurance of persecution, both from an opposing world and from false brethren arising in the midst of God's people. And in such persecutions no true teacher will be lacking; for 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' (V. 12.) Such has been the experience of every true teacher that God has ever raised up to deliver and guide his people. Witness Noah, Moses, Paul and Luther.

"But, Beloved, our advice to you in these perilous times, when error is taking on its most baneful and deceitful forms, and when it is finding its most active agents amongst false brethren and sisters in your very midst, and when fidelity to the Truth, therefore, occasions the severing of some of the tenderest social ties you have ever known, even amongst those with whom you once held sweet converse as you walked

together to the house of God—yes, in these times let us again urge the counsel of Paul—‘Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them’; for it is written (John 6:45), ‘They shall be all taught of God.’ Whoever the human agent may be that God has made use of to bring you to a knowledge of the truth, he was simply an index finger to help you trace it for yourself on the sacred page; and in humility and faithfulness he made no greater claim than this, assuring you that the holy Scriptures to which he ever and continually pointed are indeed ‘able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus’; and that ‘all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’

“THE PRECIOUS TRUTH IS GOD’S MESSAGE

“Therefore, dearly beloved, what you have learned concerning God’s glorious Plan of the Ages, and concerning your privileged place in that Plan, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, his Son, and concerning the conditions upon which you hold this precious promise and may finally realize it, and concerning that great foundation doctrine of our redemption from sin and death through the precious blood of ‘the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all,’ upon which fact rests the whole superstructure of the wondrous and glorious Plan, *hold fast* these things, knowing of whom you have learned them. This precious Truth is God’s message to you, not man’s. No such high and glorious hope could ever have entered the mind of mortal man had not God revealed it by his Spirit, as he has done through faith in his Word, in his own due time. It is all in that Word. Search and see for yourselves; and be not faithless but believing. It comes not to you on the miserable authority of vain imagination, or dreams, or doubtful visions, but on the authority of God’s most holy and authentic Word. True, it is almost too good to believe, but is it not just like our God? Does it not gloriously illustrate the breadth of his mighty mind, the scope of his marvelous wisdom and power, and the depth of his love and grace?

“Continue, therefore, in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of (having proved them yourselves from the Scriptures), and be not of them who turn away their ears from the Truth and are turned unto fables. And observing those who have a form of godliness, but who, nevertheless, by their false teachings deny the power thereof, ‘*from such turn away,*’ and ‘have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.’

“We cannot serve two masters; we cannot espouse the cause of Truth and the cause of error as well; nor can we retain the friendship of God and of the advocates of error also. Who is on the Lord’s side? Let them rally around the Lord’s standard. All told, they will be only a ‘little flock.’ Like Gideon’s band, the company now gathered by the proclamation of the harvest-message of Truth must be tested and sifted until only the loyal, faithful, true-hearted, brave and valiant soldiers of the cross remain; and to these, though their numbers be small, will the laurels of victory belong when Truth and righteousness finally prevail. Let no man boast of numbers now when the highest interests of the elect of God are all bound up with the faithful few, to whom it will be the Father’s good pleasure to give the Kingdom.

“‘Count me the swords that have come.’

‘Lord, thousands on thousands are ready.’

‘Lo, these are too many, and with them are some

Whose hearts and whose hands are not steady.

He whose heart does not burn,

Let him take up his tent and return.’

“‘Count me the swords that remain.’

‘Lord, hundreds on hundreds are daring.’

‘These yet are too many for me to attain

To the victory I am preparing.

Lead them down to the brink

Of the waters of Marah to drink.’

“‘Lord, those who remain are but few.

And the hosts of the foe are appalling,

And what can a handful such as we do?’

‘When ye hear from beyond my voice calling

Sound the trump! Hold the light!

Great Midian will melt in your sight.’”

"AND WHEN THIS COMETH TO PASS, (LO, IT WILL COME.)
THEN SHALL THEY KNOW THAT A PROPHET HATH
BEEN AMONG THEM."—Ezek. 33:33.

Brother Russell made no claim to being a prophet in the sense of being a foreteller of future events. He was used by the Lord chiefly as an expounder of prophecy and as the messenger to announce His Second Advent, and to serve as His "wise and faithful servant" to bring from the store-house and set before the household of faith "their portion of meat in due season," according to His promise of Luke 12:37. However, the foregoing article, written away back in 1891, and reprinted in 1910, describes conditions which have arisen amongst some of those who were once enlightened by the Truth as clearly as though written in 1934. Whatever may have been the condition in the Church in 1891 that caused the article to be written, surely no condition existing at any time during Brother Russell's ministry could have fulfilled every item of the description so completely as do the conditions which have developed since his death. The Lord alone knew just what conditions would develop after He would call His wise and faithful servant home, and He caused him to depict those conditions clearly so that all those who love the Truth might be forewarned and be able to recognize these false teachers and escape this "snare of the Fowler." Every one who loves the Truth and the Lord who gave it is urged to study this article very carefully and note how clearly it describes the condition which has developed in the Society which Brother Russell organized and used in carrying on the work which the Lord had given him to do. Let us briefly review a few of the points made:—

Brother Russell says, "The peril of these times is to the spiritual nature of the saints and to their valuable inheritance in the exceeding great and precious promises of God, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Subtle influences are now at work seeking to dwarf and extinguish the spiritual life and to rob the saints of their glorious hope, to sap stealthily the very foundations of Christianity, and thus effectually overthrow the whole superstructure of the Christian faith in the minds of many, causing them thus to stumble and lose their glorious inheritance as joint-heirs with Christ." This statement might seem at first glance not to be at all applicable to those at the head of the W. T. B. & T. Society, as they claim that it is "God's Organization," and that they are "Jehovah's Witnesses." But let us see whether Brother Russell's words apply to those now at the head of the business organization (See Z. '91, Nov.; '94, 330; '95, 181) which he formed and used in carrying on the work which "the Lord of the harvest" had appointed him to do. As the ransom-sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ is the "foundation of Christianity," as the Scriptures so clearly teach, and as Brother Russell so firmly and faithfully maintained, then anything that in any degree sets the ransom aside surely does "overthrow the whole superstructure of the Christian faith." What is the attitude of those now at the head of the W. T. B. & T. Society toward the ransom? We are told in Z. '30, 196, that the ransom is *not* the greatest doctrine, and in keeping with this theory, they consign to membership in "the Devil's Organization" and "the Man of Sin" all who oppose their contradictions of what Brother Russell taught, regardless of their faith in the merit of the precious blood. They thus exalt themselves and their human organization (which its founder said was "purely a business association"), above the ransom, and place loyalty to them and to their Society as of much more importance than loyalty to the ransom-sacrifice of Christ Jesus. What a God-dishonoring teaching to be held by those who proclaim themselves to be "Jehovah's Witnesses"!

"Side by side in the same communities with the humble, faithful, consecrated saints—in the same little assemblings together of those who have escaped from the bondage of Babylon, in the same households, and often at the same table of the Lord, there has been developing a class who are 'lovers of their own selves (selfish), covetous (of honors and distinction and the praise of men—ambitious), boasters (as though the credit of the Truth now due and received were in some way due to them, and as though they had a right therefore to alter and amend it at their pleasure), proud' (of that knowledge which should be received with only humility and thankfulness, and which can be retained only under these conditions). . . . The goodness of God thus manifested to them, instead of cultivating in them a spirit of thankfulness and co-operation, which is its design, seems to arouse a spirit of pride and ambition, which does not long hesitate to make merchandise of the Truth for ambitious ends, however trivial and foolish those ends may be. And in pursuance of the ambitious policy, by degrees they become 'evil-speakers (against the doctrine of Christ and those who believe and teach it), unkind, unfriendly to those that are good (who hold fast the Truth in righteousness), and false accusers (of such). As they proceed in this way they seem to lose all former strength of Christian character.

They become irreconcilable to the Truth, so that neither Scripture, nor reason, nor the example of the faithful, has power to restore them. Loving their own wills more than the will of God, they grow more and more proud and boastful of their attainments—high-minded and heady. Not submitting themselves to the Head of the Body, Christ Jesus, they are ambitious to head new factions themselves, and thus they turn traitors to the Truth."

How clearly we can see that these predictions of Brother Russell are being fulfilled in every particular! These false teachers *developed in the very midst of the Church*, have dared to *alter and amend the Truth* which the Lord has sent to suit their perverted ideas. We see that *the doctrine of Christ, the Ransom*, has been supplanted by loyalty to a human organization. We see that these false teachers are *not friendly* to those who hold firmly to the *doctrine of Christ* and to the message of Truth which our Lord has sent us through Brother Russell, the servant whom He chose to "*write the vision and make it plain*," but speak evil of these, classing them as belonging to the Devil's organization. We see that they have *made merchandise of the Truth*, and the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, which so clearly set forth the Divine Plan of the Ages, are set aside, and their own perverted and distorted views, filling *many volumes*, are substituted and zealously sold by their followers, who, like their leaders, have "*turned away their ears from the Truth*." We find a good illustration of this "merchandising" spirit in the case of the Manna book. Brother Russell says of the book, "*It will last a lifetime, and can be used year after year, for the sacred message never grows old*." This, however, did not suit the "merchandising" spirit of these ambitious leaders, so the Manna is set aside and a "Year-book" published, and now their devoted flock can be "*fleeced*" the price of a book each year instead of using the same book year after year as we do with the Manna. What a contrast between the generous, loving, zealous spirit of Brother Russell toward the Lord, the Truth and the Brethren and the ambitious, "*merchandising*" spirit of these false brethren who have arisen in the very midst of the Church, and whose ambitions have placed so many perils in the pathway of the Lord's people!

Brother Russell says. "They claim to be very earnest students of the Word of God, and so they are, but they never come to a knowledge of the Truth. They are after something new, some new and peculiar 'find' in the mine of God that will attract the wondering gaze of many curious disciples. But, alas for their purposes! There are no such real curiosities in the blessed Word of God; but the zeal of these ambitious ones is equal to the emergency, and one after another the actual truths are beclouded, distorted and perverted to this ignoble end and presented as newly-found truths." *How could* these ambitious leaders ever come to a knowledge of the Truth? They are led by *supposed* flashes of lightning from the temple (See Z. '28, 259-265), and they do not know what the next "flash" will reveal. It may be that what they had accepted as a well-established truth, may be shown by the next "flash" to be gross error. So it is *utterly impossible* for those who are thus led to ever come to a knowledge of the Truth, for they do not know whether what they have is Truth or Error.

We find a striking example of the lack of knowledge as to *what is Truth* in the case of The Finished Mystery. It was loudly proclaimed to be the long-looked-for Seventh Volume, and that all must accept it if they would be of the Elijah class. It was the *penny* which the Lord had provided to be given to the faithful laborers in His vineyard at the close of the day. But what has happened The Finished Mystery? Oh, a "flash of lightning from the temple" revealed that the "penny" was a counterfeit; and to now contend for the book so highly praised by its publishers, would be sufficient evidence to them that such a one did *not* belong to the Elijah or Elisha class; and The Finished Mystery, along with the writings of Brother Russell, has been consigned to the junk-pile. How strange that any who "were once enlightened" could fail to see that such is not God's method of revealing His Truth!

We will quote a few lines from Brother Russell's pen which shows a more reasonable way:—"During the last six or seven years, the Lord has been leading us, his people, in a very remarkable manner. As we look backward we can see that our pathway has been as a 'shining light . . . shining more and more.' It has been *progressive*, bringing us strength with 'meat in due season.' It has caused us to grow both in *grace and knowledge* and this growth, taken in connection with the fact that we are not obliged to look back and now call *darkness* what was then called by some of the brethren, 'a great flood of light,' is the very strongest grounds for confidence that the same Lord who then supplied us *light* from the Word, is still providing of the same kind. We say then, 'Cast not away your confidence' in *our Leader*, 'the great Shepherd of the sheep.'

"If we were following *a man*, undoubtedly it would be different with us; undoubtedly one human idea would contradict another and that which was light

one or two or six years ago would be regarded as darkness now: But with God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, and so it is with *truth*; any knowledge or light coming from God must be like its author. A new view of truth never can contradict a former truth. '*New light*' never extinguishes older '*light*,' but adds to it. If you were lighting up a building containing seven gas jets you would not extinguish one every time you lighted another, but would add one light to another and they would be in harmony and thus give increase of light: So is it with the light of truth; the true increase is by adding to, not by substituting one for another."—Reprints 188.

Those who follow the Lord by giving heed to His message sent to His faithful people through His servant can be *established in the Truth* even though the light increases, because the *new light* does not extinguish the light formerly received. But, as Brother Russell has so clearly pointed out, *if we were following a man*, it would be impossible to become *established*, because the *supposed* new light extinguishes the old. Every one who is familiar with what has been published by the W. T. B. & T. Society (and others as well) since the death of Brother Russell, surely should have had ample evidence in the contradictory "flashes of lightning from the temple," that instead of being Divine Truth, these "flashes" were simply *men's ideas*, and in no sense a Message from the Lord.

Brother Russell continues:—"But there is another feature of the description of these false teachers, whose ambitions place so many perils in the pathway of the saints, which should not be overlooked. Verses 6 and 8 describe, or rather illustrate, the *manner* in which the influence of such teachers will be brought to bear upon the Church. Their opposition is not expressed in bold, defiant terms, and emphasized and enforced with vehemency. As here intimated, their policy is crafty, deceitful, sly, under pretensions of godliness, love of truth and zeal for the truth. . . . Their actual course is more particularly described in verse 8 thus: 'Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth—men of corrupt minds (corrupted or turned aside from the Truth) reprobate concerning the faith.' Thus we are shown that the opposition to the Truth will be manifested in a subtle, deceptive course similar to that of those opposers of Moses. They opposed Moses by doing something similar to what he did, thus confusing the people."

BROTHER RUSSELL'S EARNEST EXHORTATION

"Beloved, our advice to you in these perilous times, when error is taking on its most baneful and deceitful forms, and when it is finding its most active agents amongst false brethren and sisters in your very midst, and when fidelity to the Truth, therefore, occasions the severing of some of the tenderest social ties you have ever known, even amongst those with whom you once held sweet converse as you walked together to the house of God—yes, in these times let us again urge the counsel of Paul—'Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.'"

WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

"We cannot serve two masters; we cannot espouse the cause of Truth and the cause of error as well; nor can we retain the friendship of God and the advocates of error also. Who is on the Lord's side? Let them rally around the Lord's standard. All told, they will be only a 'little flock.' Like Gideon's band, the company now gathered by the proclamation of the harvest-message of Truth must be tested and sifted until only the loyal, faithful, true-hearted, brave and valiant soldiers of the cross remain, and to these, though their numbers be small, will the laurels of victory belong when Truth and righteousness finally prevail."

Yes, the "testing and sifting" predicted is going on, and while those at the head of the W. T. B. & T. Society have been the most prominent in the work, as so clearly pointed out in the foregoing article, there are many others also engaged in the work of killing faith in the Lord's message and in His messenger. On another anniversary of the passing beyond the veil of "that Servant," we are glad to call the attention of all those who have retained any love for the message which our Lord has sent us through him, to his faithful warning to the Lord's people.

1323 Goebel Street,
Pittsburgh (12), Pa.,
October 31st, 1934.

Yours in the Master's service,

R. H. BRICKER.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

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OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

THE PURPOSE OF OUR TRIALS

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

—James i : 12.

The word *blessed* in this text may be understood to signify the condition of one in the favour of God. The state of such will be a happy one, a desirable one. The word *blessed* does not, of course, always suggest a happy condition as related to the feelings, or emotions, but rather as relates to the outcome. It is used here in connection with the results of trial to the Christian. The child of God who wins the crown of life will be very highly favoured or blessed of God; then whatever conduces to this end is a very great blessing, even though it cause much pain to the flesh.

Who will gain this crown of life? Of what character will he be? The Scriptures declare that it will be that man or that woman who endures temptation, trial. What is signified by *enduring* temptation? Evidently the thought is not the enduring of one temptation for one time or for many times. Even the world must endure trials. The reference is to the retaining permanently of the attitude of *patient* endurance and faithfulness when tempted, of remaining true to God under temptation and stress. Temptations come from a variety of sources. They may come from friends, who may tempt us to live a life of more or less self-indulgence, to relax in a measure our fidelity to the Lord. The enticements of wealth or worldly society, a natural love of ease and disinclination of the flesh to endure hardness—any or all of these may prove strong and subtle temptations to the Christian.

But if we love the Lord supremely, that love will become the chief impulse of our lives. Our one aim will be that we may glorify God in our

spirit and in our body. We know that there are things which are displeasing to God, and if we love Him we will seek to keep His commandments. The child of God might fail once, or he might fail repeatedly along the same line, until in deep humiliation and anguish of soul because of his continued manifestation of the same weakness, he would be led to cry out with strong crying and tears to the Lord; and his pain and distress of heart might so impress upon him his need of greater watchfulness along that line that he would become strengthened for further attacks of the same nature, and thus be enabled to gain the victory over his besetment, his special weakness.

