



All About Jesus

E. J. Waggoner

*Final Ministry,
Crucifixion,
Resurrection*

VOLUME 2 - DEMONSTRATION

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Present Truth
Signs of the Times

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Introduction

IT IS with great joy that I release this large collection of articles by E. J. Waggoner (1855-1916), gathered and grouped according to the events in the life of Jesus Christ.

When I first pulled all the articles from the *Present Truth* periodicals, I was surprised to find how much writing Waggoner had done, little of which had been collected and published. Because the larger historical works of A. T. Jones (1850-1923) had been published, along with some of his other books, I had the impression that Waggoner's written contribution to the Adventist gospel message was smaller. How wrong this has proved to be!

My rough estimate is that Waggoner probably wrote twice as much as Jones, and on a wider range of Biblical topics (although Jones specialized in History and Religious Liberty). Comparing these two men to Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph who shared his rich blessing, Waggoner was the Ephraim—the “more fruitful” one. And like Ephraim, Waggoner was also the younger of the two men.

Initially, I was not sure how to organize the many thousands of pages of articles. Eventually, it became clear that both Waggoner and Jones' articles fit into twelve categories: Gospel, Health, Life/Death/Spiritualism, Money/Work, Religious Liberty, Bible, Church, Holy Spirit, Law/Sabbath, Name of God, Prophetic Word, and Education. And I sorted them accordingly. However, it then became clear that the “Gospel” volume for Waggoner would still extend over many thousands of pages.

I was able to separate some articles out into other books, such as the volumes on *John*, *Romans*, *Hebrews*, *Prayer*, *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Paul and the Early Church*. Another series of articles were collected into the small book, *The Miracles of Jesus*.

This still left me with thousands of pages of articles. Finally, it occurred to me that the bulk of the Gospel articles that were based on the Four Gospels, could fit into a volume on the Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ, similar to Ellen G. White's book, *The Desire of Ages*, though obviously not written in such a chronological fashion. It would be more of a devotional/theological book (sorted chronologically), rather

than a chronological history.

And so this book came to be. At around 2000 pages, it is a remarkable collection of Adventist religious thought from the 1888 Gospel era. I have divided it into two volumes to make it more manageable:

- **Volume 1:** The Gospel Events, Parables, and Teachings of Jesus from His birth to the completion of His ministry in Galilee. The “Declaration” of the Gospel.
- **Volume 2:** The Final Ministry in Judea (and elsewhere), Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus. The “Demonstration” of the Gospel.

In placing the articles on the timeline, I have followed the charts on the website, www.gospelparallels.com, and also some materials from our church’s Missionary Seminar of 2005 (the charts/maps are by Andreas Dura; the timeline by Günther Cerncie). I believe that the timeline used in the Missionary Seminar charts followed, wherever possible, the chronology used in the book, *The Desire of Ages*.

I have included a few of the articles from *The Miracles of Jesus*, and *The Lord’s Prayer*; but in most cases, I have avoided duplicating articles that are already in other collections.

I have not included any of the articles from Waggoner’s *Studies in the Gospel of John*. Although they would have fit within the scheme of this book, they would have added many more pages, and since they are complete in themselves (and one article follows the next), I did not want to break them up. With a few exceptions, I have collected articles in this book that did not belong to a previous series.

The articles chosen for this volume were selected on the basis that they started with a verse from one of the four gospels or were wholly concerned with a Gospel event. There are over 450 articles included, written over a span of about 20 years.

Jesus, as the life and hope of mankind, and especially as the pattern for the final generation, was the burden of Waggoner’s writing, and this is the main theme that runs through them all. It is indeed, *all about Jesus*.

Revelation 14

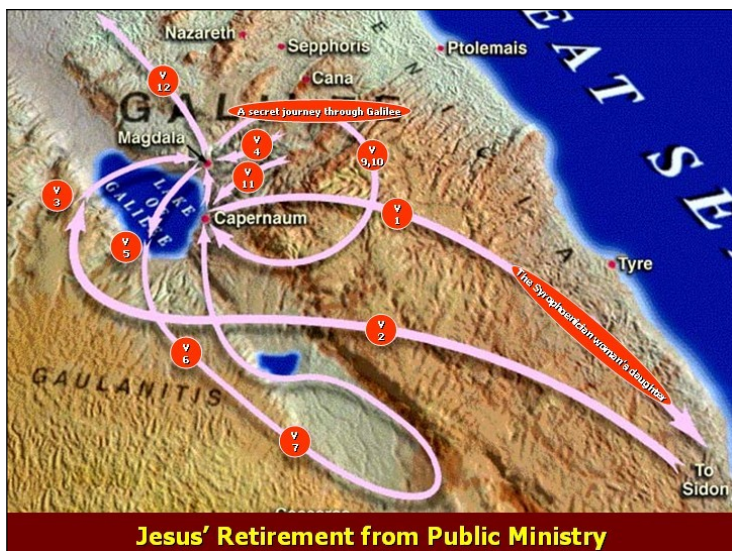
⁴ These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

Retirement

*The Retirement phase of Jesus' ministry
is a period of about 6 months
covering the Spring and Summer of 30 AD,
during which Jesus withdrew somewhat from intense
activity, and spent more time instructing His disciples.*

*After John the Baptist's death,
John's disciples had come to Christ, to link up with Him.
As well, many had left Jesus
after their attempt to make Him king failed.
For these reasons, Jesus was looking for a period of quiet during which He
could further instruct His disciples.*

There were three "rest" breaks during this period.
(1) *The first, when they went up north into Syro-Phoenicia.
The Canaanite woman's daughter was healed on this trip,
but no other miracles are recorded.*
(2) *After this visit, they went back to Decapolis, east of the Jordan,
and after some ministry there, they went up north to Caesarea Philippi,
which was in more Gentile territory.*
Here Jesus spent some time instructing His disciples.
(3) *After this, they returned back to Galilee, and after the transfiguration,
made their way quietly to Capernaum,
where Jesus gave more instruction to the disciples.*



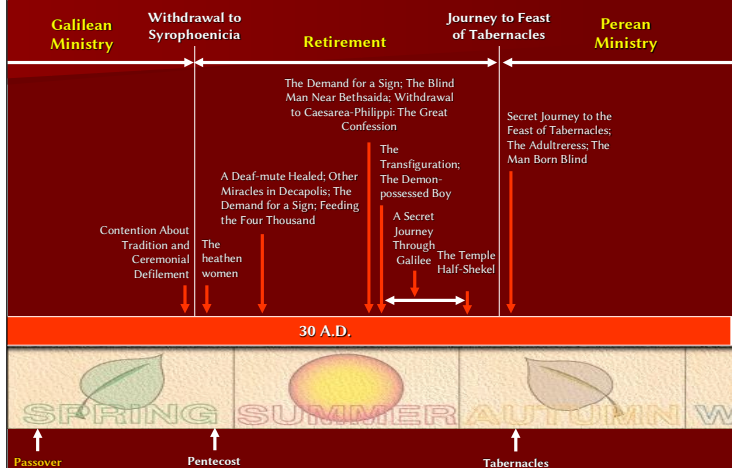
Jesus' Retirement from Public Ministry

Retirement

- V 1 Withdrawal to Phoenicia
- V 2 A Deaf-mute Healed; Other Miracles in Decapolis
- V 3 Feeding the Four Thousand
- V 4 The Demand for a Sign
- V 5 The Blind Man Near Bethsaida
- V 6 Withdrawal to Caesarea Philippi
- V 7 The Great Confession
- V 8 Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness
- V 9 The Transfiguration
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- V 11 A Secret Journey to Galilee
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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	DA	Ch.
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The Retirement from Public Ministry



Summary

Here is a short point-by-point summary of the next three Sections (Retirement, Feast of Tabernacles, and Perean Ministry), ending with the Triumphal Entry, which marks Christ's final week ending with the Crucifixion. This helped me get a better understanding of the order of events, and perhaps it will help you also.