While we shall never reach the point of perfection in the flesh, nevertheless this power to endure temptation should become more marked day by day, as the New Creature remains loyal, still resisting and striving still harder to resist and be true to the Lord in thought and word and deed. Blessed is the man who shall endure—time after time, day after day—thus proving his faithfulness and obedience to God. For when that man is tried, when the trial time is over, when God has seen that he has demonstrated fully his loyalty, then, when God's "due time" has come, that tried and proven one shall receive the crown of life.

The expression, "the crown of life," is another way of saying the *reward* of life; and this life is on the highest plane. The Apostle Paul speaks of this same crown as the "crown of righteousness." The Apostle Peter calls it the "crown of glory." It is the crown of *righteousness* because it is the reward that comes as the result of

righteousness, of obedience to God and the principles of His Government, of faithfulness to our covenant. It is the crown of *glory* because it is the reward which brings glory, honour, immortality.

In the Grecian games certain rewards were given to those who endured successfully the trial of their skill, of their prowess and of their physical endurance. The reward given was usually a crown or wreath of laurel. That crown was valuable, not so much in itself, but especially as an outward token of appreciation of superior merit. The fact that it was evergreen would suggest to the Christian that our reward as "overcomers" will be a lasting reward, an eternal reward.

The Lord is to give us life in fullest measure. The penalty that came upon our race because of sin was death; but now there is an opportunity to regain life—life in perfection, untainted, unending. This life is in the Son of God. At the present time life can be gained only by being begotten to the spirit nature. The crown of life, to be given to the "more than conquerors," is a very special kind of life—immortality, the highest form of life possible, the crown, or pinnacle, of all life. This is to be the reward of the class called in Scripture the Bride of Christ, when they shall have demonstrated their faithfulness, when they shall have been proven worthy to be members of that exalted class.

There will be a crown of life in the *next* Age—perfect human life—as the result of obedience to the tests and trials of that time. These tests will differ in many respects from the trials and difficulties of the Church at the present time. They will be much less crucial; for then temptations to sin from without will be removed, and bodily and mental uplifting and assistance granted, which will make their trial a more favourable one. Righteousness, too, will immediately be rewarded in that Day, and sin and disobedience of every kind will be promptly punished. But now righteousness often brings suffering, re-

proach, pain and loss, from the human standpoint; while sin often brings present advantage, popularity and pleasure to the flesh.

There is a special love required by God of the Gospel Church—this peculiar class now called of Him. They are to have a love that is so unselfish that it will be willing, yea, glad, to lay down the earthly life in the service of God, that they may bring blessings to others. To these God has promised the *special* crown of life—immortality, His own nature. These are to be the blessers of their brethren, those of the nature formerly their own. As Isaac was the blesser of Ishmael and of the sons of Keturah, and as the first-born of Israel were the blessers of their brethren, so these will bless all the peoples of the earth, from among whom they were chosen. How thankful we should be for an honour so great!

If these favoured children of the Heavenly King could always keep in mind the fact that every trial and testing, every persecution and difficulty, permitted to come upon those who have made the Covenant of Sacrifice with the Lord, is designed to develop them, to prove and test their love, to demonstrate whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness, it would set all their painful experiences and temptations in a new light, and would be a great assistance to them in fighting the good fight of faith successfully. For if by these trials and tribulations the Lord is proving our love and devotion to Him, then whatever they may be, whether great or small, we should diligently use them as opportunities to demonstrate to our God the fulness of our love for Him and His cause, and as means by which we may rise day by day to greater heights of spiritual attainment, being changed into the likeness of our Master.

Thus viewed and thus met, every trial and affliction would prove a blessing, a Heavenly messenger, bearing us on wings of faith "Nearer, our



God, to Thee, nearer to Thee." Then, beloved, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials, testings], knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience [patient endurance]. But let patience perfect her work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Herein we "greatly rejoice—though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [testings, provings], that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, which perisheth, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls!"—James i : 2—4 ; 1 Peter i : 6—8.

Truly, "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen [the things of the present order] are temporal, but the things which are not seen [the glories to come] are eternal."—2 Corinthians iv : 17, 18.

Thus we are assured in the infallible Word of God that those who love the Lord, and who are to receive the Kingdom, will have their love tested by trials and temptations on the way to that Kingdom. Those who do not love the Lord with *all* their hearts, in whom self or some other idol has first place, will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the Devil into some form of rebellion against the Divine Word or the Divine providences. They will have schemes and theories which they will prefer to the Lord's Plan and the Lord's way; and their schemes when analyzed will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness or ambition or upon an evil spirit of envy, hatred, jealousy, etc.

The Lord's leading and the Lord's words lose their attraction to such,

and they lose their interest correspondingly; and like those who turned away from the Master at His First Advent, and said, "This is a hard saying," so these also go away and "walk no more with Him." But some will continue to walk with the Lord; some will not be driven away nor decoyed from Him by the arts and wiles of the Evil One and his hosts. These are such as are at heart fully the Lord's, not their own; they will follow the Lamb of God, whithersoever He may lead, because they have no will except His will. They will follow Him through all the Narrow Way of discipline and trial in this life; and by and by, as He has assured them, "They shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy."—Revelation iii : 4.

Nor will this choice company lack in number by reason of the falling away of some. It will be of the predestinated number which God arranged to constitute the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. The Father's foreknowledge made full allowance for all who would turn back, and He knew that the requisite number would follow on, to make their calling and election sure. These have learned that the call of the world, the promptings of the flesh, and the arts of the Adversary, are all snares and traps and pitfalls to drag them down to death. They have learned the sound of the true Shepherd's voice, and cannot be enticed by the voice of strangers.

Precious children of the Lord, blessed are ye! Sheltered in the "secret place of the Most High" no evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." How safe and secure are these! Though a thousand fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand, yet the plague shall not come nigh them. They have "made the Most High their Habitation," and He will keep them from all harm.

As the faithful disciples of the Master in the first Harvest realized a meaning in His teachings which others of the professed children of God could not appreciate, so now, at the Second Advent of the Lord, His words have a precious significance to those who are in heart-harmony with Him which none others can realize. And we see now, as at the First Advent, that some are stumbling and going back, while others are being drawn more closely to the Lord than ever, by means of the knowledge of His Plan which He is supplying.

As we draw nearer to the close of the Harvest, we shall not be surprised if the way become still narrower, still more difficult, and if the temptations to stumble and to fall become still more frequent. Let us then, dear brethren, be more and more on our guard against the wiles of the great Enemy of our souls, and against the deceptions of our own fallen nature.

“Under His Wings I am safely abiding,
Though the night deepens and
tempests are wild;
Still I can trust Him, I know He will
keep me;
He has redeemed me, and I am His
child.

Let the perfect love of God rule in your hearts, driving out self-love and world-love, with their pride, ambition and folly. Let entire devotion to God bring into your hearts the promised fulness of joy and rest and peace. Be fruitful branches in the Vine, abiding ever in Him, responding to all the prunings of the great Husbandman with more abundant fruitage.

If beguilements come to us, let us say with the Apostles of old: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” There is life nowhere else, and we wish to go nowhere else. We are feasting in the banquet hall of our Father’s House, “and His banner over us is love!” We have an abundant supply: our table is richly laden. So we eat and go on our way rejoicing. We are nearing Home. We shall soon reach the last mile-stone in our journey! Then, with a song on our lips, let us press on!

“Under His Wings! What a refuge in
sorrow!
How the heart yearningly turns to
His rest!
Often when earth has no balm for my
healing,
Here I find comfort, and here I am
blest.

“Under His Wings! Oh, what precious
enfolding!
Here will I hide till life’s trials are
o’er;
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm
me,
Resting in Jesus, I’m safe evermore!”

SPECIAL NOTICES

PRELIMINARY NOTICE.—It is intended (D.V.) to hold the Annual Convention at Whitsuntide in Nottingham. Let us combine our hearts and our prayers in earnest supplication, that it may prove to be a season of blessing for all privileged to attend. An occasion when God’s Name will be exalted, His will done, and the presence of our Lord manifest amongst us.

A GREETING.—Bro. Carl Luttichau of Denmark writes: “At this season I am surely reminded about my spiritual family in England, and all their kindness towards me this last summer, and I ask

you to receive my very best wishes for this New Year for all the brothers, sisters and mothers in the spiritual family all over.”

ANONYMOUS.—Our sincere thanks go to the anonymous sender of 10/- for our 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 WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE.

"If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."—John viii : 31, 32.

At His first advent our Lord came to the Jewish nation, which was a House of Servants in covenant relationship with God. To these was to be granted the first privilege of becoming sons of God, and their blessing would be in proportion as they were faithful to the light that would come to them. Before they could become *sons* of God, however, it was necessary that Jesus should be their Redeemer, should make reconciliation for iniquity, and thus open up the way. This He had come to do, but He had not done it as yet. Whoever would come to understand the Divine purposes and arrangements, and act in harmony with them, should be made free, should be liberated from the condemnation resting upon them as Jews, from the results of the weaknesses of their flesh, and would be brought into full accord with God.

We can see that this great privilege also meant something more than all this. It meant something still higher—even joint-heirship with Messiah. But all these things were a hidden mystery as yet. They were known up to that time only by our Lord Himself; they were made clear to Him because He had been begotten of the Holy Spirit. There were many things hard to be understood. Jesus spoke in parables, in dark sayings, for the very purpose of making the Way of Life then opened up a "narrow way." And so we read in the Scriptures that some said of the Master's words: "This is a hard saying! Who can hear it?" Who could believe it?

The particularly hard saying referred to was that His "flesh was meat indeed, and His blood was drink

indeed," and that by eating and drinking of these they might gain eternal life. And so we read that after this many forsook Him and abandoned the thought of being His disciples, so blinded were they to their own interests. Instead of following on patiently, they said, This is all foolishness! We do not understand it!

Jesus was anticipating this condition of things when He spoke these words to them. He would put them on their guard. It was as though He would say, You have declared that "never man spake like this man!" Already you have heard words very different from the words of the Scribes and Pharisees. Now continue; hold on for a little while. If you will do this, you will grasp the situation in due time. Exercise faith—exercise patience. You have begun to have interest in these things, and as you fully become My disciples you will be granted a knowledge of the Truth. And this Truth will make you free; it will give you all the blessings and privileges that come to the children of God. Greatly blessed were the few who took heed to the Master's counsel!

These words of Jesus were not addressed especially to the twelve Apostles, but to the Jews in general who were sympathetically drawn. Nicodemus may have been one of these; he was inclined to stumble over the spiritual things; he could not see how one could be born again. The Holy Spirit was not yet given, we read, "because Jesus was not yet glorified." St. Paul tells us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are

foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Corinthians ii : 14.

But some saw enough in Jesus to attract them to Him. These, in honesty of heart, said, Surely His words are true, and His criticisms of our nation are true. We do not see how He is going to fulfil these prophecies ; but He says to us, Hold on and you will understand later. And some did hold on—"above five hundred brethren." As Jesus had promised, these were given the privilege of becoming disciples indeed.

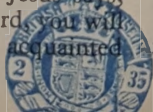
When Pentecost came, the Heavenly Father received all who had continued in Jesus' Word, and they were begotten of the Holy Spirit into the Lord's family. Then they began to see spiritual things—they were illuminated. All the light did not come at once, but they progressed as the days and years went by. They were indeed Christ's true disciples—such followers of Jesus as the Father was pleased to recognize. They were not only made free from the condemnation of the Law Covenant, but made free from sin and death. They received a new *will*, a new *mind*, and the Holy Spirit showed "the deep things of God" unto them.

In His prayer to the Father, our Lord said, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth ; Thy Word is Truth." By the word Truth Jesus was here referring to the Father's revelation of His Divine Plan through the Holy Spirit ; and the sanctifying influence would come through the knowledge of that Truth, received into an honest heart. This sanctification, or setting apart, strictly speaking, began with the Pentecostal blessing, and still continues to operate. And this sanctification progresses as long as the individual allows the Truth to have its designed influence in his life. We see a difference between our text and the one just quoted. In the latter case it is the Word of Jehovah, and in the former it is the Word of Jesus. Jesus says, If you continue in My Word, you will become more and more acquainted

with the Heavenly Father, and will know His will, His way, His method ; thus you will know His Word. All things are working out His will—the will of the Father—and seeing and doing the will of the Father, the sanctifying process will follow. Jesus says to all, "I am the Way ; I am the Truth ; I am the Life." I am the only One through whom you can come to the Father and become His sons ; and abiding in Me will bring you the grand consummation.

We perceive, then, that Christ is the sufficiency which God has provided for us in all respects. "He of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness [Justification], and Sanctification, and Redemption [Deliverance]." (1 Corinthians i : 30.) We first receive, through learning of His sacrificial work on our behalf, necessary wisdom, instruction and guidance, by which we may through His merit come to the Father. And He is our Wisdom all along the way. The Heavenly Father had a glorious Plan before the foundation of the world ; this was hinted in Eden, just after the fall. In due time He gave a further intimation of that Plan through Enoch and through Abraham, and still later through Moses and the Prophets. But how the world was to benefit from it was all hidden, all kept secret.

Not until Jesus came was the way of life opened up, made manifest. "He [Christ] hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." The essence of the Gospel was never even declared, much less known, before Jesus came. The Apostle Paul says that this salvation "at the first *began* to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Hebrews ii : 3.) Our Lord *began* to speak it ; but the secret of the Gospel, its *Mystery*, was not fully revealed until after Pentecost. It was not until after Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit that He Himself began to comprehend it clearly—not until then did He begin to set before us the way of life and immortality. And even then His



words were parabolic, and it was not until His followers were begotten of the Holy Spirit that they were able to enter into "the deep things of God."

In addition to His being our Wisdom, Jesus becomes our Righteousness. He covers our sins. He imputes to us His own righteousness, the merit of His own sacrifice. And this imputation brings us to a condition of complete righteousness—not *actual*, but reckoned, which God is pleased to recognize in the way He has arranged.

Our Lord does not become the Righteousness of everybody—not even of those who give some heed to His Words—but to those alone who come to the point of full submission to the Father's will.

The step of consecration on the part of those who become Jesus' disciples is in the Scriptures called *sanctification*. But it is not the same sanctification which comes to us through Him. God says, "Sanctify yourselves, and I will sanctify you"—that is, Set yourselves apart, and then I will set you apart; I will put you into this place where you desire to come. So, to all of us who come to the Father through Him, Jesus not only becomes our Justification, but through Him we also have Sanctification—the complete setting apart. We are accepted in Him, and His grace and Advocacy enable us to attain complete and final sanctification.

God sets us apart by begetting us of the Holy Spirit to the new nature and making us prospective members of the Royal Priesthood—prospective members of the Body of the Anointed One. This is Scripturally called a foretaste, or "earnest," of our inheritance, which will be experienced to the full when we are changed from the human to the spirit nature—"changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." But this "earnest of our inheritance" is given us with the intention of our growing in the process of sanctification already begun in us until its completion. We attain this through Christ.

Those who make satisfactory progress will have in the resurrection full deliverance from sin, from all imperfections of the flesh, and from the flesh itself—full deliverance through the power of the First Resurrection. Christ thus becomes our Deliverance. We shall then attain the full completeness of sons of God on the Divine plane.

In all these things Christ is the Centre; through Him alone can we obtain these blessings. While the Father gives them, they are given through His Son, who is the Father's Representative. Jesus received the Spirit of the Father and has shed it forth upon us. This is pictured in the type, in the anointing of the high priest. The holy anointing-oil was poured upon his head, and it ran down over his body. So we are anointed through our Head as members of the great High Priest.

"He who raised up Jesus from the dead will raise us up also by Jesus"; that is to say, Jesus will be the active agent. But there are certain features of the Divine Plan which Jesus will accomplish *in His own name*; for instance, the world's blessing and uplifting. While the Father is the Author of the entire Plan, yet this blessing comes to the world exclusively through the sacrifice of the Son. Christ will do the work of the Millennial Age, and will then deliver mankind up to the Father.

But His work for the Church is different: "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us." (1 Peter i: 3.) It is not the Son who has begotten us, though it is through the Son that we receive this Divine favour. The price, or cost, of obtaining this special Divine favour is the sacrifice of our lives. The particular thing which the Church receives more directly from the Son is *justification* (in His blood). It is a special arrangement on the Father's part for us that we may come into His favour now in advance of the world—the First-fruits unto God and the Lamb.

Ours is a wonderful God, and His great Plan of the Ages is marvellous beyond expression! Our hearts rejoice that our eyes have been anointed to see these glorious things hidden to

the many during this Gospel Age, knowing that all the blind eyes shall yet be opened, and all the deaf ears be made to hear!

THE GIFT OF GOD.

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

Matt. x : 8.