A. Leading up to the Retirement

After the feeding of the 5000, they try to make Christ king, but He refuses. He sends the apostles on the lake with the boat. Later that night, Jesus walks on the waves to them, and eventually they land on the other side. The people want to know how He got there, and want to see more miracles. Instead, Jesus presents the spiritual kingdom, and most of them leave Him. This was a turning point, and the end of most of the Galilean ministry. Shortly after this, because He did not come to the Passover, the Jewish leaders sent out some Scribes and Pharisees to ask Him about washing of hands, etc. After this we enter the "retirement" phase.

B. Retirement

1. Jesus withdraws into Tyre and Sidon looking for the retirement He had tried to find by withdrawing to a desert area near Bethsaida at the northern end of the lake of Galilee (but at that time, the people had flocked to Him, and the feeding of the 5000 took place).
2. He heals the Canaanite woman's daughter. *Matthew* 15:21-28, *Mark* 7:24-30.
3. Jesus leaves Tyre and Sidon and comes to the Sea of Galilee through the midst of the borders of Decapolis (around the east side of the Lake). *Mark* 7:31. Decapolis is a group of ten cities south-east of Galilee. He heals the deaf mute. *Mark* 7:31-37.
4. At Decapolis, the demoniacs of Gergesa had been healed about 7 months previous, and since then they had spread their story, so when Jesus returned to this area, the people flocked to hear Him and have their sick healed. Jesus and the disciples remained for 3 days, until their food ran out, and then Jesus fed all 4000 of them by a miracle.
5. Jesus then crosses the Sea of Galilee westward to Magdala, and

is met with a group of Pharisees and Sadducees who demand a sign. He says no sign will be given but the sign of Jonah.

6. They get back in the boats and cross the Sea of Galilee north-east to Bethsaida. They then travel north to somewhere around Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asks the disciples who men say He is. Peter makes his confession of faith. *Matthew 16:13, Mark 8:27, Luke 9:18.*
7. Jesus gives instructions about the nature of the Church (the "keys" of the kingdom, not to be called Rabbi, etc.)
8. Jesus starts to unveil His crucifixion. *Mark 8:31-33, Matthew 16:21-28, Luke 9:22-27.* next warning: (); third warning: (Matthew 20:17-19, Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34); fourth warning (Matthew 26:1-2).
9. "Take up your cross," "whoever loves his life will lose it" "The Son of Man will come and reward every man according to his works," "some will not taste death till they see Him come." (the disciples are troubled with the thought that He may be subjected to a cruel death and leave them in darkness). They could not understand how His death would make His kingdom so secure that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.
10. They travel back south, along the shores of the Sea of Galilee for six days.
11. Jesus takes the three disciples apart and up a mountain. The transfiguration takes place. When they come down from the mountain, the demon in the boy is cast out.
12. Return to Capernaum (northwestern tip of Sea of Galilee) quietly, for the instruction of the disciples. For the second time, Jesus attempts to prepare them for his crucifixion, mentions that they will go to Jerusalem. *Mark 9:30-32, Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:43-45.* The Disciples assume He is going to be crowned king, and begin a struggle over who is the greatest, and linger behind Him.
13. At Capernaum, they run into the temple tax problem, which Jesus solves by having Peter pull a coin out of a fish that he caught.
14. Then Jesus asks the disciples what they were discussing when they lingered behind Him, and they don't want to say (it was an argument about who should be the greatest). So He takes a

child and teaches them about humility. *Matthew* 18:1-35; *Mark* 9:33-50; *Luke* 9:46-50.

C. At the Feast of Tabernacles

1. Since the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus had not attended the annual feasts. His brothers urge Him to go to the feast of Tabernacles. Jesus doesn't go with them, but comes by himself, on an unfrequented route. He appears suddenly in the temple and teaches the people for many days, finishing with "If any man thirst..." *John* 7.
2. The priests and rulers try to entrap Jesus with words. The woman caught in adultery is brought forward. *John* 8.
3. Jesus presents himself as "the light of the world." There ensues an argument about descent from Abraham. *John* 8.
4. Jesus heals a blind man. They excommunicate the blind man. Jesus warns the Pharisees about their spiritual blindness. *John* 9.
5. Jesus teaches, "I am the good shepherd." *John* 10.

D. Perean Ministry

1. They make a final trip back to Galilee. This trip is not mentioned, but we find them departing from Galilee shortly after, so we must conclude that they traveled there. *Matthew* 19:1-2.
2. The Last Journey from Galilee takes place, performed openly to draw attention. Messengers are sent to Samaria, but rejected. *Luke* 9:51-56.
3. Jesus ends up in Perea first. "A considerable part of the closing months of Christ's ministry was spent in Perea, the province on 'the farther side of Jordan' from Judea. Here the multitude thronged His steps, as in His early ministry in Galilee, and much of His former teaching was repeated." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 488.
4. Most of the events and teachings of this period are recorded in *Luke*. The gospel of *John* states that Jesus returned to the area He was baptized (*John* 20:40-42) and "many people believed in Him beyond the Jordan." John the Baptist worked near Perea (Bethabara and Aeon, *John* 1:28, 3:23).
5. Jesus sends out the Seventy, but without the restriction to only

visit the Jewish cities: the Seventy go to Samaria also. *Luke* 10:1-24.

6. Many parables and teachings take place in Perea over the next 3 months. *Luke* chapters 10 to 19.
7. Jesus makes a trip to Bethany to raise Lazarus. *John* 11.
8. After the raising of Lazarus, the Jewish leaders plot to put Christ to death, so He withdraws to Ephraim, north-east of Jerusalem. *John* 11:54.
9. From there, they set out on the final trip to Jerusalem. For the third time, Jesus tells His disciples about His death. James and John request the highest places in the kingdom. The others get angry. Jesus lays out again the principles of His kingdom: "...it shall not be so among you." *Matthew* 20:17-28; *Mark* 10:32-45.
10. Jesus heals Blind Bartimaeus and meets with Zacchaeus. *Luke* 18:35 to 19:10.
11. Jesus reaches Bethany six days before the Passover. The feast at Simon's house takes place. For the fourth time, Jesus warns the disciples about His approaching death. *Matthew* 26:1-5. Judas makes a deal with the priests to betray Christ. *Matthew* 26:14-16.
12. The Triumphal entry takes place. This marks the beginning of the Passion week, which is covered in the four sections following the Perean ministry:
 - a. Closing Ministry of Jesus at Jerusalem
 - b. The Olivet Discourse
 - c. The Lord's Supper and Gethsemane
 - d. The Betrayal, Trial, and Crucifixion

1. The Woman of Canaan

Present Truth, March 24, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-school Lessons

Timeline: V-1 (Withdrawal to Phoenicia)

Matthew 15:21-31

A FULL understanding of the lesson intended to be taught in the experience recorded in this scripture, can be had only by remembering that the Jews regarded the Canaanites with the utmost contempt, even refusing to speak with them, and that even the disciples of Jesus had not wholly cast aside this wicked prejudice. They had not yet comprehended the fact that:

1 John 4

¹⁴ The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

The woman knew that Jesus was a Jew and recognized Him as one, in addressing Him as a “son of David,” and she well knew how the Jews regarded her nation. But she had heard of the compassion shown by Jesus to those who were in trouble, and resting her hope upon His character rather than upon His nationality, she presented her case to Him, saying,

Matthew 15

²² Have mercy upon me, O Lord, you Son of David; for my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

She well knew that she had nothing in herself upon which to base a claim for help, for was she not “a woman of Canaan”? From the standpoint of the Jews, here was a double reason for answering her “not a word;” for on another occasion even the disciples...

John 4 [RV]

²⁷ ...marveled that He was speaking with a woman.

And she was not simply “a woman,” but she was “a woman of Canaan.” But her plea for help was not put upon the ground of her worthiness but of her need. It was the same old cry of

the soul,

Psalm 31

⁹ Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble.

Psalm 51

¹ Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to your lovingkindness.

Seeing that Jesus made no immediate response to her request, the disciples gave expression to their feelings of prejudice and said,

Matthew 15

²³ Send her away.

This openly declared attitude of the disciples toward the woman and her request gave force to the very lesson which Jesus intended to teach them by His own answer to her cry for help. How would they be ready to...

Mark 16

¹⁵ Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,

—if they were not taught, by an almost extreme example as well as by precept, that...