God's understanding Love!
To Him we come,
Misunderstood, misjudged,
Motives impugned, and explanations
spurned,
Soul all aquiver with its deep driven
pain.
And lo!
He soothes us with His understanding
Love.
Giving us credit for the best we are
And what we strive to be;
Draws from the wound its bitter sting,
And with His loving confidence gives
strength
To bravely bear.

Freely He gives us this great Love,
And we
He bids to give it forth again as free
To those we meet upon our daily path;
Giving each credit for the best he is
And what he strives to be.
With understanding love give strength
to bear,
And thus the burden of our brother
share.
Who gives another strength of soul
will find
That he himself is not one whit behind.
So may we live!
Freely we have received Love.
Freely give!

Teach us, O Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest. To give—and not to count the cost. To fight—and not to heed the wounds. To toil—and not to seek for rest. To labour—and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will.

SPECIAL NOTICES

MEMORIAL.—The appropriate date on which to "keep the Feast" this year is Tuesday, 16th April (after 6 p.m.), and we trust that all who take part in this sacred act of remembrance will be comforted and refreshed in spirit, realising very especially at that time their privilege of union with their Lord and Head and the members of His Body everywhere.

PILGRIM VISITS.—As no Brother is giving full time to this service now a circular letter is being sent out to the secretaries requesting that they be notified of Classes who specially desire visits, so that we may hope to arrange accordingly.

OFFER OF AN ORGAN.—We learn that Brother Douglas Parker, of 338 Langley Road, Langley, Bucks, has an American organ, in good condition (apart from the bellows needing repair), which he would be willing to give to a Class requiring a musical instrument, if they would meet the cost of packing and carriage. We suggest that any Class interested should write direct to Brother Parker.

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. 11

April, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

RESURRECTION

"The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob . . . is not a God of the dead, but of the living."—Luke xx : 37, 38.

When we note the context here we see that our Lord was combatting the theory of the Sadducees, and proving that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob would have a resurrection. Jesus said, "Now that the dead are *raised*, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (Luke xx : 37.) If they were dead in the sense that the beast is dead, God would never have spoken of them in this manner. They had come into accord with God, and He spoke of them in harmony with the general Plan. St. Paul says, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." (Acts xxiv : 15.) The Ancient Worthies had this testimony that they pleased God ; and we know that they had the promise of a better resurrection than would have been theirs if they had not pleased God.—Heb. xi : 35.

These Ancient Worthies lived in exactly the same sense that the begotten New Creatures live. Unless God raises us up from the dead there will be no resurrection. The same thing that applies to the New Creature in Christ applies to the world in general. They may think that those in the tomb are absolutely *dead* ; but God intends that they shall have an awakening. So the Apostle speaks not only of those who are asleep in Christ, but also of those who are asleep in *Jesus*. Those who are asleep in Christ are those who have become New Creatures in Christ, heirs of God, partakers of the Divine nature and have passed into death. These are spoken of as "the dead in Christ" who shall rise first.

Jesus is not the Saviour merely of the Church, but also the Saviour of the world. (John iv : 42 ; 1 John iv : 14.) He is the propitiation not only for our sins, "but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii : 2.) Therefore, those who believe this statement—that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust—speak of the whole world in exactly the same way that they speak of those who have slept in Christ.

But in the awakening, those of the world who are asleep in Jesus will have the earthly nature, and those who have slept in Christ will have the higher nature. Christ gave his life as a corresponding price for man's life. But we who have come into the Church have come under different conditions altogether from those of the world. As Jesus said, "Ye are not of the world." (John xv : 19.) We are separate and distinct from the rest of the world. The Apostle tells us that *our* life comes from the *Father*—"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Peter i : 3.

Does Jesus do nothing for the Church? Yes, indeed! As Advocate He imputes of His merit (surrendered human life) to the Church that we may be counted in as joint-sharers of His sacrifice, for "if we suffer [with Him], we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii : 12.) This willingness to *suffer* is the Covenant of sacrifice that we make with our Lord. Without *Him* we can do *nothing*. We can never come up to the Divine standards as He did ; but as our Advocate He makes good our deficiencies. We have the same begetting of the Holy Spirit by the same Father and we shall also share in the same Resurrection, being made conformable to His death. The Resurrection of Christ is to the Divine nature, in

which we shall be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."—1 Cor. xv : 51, 52.

The world will receive earthly resurrection. The Life-Giver, Jesus, will give to them all that was lost—human nature and the Edenic condition. So then, the dead world is said to be *asleep*, but they are to be awakened. Theirs is exactly the same kind of sleep as with us ; but the Church were asleep as *New Creatures* and the world are not.

"Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain ; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him."

Here is the thought : Mankind belong to the Adamic nature. The kind of nature that God has been pleased to give to the Adamic race is earthly nature. But if we belong to the spirit nature we shall come up accordingly. If you plant corn, you will reap corn ; if you plant wheat, you will reap wheat ; if you plant barley, you will reap barley. So in death. If an animal body is sown, the animal body will be raised. The Church is an exception to the rule. We *New Creatures* are sown as animal bodies, but we have these animal bodies merely loaned to us, in which to operate. We are *New Creatures*, not human beings. We are sown natural bodies, we are raised spirit bodies, in the First Resurrection.

"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."—John v : 28, 29, R.V.

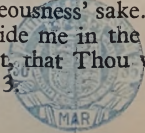
The Divine provision is that through the obedience of One, the sins of the whole world will be atoned for, and a blessing come to every member of the Adamic race. By a man came death, and by a man comes the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. xv : 21-23.) We have two classes here ; they that have *done good* are those who, during the present time, have heard the Gospel, and who have and use an opportunity to do good, and those who have *done evil* are those who have not heard and who have not, therefore, had an opportunity of doing good.

Who can be said to have done good ? "There is *none* righteous, no *not one*." (Rom. iii : 10.) After having received this good Word of God we should make good use of it, enter into the School of Christ to be taught of Him, and pass through our trials and testings. These things will determine whether or not we are worthy of this high position, to attain which we have consecrated our lives.

But we shall not in this life be perfect as Jesus was—in body as well as in mind. We cannot be perfect in the *flesh*, as Jesus was ; but Jesus had a perfect will, and we can also have a perfect will, although we may have drawbacks and hindrances in carrying out that will. But to cover our defects, we have our Advocate, in whom God has arranged that we may be accepted. The Church have had their trial in advance of the world ; and if they have overcome, God has said that the verdict will be, "Well done . . . I will make thee ruler over many things." (Matt. xxv : 21. These constitute the "good.")

Who are they that have done evil ? None have been perfect ; not even in their minds have they come up to a standard that God can approve. They are *unsatisfactory*, which means *unfit*. When God shall have established the glorious Messianic Kingdom, then He will put all mankind under trial to see whether, during the thousand years of His Reign, the rewards and punishments will bring them to a proper condition of heart. At the end of the thousand years, Jesus, as Mediator, will present them to the Father for a final testing. If they pass that test, God will give them everlasting life. But those who take a thousand years to *make good*, will not get as high a reward as those who, by self-sacrifice, now prove their love for the Truth and die for righteousness' sake.

"O that Thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldst keep me secret until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me !" —Job. xiv : 13.



This passage of Scripture refers, not to the New Creature, but to a human being. It refers to a man and not to a spirit-begotten son of God and member of Christ. Job was here speaking as one of mankind. He was willing to die, for life had become burdensome to him. He said, "Oh, that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheol until Thy wrath be past!" In the midst of his very severe afflictions he cried, Oh, that I might die! but do not leave me as the brute creation; only hide me in the grave until all this time of wrath and sin and curse is done away with and the New Era shall be ushered in. We can hardly believe that Job realised the meaning of what he was saying, but we should rather suppose that he was uttering words, the full import of which he did not realise.

There is no reason to suppose that when David said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol" (hell), he knew that he was speaking prophetically of the Messiah. St. Peter pointed out that these words referred, not to David, but to Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. (Acts ii : 27-31.) But Job was speaking for himself, and yet prophetically for mankind. He was a type of the world. He had lost his flocks, and herds, his friends, his home, his children, his wife and even his health.

But in due time, God gave Job back just as many sons and daughters and twice as many flocks and herds, etc. In this way he was a type of the human family. Adam and his family have been lost. He was the king of the earth, but he lost his authority, and with it everything that he had. Ultimately Adam and all of his children will come back to their own—child for child. And so far as the earthly riches were concerned, he will get very much more than he ever lost. Job is a type of this Restitution.

The world is asleep from the Divine standpoint. As Job could say, "Hide me in the grave," so once a Christian could have said, "I shall be hid in the grave until the resurrection." God has made provision for the resurrection of all. But did all die alike? We answer that the Adamic family are dead in the sense that their life-rights were forfeited at the time of the fall. But God looked forward and could speak prophetically either through Job or through any one else. Job could speak as if he were not dead, taking cognizance of the fact that there will be a resurrection. The point here seems to be, Was Job's life carried over in the same sense that St. Paul's life was carried over? By no means. Job was asleep in the *Adamic* death; St. Paul was asleep in *Christ*. The one was the life of the New Creature, and the other was the life of the old creature, not begotten of the Holy Spirit to the new nature.

There is not one statement in the Bible that declares that the same body that dies is to be brought forth in the resurrection. On the contrary we read, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain."

We admit that to produce a body with the same convolutions of the brain, the same individuality, the same soul, the same sentient being, is a miracle so great that we cannot conceive of it. Yet it is that very thing which God purposes to do for the whole human family—thousands of millions in number.

It is for us to follow the Word of God, to reject all extraneous matter from whatever quarter it may come, and to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to make us wise." We are to discard the things which are without Scriptural authority. Nothing that man can offer can compare with what we find in the Word of God; the Bible is the very essence of grandeur, beauty, justice, love.

In Isaiah's prophecy we read that Jesus "poured out His *soul* unto death," that His *soul* was made "an offering for sin." (Isaiah liii : 12, 10.) Then again we read, "Thou wilt not leave My *soul* in Sheol [the grave]; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm xvi : 10.) Explaining this prophecy, the Apostle Peter says that God would not leave Jesus' *soul* in Hades—the grave. (Acts ii : 22-31.) The soul of Jesus was not left in the tomb.

Speaking of His own resurrection, Jesus said, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am *alive* forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation i: 18.) God raised Him up from the death condition on the third day. On the very morning of His resurrection He said to Mary, "Touch Me not; for I have not yet ascended to My Father . . . I ascend to My Father, and your Father, and to My God and your God." (John xx: 17.) He was the first One who descended to the tomb, and was raised from the dead, and who has ascended far above angels, principalities, powers, and every name that is named.—Ephesians i: 20-23; Philippians ii: 9-11.

Since our Lord has passed through these experiences, the Apostle's suggestion is that He who brought the Lord Jesus from the tomb is also able to bring us. He tells us that we need not sorrow as do those who have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, let us believe that He will bring all that are in the death condition back to life. (1 Thessalonians iv: 13, 14.) Let us believe that "all who are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth" (John v: 25-29)—the Church first. As it is written, "Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the First Resurrection; on such the Second Death shall have no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ; and shall reign with Him a thousand years."—Revelations xx: 6.

Others shall come forth to a resurrection over whom the Second Death may have power. Whether or not they will ever get altogether free from death will be determined by their conduct during the time of their opportunity—during the time when the riches of God's grace will be made known to them and when they will have the opportunity of coming back into full harmony with Him and of gaining life everlasting.

SPECIAL NOTICES

MEMORIAL.—We would remind all of our Lord's words, "This do in remembrance of Me." On Tuesday, 16th April, after 6 p.m., the brethren will be responding to His gracious invitation and will, once again, experience the blessedness of that mystic one-ness with Christ which is known and appreciated only by those "called of God."

ANONYMOUS. We warmly thank the donor of 10s. sent "for use in the Lord's service." Also the dear friend in Yorkshire who has sent us £2 as a "thank offering," "to be used as you think best." These gifts are very encouraging to us, and help to make possible the work of service.

HOME-GATHERING. The brethren at Sunderland extend a loving welcome to any who can join with them for worship and fellowship on Easter Sunday. The Meetings will be in the Co-operative Hall, Green Street, at 2.30 and 6.30, and tea will be provided in the interval.

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.

BRILLE 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?

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.

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.

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

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. 12

May, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

PATIENT ENDURANCE

"Let patience have her perfect work."

The Scriptures everywhere represent patience as an important element of character. In every phase of human experience we can see its need. To be just under present conditions, one must be patient, not rash; for it would be unjust to be impatient and severe with the unavoidable imperfections and weaknesses of our fellowmen. Therefore the spirit of a sound mind demands that we be patient in dealing with fallen humanity. God Himself possesses this quality of patience, and has long exercised it. In dealing with the world in the next Age the Church will need to have much patience, and under our present environments we need it constantly in order to develop the character necessary for a place on the Throne with our Lord.

Patience is closely allied to love and mercy. If God were unloving, unmerciful, He would be without patience. In man's present blemished, fallen condition, patience is sadly lacking, although it is often exercised outwardly for policy's sake. This Godlike quality, like all the other qualities of character inherent in God and in all perfect beings created in His likeness, has been largely obliterated in humanity by the fall of the first pair.

In the New Testament there are two Greek words translated *patience*. One of these words signifies forbearance, longsuffering. The other carries the thought of cheerful or hopeful endurance. The latter is the word used in our text, and has a much deeper significance than attaches ordinarily to our word patience. This constancy—the endurance of evil in a cheerful, willing manner—represents an element of character, and not merely a temporary restraint of feeling or of action. It signifies a development of heart and character which manifests itself in an endurance of wrong or affliction with contentment, without rebellion of will, with full acquiescence in the requirement of Divine Wisdom and Love, which, while permitting present evils, has promised in due time to overthrow them.

It will surely be profitable for us to cultivate carefully this element of Christian character of which our Lord speaks in such high commendation, and without which, His Word assures us, our character cannot be perfected. The Christian requires patient endurance to put on the whole armour of God, and having put it on, to keep it securely buckled. We need it in dealing not only with others, but also with ourselves, with our own blemishes. We should always take into account the various circumstances and conditions surrounding ourselves and others. As we look around, we see that the world is in a condition of blight, of sin. This knowledge should give us great sympathy with humanity, without which we would have but little patience. All of our brethren in Christ, like ourselves, are by nature members of this fallen human race. Therefore we should have a great deal of patient endurance with the Lord's people, as we would have them exercise this grace toward us.

As the quality of justice will always persist, so will the quality of patience, though not in the sense of patient endurance of evil. God patiently works out His own glorious designs, in perfect equipoise of mind. At present this requires the

exercise of patient endurance with evil, sinful conditions ; and in the Ages of glory to come God will, we believe, still work out His purposes in perfect patience, probably in worlds yet uninhabited.

But in the exercise of patience under present evil conditions, Wisdom must have a voice. God has declared that in His Wisdom the time will come when He will cease to exercise patience toward the world. That is to say, He will no longer bear with the world in their present sinful, imperfect condition. That time has almost arrived. The great cataclysm of trouble, now about due, will sweep away the entire present order preparatory to the establishment of the Kingdom of God under the whole heavens. Then God will give men the fullest opportunity of coming into harmony with Himself and righteousness before He will deal with them summarily.

The time is coming when there will be no more sin, God will have a clean universe by and by. But He will first give everybody an opportunity to rise out of sin. If they will not avail themselves of the opportunity, then God's patience, longsuffering, will cease to be operative toward such. This will not mean that God's patience has ceased, but that its activity has ceased in that direction.

God's patience has arranged the thousand years of Messiah's Reign for man's blessing, and His Wisdom has decided that those thousand years will be sufficient for the elimination of evil. Whoever will not learn to live righteously under those favourable conditions would never learn, and it would not be the part of Divine Wisdom longer to exercise patience with such. Likewise also, in our dealings with ourselves and others, there is a limit to the proper exercise of patience—long-suffering. We should not be patient with ourselves beyond a certain point. There are circumstances in which we would properly feel that we should have *known* better and should have *done* better than we did.

If a child of God realizes that he has been derelict with himself, he should say, I will not be patient with myself any further. I will take myself in hand and conquer this weakness which I have permitted in a measure to assert itself to the weakening of my own character and probably to the discomfort and pain of others. I cannot do this in my own unaided strength, but by the grace of the Lord I am determined to overcome in this matter.

Recurring to the word patience as used in our text, let us glance backward to our Lord's Parable of the Sower, as recorded in Luke viii. In verse 15 we read, "That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience," patient endurance, constancy. The thought here is that to be of the fruit-bearing class which the Lord will approve and accept in His Kingdom we must do more than to receive the Word of His Testimony, even though we receive it with joy. It means more ; for the stonyground class at first thus received it. For a brief time these seemed to give evidence of fruitfulness and vigour ; but when the hot sun of persecution arose, they withered away, because of lack of depth of soil.

In this parable the Lord shows that patient endurance, constancy, is the final test of character. It follows after the receiving and the sprouting of the seed ; it follows after love, hope, joy and faith have caused the seed to spring forth and begin to bear fruit. Patient endurance, then, is necessary in order that the fruit may be developed and thoroughly ripened, that the grain may be made ready for the garner. Ah, how important this grace is seen to be, in the light of God's Word ! But remember that the endurance must be *cheerful*. We cannot suppose that He who judges the thoughts and intents of the heart would be pleased with His children, even when He saw them bearing much for His sake, if they endured it in an impatient or dissatisfied or unhappy frame of mind.

Those who thus endure surely would not be copies of God's dear Son, whose sentiment found expression in the words, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God !"



All of the Royal Priesthood are sacrificers, as was our great Chief Priest; and God who accepts our sacrifices through the merit of our dear Redeemer, informs us that He loves a *cheerful* giver—one who performs his sacrifices gladly, with a willing heart. This does not mean that our bodies will never grow weary; but that our spirit will rejoice in the privilege of suffering weariness of the flesh in so noble and wonderful a service. But if our Father should see best to lay us aside from active work for a time, when our hearts are longing to serve, this too will be an opportunity to endure cheerfully His will for us. It may also be a test of our full submission of our wills to His, and thus be an important stepping-stone upward toward the Kingdom glories and privileges.

The other instance in which the Lord used this word patience, or patient endurance, is recorded in Luke xxi : 19. He had just been telling His followers that they must expect tribulations as the result of being His disciples during the present time, when sin abounds, when Satan is the prince of this world. They must expect opposition from various quarters; but He assured them that nevertheless they would be fully under Divine care and protection, even though persecutions would be permitted to reach and to affect them. Then follow the words, "In your patience [patient endurance, cheerful constancy] possess ye your souls."—Luke xxi : 19.

Our faith and our trust in the Lord and His gracious promises should be so strong and unwavering that they will far more than counterbalance the oppositions of the world, of false brethren, and of Satan's blinded servants. So implicit should be our faith in our Father's love and care that all these persecutions will be recognized and rejoiced in as the agencies of His providence in chiseling, shaping and polishing us as living stones for the glorious Temple which He is constructing, and which is now so soon, we believe, to be set up.

Viewing our trials from this standpoint, we can indeed rejoice and can possess our souls, our lives, as New Creatures, even amidst tribulations, with cheerful endurance. Yea, we may realize that the soul, the real being, to whom God has given the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the future, cannot be injured by the persecutions of the flesh, or by anything that man can do unto us, so long as we are faithful to the Lord, accepting every experience that He permits to come to us as ministrations of His providence for our ultimate good and His glory.

Let us here examine carefully into the reason why it is necessary for us to develop this grace of patient endurance. It appears that the development of this quality is one of the conditions which God has attached to the call to joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom, and one of the same conditions required of Him. The wisdom of this is manifest when we consider the work to which we are called—the work of blessing all the families of the earth, as God's Millennial Kingdom, in joint-heirship with the Only Begotten Son of God, our great Redeemer. That will be a mighty work; and it is eminently proper that Jehovah should require that those whom He shall account worthy of that exalted position shall not only appreciate His goodness and His glorious character, and prefer His service to sin and iniquity, but demonstrate their thorough loyalty to the principles of righteousness and to His will to the extent of a joyful willingness to suffer on behalf of these principles. A transitory endurance of one or two or three brief trials would not prove the individual to have an established character for righteousness; but a patient, cheerful, endurance even unto death would be necessary to demonstrate such a character.

We might illustrate this with the diamond. Suppose that we were able to make diamonds out of some plastic material with the brilliancy of the real diamond; and suppose that they became hard, but not so hard as the genuine diamond. Would these imitation diamonds have the value of the true diamond? By no means. If they were subjected to severe pressure, they would be crushed. And

so with the Christian. If we supposed him possessed of every grace of character that could belong to the sons of God, save this one of firmness, endurance, he would not be fit to be amongst the Lord's jewels. Hence we see the necessity of the Lord's demand that patient, cheerful endurance shall be a characteristic of each one who shall be accepted to a place in His Royal Diadem.

The importance of this quality in the Christian character is again emphasized by the Apostle Paul. In His Epistle to Titus (ii: 2), when enumerating the character qualities of an advanced Christian, he declares that they must be "vigilant, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience." The final test of patient endurance must be passed before we can be accepted as of the Very Elect.

The same Apostle in writing to Timothy, thus reminds him, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patient endurance." We need this important grace more and more as we speed along on our race course and near the end of the way. Feet grow weary; trials and testings abound; therefore we need to "gird up the loins of our mind" and, looking to our great Exemplar for the needed inspiration and strength, to set our faces like a flint for the home stretch.

SPECIAL NOTICES

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CONFERENCE.—The usual Conference of Representatives will be held on Whit Monday at 10 a.m. Full particulars of this can be obtained of Mr. Geo. Ford, Hill View, Marlpit Hill, Edenbridge, Kent.

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

Malvern	May 2
Birmingham	" 4/5
Bristol	" 7
Abertillery	" 8
Pontnewynydd	" 9
Pontardulais	" 10
Cardiff	" 11/12
Swindon	" 15
Oxford	" 16

VOLUME XII.—Next month we commence the twelfth year of publication, and we look forward to the extended service confident that the Lord will continue to richly bless every effort to sustain the ministry, and to comfort and encourage His people.

IN STOCK.—"Divine Plan" (pkt.), cloth 1/6. "Plan—In Brief," 5d. S.S. 1 to 3, cloth 1/3; 4 to 6, 1/6. Q.B., 5d.; used, 2d. Sets S.S., 6 vols., cloth 6/6 and 7/6; used, 4/6. Karatol sets, 12/-; used, 6/6. Used volumes are in good order. "Tabernacle Shadows" (with Q.), 6d. Students' Bibles, 12/6. "Daily Manna," cloth (pkt.) 1/3, paper 1/6. M.D. Hymn Book, with music, 2/-. "Covenants, Ransom and Sin-offering," 6d. "Christ's Return," 3d. "Food for Thinking Christians," 4d. "God and Reason," 10d. "Selected Discourses," 6d. "Spiritualism," 6d. Tracts, "Thy Kingdom Come," 10/- 1,000. "Kingdom" Cards, 4/9 1,000.

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BRILLE 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?

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. 12, No. 1

JUNE, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

THE FINAL TEST

"That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."—James i : 4

Our ability and strength to patiently endure should increase as we progress in the narrow way. We should grow "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." But we cannot possibly develop this essential trait of character without trials—experiences intended to call for the exercise of cheerful endurance. So let us not think it strange if we are called upon to pass through protracted trials which make necessary the nerving of ourselves to *bear*. But let us repeat that the virtue is not merely in the bearing ; for the *world* has much to bear, but it is particularly in the *manner* in which we endure. At heart we must be sweet and submissive—in fullest harmony with the Lord's processes of development. This may be hard at times ; but His grace will be sufficient, if we constantly apply for it. "Having done all," let us "stand !"

Ah, yes ! We can see a new reason for the Lord's arrangement that we should have our trial as our Master had His—under an evil environment—that we might not only have all the necessary qualities of Christian character, but have them rooted, grounded, fixed, established.

The Apostle James likewise draws out attention to the importance of this quality. He says, "The trying of your faith worketh patience" ; that is to say, if our faith stands the trial, it will work out in our character this patient endurance. On the other hand, if we do not attain this development, it will mean that our faith has not stood the test satisfactorily, and that we are not fit for the Kingdom. Thus we see clearly what a great mistake has been made among Christian people in general in supposing that religion is a thing to be gotten suddenly as an answer to prayer, or by going to the mourner's bench, or by standing up for prayers, or in response to some Divine or human appeal—just as one would get a dollar and put it into his pocket. On the contrary, the step of repentance from sin and justification is only the beginning, and not the end, of the Christian way. The next step is consecration of ourselves and our all to God. But this also is far from the end. Not only must we go on and on, to the attainment of faith, fortitude, self-control, meekness and love, but having attained all these, we must *patiently endure*. We must "run with patience [cheerful endurance] the race set before us." Or, to use another figure of speech, it is merely starting in the School of Christ ; merely having our names enrolled as pupils, to be taught of the Lord.

The Church of the Philadelphia period were promised of the Lord that because of their faithfulness, because they had "kept the Word of My patience," they should be kept from "the hour of temptation" which was to come upon all the world a little later. The Church of Laodicea—the Church of our day—is not kept from entering into the "hour of temptation" ; but we may be sure that we will be kept while *in* it, if we are faithful and true. Our dear Lord's special message to the Laodicean phase of the Church has been, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My Voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne."—Revelation iii : 20, 21.

Though we are not spared from this hour of temptation, we have a counterbalancing blessing as a result of living in the time of our Lord's parousia. We may have His instruction, His dispensing to us of spiritual food, "meat in due season," in a manner and to a degree never before enjoyed by His saints. And, as we might expect, this greatest favour is offset by the subtle and severe trials and testings of this special "hour of temptation." If there was ever a time when patient endurance was needed by the Lord's faithful, it is *now*. If ever they needed the counsel, "In your *patience* possess ye your souls," they need it *now*. Those who are able to *patiently endure* will *stand* in this evil day. All others will fall. As the Apostle forewarned us, the fiery ordeals of this day "will try every man's work, of what sort it is."

We find this quality of patient endurance lacking everywhere throughout Christendom to-day, even among the majority of the professed followers of Christ. It is becoming more and more scarce. Few wish to endure anything—for righteousness' sake, for Christ's sake, or for any one else's sake; and if endurance of anything unpleasant is absolutely necessary, the trial is borne with much of impatience, complaint and chafing. Moreover, a spirit of defiance and rebellion against everything like self-denial or resignation, a spirit of intense bitterness, is daily growing in the hearts of mankind.

This general tendency of the civilized world to-day toward non-endurance, impatience and rebellion against restraint necessarily has its influence upon those who are seeking to walk in the narrow way. Only by Divine grace can this tendency be successfully resisted, and progress be made toward the development of the likeness of Christ. This special grace, needed to-day by the Lord's children, will be withheld from those who are not walking close to the Lord, following in the footsteps of Jesus. It is because the professed followers of Christ are living so far from Him that we see to-day the tendencies are developing which we have noted amongst those who profess His name.

This spirit so prevalent is at the bottom of mob violence which is kept down largely by military force, in the outbreaks against law and order which we hear of so frequently. We may expect this spirit to continue to grow. There is a feeling amongst the masses that in the past they have been too patient, not sufficiently aggressive—the feeling that if they had taken things into their own hands long ago present conditions might have been averted. But those who have kept the Lord's Word of patient endurance, who have sought from Him the wisdom from on High, which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy of entreatment, full of mercy and of good fruits," have learned that He has a due time in which His purposes shall be accomplished, and they are willing to abide His time patiently, knowing that it is best. They have learned that

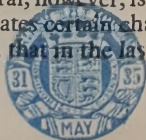
"God's plans, like lilies white, unfold ;

We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,

Time will reveal the hidden heart of gold."

The Apostle counsels us respecting this "hour of temptation" which is now upon us. Its besetments and trials will be many, and some of them will be so subtle and deceptive that all who are not thoroughly rooted and grounded in the Truth will be carried away by the false arguments of those whom Satan is now permitted to use as his agents in trying all those who dwell upon the face of the whole earth.

The hour of trial is not coming alike upon all, for all of Christendom are not upon the same plane—mentally, morally or physically. The trial as it is coming upon Christendom in general, however, is pictured by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy iii : 1-5. He here enumerates certain characteristics of this "hour of temptation." He says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come ; for men



shall be lovers of their own selves—covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers [enticers to strife], incontinent [not under restraint, impetuous], fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors [those who cannot be trusted], would sell out their best friends for selfish considerations], heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a *form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof."

This is a graphic picture of present-day conditions in the Christian world, so-called. Because they received not the Truth in the love of it, therefore God has sent them "strong delusions, that they should believe a lie," and should be condemned thereby. This hour of temptation has not yet reached its greatest intensity, but we believe this stage will be reached in a very short time. Blessed are all they who have made the Lord, "even the most High, their Habitation." These shall not be moved; yet many of them will pass through most severe trials and temptations. We learn of the struggles and prayers of many of God's children—some because of their own imperfections and frailties, and some because of the imperfections of others; and still others are tried because of earthly cares and burdens which they seem unable to fully overcome or to cast upon the Lord.

We sympathize with these dear ones, and counsel them as best we can, remembering the Master's words, "Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh." (Luke vi : 21.) Our heart is especially solicitous for those that are in temptation, but realize it not—who are being swallowed up of ambition or business or other "cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches"—whose love for the Truth seems to be growing cooler instead of hotter, and who seem to *feel* less and *see* less than they did years ago. These seem to be sleeping when they should be watching and praying; and this hour of trial, we fear, is finding them unprepared; whilst some who are weeping, praying and striving are more like our dear Master in Gethsemane; and like Him, they will be strengthened for the final trial.

Let us each, dear brethren, be very solicitous for ourselves and for each other, and counting the prize held out to us as far dearer and more precious than all else beside. "Let us fear, lest a promise being left to us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." Let us so love all the Lord's dear children that their welfare will be our chief concern; and this will mean our own spiritual health. Yet we must not allow our love even for the brethren to hinder our fullest confidence in the Lord's love and wisdom in the choice of His Bride, even though siftings should take from us some whose fellowship we have cherished.

Let us patiently hold on our way—this blessed way! Let us do with our might what our hands find to do. Soon will come the Harvest Home! Soon, if faithful, we shall gather, as a glorious company, to go out no more forever. We shall come with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us! But let us remember that "we have need of *patience*, that after we have done the will of God, we might receive the promise!"—Hebrews x : 36.

"A little while"; with patience,
Lord,

I fain would ask, "How long?"
For how can I, with such a hope
Of glory and of home,
With such a joy awaiting me,
Not wish the hour were come?
How can I keep the longing back,
And how suppress the groan?

Yet peace my heart! and hush my
tongue!

Be calm, my troubled breast!
Each passing hour prepares thee more
For everlasting rest.
Thou knowest well, the time thy God
Appoints for thee is best.
The morning star already shines;
The glow is in the east.

DUTIES OF DAILY LIFE

"Life is not entirely made up of great evils or heavy trials ; but the perpetual recurrence of petty evils and small trials is the ordinary and appointed exercise of the Christian graces. To bear with the infirmities of others, their bad judgment, their ill-breeding, their perverse tempers—to endure neglect when we feel we deserve attention, and ingratitude where we expected thanks ; to bear with the company of disagreeable people whom Providence has placed in our way and whom He has provided on purpose for the trial of our virtue ; these are the best exercises of patience and self-denial, and the better because not chosen by ourselves. To bear with vexation in business, with disappointment in our expectations, with interruptions of our retirement, with folly, intrusions, disturbance—in short, with whatever opposes our will or contradicts our humour—this habitual acquiescence appears to be more of the essence of self-denial than any little rigors or afflictions of our own imposing. These constant, inevitable, but inferior evils properly improved, furnish a good moral discipline."

"Let us be watchful, for the hour which shall be revealed by fire shall try every man's work—the work of silence and routine, no less than the work of energy and zeal—of what sort it is."

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BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 12, No. 2

JULY, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"NEW CREATURES"

"If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature ; old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new."—2 Corinthians v : 17.

Our information on this subject of the New Creature comes from the Word of God. It is the Spirit of the Truth that bears the witness. "If any one be in Christ, he is a New Creation ; the *old* things have passed away ; behold ! they have become new." [Diaglott Translation.] Apparently, then, if old things *have* passed away from us, and we *are* New Creatures in Christ, we are now receiving the blessings. There is nothing said about being *reckonedly* New Creatures. The change is *actual, bona-fide*. When God accepts the human *will*, He does not hold the New Creature responsible for any of the deeds done *previous* to *consecration*. The whole account is a new one.

We are New Creatures in the sense that God has begotten us of the Holy Spirit. God has given us Heavenly promises instead of earthly promises. We are no longer striving to see whether we can attain a higher position in the world. We have new ambitions. Our aim is to live pleasing to God. And in every way this change of sentiment indicates a transformation of mind.

Transformation means to *form over again*, across, different, in an opposite way. So we have been changed by reason of this change of our *will*. God has made us the promise that, if we make this change, or transformation, He will no longer *count* sin to us, that we shall have *standing* henceforth no longer as sinners, but as holy ones. The world does not know that we are children of God. They do not realise how fully we have given up the earthly hopes and are seeking a different prize from that which the world seeks.

The fact that this change is merely in the *mind* and not in the *body* does not alter this matter at all. According to science, every seven years a complete change takes place in our bodies, the new matter coming on as the old matter sloughs off. But one is not a new *man* because his *body* has changed. If this were so, we would have had several changes by this time. So far as the mind is concerned, personality is not changed. If we had lost a hand, we would still be the same personality ; or if we were to lose a hand and a foot, the loss would not change our personality.