Romans 3

²² ...there is no difference.

And yet the reply of Jesus to them would seem, as interpreted by them, to strengthen their position.

Matthew 15

²⁴ I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Yes, so they thought; and why therefore should He not send away this “woman of Canaan”? They were yet to learn that:

Romans 9

⁸ They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted

for the seed.

The Scriptures were full of this teaching:

Isaiah 11

¹⁰ In that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek.

Isaiah 41

¹ Behold my Servant, whom I uphold: my elect, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Psalms 67

¹ God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us;

² That your way may be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations.

But then, as now, the plainest scriptures, when read in the light of a prejudice, are not permitted to convey the truth to the heart. It is often necessary to ask, as did Jesus,

Luke 10

²⁶ What is written in the law? how do you read?

“Whoever sought the Saviour, ready to believe on Him when He should be manifested to them, were of the lost sheep whom He had come to gather in His fold.”¹

In response to the woman’s second petition, “Lord, help me,” Jesus made His first direct reply to her urgent entreaty:

Matthew 15

²⁶ It is not meet to take the children’s bread [loaf], and cast it to dogs.

The woman’s answer gained her request:

“Yes, Lord, you speak truly and I accept your statement of the case; but I do not ask for the loaf: I only ask for the

¹ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume Two, p. 303.

crumbs, and you say that they do belong to the dogs. I am utterly unworthy, but the thing which I ask is such a little thing to you, and yet it is a question of life to me.”

It is enough. The feelings of the disciples have been expressed, so that the contrast between their attitude and His may sharply appear, and the faith of the woman has stood the test put upon it.

Matthew 15

²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said under her, O woman, great is your faith: be it unto you even as you will. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Thus did Jesus show that this poor woman, and every other needy one desiring help, was one of the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

In the closing part of the lesson we have the results of sin and the saving power of the Gospel set before us in marked contrast. God gave man legs with which to walk, eyes with which to see, a tongue with which to speak, and a perfect physical frame in which to reveal a well-balanced mind.

But sin has changed all this and “great multitudes” then, as now, were “lame, blind, dumb, maimed.” Thus was sin made visible, for any defect in the works of God is due to sin.

Psalms 18

³⁰ As for God, His way is perfect.

Genesis 1

³¹ And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.

Tares have been sown, and,

Matthew 13

³⁹ The enemy that sowed them is the devil.

1 John 3

⁸ For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He

might destroy the works of the devil.

And this He does, not simply by removing the outward appearances or results of sin, by healing diseases, but by getting to the very root of the trouble and taking away the cause, the sin itself.

This was the Gospel which He encouraged people to believe by showing to them His power over disease. This was the Gospel which He preached when He healed the withered hand,

Matthew 12

¹³ ...and it was restored whole, like as the other.

It is the Gospel of a complete restoration for every one who will believe it.

Psalms 103

² Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits;

³ Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases.

Matthew 8

¹⁶ [Jesus] healed all that were sick,

¹⁷ That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses.

They brought those who were needy of help...

Matthew 15 [RV]

³⁰ ...and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and He healed them.

They were lacking in life-power, but being brought into touch with Him with whom "is the fountain of life" (*Psalms* 36:9), such a change took place...

³¹ ...that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing.

The same opportunity is offered unto us today.

Zechariah 13

¹ The fountain...for sin and uncleanness...

–is still open and the invitation is still extended:

Come to the fountain so rich and sweet;
Cast your poor soul at the Saviour's feet;
Plunge in today and be made complete;
Glory to His name.²

The manner of Christ's working is an example for all His followers. Although wonderful works were wrought, so that the people were led to exclaimed,

Mark 2

¹² We never saw it on this fashion,

–yet Jesus never drew attention to himself or led the people to give Him the glory.

Matthew 15

³¹ They glorified the God of Israel.

Thus was His practice in harmony with the teaching which He had already given when He said:

Matthew 5

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

So when Jesus had finished His work He was able to say:

John 17

⁴ I have glorified You on the earth.

If this principle had been followed by the teachers in the church in later times, all the evils of the great apostasy would have been avoided. It was because men arose in the church...

² Eliza A. Hoffman, Hymn: *Glory to His Name*, 1878.

Acts 20

³⁰ ...speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them,

–that there was developed...

1 Thessalonians 2

⁴ ...the man of sin, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

This is the papacy. But the principle is the same, whatever the name of the church, and there are daughters of Babylon. When man and his words are put in the place of God and His Word, God is dishonored, and the salvation of souls is imperiled.

Revelation 14

⁷ Fear God and give glory to Him.

That is the Gospel message for this time.

2. The Gentile Woman's Faith

Present Truth, July 5, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for July 15

Original title: The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel. The Gentile Woman's Faith

Timeline: V-1 (Withdrawal to Phoenicia)

Mark 7:24-30

IN STUDYING this lesson no one must fail to compare with it the parallel record in *Matthew* 15:21-28, which is more full, several particulars being given there, that are not mentioned by Mark. In our study we shall combine the two, and take them as one.

After having fed the thousands in the wilderness, Jesus was much sought after, for the people were much taken with the idea of having Him for their king. Then, as now, the people longed for Government support; and to have a king who could at any time provide them with abundance of food, without their being obliged to work for it, was a very attractive prospect.

But Jesus did not come to be king over this present evil world, or any part of it, and He evidently wished to be alone, for He took a long journey, from Capernaum to the region of Tyre and Sidon,

Mark 7

²⁴ ...and entered into a house, and would have no man know it.

He knew that His time for labor was short, yet He did not seek to keep himself continually before the eyes of the public. He understood that no matter how pressing the work was, He could perform it better by taking seasons away from the crowds of people.

We hear it often said in praise of some evangelist's zeal and endurance, that he works constantly, and does not allow him-

self any vacation. It is very doubtful praise, if we take Jesus as an example. It is not by continuous talking that any preacher can accomplish the most good.

Mark 7

²⁴ ...but He could not be hid.

The word concerning Him had gone out through all the earth,^{3/4} and wherever He went people recognized Him, and flocked to Him. He was the light of the world; and a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. He had no need to advertise himself; His works testified of Him; they were His letters of recommendation.

When we consider how the people came to Jesus, not merely out of curiosity, nor for selfish motives, but in faith, we can better understand that which is promised to His church, in these words:

Isaiah 55

³ Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

⁴ Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

⁵ Behold, you shall call a people that you know not, and nations that did not know you shall run unto you, because of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you.

Here was a case in point. A woman of Canaan, a descendant of the same people that inhabited the country before the Jews came into it from Egypt, came to Him, begging Him to cast an unclean spirit out of her little daughter.

³ **Psalm 19** ⁴ Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

⁴ **Romans 10** ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. ¹⁸ But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Mark 7

²⁵ For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet:

²⁶ The woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

The woman was a Gentile, for that, according to the margin both in the old and the new version, is the meaning of the word rendered “Greek” in verse 26. A Gentile woman sought and found Christ. Moreover it seems as though Jesus took that long journey solely to grant that woman’s request; for we do not read of any other work done in that region.

At first Jesus appeared not to heed what the woman said.

Matthew 15

²³ He answered her not a word.

The disciples thought that this indicated indifference, because she was a Gentile, and they said,

²³ ...Send her away, for she cries after us.

They did not know the Master as well as the woman did, for she was not at all disheartened by His silence, but continued pressing her request. Then Jesus said,

²⁴ I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But this saying, instead of repelling her, made her still more bold, and:

²⁵ She came and worshiped Him, saying, Lord, help me.

Then Jesus uttered the words which at first thought seem so cruel,

²⁶ It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and cast it to the dogs.

The Greek is still more expressive, for it has “little dogs,” puppies. Surely, she will now turn away in offended dignity.

Not at all; she was ready with a reply, and said,

Mark 7

²⁸ Yes, Lord; but the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

After that speech what more could possibly be said to test her faith? Jesus answered and said,

Matthew 15

²⁸ O woman, great is your faith; be it unto you even as you will. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

The woman believed, for she at once went her way satisfied, and found her daughter healed.

The first lesson taught by this scripture is that every one who believes the Lord is by his faith an Israelite. Jesus said that He was sent to none but the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet He immediately granted that Gentile woman's request, and seems to have been sent to that region by the Spirit for that express purpose.

The words and the act, taken together, show that the Gentile woman was one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In the 10th chapter of *John* we learn who are the sheep of Christ's fold:

John 10

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Anyone who will follow Jesus and who is willing to receive life from Him, is one of His sheep. If people would but consider this one incident, it would settle all the controversy concerning Israel: it is not any special race or nation on earth, but those in all nations who seek and find the Lord as their personal Saviour.

Did Jesus call the woman a little dog? Not by any means. He simply made an abstract statement; it was the woman herself

who seized upon it, and applied it to herself; and by so doing she made her case sure.

Pride seeks to exalt itself, but faith is humble. It would be in keeping with the spirit of the natural man to say after such a saying,

“I am not a dog!”

How quickly we assert our dignity. How natural for us to make out as good a case as possible for ourselves.

But this woman was wiser; she had the wisdom of humility. She wasted no time telling how worthy she was, but showed Jesus that according to His own words she had a just claim; for, admitting that the children’s bread ought not to be given to the dogs, and even tacitly admitting herself to be a dog, she still had a right to the crumbs.

Meekness and lowliness of spirit win where pride and self-esteem fail. It is better to be considered a dog, and to get all that we need, than to assert our claim to honor and dignity, and to get nothing.

Ecclesiastes 9

⁴ A living dog is better than a dead lion.

Christ’s words and actions showed that He considered the woman to be one of the children, and not one of the little dogs. It was true, as He said, that it is not fitting to give the children’s food to the dogs, and the Lord will not do that; but He gave to that woman the best that He had, and in so doing He robbed nobody else. Therefore it is clear that He owned her as one of the children of God.

Such faith as the woman had is very rare. The same may be said of the quickness of her perception. But this faith and wisdom were the result of her humility.

Proverbs 11

² With the lowly is wisdom.

She had a very humble opinion of herself, and that made her wise in the things of God. She showed that she knew the value of heavenly gifts. When Jesus said that the children's bread ought not to be given to dogs, she went straight to the main point, and indicated that she would be satisfied with the crumbs that nobody else would notice. That which others would consider too trifling to be worth any attention, would be sufficient for her, if it came from God. The least thing from Him is great. A crumb from the Lord's table is enough to feed a multitude.

Psalm 37

¹⁶ A little that a righteous man has is better than the treasures of many wicked.

The woman's reply showed that she had a just sense of the fullness of God in Christ. In Christ the small and great unite in one. A crumb means a feast, and a moment comprehends eternity.

One thing more. It is a lesson concerning the power of genuine faith in God. Jesus said,

Matthew 15

²⁸ O woman, great is your faith; be it unto you even as you will.

This shows us that true faith can have anything it desires. True faith will not desire anything that is not good, and God cannot withhold any good thing.

- It is impossible to believe too much in God.
- We cannot have too strong faith, nor can our faith in God grasp too much.
- We can have all that we believe for.

God is infinite in goodness, and in the power to do good. The greatness of His goodness is unsearchable. We cannot think of anything too hard for Him to do, that will exhaust

His generosity.

2 Timothy 2

¹³ He cannot deny himself.

And therefore whatever good thing we believe that He will do, must be done. Some people—professed Christians, too, even ministers—seem to be afraid that people will believe too much, and will claim too great things from God. Instead of inciting people to believe without limit, they are continually in a fear of anxiety lest they become fanatical.

But it is impossible for perfect faith and fanaticism to go together. Faith comes by the Word of God, and fanaticism comes from neglecting the Word.

So think of every good thing that you can; call to mind everything that you could possibly desire, not to satisfy your feelings, but to make you better, and then know that:

Ephesians 3

²⁰ [God] is able [and willing] to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

Therefore to Him be the glory in Christ Jesus, throughout all ages world without end.

3. Asking a Sign

Present Truth, February 15, 1894

Timeline: V-4 (The Demand for a Sign)

Matthew 16:4

IT IS only unbelief that asks for a sign; faith never asks for anything more than God's word. The Jews were constantly asking a sign of Christ; but the Saviour said to them,

Matthew 16

⁴ A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign.

It is no more creditable to be seeking for a sign now than it was then. When God has spoken, all the evidence has been given that anybody needs; and to ask for a sign in addition is only an evidence of unbelief and an evil state of the heart.

Not only has all needed evidence been given when God has spoken, but all the evidence has been given that could be given; for there is nothing greater and more powerful than the word of God. No sign can add anything to the word, though the word can add to the evidence of the sign.

Psalms 33

⁶ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.

⁹ He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

Thus the creation of heaven and earth is itself but a sign of the power of God's word; and therefore the word itself is a greater sign than any sign that has been given since. In other words, the evidence of God's word in confirmation of a thing is just as great as would be furnished by such a sign as the creation of heaven and earth.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the former is represented as asking of Abraham that Lazarus be sent to the house of the rich man to warn his brothers of the fate which had overtaken him, and saying,

Luke 16

³⁰ If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

But Abraham replied,

³¹ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

If one believes not the word, the greatest sign is powerless to convince him.

But who is asking for a sign? This is a question which each one should ask themselves. Let no one depend upon the integrity of his own heart, for:

Jeremiah 17

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

The deceitfulness of the heart is often acting and bearing fruit when we do not know it; and thus it may be with reference to what God has spoken. God has given to us...

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...exceeding great and precious promises,

and has...

Ephesians 1

³ ...blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

And if His word is sufficient for us, if we ask no more evidence than that, we have these blessings, and they are manifested in our lives. By them we are made...

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...partakers of the Divine nature.

We have all that any man has ever had; for God has given His Son, and with Him freely given all things, to every individual one on the earth.

Romans 8

³² He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

James 5

¹⁷ Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.

The difference between him and ourselves is not a difference in nature or in the amount that he had from God, but in the amount that he appropriated by faith. He believed God's word and asked no further evidence.

If we are waiting for some greater evidence, some special experience, some "sign" that what God has promised and says He has given us, is ours, we are simply in the position of the Pharisees. The trouble is not in God's not giving, but in our not taking. We are manifesting unbelief, and depriving ourselves of the greatest blessings.

No miracle was ever done by God to convince the person who doubted His word; and no miracle ever did convince such a person. Unbelief cannot be overcome in that way. And for God to deal thus with unbelief would be contrary to the principles on which He works. It would be to belittle His word. Of one place where our Saviour went it is recorded that:

Matthew 13

⁵⁸ He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Christ could not do anything to put a premium on unbelief. He could not do anything to tempt men to disbelieve until they had seen a miracle. They might no doubt have been pleased, as Herod would have been, to have seen some mighty miracles done by Him, but He could not work miracles to gratify the desires of the flesh. And as has been said, it would have had no good effect had He performed them. The example of Pharaoh stands out as an example for all ages of the inabil-

ity of miracles to overcome unbelief.

When doubting Thomas had beheld his Lord and touched with his hands the wounds made by the nails and the spear at the crucifixion, and said,

John 20

²⁸ My Lord and my God!

Jesus said to him,

²⁹ Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed:
blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

The faith that does not require sight is the faith that will stand the test. We do not need a sign; all we need is to believe His word. We do not need something more than God has given. We only need to appropriate by faith what we already have.

4. Peter Confessing Christ

Signs of the Times, January 13, 1888

Notes on the International Lesson, January 20

Timeline: V-6 (Withdrawal to Caesarea Philippi), 7 (The Great Confession)

Matthew 16:13-28

THIS is a lesson so full of strong points that but little space can be devoted to each.

Jesus had just returned from healing the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman, and had reached the region of Caesarea Philippi. Seemingly without any previous introduction, He asked his disciples:

Matthew 16

¹³ Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

¹⁴ And they said, Some say that you are John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

These ideas that were held by different persons were no doubt derived from:

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

Malachi 4

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Besides this, it seems they had a tradition that before the end some of the prophets would rise from the dead; they were looking for the Messiah at about the time of Christ's advent, but they had confounded the prophets concerning His first and His second advent, and were looking for Him to come in glory.