Our personality would not change in this event, because the personality is the mind, the ego. And so when the ego, the mind, is changed, that New Creature is distinctly separated from the other. The fact that it does not yet have a spirit body does not matter. The New Creature is the New Creature, only now he is the New Creature under adverse conditions ; whereas by and by he will be the New Creature who has entered into that condition which God has promised—the Divine nature and everlasting joy—and in which he will abide forever.

We are now spirit beings in human bodies. The Apostle says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." It is not the *body* that is risen, but the New Creature. It was not the New Creature that *died*, but the old creature. It is not the life of the *old* creature that "is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians iii : 3), but the life of the New Creature. The Apostle declares, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

He says also that we are not only to reckon ourselves *dead*, but to reckon ourselves as though we had been *raised from the dead*. "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"—Romans vi 11.

The body is not the New Creature, but it *belongs* to the New Creature. It is the *servant* of the New Creature. The New Creature is the only one that God recognises at all; for He knows us not after the flesh. And we should live in the Spirit, and view ourselves and all of our affairs from this standpoint. We should "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans viii : 4.) Our view-point should be this : As New Creatures, we merely *inhabit* these bodies for awhile.

These bodies are our slaves and we are to use them as our slaves. The environment is unfavourable for the New Creature at the present time. But it is the New Creature that God is looking at. "If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creation; the old things have passed away; behold, they have *become new*." If he now fails to make good his consecration, fails to be an overcomer, he will have no resurrection; for all his *earthly* rights have been abrogated.

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." We do, as New Creatures, have the fleshly bodies. But the flesh is not *we*; that is, not our kind, not our nature. It is only as the New Creature that we can inherit the Promise. Jesus was put to death in the flesh; that is to say, He sacrificed the flesh—He gave up His claim on the flesh at His consecration. And it was on the basis of His giving up His rights that the Father begat Him to the new nature. Therefore He said, My will is to do My Father's will. The Cup that My Father hath poured for Me, I will drink!—John xviii : 11.

Jesus would not stand for His earthly rights. His dying was not merely at Calvary. It was begun at Jordan three and a half years before. In the type, the high priest slew the bullock, which represented the Man Jesus. Our Lord gave up His life completely—His human life. The High Priest was another person. He went inside and ministered in the Holy while His human nature was sacrificed upon the altar, and His body burned outside the camp, but in sight of the camp.

Every New Creature is a soul. The word *soul* is used in the Scriptures, in a very broad manner indeed, as signifying *any* sentient being, any being that has sensibility, intelligence. A fish has intelligence; therefore the Bible describes a fish as *being* a soul (See Genesis i : 20, margin). A dog, a cow, a horse, is each a soul. An angel is a soul, or being. God is a soul, or being—the Bible says so. The Scriptures say that "If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews x : 38)—this means *God's* soul.

This broad use of the word, therefore, in connection with any kind of sentient being, assures us that as New Creatures all of us are souls—intelligent beings. We might be understood to be double souls in the sense that we were human souls to begin with, but that God has through Christ made a special arrangement for us whereby we are begotten again to be New Creatures. This begetting is of the mind; and only in this way are we New Creatures now.

This New Creature is not yet perfected. This new soul has not yet reached that condition which God intends that it shall have. The Apostle tells us that we have this treasure of the new mind in the old body—the earthen vessel. The new mind must do the Father's will, irrespective of the will of the body, or of the friends of the body, and what they might desire it to do. The new mind is to do God's will under all circumstances.

A spirit-begotten child of God may speak of himself as already possessing eternal life, which he does possess by faith. But the New Creature, the new soul, is not yet completed. God's promise is that when this new soul shall have been completed, we shall have a body like Christ. We shall be like Him. We shall see



Him as He is and share His glory. We shall be souls on the Divine plane, whereas formerly we were souls on the human plane ; now we are reckoned as in the transitional state.

When we speak of being dual *souls*, we do not mean that we are dual-minded ; for that would be a reprehensible condition. We are *single-minded*. Our duality consists in the fact that we have the mind of one nature and the body of another. A perfect soul results from the union of life-principle with an organism. It is thus with a fish, a dog, a horse. There is an organism, and there is vitality, a spark of life, before there can be a soul. The Lord's people were human souls, or had the powers common to all mankind, to begin with. Then they were begotten again. And the new will, the new mind, has at present an organism not adapted to its needs.

In the resurrection the New Creature will have an organism fully adapted to its requirements. But now it is a soul that is neither perfect in the flesh nor perfect on the spirit plane. And since the nature goes properly with the mind, the will, therefore the flesh is counted as being that of the New Creature, and the New Creature is held responsible for this flesh.

The Apostle suggests to us that not only our old minds, or wills, are dead. and that we reckon also our bodies dead, but that we go further, and reckon our bodies quickened, or made alive, from their dead and sin-disposed condition, that they may be fully our servants as New Creatures, that they may serve our purposes—"quickened by the Spirit of God that dwelleth in you." That is to say, so long as the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit is ruling in our hearts and minds, it controls and energises the physical body.

God deals with us as New Creatures from the time we are begotten of the Holy Spirit. He has no dealings with the flesh. The flesh is under condemnation. God dealt with the flesh of Father Adam, condemning it to destruction. Then He provided a way in Christ by which the race may be rescued from destruction. The Church's relationship to God is purely as New Creatures. From the time, then, that we become New Creatures, accepted of God, He takes these mortal bodies of ours, which are consecrated to His service, as a part of the New Creature. So if we suffer, it is the New Creature that suffers. And in this sense God takes cognisance of our flesh from the time of our consecration. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Because our human bodies are vehicles for His service, God takes note of them. In proportion as we become strong in the Spirit of the Lord, we have the power to make the mortal body do what the new mind wills. But we are weak in ourselves. We cannot properly control our mortal bodies. God, therefore, gives us of His Truth. And the more we receive of the Truth, of the Spirit, the more fully sanctified we should be, the more fully in harmony with the Father's will, and the greater control we should have of our mortal bodies.

CONVENTION NOTES

The brethren who were not in attendance at the Convention held in Nottingham at Whitsuntide will be interested to know that all present felt it to be one of the most helpful they could remember. The addresses were very acceptable, and gave evidence that those who spoke to us had earnestly sought the Lord's help, that they might deliver His message ; and in His own way, and by His own power through the Spirit, and they did not seek in vain. We cannot hope to give an epitome of all the discourses, therefore think it best not to refer directly to any of them in detail.

We could have wished that all who are "running for the prize" could have been present to receive the comfort and encouragement they offered. The Brother,

in his opening remarks, after extending a warm and loving welcome to all, from those who had made preparations for the Convention, expressed the hope that all attending might obtain the blessings they sought ; this wish we feel assured was abundantly fulfilled. Throughout the whole time nothing whatever interfered with the sweet fellowship enjoyed by all ; every moment was precious, and laden with spiritual refreshment. Truly it was good to be there ; it fulfilled all our expectations, and answered all our prayers.

Two Sisters and one Brother were immersed after listening to a short address by Brother Kirkwood, and receiving the right hand of fellowship from him.

The ladies and attendants who prepared and served our meals added greatly to the enjoyment by their kindly and courteous attentions ; indeed the Warden requested permission to express publicly to all how happy they were to have us come, and that they received a blessing from our visits, and looked forward to them each year.

Friends gathered from a wide area, including Scotland and Wales, and in somewhat larger numbers than the previous year ; and many loving messages were received from our own country and abroad from those who would specially have liked to be with us had it been possible.

A Conference of the Representatives was held on the Monday morning, and a Report of same was made to the friends in the afternoon.

Our first gathering was a Devotional Meeting held on the Friday evening, and the Convention closed with a short Thanksgiving Service, when prayers of thanksgiving were offered, and hymn number 84 was sung ; this was followed by a Love Feast ; then God's people gradually, very gradually, began to disperse ; feeling physically tired, yet spiritually refreshed, and fortified for the experiences of life awaiting them.

So many messages of love and kindly interest in the Convention were received that we take this opportunity of conveying to all, and particularly the Lord's dear suffering ones, the message of warmest love from those in attendance, coupled with the following scriptures :—2 Corinthians i : 2-6, and iv : 9.

SPECIAL NOTICES

CONVENTION.—We are requested to notify a "General Convention" to be held in London at the August Bank Holiday time. The Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, has been engaged for the purpose, and the arrangements are in the care of Brother A. O. Hudson, 20 Darwin Road, Wellington, Kent, from whom a programme can be obtained when ready.

VOLUNTEER MATTER.—An enquiry has been sent out by us to all the Classes as to what Tract, if any, should be printed for distribution at the present time ; and we shall be glad to hear of what the requirements are, and to give same every attention. There appears to be some spirit of enquiry abroad now, and we know how glad all will be to respond to it.

The "Kingdom" Cards (at 4/9 per 1,000) continue to bring in many enquiries for literature.

ENQUIRIES.—We shall be glad to learn of friends willing to follow up enquiries, coming to us through the "Kingdom" Cards, from the following districts : Glasgow, Kinross, Kilwinning, Falkirk, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Redcar, Bothwell, and Nottingham.

SPECIMEN LITERATURE.—We are at all times willing to provide, free of charge, specimen copies of "The Herald," the "Bible Students Monthly," and such Tracts as are available now. Some brethren find these very useful to pass on to those leaving the Society. Others give them to likely readers, and also to sick folks they visit.

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

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

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 12, No. 3

AUGUST, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH"

"Be ye filled with the Spirit."—Ephesians v : 18.

Let us consider together briefly these words of the Apostle Paul, addressed to the Church of Christ, the saints. They do not apply to those who are merely empty professors, having a form of godliness only, but to those who have fully accepted the terms of God's Call, who have made the full consecration which alone brings us into the position of sons of God. These are the only ones who have the Spirit of God. These only are begotten from Above. But St. Paul would have us remember that it is not sufficient that we receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit, which comes to us at the very entrance of the narrow way. We should see that the Holy Spirit of God abounds in us more and more as we go on in our Heavenward course. The little spark of the new mind should grow stronger and brighter day by day.

If this development does not take place, if we merely stand still, we shall soon begin to lose ground ; but if we progress, the natural man will gradually perish and the new man will thrive. Christian development should be steady and continuous. We are to be more and more filled with the Spirit. Sometimes the Lord's children say, "I do desire to be filled with the Lord's Spirit, but it seems as if my capacity is so small. I wish to have His Spirit in large measure, but I am unable to be what I long to be. I am not satisfied with my attainments." But if we are striving earnestly and prayerfully to become like Christ, let us not be discouraged. Let us remember that if we keep filled to our present capacity, this very infilling will enlarge our capacity. Then our earthen vessel will hold more of the Holy Spirit. This, in turn, still further enlarges our capacity ; and so the expanding and filling goes on. Thus it is possible for us to be filled continually.

If it were an impossibility for us to be filled with the Spirit of God, the inspired Apostle would not have so instructed us. To the truly consecrated child of God this is possible, and not only possible, but obligatory. But as there are ebbs and flows in the ocean tides, so with our sense of the Lord's presence with us and His smile upon us. We may not always realize His presence to a large degree, but the Lord's saints must learn to walk by faith, to trust Him and His abiding love and presence with us even though physical ill health or untoward outward circumstances or conditions may at times cause a mental depression. We are to rejoice in the Lord even though there may be for a time more or less heaviness of spirit.

In speaking of the glorious salvation of the Church the Apostle Peter says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [trials], that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen ye love ; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i : 6—8.) And we can thus rejoice even in the midst of severe trials that cause pain and tears. There may be times when it will seem as though we are more filled with the Spirit than at other times. But if we are striving earnestly to daily walk with God, this will not really be the case. It may be only a difference of surface feelings. The true child of the Lord should steadily progress.

The spirit, or disposition, of the world will seek to invade the dominion of the New Creature. But the New Creature must be on the alert to see that his mind and body are freed from everything that would not be in fullest harmony with God's Holy Spirit. Each one should seek to judge himself in this respect. We may not judge one another, but we should judge ourselves. We are to see to it that the Spirit of the Lord is manifest in our words, our thoughts and our conduct. We should be able to do this more and more successfully, more and more continually, as we go on in the good way and grow in grace and knowledge. This we shall do if we are watching, praying, striving, day by day.

The Spirit of the Lord dwelling in us in fulness, as it should be, will cause our entire being to be so absorbed by the principles of righteousness laid down in the Lord's Word, to be so in love with the Heavenly things, Heavenly hopes, Heavenly prospects, that everything else will be of no value to us. And this will be more and more our blessed experience if we continue faithfully in the narrow way, if we "follow on to know the Lord."

But if, on the contrary, we find ourselves making provision for the flesh, making worldly plans; if we find ourselves inclined to lay up treasures on earth instead of in Heaven, we should take alarm, and should ask ourselves whether we are deficient, whether we are neglecting the means of grace—prayer alone with God, study of His Word, meditation upon the glorious things to which we have been called, watching ourselves as to our growth in the fruits of the Spirit. If we find that we are considerably controlled by the spirit of contention, we should ask ourselves, "Are we seeking to deal justly and equitably with others—to give them their rights and not to intrude upon them? Are we cultivating the love which is forbearing, forgiving and kind?"—2 Timothy ii : 24; Ephesians iv : 31, 32.

If we find after close introspection that we are in full sympathy with the spirit of love, and can see that we are gradually developing this crowning fruit of the Spirit, let us rejoice; for we should greatly deplore the matter if it were otherwise. If we find that we are controlled by this spirit of love, we may know that we are filled with the Spirit. This spirit of love will enlarge our hearts and minds, making us broader and nobler day by day.

But we need to continually watch and pray; for there is constant danger otherwise that we may be tripped up or stumbled either by our own faults or those of others. We are never safe from being side-tracked unless we go often to the Throne of Grace; we cannot be filled unless we keep very close to the great Fountain from which our infilling comes. We must daily carry our earthen pitcher to this Heavenly Fountain to be replenished; for we are leaky vessels. We are not to feel discouraged if we do not find in ourselves the rapid growth that we desire to see. Strong, sturdy trees that can withstand the fiercest storms are not developed in a day. Their growth is a slow, steady process. We should show our loyalty to the Lord by renewed effort every time we fail. He is looking at us not to see if we are perfect in the flesh—for He knows that we are not and can never be—but to see whether or not we have the spirit of earnestness and loyalty which daily and hourly seeks to keep the body under and to cheerfully take up the cross.

The Christian is not to be like the worldling who seeks to drown his troubles and affliction in drink or in pleasures, dissipations and frivolous diversions; but in every trouble he is to fly to the only true Source of solace and comfort and strength. This will drive away all anxiety and give him rest and peace even in the midst of trouble. Like the fabled halcyon, which built its nest and brought forth its birdlings in the midst of the sea, the true child of God can be at rest even amidst the billows and storms of life, and can prosper as a New Creature and accomplish all the good pleasure of God's will.



This unwavering trust in the Lord, this abiding rest of soul, this zeal in God's service, is a matter of growth. "They go from strength to strength," the Psalmist declares of the inhabitants of Zion. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," said our Lord of this class. (Psalm lxxxiv : 7 ; Mark iv : 28.) Notwithstanding the difficulties of life, these can continue to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. They rejoice no matter what may be the outward earthly conditions. They can smile even through their tears, knowing that, according to His promise, all things are working together for their good. To attain this development is to be filled with the Spirit ; and each consecrated disciple of Christ should reach this plane.

Some Christian writer has well said : "Wherever there has been a faithful following of the Lord in a consecrated heart, several things have, sooner or later, inevitably followed. Meekness and quietness of spirit become in time the characteristics of the daily life. A submissive acceptance of the will of God, as it comes in the hourly events of each day, is manifested ; pliability in the hands of God to do or to suffer all the good pleasure of His will ; sweetness under provocation ; calmness in the midst of turmoil and bustle ; a yielding to the wishes of others [where there is no conflicting principle involved], and an insensibility to slights and affronts ; absence of worry or anxiety ; deliverance from care and fear—all these, and many other similar graces, are invariably found to be the natural outward development of that inward life which is 'hid with Christ in God.'"

"JESUS' INSPIRING PROMISE"

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life."—Rev. ii : 10.

These are the words of our glorified Lord, given through St. John the Revelator on the Island of Patmos. This thrilling exhortation is given to the Church, to those who have entered into a special contract, a special covenant with the Lord. The invitation of the present time, to *suffer* with Jesus that we may *reign* with Him, implies the attainment of membership in His Body. His members are His disciples ; they have been invited to walk in His steps.

It is required of these that they continue to hold fast the faith that first led them to make a consecration. They are to continue in this attitude through evil report and through good report, to follow their Leader "whithersoever He goeth." They must not faint before they reach the end of the journey. The world, the flesh and the Adversary will try to dissuade them and turn them back—try to cause them to think that the invitation they have received is an intangible, impossible thing.