Accordingly, some thought that Jesus might be one of the prophets risen from the dead as a pledge of the general resur-

rection. Notice, however, that nobody is reported as saying that Christ was the Son of God. It seems that a belief of this was confined almost exclusively to his disciples.

Matthew 16

¹⁵ He said unto them, But whom do you say that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Here was a recognition of Christ's real nature and mission.

John 6

⁶⁸ You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Or, the Son of the Author of life, conveying the same idea as in the confession recorded:

John 6

⁶⁸ You have the words of eternal life.

⁶⁹ And we believe and are sure that you are that Christ, the Son of the living God.

The confession of faith which Peter made on behalf of the disciples, must have been as a refreshing draught to Jesus, in view of the way in which He was regarded by the world at large.

And Jesus answered and said unto him,

Matthew 16

¹⁷ Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jona [Simon son of Jonas]; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in Heaven.

No human being had revealed this wonderful truth to Peter; no human being could reveal it. For,

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Says Paul:

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁶ Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know Him no more.

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God.

From these texts we learn that no matter how much one may have heard of Christ, he doesn't know Him if he has not received the revelation which God alone can give by His Spirit. He who has this knowledge indeed, is a new creature.

Many can testify that when Christ was revealed to them as the Saviour of sinners, and not merely of sinners in general, but of them in particular, it was in the place of secret prayer; or perhaps it was after hearing words, the like of which they had often before heard unmoved. And nothing could be more positive than the knowledge which is thus revealed. No argument could make it so plain, and no argument could make the individual doubt the knowledge thus revealed.

John 3

⁸ The wind blows where it lists, and you hear the sound thereof, but can not tell whence it comes, and where it goes; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Matthew 16

¹⁸ And I say also unto you, That you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Upon this we quote the following from Edersheim's *Life of Jesus the Messiah*:

Not less Jewish in form are the succeeding words of Christ: "You are Peter (*Petros*), and upon this Rock (*Petra*) will I build my church." We notice in the original the change from the masculine gender, "Peter" (*Petros*), to the feminine, "Petra" (Rock), which seems the more significant, that *Petros* is used in Greek for "stone," and also sometimes for "rock," while *Pe-*

tra always means a “rock.” The change of gender must therefore have a definite object, which will presently be more fully explained.

Meantime we recall that, when Peter first came to Christ, the Lord had said unto him: “You shall be called Cephias, which is, by interpretation, Peter [*Petros*, a Stone, or else a Rock]”—the Aramaic word *Kepla* meaning, like Peter, both “stone” and “rock.” But both the Greek *Petros* and *Petra* have (as already stated) passed into Rabbinic language. Thus, the name Peter, or rather *Petros*, is Jewish, and occurs, for example, as that of the father of a certain Rabbi *Jose bar Petros*.

When the Lord, therefore, prophetically gave the name *Cephias*, it may have been that by that term he gave only a prophetic interpretation to what had been his previous name, Peter. This seems the more likely, since, as we have previously seen, it was the practice in Galilee to have two names, especially when the strictly Jewish name, such as Simon, had no equivalent among the Gentiles. Again, the Greek word *Petra*—Rock—(“on this *Petra* [Rock] will I build my church”) was used in the same sense in Rabbinic language.

Believing that Jesus spoke to Peter in the Aramaic, we can now understand how the words *Petros* and *Petra* would be purposely used by Christ to mark the difference, which their choice would suggest. Perhaps it might be expressed in this somewhat clumsy paraphrase: “You are Peter (*Petros*)—a Stone or Rock—and upon this *Petra*—the Rock, the *Petrine* will I found my church.”

If, therefore, we would not entirely limit the reference to the words of Peter’s confession, we would certainly apply them to that which was the *Petrine* in Peter: the Heaven-given faith which manifested itself in his confession. And we can further understand how, just as Christ’s contemporaries may have regarded the world as reared on the rock of faithful Abraham, so Christ promised that he would build His church on the *Petrine* in Peter—on his faith and confession.

Some have thought from the reading of *Ephesians* 2:19-20 that Christ referred, not to Peter alone, but to all the apostles,

as the rock upon which his church should be built. That text reads:

Ephesians 2

¹⁹ Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

²⁰ And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

But the apostle Paul shows just how this should be taken:

1 Corinthians 3

¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let every man take heed how he builds upon it.

¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

This text teaches that Jesus Christ is the only foundation; He is not only the chief corner-stone, but the entire foundation. Then how could Paul say to the Ephesian brethren that they were built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets? He means the foundation which the apostles and prophets laid, as he says in *1 Corinthians* 3:10, that is, Jesus Christ as the Life-giver and the Saviour of sinners.

That this is the foundation to which he refers, is proved by the second verse of the preceding chapter:

1 Corinthians 2

² For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

This was the foundation which all the apostles laid, as Peter himself said after he had healed the lame man:

Acts 4

¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you cru-

cified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him does this man stand here before you whole.

¹¹ This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

And this was likewise the foundation of the prophets, as Peter further says:

Acts 10

⁴³ To Him [i.e., to Jesus] give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.

Thus we see that the rock upon which Christ's church is founded, is belief from the heart in Him as the one whose blood can cleanse from sin.

Matthew 16

¹⁸ ...and the gates of hell [hades, the grave] shall not prevail against it.

This does not mean that the gates of the grave are carrying on an aggressive warfare against the church, hurling themselves against it in a vain endeavor to overthrow it. Gates don't "prevail" in that way, neither do men use gates in that way in warfare. Gates "prevail" against anyone when they effectively bar his passage. Now Christ is the Son of the living God; and:

John 5

²⁶ As the Father has life in himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in himself,

John 17

² ...that He should give eternal life to as many as [the Father] should give Him.

He says of himself,

Revelation 1

¹⁸ I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Satan has the power of death⁵; the grave is his prison-house, and all the dead he counts as his lawful prey, since death came because of sin. So he, as...

Luke 11

²¹ ...a strong man armed keeps his palace,

and

Isaiah 14

¹⁷ ...opened not the house of his prisoners.

But Christ is the stronger than he, who has come upon him, and overcome him, and passing through his prison-house, has carried away the keys, and will divide the spoils.

Luke 11

²² But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, He takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils.

Isaiah 53

¹² Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The saints of God may go into the grave; Satan may stir up persecution against them, and may slay them by the thousands; but the gates of the grave cannot prevail to hold a single soul that has been fastened to the eternal Rock.

John 11

²⁵ He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he

⁵ **Hebrews 2** ¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

live.

Matthew 16

¹⁹ And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.

No power was here conferred upon Peter that was not conferred in equal measure upon the other apostles, and in more limited measure, perhaps, to the entire church. In His instructions as to the method of dealing with an obstinate church member, Jesus said:

Matthew 18

¹⁷ But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican.

¹⁸ Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Whatever the church does acting unitedly and in the fear of God, is ratified in Heaven, because it is the body of Christ.

Ephesians 1

²² And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church,

²³ Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

As such, it is Christ's representative on earth, and He has no other. To no individual, in the church or out, has Christ given power to bind or loose. And even "the church" cannot do this, except when it is walking in the light, and its members are abiding in Christ; for when this state of things ceases, it ceases to be the church of Christ, no matter what its name or pretensions.

5. The Good Confession

Present Truth, July 12, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for July 22

Timeline: V-6 (Withdrawal to Caesarea Philippi), 7 (The Great Confession)

Matthew 16:13-26

JESUS had returned from healing the Gentile woman's daughter, and was in the region of Caesarea Philippi, in the north east of Palestine, near the source of the Jordan, when He put the question to the disciples,

Matthew 16

¹³ Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

The answer was ready, because everybody was talking more or less about Jesus, and the disciples knew what was being said. There were various opinions about the new Teacher, but most of them were the result of thoughtless curiosity, instead of being based on an intelligent appreciation of His work.

Some said He was Elijah, some that He was John the Baptist, and others that He was Jeremiah or some other of the ancient prophets. All knew that He was more than an ordinary man. All the answers indicated that people thought He was one risen from the dead.

But since they thought that He had this mark of Divine power, why could they not readily admit that He was the coming One for whom God had prepared a new body? By the answers which showed their ignorance of Christ's real nature, the people showed themselves to be without excuse for not knowing Him.