A faithful servant is one who demonstrates himself worthy of his master's confidence, one who can always be relied upon. Daily we are proving our loyalty or our disloyalty. "The Lord your God doth prove you." He proves us to see if we are worthy—to see whether we love *Him* best or love *self* best, to see if our confidence in Him is such that we will lay aside everything else to win this great Prize which He has offered, to see whether we are following a mere temporary impulse, whether we are trying to grasp this beautiful thing, this Crown of Life, without appreciation of its cost.

In one of His parables, our Lord represents some who, when the sun of persecution arises, are not sufficiently loyal to the principles of righteousness to stand. They become offended. They wither away. So this word *faithful* seems particularly to signify *loyalty*, including also the thought of being *full of faith*. God's children are to be full of faith, and those in whom God can have faith—those proving worthy of His entire confidence.

"JESUS' INSPIRING PROMISE"

Our Lord will say to such as are wholly faithful to the end of the race, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" These shall have "a Crown of Life." Their loyalty must be proved even unto death. This does not mean merely that they shall *die* as a consequence of their consecration to the Lord; for there will be two classes of those who thus die—the Little Flock will die sacrificially, and the Great Company will die through "the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus."

"Unto death," therefore, would in this text mean a faithfulness which would persist until the sacrifice is finished in death, a faithfulness ready to encounter death at any moment, which would lead to the performance of the Covenant of Sacrifice even unto its consummation.

The thought in respect to the receiving of the Crown is that it confers great honour. In the Olympian games of olden time a crown was given which was usually of laurel leaves; and great victors on battle-fields received crowns of laurel—the laurel being an evergreen shrub or tree, symbolizing that which endures. The Apostle used this illustration as picturing the high honour to be bestowed upon the faithful Church. There is a great Prize to be given. There is an election going on. It is for each individual to make his calling and election sure.—2 Peter i: 10, 11.

Each one who is victorious will receive a Crown of Life. It will not be a crown that will soon fade, or one that will last only a certain number of years, but a crown of *everlasting life*. And not only so, but the Lord shows us that this crown of everlasting life will be a crown of *superior life*—life on the *very highest plane*. Those who attain Restitution during the Millennial Age will have everlasting life on the human plane. The angels will have everlasting life on the spirit plane. But this *Crown of Life* given to the "more than conquerors" will be the very highest form of spirit life—immortality—far above all other planes of life, as the special reward for being victors in this race. "Let us so run that we may obtain." The goal is near!

SPECIAL NOTICES

CONVENTION.—We would remind friends of the "General Convention" to be held in London at the Bank Holiday time in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street. Full particulars of Bro. A. O. Hudson, 20 Darwin Road, Welling, Kent.

QUARTERLY UNITED GATHERING.—The friends of the Nottingham district extend a hearty welcome to their United Gathering in the Co-operative Hall, Beeston, Nottingham, on Sunday, 29th September. Full particulars of Bro. J. H. Essex, 50 Park Road, Chilwell, Notts. Will friends please note that the Mansfield Class will be uniting in this Gathering instead of holding their usual Home-gathering.

LOST.—Will the finder of Hymn Book (with many tunes added) lost during the Convention at Nottingham, be good enough to send same to Mrs. Cedric Smith, 21 Werter Road, Putney, London, S.W. 15. The book is of great value to our Sister and we sincerely hope to hear of its recovery.

SPECIAL OFFER.—As we are desirous that all our brethren possess a copy of Brother Barton's booklet on "God's Covenants," feeling assured that so interesting and helpful an exposition on this very important subject would be welcome just now, we are prepared to supply same in parcels of not less than 24 @ 1½d. each. Single copies 2d. each. Classes are welcome to take full advantage of this offer so long as our supply lasts. We pay postage.

HOLIDAY WITNESS.—The "Kingdom" Cards (at 4s. 9d. per 1,000) are most useful for this purpose.

ENQUIRIES.—We have received enquiries, through the "Kingdom" Cards, from the following towns and would be pleased to hear of friends willing to follow these up. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Kinross, Kilwinning, Falkirk, Newcastle-on-Tyne and Bothwell.

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 Committee, 204 Broadway Chambers, Letchworth, Herts.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 12, No. 4

SEPTEMBER, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"DRINK YE ALL OF IT"

"*Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?*"—Matthew xx : 22.

The incident which is narrated in our context occurred just previous to our Lord's death. He had gone up to Jerusalem. He had made the triumphal entry into the city. Now He was waiting for the grand climax of His experiences. He had forewarned His disciples and had explained to them that the chief priests would deliver Him up to be crucified.

But the Apostles in general did not understand the Lord's words. On many occasions His words had been figurative. So now they wondered what He meant. They did not know what kind of figure of speech this could be. They thought That He was near to sitting on His Throne, and that they would be with Him. So thoroughly were they convinced that the establishment of the Kingdom was at hand that St. James and St. John—their mother acting as spokesman, advocate—had asked that when He came into His Kingdom they two might sit near Him, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left. They were expecting that in a day or two important events would take place which would bring them into the Kingdom.

Our Lord's answer to this request was intended not only for the disciples there before Him, but undoubtedly for all His disciples throughout the Gospel Age, to set before them the conditions on which the Kingdom was to be attained. Our Lord stated the matter very plainly, asking James and John, "*Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*" They did not understand these words in full, but perceived that it meant some kind of death. "*Are you able?*"—Are you willing? They replied that they were.

The word *able*, while it contains the thought of force, strength, nevertheless expresses willingness ; for it refers to the *will*. The thought is not, *Are ye physically able?*—but, *Are ye mentally able?* This thought would properly be represented by the word *willing*. Are your wills strong enough? The two disciples determined that they were. "Yes, Lord, we have a will to do the whole thing, whatever it may be." They were fully given up to the Lord, to do His will. They would be willing for anything. They had such appreciation of the Kingdom, and such confidence in the Lord that whatever *He* was about to do *they* were willing to do.

And so it is with us. Our wills are made up. "*Are ye able?*" Surely! There is not a doubt—nothing to interfere. That which the disciples could not understand, and which we could not have understood had we been in their places, we fully understand now, because we have the assistance of the Holy Spirit to guide and help us in the understanding of the deep things of God. We see that the Lord meant that He was immersed into death. At the beginning of His ministry, He gave up all of His earthly interests in every sense of the word. This was His sacrifice. It was *symbolized* by baptism into *water*, but it was *really* a baptism into *death*. He had been fulfilling that baptism for three and a half years ; and the next day He would die, as He well knew. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!"—Luke xii : 50.

The thought is, "I am feeling greatly straitened until that baptism be accom-

plished. It will be accomplished tomorrow. I find that connected with that death there are difficulties that I had not expected. I am anxiously waiting for tomorrow, for the completion of My sacrificial death."

Our Lord had not supposed that His consecration to death would mean a death of such serious indignity, humiliation and misrepresentation of His character—an ignominious death. He had known that He was to be crucified, had told His disciples so and was entirely willing thus to die. But as He got down to the core of the matter, He saw that the arrangements were that He was to die the death of a *criminal*. It was an entirely different matter to be crucified as a criminal. Because He was a good man, it was most trying to Him to be arrested as a *blasphemer*—one guilty of the worst crime known to the Jews. To be condemned on the charge of blasphemy and to be led by His own countrymen to be put to death, when He was really giving up all that He had for the service of God, was a terrible ordeal for Him—much more of a test for Him than it would have been for one who had been tainted with sin, and who was less sensitive because of his wrong life. Jesus seems frequently to have referred to this cup, as if He instinctively shrank from the experience.

In a broad sense, the figurative expression, *cup of experience*, might be used in referring to every affair of our lives. But this is apparently not the way in which Jesus was using this word at this time. He used it in respect to something in the future. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I *shall* drink of?"—in the future—that cup which I shall drink within the next few hours. That cup was a terrible draft to Him—not the *dying*, not the *cross*. He had not asked that He might be spared the dying, that He might avoid death. But He had asked that this bitter cup of ignominy, that He should be put to death as a *blasphemer*, might be set aside; and yet He said, "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" After He had cried out with strong cryings to God and had received the assurances of God's favour, He was then ready to drink of this cup.

So it is with the Lord's followers. It is hard that our good should be evil spoken of, that we should be declared to be poisonous to every religious sentiment. This is a part of our experience. To have people separate us from their company would be a trifling thing. To die in some respectable way would be a small matter. But to be put into a false light, to have our good made out to be evil, these are trying experiences. Our attitude is to be the same as that of our Master, "The cup that our Lord shall pour, shall we not drink it?" We have the word of the Apostle that all things shall work for good to those who love God, to the called according to His purpose. With these thoughts before our minds, we are to be of good courage and to accept the cup of experience which the Lord has for us. We know not how near that cup may be. Perhaps with the Church it is the same as with Himself. Perhaps there will be a measure of acknowledgment that we are right about the Divine Plan. Then through the machinations of the church systems we may be delivered up—possibly to death.

The disciples at the First Advent did not realize how near they were to the experiences of Gethsemane and Calvary. It may be so with us now, for aught we know. Therefore we realize the importance of our lives being such as the Lord has marked out for us. Watch ye, lest ye fall in the hour of temptation! The hour of temptation was upon them; therefore it was important that they keep themselves in the right attitude. And so should we do now, when we believe the Age is closing. There may be peculiar tests, which the Lord may not wish us to know—they would not be such tests if we knew of them in advance. Therefore we should be on guard that we may be found loyal and faithful, and that we may demonstrate our faithfulness unto death in the way that the Lord has prepared for us.

"THE ANGEL OF GETHSMANE"

4

It would appear as though the present time may be one in which the Lord is giving His people a test of a new kind. Even though we see the Gentile nations in process of disintegration, there is an opportunity for some to doubt the whole matter and to say, "There have been wars before, and I suppose there will be wars yet! This is not the end of the Gentile Times, as I thought it would be." Such people, if they had been engaged in the Lord's service, might leave it and go into worldly society, or become engrossed in business, or what not. This is most particularly the very time in which such testings might come. Therefore we should be on our guard lest any spirit of doubt come upon us. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

THE ANGEL OF GETHSEMANE

'Twas midnight, and the Man of Sorrows took His chosen three,
 And sought with weary step the shelter of Gethsemane
 To pray, His soul exceeding sorrowful, e'en unto death,
 And heavy laden with the sin and woe of all the world.
 In agony of bloody sweat He fell upon His face,
 And cried, with tears, "My God, My Father, if it be Thy will,
 Oh, let this cup of shame and numbering with transgressors pass—
If it be possible! Yet, not My will, but Thine be done!"
 And then His thoughts turned to the sacrifice—a fear bore down
 With agonizing weight upon His heart, lest to comply
 With every jot and tittle of the Law, He might have *failed!*
 He saw the priestly type, He knew eternal death awaited,
 Should He seek to pass the second veil unworthily.
Eternal death! Oh, anguish inexpressible—to see
 No more His Father's face! He sought His well-beloved three,
 Perchance they might refresh His fainting heart with some sure word
 Of prophecy. Alas, their eyes were heavy and they slept.
 Three times He sought them, and three times *in vain!* Yet He was heard
 In that He feared. The Father sent a *heavenly* comforter
 To touch with tender, strengthening hand that dear, devoted head,
 And whisper, "'I the Lord in righteousness have called Thee, I
 Will hold Thine hand and keep Thee, neither shalt Thou *fail* nor be
 Discouraged.' Lo, Thou art 'a priest *forever*, and a king
 Upon Thy throne, like to Melchizidek.' And Thou shalt see
The travail of Thy soul, and shalt be satisfied." His heart
 Revived, He knew His Father's faithful word could never fail;
 He knew it would accomplish that whereunto it was sent.
 He rose, and from that hour went forth to trial and to death,
 In peace—a calmness born of perfect confidence in God.
 How oft, throughout the many-centuried "night" of this dark age,
 The Father's "little ones" have knelt in sad Gethsemane
 To pray! E'en now the Garden's shade re-echoes with the cry
 Of God's elect, "*How long*, oh Lord, how long until we see
 The travail of our soul? How long until Thou shalt avenge
 Thine own elect, who cry to Thee, with tears, both night and day?"

* * * * *

Dear Lord, oh, use *me* as the angel in Gethsemane!
 Oh, fill me with Thy Holy Spirit of divinest love!
 Oh, make me sympathetic, *wise*, that every anguished heart
 May come, nor seek in vain for consolation from Thy Word,
 And strengthened, comforted, go forth to prison and to death,

To suffer patiently the cruel mockings of the tongue ;
 To bear the cross unto the bitter end, then calmly say,
 "'Tis finished," and *with faith unwavering pass beneath "the veil!"*

SPECIAL NOTICES

HOME - GATHERINGS.—A hearty welcome awaits all friends enabled to attend the following:—**Dewsbury**, on Sunday, 6th October. Write Mr. A. Carrington, 6 Greenmount Street, Leeds, 11. **Welling**, on 15th September, a united gathering with the Gravesend friends. Particulars of Mr. F. Turner, 17 Izane Road, Bexley Heath, Kent.

ANONYMOUS.—We sincerely thank the dear friend who has sent us £5 as a thank-offering, "to be used as thought best." Assuring the giver that the request for our prayers is not forgotten. Also we warmly thank the donor of 10s. who so regularly sends us help in the Lord's service.

GONE FROM US.—Bro. Frederick Pett, for twenty years doorkeeper at the Tabernacle, and known to many in London, passed away on Sunday, the 18th inst. For the past few years he had fellowshipped with the Welling Class, and was much esteemed by them.

CLASS NEAR KINGS CROSS.—Meetings are held in the Minerva Club, Brunswick Square (corner of Coram—Hunter Street) on Sundays at 6 p.m. Secretary, Mrs. Jeffries, 147 Great Tattenhams, Epsom, Surrey.

DIVINE PLAN.—The brief edition of Vol. I can be had in the Swedish language, price 1s.

STRONG'S CONCORDANCE.—Anyone having a copy for disposal please inform Brother F. Stratton, 115 Edinburgh Street, Swindon, Wilts. Our Brother is bed-ridden, but a keen Student.

LOST.—Will the finder of Hymn Book (with many tunes added) lost during the Convention at Nottingham, be good enough to send same to Mrs. Cedric Smith, 21 Werter Road, Putney, London, S.W.15. The book is of great value to our Sister, and we sincerely hope to hear of its return.

HOLIDAY WITNESS.—The "Kingdom" Cards (at 4s. 9d. per 1,000) are most useful for this purpose. They bring us many enquiries.

ENQUIRIES.—Will friends willing to follow-up enquiries in the following towns please so inform us: Tow Law, Co. Durham; Woodley, nr. Reading; Ross-on-Wye; Falkirk; Kilwinning; Glenlondmond; East Kilbride; Bothwell; Stranraer; Edinburgh; Glasgow.

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.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

For Year ended 31st July, 1935

Income	£	s.	d.
Balance in hand at 31st July, 1934	83	15	8
Pastoral Bible Institute	97	7	6
General Office	196	0	1
Good Hopes	52	0	8
Pilgrim Fund	44	18	0
Bible Students Monthly	27	3	0
	£501	4	11

Expenditure	£	s.	d.
Pastoral Bible Institute	80	0	0
Printing and Stationery	6	5	9
Postages and Carriage	32	12	5
Pilgrims' Expenses	63	9	5
Staff Salaries	156	0	0
General Office Expenses, including Books, Tracts, etc.	64	1	7
Light, Rent, Rates, etc.	34	18	2
Convention Expenses	14	7	6
Caretaker	9	3	6
By Cash in hand	0	16	1
„ Cash at Bank	39	10	6
	£501	4	11

RALPH LESTER, Treasurer.

Bible Students Committee, 204 Broadway Chambers, Letchworth, Herts.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 12, No. 5

OCTOBER, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"THE PRESENCE OF THE SON OF MAN"

"Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—Matthew xxvi : 41.

For various reasons many Bible students understand that our Lord referred to the Jewish nation under the symbolism of a fig-tree. He had been telling His disciples what He expected in the end of this age, when He would come again to receive His faithful to Himself and to give them a place as His Bride upon His Throne and to establish His Kingdom under the whole heavens for the blessing of Israel and all the world through Israel. He tells us that amongst the prominent signs of the closing of this age and the opening of the new will be the budding of the fig-tree—the springing forth of new life and new hope in the Jewish nation. And is not this condition of things manifesting itself to-day? Behold the Jews awakening and listening to the voice of Moses and the Prophets calling them to Palestine and to fresh hope in God and in the glorious promises to which they still are heirs as the natural seed of Abraham! "For the gifts and calling of God are things He does not repent of."—Rom. xi : 11-39.

The generation which witnesses these signs, and which witnesses this putting forth of the green leaves of hope by Israel will see to the full the accomplishment of the glorious change of Dispensation so long foretold. They will witness the passing of the reign of the Prince of Darkness and the inauguration of the glorious reign of the Prince of Light—Messiah with His glorious Bride class; not, however, that mankind will see Messiah with the natural eye, nor see even His glorious Bride, except with the eyes of their understanding. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" in this highest sense. Flesh and blood, however, will see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets in the Kingdom, and will have full testimony and practical demonstration of the Kingdom power in the great transformation that will be wrought and the restitution blessings which will be showered upon Israel and upon all who will come into harmony with God through Israel's New Covenant.—Jer. xxxi : 31.

The present ecclesiastical heavens and the present social earth will, indeed, both pass away in the great time of trouble with which this age will end; but following these, supplanting them, will come the new heavens and the new earth—the new religious institutions of the Lord—the Church in glory, and the new social order amongst mankind under the regulations for which we still pray, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth." Then the words of the great Teacher will surely have fulfillment.

The day and hour of the great change no one knew, not even the angels in heaven. The Master Himself declared that He did not know—but the Father alone. This should not, however, be understood to mean that the Son of God would not know about the matter later on, in due time, before He would begin His work of establishing the Kingdom. Neither would it prove that the angels of heaven would be in ignorance up to the last moment. Neither would it prove that God's people, living at the time for the establishment of the Kingdom, would not know. In fact, the Master declares that all living in proper harmony with Him would be kept informed respecting the Father's Plans as they became due. He declared that if they would partake of the things of God and follow after them, then they should have meat in due season.

In this very study the Great Teacher illustrates this principle, referring to Noah and Lot. Noah was informed respecting the coming change of Dispensation when he was instructed to build the ark one hundred and twenty years before the flood. Lot was instructed respecting the disaster coming upon the city in which he lived long enough in advance to escape from it ; likewise the Church of Christ is forewarned by this illustration and reminded that when they flee they shall not, like Lot's wife, covetously look back to the things which, under Divine condemnation, are to pass away, but shall escape to the mountain—flee to the Kingdom of God, which will at that time be in process of establishment.

Doubtless much of the immorality and sensuality which marked the days of Noah and the days of Lot will prevail in the world in the closing days of the present age. Other Scriptures so inform us, even though this study intimates nothing of the kind. This lesson brings to our attention another feature connected with our Lord's Second Advent—a feature which hitherto has been little noticed by Bible students. It informs us that His Second Coming will be unobserved, unknown to the world ; that He will be present in the world, and have to do with the gathering together of His saints and with the great time of trouble which will follow, yet be entirely invisible to men, recognizable only by outward signs of His presence and known only to the saintly few of humanity.

This feature of the lesson is veiled from the eyes of the average Bible student by a mistranslated word. The Greek for the word *coming* in verses 37 and 39 is *parousia*, which *does not mean coming*, but should be rendered *presence*, as of one who has already come.

This gives us a stupendous thought ! The great King of kings will for a time be present amongst men, invisible, unknown, except by a very few of His saints, to whom His presence will be revealed through the knock of prophecy and the opening of the eyes of their understanding to appreciate fulfilments. Everything will continue as ordinarily—the eating, drinking, planting, building and marrying, "as it was in the days of Noah." Had the world known in Noah's day the climax of trouble impending, many of the ordinary affairs of life would have been discontinued—and likewise here. The lesson is that as the world did not know in Noah's day, so the world will not know "in the days of the Son of Man"—in the presence of the Son of Man.

The field is the world, said our Lord, in explaining one of His parables. And so we should interpret it here. The Lord will gather some of His jewels from the field ; all not His jewels will be left. Two will be grinding at the mill preparing food for the household ; one will be taken and another left. The Lord's household is the Church, and the mills which prepare the food for the Church are theological. The intimation is that some theologians will be taken and some will be left, in the selective processes of the presence of the Son of Man—in the making up of His jewels.

St. Luke mentions another feature of this discourse. There shall be two in one bed ; the one shall be taken and the other left. A bed is a place for rest. All ecclesias profess to be resting places, where the weary and heavy-laden rest through faith in God and in His promises. The teaching, then, would be that not all who are resting will be amongst the elect, the gathered jewels. Some will be taken away, others will be left.

Following these illustrations of His presence and His work in the harvest time of this Gospel Age the Master exhorts all of His followers to watch, to be ready, to be on the alert, to be on the lookout, that they may be ready for His presence, that they may, in due time, discern His presence, and that they may be gathered or separated from the world and theological relationship, and from earthly church relationship, to the Master Himself. Some very earnest Bible students believe that we are in this harvest period now ; that the Son of Man, the glorified Messiah,

invisible to men, is even now present doing a searching and separating work in His Church, gathering His saints unto Himself preparatory to their change from earthly to heavenly conditions and preparatory to the inauguration of the great time of trouble, by which present institutions will be blotted out to make way for the Kingdom of righteousness, for which we have so long prayed. Many Bible students believe that the present unrest and sifting and shaking amongst Christians are but incidental to this work which the Son of Man, present amongst us, is accomplishing for the purpose of fully separating to Himself His very elect. Whether this proposition be agreed to or not, the fact still remains that thus matters will be whenever the time shall come, whenever the end of this age and the inauguration of the new shall take place.

The Master likens the institutions of the present time to a house or household. Elsewhere He informs us that Satan is the Prince of this world, the over-lord who tyrannizes the world, operating through the weaknesses and passions and depraved appetites and impaired reasoning faculties of humanity. Had the time of the Lord's Second Advent been clearly made known that knowledge would have so altered matters and affairs that the world would not have been taken by surprise in connection with the gathering of the Lord's jewels and the establishment of His Kingdom, and thus there would not be such a breaking-up in earth's affairs as is now impending; the Kingdom would be established, but not in the way in which God designed.

Our Lord likens His second presence, unknown to the world, to the presence of a thief in a house, unknown to its master. The Lord's saints in the world are His jewels. These He will take away and the loss to the world will be great. As the saintly ones will be gathered from the field, from the mill and from the bed into closer heart-union with the Lord, those left in the world, the mill and the bed, will be greatly disadvantaged—not because the jewel class are wealthy or have worldly greatness, for of these chosen saints it is distinctly stated that there are amongst them "not many great, not many rich, not many wise, not many noble." But these saintly ones are, nevertheless, the "salt" of the earth and the salt of the churches. After the taking away of the salt class, putrefaction and disintegration will speedily follow.

In view of all this, all who profess to be the Lord's people should earnestly watch, as well as pray; they should watch their words and thoughts and doings and see to it that they worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and that they do not idolize either dead or living men, or their creeds. Thus walking circumspectly in the footsteps of Jesus the saintly ones will be kept in the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole world to prove them.—Rev. iii: 10.

To the very best of our ability we have endeavoured to make clear that the *parousia* of our Lord is wholly different from His *epiphania*. Both of these Greek words are translated *coming* in our common Bible, but in the Greek they have very different significations. The word *parousia* signifies presence, but does not signify any outward manifestations of that presence. It is used in respect to the first stage of the Second Advent, in which our Lord is said to come "as a thief in the night" to reckon with His own servants and to take the faithful of them with Him to the heavenly mansion or condition prepared for them.

Our Lord's *parousia* and the gathering of the elect, we understand, has been in progress since October, 1874. It will continue until all of the "elect" shall have been gathered and glorified. In one sense our Lord will continue to be present as the world's King to the conclusion of the Millennial Age; but His *parousia*, in the sense of secrecy of presence, will terminate when, as the Scriptures declare, "He shall be *revealed* in flaming fire (judgments), taking vengeance on all who will not obey the Truth," but enlightening and revivifying all who will hear and, to the extent of their opportunity, obey His message. The

"THE PRESENCE OF THE SON OF MAN"

parousia is to the Church and for the Church only. The *epiphania* or *apokalupsis* of the Lord in power and great glory is not to the Church nor for the Church, but to the world and for the world. "When He shall thus appear we also shall appear with Him in glory," the Apostle declares.—Col. iii : 4.

Applying these things to the Atonement Work of this Gospel Age and the resulting restitution work of the Millennial Age, the matter is clear. Our Lord, as the great High Priest, ascended on high and applied His blood—the merit of His sacrifice—on behalf of the Church—the antitypical priests and Levites. Immediately, as shown in the type, after making atonement for our sins, the High Priest appeared at the door of the tabernacle—amongst His consecrated ones waiting at Pentecost in the upper room. His presence was manifested amongst them by the Holy Spirit, and the sacrificing of the Church, made acceptable by Jesus' blood, began. The work has progressed ever since with those who are spiritually seated with Christ in the holies. Soon the last of the great Priests' "members" will have suffered in the flesh.

Now, in the harvest time, He is present to gather the sleeping ones and to further test and perfect "us who are alive and remain." The High Priest is doing no work outside of the "holy" of the antitypical Tabernacle. His presence is unknown to the world. Soon Bridegroom and Bride will be ushered into the presence of the Father in eternal glory. The "marriage supper of the Lamb" will be celebrated, and then Bride and Bridegroom, Head and members complete in glory, will come forth to bless the world. That crowning day of joy to the Church will be followed by our Lord's *apokalupsis* and *epiphania*. To the world He shall be revealed in flaming fire of the time of trouble, but nevertheless with power and great glory, "and all His saints with Him." The great Mediator of the New Covenant will not be seen with the natural eye, nor by any except as their eyes of understanding open and they begin to grasp the situation. The first to "look upon Him whom they pierced" will be the natural Israelite. Brought into Covenant relationship with God through the "better Mediator than Moses," they will be trained, chastened, blessed and uplifted by Him during the Millennium; so that by the end of the Millennium they shall be ready for the everlasting Covenant condition of perfection in harmony with God.

SPECIAL NOTICES

HOME - GATHERINGS.—At Tunbridge Wells on 27th October, in Good Templars Hall, Salisbury Road. Particulars of Mr. F. Carter, The Haven, Woodlands Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. In connection with this gathering motor coaches for the convenience of the brethren will be run from Woolwich and Dartford, and will pick up, by arrangement, in S.E. London and North Kent. Full particulars from Bro. A. C. Hudson, 20 Darwin Road, Welling, Kent.

At Dewsbury on 6th October, in Y.M.C.A. Hall, Wakefield Road. Lunch and tea will be provided. Full particulars of Mr. A. Carrington, 6 Greenmount Street, Leeds, 11.

CONCORDANCE.—If anyone has either a Young's or Strong's Concordance

for disposal will they send particulars, price, etc., to Mr. T. Newton, 9 East View, Grappenhall, Warrington?

ENQUIRIES.—Will friends willing to follow-up enquiries (from the Kingdom Cards) in the following towns so inform us :—Norwich, Wymondham, Uxbridge, Doncaster, Tow Law, Woodley, Ross, Falkirk, Kinross, Bothwell, East Kilbride, Stranraer and Edinburgh.

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 Committee, 204 Broadway Chambers, Letchworth, Herts.

BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 12, No. 6

NOVEMBER, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"THE EARTH TREMBLED"

"His lightnings enlightened the world ; the earth saw, and trembled."—

Psalm xcvi : 4.

God's holy Prophets of the Old Testament and of the New give us numerous pictures of our day and the events now taking place in the world. The Psalmist David, taking prophetically a standpoint of observation future from his day declared, "The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof!" (Psalm xcvi : 1.) This began to be true when our Lord Jesus, having returned to earth to set up His Kingdom, took unto Himself His great power. Yet not until His Kingdom has been fully established in the earth will His glorious Reign be clearly recognized.

That the Prophet David is referring especially to the present time, from 1878 down to the full inauguration of the Kingdom, is clear from his succeeding statement : "Clouds and darkness are round about Him ; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His Throne. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about." How true it is that the storm clouds are all about us in this Day of the Kingly presence of Jehovah's great Representative, the Executor of His great Purposes ! Daily the darkness of gloom and perplexity deepens on every side for those not acquainted with Jehovah's purposes.

If we inquire, Why is this Day of His presence such a Time of Trouble and distress of nations ? the answer comes, Because righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His Throne, and He is judging the nations and weighing them in the balance. Judgment is being laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet (Isaiah xxviii : 17), to the intent that ere long the equitable principles of His Government may be established in all the earth. Not only will all unrighteousness be made manifest, but "a fire goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies." (Psalm xcvi : 3.) All the wilful and persistent opposers of His righteous course shall be "cut off," "destroyed," "burned up," "*devoured* with the fire of His jealousy."—Zeph. iii : 8.

This work of judgment and the consequent Time of Trouble being a necessary preparation for the glorious Reign of Righteousness that shall immediately succeed it, and all being wisely directed by the High and Holy One, who is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind," the Prophet bids us discern in it an abundant cause for rejoicing and gladness. (See Psalm xcvi : 9-13 ; xcvi : 1-9.) Indeed, there is great cause for rejoicing, not only among the saints, but in the whole earth ; and it is the privilege of the saints to tell the glad tidings to all who will hear.

But whether men hear or whether they forbear, let us tell it out, and by and by when the great afflictions of this Judgment hour begin to seal the instruction upon the hearts of men, then the blessed testimony will be as healing balm. They will see that He who smote them in His wrath, and scourged them in His hot displeasure, is also merciful and gracious, and unwilling that they should perish, but desirous rather that they should turn unto Him, obey His counsels and live.

It is in the midst of the clouds and darkness of this Day of Trouble incident to the setting up of Messiah's Kingdom that the statement of the Prophet is verified : "His lightnings enlightened the world ; the earth saw, and trembled." How apt is this figure ! Truly like lightning flashes in the midst of the gloom and

perplexity of this cloudy day, come to men the remarkable glimpses of the great principles of Truth and Righteousness in contrast with which the world's present disorder is so manifest! A flash of lightning from the obscured Throne discloses here one error, and there another, and another.

Soon the whole world will be aroused. Already it is largely so. Every day adds to the intensity of the trouble, and the whole world trembles for fear, not knowing what the outcome will be, but dreading the worst. The editorials of some of our great newspapers read as if written from the standpoint of Present Truth, so remarkably do they foretell what will be. Revolution and black anarchy are freely prophesied, to precede a great reconstruction period. The great French Revolution is referred to in contrast, as an April shower compared to a destructive hurricane of the tropics. How truly are the Master's words concerning this time being fulfilled—"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for apprehension of the things coming on the earth!"—Luke xxi : 26.

It is remarkable that these lightning flashes are continually calling attention to the Word of God, to the Golden Rule, to the equal rights and privileges of human brotherhood, to the faultless character and loving and self-sacrificing disposition of Jesus Christ, to the Law of Love in contrast with the law of selfishness everywhere prevailing. It seems remarkable, too, how often in these days of war and stress *worldly* men are drawing attention to the prophecies of the Scriptures, and wondering whether present conditions, and the troubles which all intelligent people see just ahead, are not fulfilments of these Bible prophecies. All this is leading men to reason of righteousness and of coming judgments (Acts xxiv : 25), when they hope and believe that in some way present wrongs will be righted and righteousness established.

By the sudden, and now increasingly frequent, flashes of light which issue from the storm clouds that surround the invisible, spiritual presence of our glorious King, these principles of the Word of God are being illuminated and brought to the front for the consideration of all men. They are discussed not only in the daily press, but in our popular periodicals, in the official labour organs, in stores and factories, in counting-rooms, in the market-places, at public gatherings. Even heathen nations are discussing them, and are contrasting both the daily lives of professed Christians and the present course of the professed Christian nations with the character and the teachings of the great Founder of the Christian religion, extolling the latter and ridiculing the former.

As a result of God's lightning flashes which are enlightening the world, there is great commotion everywhere manifest. Never before have such conditions prevailed. There are ominous mutterings of dissatisfaction, unrest; and the whole current of popular thought throughout the earth is set in a revolutionary direction. The lightning flashes are revealing the corruption in the world, the dishonesty in high places, and showing men that they are living far below the dignity of manhood. But how to right things they are not able to see; and the conflicting ideas, voices, theories and threats, reveal the facts which the Prophets foretold; for "the nations are angry," "the heathen [Gentiles, peoples] rage," and the whole earth trembles from the din of a wordy conflict and from the blows which even now are beginning to arouse the world.

But in the midst of all this trouble and tumult in the world, what is the attitude of the Lord's truly consecrated and faithful people? Are they, too, in fear? As the judgments of the Lord fall heavily upon the wayward and disobedient so that the whole earth reels and staggers as a drunken man (Psalms cvii : 27), are the saints in dismay and distress? Ah, no; for it is written, "Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of Thy judgments, O Lord!" It is the "sinners in Zion" that are "afraid." Psalm xci and xlvii show why the saints rejoice and are restful of heart while others weep and lament. It is because



"THE EARTH TREMBLED"

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they "dwell in the secret place of the Most High [represented by the Holy of the typical Tabernacle], and abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (as the typical Tabernacle was covered by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night). It is because God is their "Refuge and Strength." "The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence Him, and He will show them His Covenant."—Psalm xxv : 14.

These dwellers in the secret place of the Most High are provided in these perilous times with a clear knowledge of the Divine Plan, with its times and seasons, which enables them to see both the necessity for the present method of Divine discipline upon the world and also the peaceable fruits of righteousness which shall result therefrom. In the midst of the storm and battle of this great Day of the Lord, they hear the commanding voice of the Lord of armies, and their hearts rejoice ; for they have full confidence in His ability to bring order out of all the confusion. They realize that in the judgments of this Day it is the Lord that speaks from Heaven—from the high place of authority and control ; therefore they give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness (Psalm xxx : 4)—of His Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power, which insure His doing all things well.

But the Psalmist intimated that, while the world at large would be in ignorance of the real portent of present events, and therefore in fear and dread, and while the saints, with clear knowledge, will be rejoicing and lifting up their heads, because they see the outcome, some—heedless both of the world's distress and of the Voice which speaketh from Heaven—will still boast themselves of their idols. He says, "Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols." These words call to mind the warning of the Apostle Paul : "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh from Heaven." (Hebrews xii : 25.) St. Paul addresses these words to those who know the Lord's voice and recognize it, warning them against at any time refusing longer to heed it, when He speaks in wrath and judgment.

But alas ! there are some who heed not the warning, and who, although they recognize the voice of the Lord, refuse longer to obey it. They turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven, towards the idols which their wayward hearts have set up instead of God. These "graven images" are indeed the work of their own hands—the human philosophies, and science—"falsely so called"—of this evil day. And those who reject the testimony of God, when once they have heard it, invariably fall into some *one* of the many forms of idolatrous worship now so prevalent ; or else they drift restlessly from one to another of them.

All such shall surely be confounded ; they shall be put to shame and confusion ; their idols shall be destroyed. The wilful sinner, once enlightened and blessed with the hallowed influences of the Holy Spirit and the Truth, shall not, the Apostle declared, escape the just punishment for his deeds. Heb. xii : 14-19 points out this danger to the children of God, and warns them of the fearful penalties of turning away from the holy commandment delivered unto them. The Apostle Paul here depicts the scenes accompanying the inauguration of the old Law Covenant, and shows it to be a picture of events which will accompany the establishment of the New Law Covenant, at the close of this present Age, under the greater than Moses —our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Mountain (Kingdom) of the Lord's House is now being established in the top of the mountains, superseding the great kingdoms of this world, and is being exalted above the hills—the smaller governments. (Isaiah ii : 2.) Clouds and darkness, trouble and perplexity and distress of nations are round about ; and the thunderings and lightnings are making all the earth to tremble as did Israel at Mt. Sinai. (Exodus xix : 1-25.) And now—since the Spring of 1878—God has "set His King upon His Holy Hill of Zion." (Psalm ii : 6.) Therefore, if those who refused to obey Moses, and presumptuously disgraced the ceremonies of the

"THE EARTH TREMBLED"

occasion at Sinai, met with instant death, how can we escape if we disregard the voice of the great Mediator of the New Covenant, and the remarkable circumstances which now accompany its establishment?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

We see the deepening clouds of trouble. We hear the thunder tones of judgment that "call the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof" (Psalm 1: 1)—from the east to the west. We see the lightning flashes of Truth and Righteousness, and observe how the whole earth is now in the shaking process which will eventuate in the complete overthrow of all existing institutions, systems and governments. Present events indeed speak in trumpet tones. How shall we regard these things? Surely, dear brethren, it will be with thoughtful and reverent hearts! Surely we shall watch and pray, lest "a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it!" (Hebrews iv: 1.) We shall guide our course with the greatest carefulness that we may make our calling and election sure.

In this eventful period everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that only the unshakable things of truth and righteousness may remain. (Hebrews xii: 25-29.) Every one called to share in the coming Kingdom must be a lover of righteousness, one who will courageously and lovingly stand for the Truth however much it may be spoken against. All others will be shaken out of this company. The snares and delusions of this "evil day" are accomplishing this very work. In the end only the true will remain. "Seeing that we look for these things [let us] be diligent, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter iii: 14), ready for the entrance into that rest which yet remains.

SPECIAL NOTICES

SPECIAL OFFER.—Preparatory to the removal of the Office from Letchworth to London, we are offering to supply the items set out below at the special rates mentioned, subject to their being unsold at the time the order reaches us:—

New Stock: Reprints (cloth) (surplus), vols. 1 and 7 only, at 2/6 each. Scripture Studies (cloth) (surplus), vols. 5 and 6 only, at 1/- each. Ditto (cloth), vols. 2 and 3 (somewhat confused in binding, but complete), for 9d. the two vols. Ditto, Sets of Six (cloth), 6/9 the set. "God's Covenants" (Barton) at 2d. per copy. Tracts: "Thy Kingdom Come" at 6/6 per 1,000; "Kingdom" Cards at 3/6 per 1,000.

Also "used" volumes in good order: Scripture Studies (cloth), vols. 2 to 6 only, at 6d. each. Ditto, Sets 1 to 6, at 4/6 the set. Ditto, Sets (as new), 5/6 the set. Ditto, Sets (karatol), 6/6 the set. Question Books (rather worn) at 2d. each. Bible, large size, 2/6. Bible Educator, vols. 1 to 4 (cloth), for 2/6 the lot. Greek-English Lexicon (Liddell & Scott) large size, 2/6. "Watch Towers" (in binders), 1895 to 1916, for 10/6 the lot.

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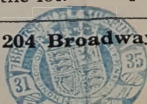
SPECIMEN LITERATURE: We are willing to provide, free, specimen copies of "The Herald," and the "Bible Students Monthly," also such Tracts as are available now. Some brethren find these very useful to pass on to those leaving the Society. Others give them to likely readers, and also to sick folk they visit.

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.

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 Committee, 204 Broadway Chambers, Letchworth, Herts.



BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY

Vol. 12, No. 7

DECEMBER, 1935

OUR MONTHLY DISCOURSE

"WHO IS WORTHY?"

"Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."

In the visions of the Apocalypse we read of a wonderful scroll in the right hand of the great King who sits upon the throne of universal dominion. This scroll is a forceful representation of the divine plan, originally existing only in the mind of God, and which could not be made known to men until some one was found worthy to open the seals and display it to view. But "no one in heaven nor in earth was able to open the scroll, neither to look thereon," until one came whom the Revelator describes as "The lion [the strong one] of the tribe of Judah, the root of David," of whom the testimony is given—"Thou art worthy to take the scroll and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred and people and nation; and hast made them unto our God a kingdom and priesthood; and they shall reign on the earth." Rev. v: 1-5, 9, 10.

Excepting the bare promise (written on the outside of the scroll—verse 1) of salvation through the Seed of the woman, nothing could be known of the wonderful scheme for human restitution until the Son of God, having left the glory of the spiritual nature, took our nature and by the sacrifice of Himself redeemed us from death. Then, having His righteousness imputed to us by faith, we are counted worthy to look upon the scroll as He opens the seals one after another.

Great was the favour bestowed upon the Strong One of the tribe of Judah, in being permitted to open the seals—to carry out and make manifest the grand designs of infinite love—and great is the privilege of those who are permitted to look thereon as the seals are opened. It is not our purpose here, however, to treat of the peculiar symbols relating to the opening of the seals, but rather of what constitutes worthiness in us to look thereon, and what favour of God to us is implied in this privilege of looking.

The knowledge of God's purpose is due only to those able and anxious to co-operate with Him in their development; for God does not display His plans to satisfy mere idle curiosity. First, then, if we would comprehend what is revealed within the scroll we must have faith in what is written on the outside—the promised redemption through the precious blood of Christ—and must be sincerely desirous of knowing the details of God's plan in order to an earnest co-operation with it. In other words, there must be the earnest inquiry arising from a heart grateful for the promise of life through the Redeemer—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" Such, and such only, are worthy to know, and such only ever come to see, in the sense of the understanding and appreciating, the deep things of God written within the scroll. Such are the called according to the divine purpose, to be educated in and to serve the truth. Such are the righteous for whom the light (truth) is sown. Such was our Lord's attitude when He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." (Heb. x: 7.) He was meek and lowly of heart and ever ready to render implicit obedience to the will of God; and it is to those who are similarly meek that He was sent to preach the good tidings (Isaiah lxi: 1)—to open the

scroll. "The meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His way." (Psa. xxv: 9.) If any man have this evidence of worthiness—this acquaintance with the truth—let him rejoice in his privilege and by his works manifest his continued worthiness.

This worthiness is inquired for not only at the beginning, but all along the path of light. If we are not found worthy by the various tests applied from time to time, we cannot proceed in the path of light; and unless the unfaithful ones arouse themselves to greater diligence and watchfulness, the light that already is in them will become darkness. And how great, how intense must be the darkness of one cast out of light! (Matt. vi: 23.) To find the glorious hope that once inspired our hearts slipping away and the truth whereon we built that hope beginning to seem like an old song or an idle tale, or as relics of the past to be displaced at any time by any plausible subterfuge of error which our wily adversary may be pleased to palm off as advanced divine truth, are indications that should arouse any one who discovers them to a realization of the fact that he is going into darkness—a darkness that will only become the more intense as he slips and slides along the backward track.

All along the way, as we have said, we will find tests applied to prove our worthiness to proceed from knowledge to knowledge and from grace to grace. Who is worthy?—worthy to receive the truth, worthy to continue in the truth, worthy to suffer and to endure hardness as a good soldier for the truth, and finally to be exalted to power and great glory when truth and righteousness shall be exalted in the earth and their glorious triumph begun?

Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke ix: 23.) At the very beginning of our course we each found the cross confronting us, and had we not taken it up we would not have been counted worthy even to look with intelligent appreciation into the precious truths of God's plan. And as we advance from step to step and find the truth increasingly precious—sweeter than honey from the honeycomb—we have these additional evidences of continued worthiness and should greatly rejoice in them as such. Our possession of these truths has thus far proved us meek enough to discard the popular theology of the nominal Church and be counted as heretics, turncoats, fanatics, cranks, or whatever our former friends are, in their ignorance, now pleased to term us. And it has proved us meek enough to bear willingly the Lord's approval, and of seeing by faith the great blessings in store for us if faithful unto the end.

But "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" for sudden and sharp will be many of the tests applied to prove our continued faithfulness. The world, the flesh and the devil all conspire to allure, ensnare and overcome us. The world will present its allurements through friends or wife or husband or children. They will try to encroach upon the clearly defined line which you have drawn between yourself and the world. Then the flesh will grow weary in fighting the good fight of faith, weary of the reproaches of the world, weary of the alienation of former friends and weary of the self-denying, sacrificing and daily cross-bearing life. Then if you turn aside for a moment to ponder on these things the devil will quickly see his opportunity and will cunningly devise some trial specially suited to your peculiar condition of mind, and a crisis comes in your experience, the result of which will prove the exact strength of your devotion to God and His truth. These tests God permits and even desires to have come upon us, in order that we may be thoroughly tried and proved either worthy or unworthy of the great reward He has in keeping for those who remain faithful unto death.

The Lord is seeking His precious jewels. Many of them are indeed diamonds in the rough. The real diamond is a noble, loyal, faithful character, devoted and uncompromising in its allegiance to God. Sometimes the circumstances of life have

deprived such of education or culture and have left them only sufficient means for the barest necessities of life. But no matter, God's eye is on them : character is what He is looking for, and in due time, when that character is sufficiently developed, confirmed, tested and proved worthy of exaltation, He can and will add to it all the glories of knowledge and wisdom and grace and beauty. But first He will subject it to all the necessary tests. If it is a true diamond it will receive and it will also transmit to others the light of divine truth. Nothing so gloriously reflects the truth as the worthy character of the true and faithful saint.

Another way of testing a diamond is to put it under pressure. If it is a real diamond it will stand the pressure, for the diamond is the hardest substance known ; but if it is not a real diamond it will go to pieces and thus prove itself spurious. So God allows us to come under the constant pressure of years of toil and care and self-sacrifice to see how we will endure ; and blessed is that diamond-proved character that endures to the end.—Jas. i : 12 ; Matt. x : 22.

Sometimes the tests come in the way of trials of faith, and we are called upon to prove ourselves whether we be in the faith (2 Cor. xiii : 5) when some subtle errors are presented to us as advanced truth. But if we know the voice of the " Good Shepherd " we will not be easily beguiled. We remember the inspired counsel, " To the law and the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah viii : 20) ; and to the law and the testimony we go, and, relying implicitly upon this as the infallible teaching of the Spirit of God, we are enabled to arrive at definite, clear and positive doctrine. We are not left in doubt as to what is truth, but we are enabled to give a solid Scriptural reason for the hope that is in us, on which hope we dare implicitly to rest our faith, and with humble boldness to successfully withstand the assaults of error. But oh, how dead to selfish ambition, how fully devoted to the will of God such must be !

Let us, dearly beloved, as we realize that thus far God has counted us worthy to look upon the scroll of His plan which has been unsealed for us by our blessed Lord Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, prove our worthiness to continue to look therein and to read the wondrous things of His law, by faithful obedience and loyalty to it in all things. Let us not undervalue our great privilege in being counted worthy to suffer some reproach and some hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake ; and also in being counted worthy to have some part in the blessed ministry of reflecting the light of divine truth ; let us prove ourselves jewels of rarest value, diamonds indeed, heartily receiving and beautifully transmitting to others the light of truth, and faithfully enduring the severest pressure that God may permit to come upon us ; for, if faithful in these small things we shall in due time be counted worthy also to reign with Christ in power and great glory. Let us not be like some who have only a little good earth on the surface of their hearts while the heart is really hard and stony. Let the good seed of divine truth sink down and take deep root, and then let it branch out in the light and bear its abundant fruitage to the Master's glory. So shall we be accounted worthy to see the King in His beauty and to live and reign with Him and His beloved bride and joint-heir. And when to the " worthy Lamb that was slain " the voices of the multitudes ascribe blessing and honour and glory and power, they will also exclaim, " Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."—Rev. v : 13 ; xix : 7.

To this end it is the duty of the New Creatures to detect the imperfections, errors and shortcomings of the flesh, and to go immediately to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace with them, to obtain mercy and forgiveness. Only those with tender consciences will keep their garments unspotted. The failure to do this seems to be the reason why many fail to make their " calling and election sure." They are not particular about these *little things* ; they are careless of opportunities, etc. Thus their robes become spotted and quite unfit for the marriage ceremony.

"WHO IS WORTHY?"

The Scriptures show us that this class will go through a time of great trouble, during which they will do what they failed to do at the proper time—"wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii : 14.) By this process of purification, they will come up and will bear palm branches instead of wearing crowns of glory. Instead of being members of the Temple class, they will be servants in the Temple.

The Robe of Christ's Righteousness, the figurative expression which means the imputation of the merit of Christ to those who are accepted as members of His Body, is not only styled "the Wedding Garment" (Matt. xxii : 11-14), but is also beautifully pictured as the Bridal Robe (Psa. xlv : 13, 14.) There we read that the Bride will be brought before the great King in garments of needlework. Thus we get the thought that while this Robe is provided for us when first we become members of the family of God and of the prospective Bride of Christ, nevertheless, there is an individual work for each to accomplish.

This special work is represented as *embroidery*. The design we as Christians are to trace with painstaking zeal ; for it requires great skill, close attention. This Robe of Christ's Righteousness, which is represented as being ours in the sight of God, will continue to be ours throughout the everlasting future. It will no longer be ours by imputation, but by right of possession. By that time we shall have made our characters, by the grace and assistance of the Lord, copies of the character of God's dear Son, our Redeemer. Then we shall no longer need the imputation of Christ's merit to cover our blemishes ; for the new body which we shall receive in the Resurrection will be without spot or wrinkle—without blemish. It will be *perfect*.

SPECIAL NOTICES

ELECTION of COMMITTEE.—The following brethren have been elected to serve on the Bible Students Committee for the current year :—Brothers Absalom, G., Couling, S. A., Cruickshank, A., Holmes, T., Hudson, A. O., Morrall, W. H., and Smith, C. R. Brother Smith has been elected to serve as Secretary for the same period.

REMOVAL OF OFFICE.—The brethren are asked to note that all correspondence for the Bible Students Committee on and after 3rd December should be addressed to 21 Werter Road, Putney, London, S.W.15. The office will be removed from Letchworth to that address, and the work in the future conducted from there.

Brother Shearn will be very pleased to hear from friends who may wish to write him at any time. Please address : Mr. H. J. Shearn, 20 Sollershot Hall, Letchworth, Herts.

ANONYMOUS.—We warmly thank the dear friend who has sent us 10s. for "the Lord's service."

CHRISTMAS CARDS.—Assorted Scriptural Christmas Cards, at 1/3 & 2/3 per doz. are available (at 21 Werter Rd.) for the use of friends desiring same.

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DIVINE PLAN.—The brief edition of Vol. I can be had in the Swedish language, price 1s.

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