Then came the direct question:

Matthew 16

¹⁵ Whom do you say that I am?

Promptly came the answer from Peter,

¹⁶ You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Anybody else might have known this, as well as Peter and the other disciples; for Peter did not know it by any wisdom or shrewdness that he possessed. Jesus replied,

Matthew 16

¹⁷ Blessed are you Simon, son of Jona; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

God is no respecter of persons, and is as willing to reveal the truth to all men as to any one person.

There was nothing in Christ's bodily appearance to indicate that He was the Son of God. Indeed, that was rather against Him.

Isaiah 53

¹ Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

² For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

³ He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He

stricken.

The flesh of Jesus veiled His Divinity, so that only the works that He did, and the words that He spoke, could make it known. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. God is Spirit, and His sons are born, not of flesh nor of blood, but of the Spirit⁶; and therefore only those who are spiritual can recognize them. Thus it is that to be...

Titus 1

⁸ ...a lover of good men,

–is a characteristic that marks one as taught by God, and so to that degree able to teach others.

The term “flesh and blood” is used in the Bible as a synonym of earthliness and mortality. It indicates everything that is the opposite of God.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁰ Flesh and blood does not inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption.

Jesus Christ, whose name is “God with us,”⁷ God manifest in the flesh, reveals what the infinite power of God can do, what righteousness it can work, in spite of the weakness of the flesh, and through it. Jesus,

Galatians 4

⁴ ...born of a woman, born under the law,

–was partaker of flesh and blood, just the same as all those whom He came to redeem, and was therefore partaker of all human weakness in like measure; yet He never gave way to any weakness, and...

⁶ **John 1** ¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

⁷ **Matthew 1** ²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ ...knew no sin.

This is to show us all that the inherited and acquired weaknesses of our flesh cannot hinder the perfect manifestation of the righteousness of the Spirit of life in us, if we as earnestly desirous of it. The flesh cannot reveal godliness, but it cannot hinder godliness from revealing itself. Christ has...

John 17

² ...power over all flesh,

—even over ours. So while our flesh will continue to be corrupt until the coming of Christ, when...

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁴ ...this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption;

—the corruption of the flesh can be so cleansed by the stream of life flowing through it, and still abiding in it, that no impurity will manifest itself. This is the glorious lesson to be learned from...

Matthew 16

¹⁶ ...the Christ, the Son of the living God.

The lesson gives us a glimpse of...

1 Timothy 3

¹⁶ ...the mystery of godliness.

It reveals to us the fact—not the explanation of it—Christ can dwell in all His fullness in every man, so that each one has the whole of Him, and yet even...

2 Chronicles 2

⁶ ...the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him.

Until we realize that Christ is infinitely more and greater than any or all flesh, greater even than the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth, we do not know Him as we ought to know Him in

order to appreciate Him as our Saviour.

John 6

⁶³ The flesh profits nothing.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁶ Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh; yet henceforth we know Him no more.

When we know Christ as...

1 Corinthians 15

⁴⁵ ...a quickening Spirit,

—we have really entered into the holiest,

Hebrews 10

²⁰ By the new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil.

God grant that for every reader of this paper, the veil may quickly be done away. Not only may Christ's flesh no longer serve to veil His Divinity from the eyes of our understanding, but may our flesh no longer serve as a veil to hide the shining forth of Him who...

Psalms 80

¹ ...dwells between the cherubims,

—and whose rightful throne is our heart. Again we ask the question,

“Why did Christ ask the disciples what men said of Him, and what they held Him to be?”

It was certainly not because He did not know, nor was it because of any feeling of vanity. It was evidently a desire to prove the disciples, to see how much they were affected by public opinion.

The disciples had an opinion of their own, and yet not of their own. It was not an opinion, but positive knowledge de-

rived from God himself. Only people who have this personal acquaintance with Christ through the Spirit can really confess Him, and can give a positive testimony when others are in doubt.

One thing must not be forgotten, and that is that talking about Christ does not make one a Christian. In the days of Ezekiel the people seemed to be talking of little else but the message that the prophet had from the Lord; but it amounted to nothing.

Ezekiel 33

³⁰ Also, you son of man, the children of your people still are talking against you by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that comes forth from the Lord.

³¹ And they come unto you as the people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear your words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness.

³² And, lo, you are unto them as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear your words, but they do them not.

It is true that:

Romans 10

¹⁰ ...with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,

—but this saving confession cannot be made unless...

¹⁰ ...with the heart man believes unto righteousness.

Not only does mere talking about Christ amount to nothing, but the most zealous profession of faith is worse than useless if the life itself does not make the confession.

Proverbs 26

²³ Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

Words, human words, are empty things. Only the Word of God is living and powerful and everlasting. It is not by talking, not by anything that any man can say, that the Christ of God can be made known. Belief in Christ's Divinity cannot rest on human authority.

It is of no use merely to tell people that Jesus is the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead, unless the word spoken is the Word of life—unless the speaker's own life is in the words. It is not argument, but the manifestation of the life of Jesus in the flesh, in spite of the flesh, that wins.

Moreover the fact that one has made a good confession of Christ's Divinity does not ensure him against denying Him. How much knowledge of Christ's Divinity ever really took possession of the mind of Judas, we do not know; but we do know that Peter, who was foremost in declaring Christ to be "the Son of the living God," and who, when others forsook the Lord, said,

John 6

⁶⁸ You have the words of eternal life.

⁶⁹ And we believe and are sure that You are that Christ, the Son of the living God,

—denied the Master with oaths, saying,

Matthew 26

⁷⁴ I know not the Man.

1 Corinthians 10

¹² Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Hebrews 3

¹⁴ We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

Little time need be spent with one who believes the Bible, to show him who is the foundation on which the church is built.

He does not even need to be told—what is indeed the case—that the word “Peter” is not the same as the word rendered “rock,” in *Matthew* 16:18.

1 Corinthians 3

¹¹ Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The church is built, not upon the apostles and prophets, who are a part of the church, but upon Jesus Christ, who is the chief corner stone, and the entire foundation; for this tried Stone, this precious corner stone is laid in Zion,

Isaiah 28

¹⁶ ...for a foundation.

Peter was indeed a stone, but a rolling stone, while Christ is the Rock, in whom is no unrighteousness. The word here rendered “rock” is the same that occurs in:

Matthew 7

²⁴ Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a *rock*:

²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a *rock*.

1 Corinthians 10

⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual *Rock* that followed them: and that *Rock* was Christ.

1 Peter 2

⁷ Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the *stone* which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

Romans 9

³³ As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and *rock* of offense: and whosoever believes on Him shall not be

ashamed.

It is not Peter, not even the confession that Peter made, but Christ himself, that constitutes the “sure foundation” of the church. Against this foundation the gates of hell—Hades, the grave—could not prevail, for they could not hold Him. God brought Him forth from the grave,

Acts 2

²⁴ ...having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be held of it.

Here is something on which to build.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.⁸

No man, nor any number of men combined, can form a foundation for anybody's faith. They who would make Peter or any other man the foundation of the church, forget that flesh and blood cannot reveal the Christ. The strongest man is as helpless as the weakest: all stand in equal need of Christ the only Rock.

But what about the keys of the kingdom of heaven? Were they not committed to Peter? Yes, to Peter and the other disciples, and not to them only, but to all the true and sincere believers in Christ. Wherever two or three believers are gathered in Christ's name, there He is in the midst of them, with all power in heaven and earth.

Every one who has been reconciled to God, has given to him the word of reconciliation, that he may act as ambassador in the absence of Christ's visible presence.⁹ Reference to

⁸ Edward Mote, Hymn: *The Solid Rock*, 1834.

⁹ **2 Corinthians 5** ¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus

Jeremiah 1:10 shows that this power to bind and loose was no new thing given to men:

Jeremiah 1

¹⁰ See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

But it is no power inherent in man, and is possessed only by those who are filled with the Word; for it is the Word itself that works. Even Christ himself said,

John 5

³⁰ I can of my own self do nothing; as I hear I judge;

—and the servant is not above his Lord. But every servant may be as his Lord, and this assurance should make us confident in Him, in the face of all the weakness of the flesh.

Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.

6. Worth How Much?

Present Truth, January 18, 1894

Timeline: V-7 (The Great Confession)

Matthew 16:26

Matthew 16

²⁶ For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

IT IS very common to hear a man's worth estimated at so many thousand pounds. We read that one man died worth fifty thousand pounds, and of another that he is worth two hundred thousand pounds. What is meant is that man possessed so many thousand pounds. If it were true that they were actually "worth" no more, they were poor indeed.

Jesus of Nazareth had no place that He could call His own, in which to lay His head, yet He was worth more than all the world combined. His riches are described as unsearchable.

Ephesians 3

⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

And He gave himself for us,—for each one of us,—in order that, having Him, we might be worth as much as He.

2 Corinthians 8

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.

In Christ we are made overcomers, and:

Revelation 21

⁷ He that overcomes shall inherit all things.

Let all, therefore, beware how they despise the poor of this earth. The poorest man on earth, if he has Christ, is worth

more than can be expressed in figures; and if he has not Christ, there is still the possibility of his gaining...

Ephesians 2

⁷ ...eternal riches.

7. The Value of the Soul

Present Truth, October 12, 1893

Timeline: V-7 (The Great Confession)

Mark 8:36-37

Mark 8

³⁶ For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

³⁷ Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

MANY a man has exchanged his soul for something far less than a world. No man this side of Adam ever owned a continent. Very few have more than a few square miles of the earth's surface, or hold even this much by more than a precarious tenure. The vast majority have never possessed more than a few hundreds or thousands of pounds; yet even this is sufficient to blind the eyes of men to the value of their souls.

Men have bartered away their souls for a little worldly honor or a moment's pleasure. They are making just such bargains today. They do not do this understandingly of course; but they do it because their eyes are blinded by the god of this world, and they have no realization of what the soul is worth.

Yet these same persons have a vivid sense of their own individual importance. They think that no position on earth is too high for them, and no honor too good for them. They are ready and anxious to be exalted above their fellow-men. They live as if it were their aim to make themselves the center around which everything else ought rightfully to revolve.

But the prophet David, with mind enlightened by a higher wisdom, exclaimed,

Psalms 8

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

⁴ What is man, that You are mindful of him? and the son of

man, that You visit him?

Man, considered by himself, becomes very small when the eye looks over creation; so small that, as an individual, he sinks into absolute nothingness. What is the globe itself, upon which man dwells? Astronomy reveals it to be nothing but a tiny speck among the myriads of lights that fill the heavens,—in which it is lost like a grain of sand upon the seashore!

And what is the nation itself to which an individual belongs? It is only one among hundreds of other nations that have existed upon the earth since time began. And what is he himself? Only one among the countless myriads that have been born and lived and moved upon the earth since it became the home of the human family,—an indistinguishable speck upon an indistinguishable speck, compared with a great creation which exists and moves and lives and fills the immensity of space, upheld by the life of God!

But only God himself can estimate the soul at its true value; and He has revealed His estimate to the sight of man. The cross of Calvary tells what the soul is worth to God; and its worth to Him is also its worth to us. For we belong to Him, and were created for His pleasure and His glory.

But apart from God the worth of the soul is lost. Without Him life would not be worth living. The sinner apart from God would eventually long for death. Connected with God, the soul is of infinite value; but severed from Him it is lost both to the individual and to himself.

The cross of Calvary is the link that connects the soul with God. Life has its value to us by virtue of that alone. Let us say therefore with the apostle,

Galatians 6

¹⁴ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8. Spiritual Blindness

Present Truth, August 17, 1893

Timeline: V-7 (The Great Confession)

Mark 8:31-34; Mark 9:30-34; Mark 10:32-41

SPIRITUAL blindness, like physical blindness, is a sad misfortune. Indeed, it is much the greater calamity of the two, being almost as difficult to remove, and much more disastrous in its ultimate effects.

And it is no less real because of its insidious nature, which prevents its victim from recognizing its presence; it is only rendered thereby the more dangerous. To persuade an individual to submit to treatment for an affliction which he does not believe to be upon him, is a very difficult task. Just this difficulty must be met in trying to cure the one who is spiritually blind. He neither understands his need, nor understands the necessary remedy agreeable to his natural taste.

The word of God has much to say of this prevailing spiritual affliction. It speaks of those who have eyes, and see not, and ears, yet hear not, and hearts, but do not understand. Such were those to whom the prophet Isaiah was sent:

Isaiah 6

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

And such were very many of those who listened to the words of Christ during His ministry upon the earth.

Nor was it alone the scribes and Pharisees, or those accounted to have been the greatest sinners, who gave proof of their spiritual blindness. In all ages of the world this affliction has been exceedingly common, and some of the best men as well as the worst have been conspicuous as its victims.

Our own age is no exception to others in this respect, nor

are we ourselves beyond the reach of this dangerous evil. Indeed it is only by the grace of God received into the heart that any can escape this condition, for men are not born naturally into a state of spiritual enlightenment.

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

There is something in the heart of the natural man which, whenever he is called upon to see spiritual things, entirely obstructs his view, so that he cannot discern anything; and no matter how plainly a thing may stand revealed before him, he cannot see it. No matter how hard he tries to see it, he will not be able to do so. It is a simple impossibility.

And this something in the natural heart is very liable to exist where its presence is least suspected, or to creep back into the heart after it has once been driven out. It is this something which makes the heart, as the prophet Jeremiah says,

Jeremiah 12

⁹ ...deceitful above all things,

—more deceitful even than Satan himself.

Proverbs 4

²³ Keep the heart with all diligence [is the wise man's admonition,] for out of it are the issues of life.

Only by the greatest diligence can it be kept in a state which will leave the spiritual vision clear and unperverted.

Even the disciples of Christ; those who stood nearest to Him and were most constantly with Him, often signally failed to discern the spiritual truths which He spoke. Often they were as much in the dark as to the meaning of His parables as were the Pharisees themselves.

And there is one instance of their failure in this respect

which makes one of the strangest and most striking narratives to be found in the Bible. The account is very instructive, both in regard to the effect of spiritual blindness, and the cause which produces it. We will notice briefly that furnished by *Mark*, beginning with verse 31, of the 8th chapter:

Mark 8

³¹ And He began to teach the disciples that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

³⁴ And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Although Jesus spoke this saying openly, the disciples understood it no more than though it had been uttered in an unknown tongue. What was the reason of their failure to comprehend language so plain and simple? Did God, by some miracle, withhold it from them? Not at all. God does not withhold from anyone knowledge that would be for his good. Verse 34 reveals the cause:

³⁴ Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

It was SELF. Self was in the hearts of the disciples, and robbed the words of Christ of all their meaning.

Mark 9

³⁰ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and He would not that any man should know it.

³¹ For He taught His disciples, and said unto them, the Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day.

³² But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

Here Jesus made a second attempt to prepare His disciples

for the momentous scenes that were to attend His trial and crucifixion, then so near at hand; but again they failed to understand what He said. The succeeding verses give the reason:

³³ And He came to Capernaum; and being in the house He asked them, What was it that you disputed among yourselves by the way?

³⁴ But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

Here was self again, seeking for exaltation, and the result was that the simplest and plainest statements were turned into a mystery. Self threw the whole field of spiritual vision into a total eclipse. The plainest objects before them, so near that they were standing within their very shadows, were by self made wholly invisible.

Yet again Jesus sought to tell His disciples of the solemn events connected with the solemn tragedy so soon to be enacted at Jerusalem. A third time He endeavoured to prepare them for the approaching scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, using even more explicit language than on the two occasions preceding.

Mark 10

³² And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him,

³³ Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles;

³⁴ And they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again.

But His words were as much of a mystery to them as ever. Three times within the space of a few days, the Saviour had told them, in the plainest possible language, what was about

to befall Him; and yet they understood nothing about it, and when the events that He had told them of took place, they were taken wholly by surprise. What can account for such blindness? Again the record tells us.

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto Him, saying, Master, we would that You should do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

³⁶ And He said unto them, What would you that I should do for you?

³⁷ They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on your right hand, and the other on your left hand, in your glory.

⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

These two disciples were scheming to get the chief places in the kingdom of heaven, and the remaining ten were angry with them because they had gotten their plea in first! This was what occupied their minds while the Saviour was trying to tell them of the great events that should mark the conclusion of His earthly ministry. Self was there, and filled the whole horizon of the future, so that nothing else was visible to their sight.

What a loss the disciples sustained on account of their blindness! The privilege of watching with their Lord in Gethsemane, of strengthening Him by their sympathy through the dark hours of His agony, of being actors for God in the world's greatest tragedy,—what, to the Christian, would not this be worth! But they missed it all, and acted the part of sleeping sentinels and deserters.

It was not necessary that it should have been so. It was not some inscrutable act of Providence that kept back the disciples from comprehending the plain statements of their Master. It was self. Seeking for their own exaltation and filled with their own desires, they lost the rich blessings which God desired to bestow upon them.

And this is what always comes from the presence of self. It works just the same today that it did in the days of the apostles.

- It will keep us from getting what is for our good just as surely as it did them.
- It will make us just as blind as it did them.
- It will prevent us from comprehending the plainest statements of God's word, or of knowing what He speaks to us by the agency of His Spirit.

Self perverts the judgment of the most powerful intellect, and turns the spiritual light of the mind into darkness. Self must be purged from the heart, or the individual will walk in spiritual darkness, and know not where he goes.

9. Jesus and the Little Ones

Signs of the Times, January 27, 1888

Notes on the International Lesson, February 12

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:1-11

IN STUDYING this lesson, particular attention should be given to the parallel passages in *Mark* 9:33-50 and *Luke* 9:46-50, for only by so doing can all the circumstances be learned. In *Matthew* we read:

Matthew 18

¹ At the same time the disciples came unto Jesus, saying,
Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?

From Mark's account we learn that something had preceded this question. Jesus had first asked them what they had been disputing about by the way, and, ashamed to acknowledge that they had been disputing as to who should have the supremacy, they held their peace.

Doubtless some of the other disciples who had not been so prominent in the discussion, but who were equally anxious with the rest that the question should be settled, asked the question which Matthew records:

Matthew 18

² And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

³ And said, Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Mark says that before this, He said,

Mark 9

³⁵ If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

How different the kingdom of Heaven is from this world. Here the man who wishes to be first, and accounted great, must push his claims. No man could hope for any political preferment if he did not “work” for position. But just the opposite must be done by the one who wishes to be great in Christ’s kingdom. He must entirely forget himself, and must prefer that others should be honored rather than himself. Otherwise he cannot be the follower of the Son of man,

Matthew 20

²⁸ ...[who] came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

It is evident that Christ must be the greatest one in His own kingdom. His whole life was one of self-denial and humble service to others, and on the night in which He was betrayed, He washed His disciples’ feet. Now the man who should esteem himself too exalted to perform such menial service, would esteem himself greater than Christ, and consequently could not enter His kingdom. Such a one would want to divide honors with Christ, as did Satan, in Heaven.

John 13

¹⁶ The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Christ did not mean, when He said that they must be as a little child, that children are sinless. The seeds of sin are in the heart of every child that is born. Solomon says,

Proverbs 22

¹⁵ Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.

But there are characteristics of childhood that must also be exhibited in the man who expects to enter the kingdom of Heaven. The child is trustful, accepting everything that is told it as literally true. It has not learned “the wisdom of the world,”¹⁰ which is doubt. So the one who would share Christ’s

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 1:20; 2:6; 3:19.

kingdom must believe, without any mixture of doubt, whatever God says. When the Lord made a promise to Abraham, which was so great as to be incomprehensible, and was contrary to all natural law, the simple record is,

Romans 4

³ Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

In childhood there is naturally a lack of self-consciousness, which means an absence of pride. It is pride that leads us continually to wonder what others are thinking of us, and often to imagine that we are the center of observation, when nobody is thinking of us. The child has not this morbid care for what others think, because it does not think of itself.

Again, the child does not harbor resentment. It is utterly foreign to a little child's nature to hold a grudge. To cherish animosity is something that the child learns only after repeated ill-usage unaccompanied by Christian training. So we, if we would be followers of Christ, must love even those who use us spitefully.

In a word, artless simplicity, loving confidence, and an entire absence of self-seeking, must characterize the candidate for heavenly honors. He must...

Colossians 3

¹⁴ Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness,
and,

1 Corinthians 13

⁴ Charity suffers long, and is kind; charity envies not; charity vaunts not itself, is not puffed up,

⁵ Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil.

The student will lose much if he fails to connect this answer of Christ as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven, with His words on the same subject in the sermon on

the mount:

Matthew 5

¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

¹⁸ For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

¹⁹ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

In one case He said that he who would be greatest must humble himself as a little child; in the other He said that the one who should do and teach the commandments of God, should be great in the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore we must conclude that these two things go together, and that true humility and the keeping of the commandments are identical. For further proof, read the following text:

1 Timothy 1

⁵ Now the end [object, or design] of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

We have already read the description of charity, in *1 Corinthians* 13:4-5. So we find that the design of the commandment is to make a man long-suffering, kind, free from envy, or malice, and humble. It is to make a man love God with all the powers of his being, and his neighbor as himself. Such a man cannot be a self-seeker.

It is quite fashionable to speak slightly of the ten commandments, as adapted for a low state of civilization, serving only to give people some crude ideas of holiness, but as unfitted for the mature Christian. Some have said that:

“The man whose life is no better than the ten command-

ments require a man's life to be, cannot be much of a Christian."

Such ones have no conception of the depth and the breadth of God's love. It stops not with outward acts but covers...

Ecclesiastes 12

¹⁴ ...every work,...with every secret thing.

There is not a grace which the angels of God possess, that will not be exhibited in the life of the one who keeps the commandments perfectly. The beautiful character of Christ,

Acts 10

³⁸ ...who went about doing good,

—and His life of sweet humility, and tender, self-denying love, was due to the fact that the law of God was in His heart. Every act of His life was simply the natural working of the law of God. If anybody wants to know just how much is required by the ten commandments, let him study the life of Christ. It requires no less of love and mercy and justice than was manifested in the character of Jesus. As Isaac Watts beautifully expressed it:

My blest Redeemer and my Lord,
I read my duty in your word;
But in your life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters.

Matthew 18

⁷ It must needs be that offenses come,...

Not because God wills that they should come, but because of the perverseness of human nature.

⁷ ...but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

If offenses were necessary, that is, if it were fixed by fate that certain men should commit certain evils, then it would be unjust to pronounce a woe upon them. But the "offenses" here

spoken of are stumbling-blocks. The idea is that in this world it is impossible but that there will be things tending to make Christians stumble in the way; but the one who shall be a cause of such stumbling is in a sad case. This should teach extreme carefulness in every act of life,

Hebrews 12

¹³ ...lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.

Right here we may express this thought with the first part of the lesson, concerning the law of God as the rule of humility which will make one a sharer in the kingdom of Heaven. Offenses are stumbling-blocks; offenses will come, and some will fall, yet not all. Says David:

Psalms 119

¹⁶⁵ Great peace have they which love your law; and nothing shall offend them.

That is, those who love and adhere to the law, shall not stumble. This is what the same writer says of the righteous:

Psalms 37

³¹ The law of God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

But we have learned that the keeping of the law produces humility, and lowliness of heart. Now what is more evident than that a humble man will not fall?

Proverbs 16

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 11

² When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the lowly is wisdom.

So here again we see that Christian humility is simply conformity by the aid of Christ, to the ten commandments. The fact that those who humble themselves and keep humble cannot fall, is thus aptly expressed by Bunyan:

He that is down need fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

Matthew 18

¹⁰ Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Much misapprehension has existed in regard to this text. It does not refer exclusively to literal little children, but to all who have been converted and have become as little children. It is thus that the beloved disciple uses it in his epistle:

1 John 3

⁷ Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.

1 John 5

²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

The expression “their angels” indicates that each follower of Christ has an angel to whose special care he is intrusted. Compare with:

Hebrews 1

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Matthew 18

¹⁰ ...their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

This does not teach that they always remain in Heaven, looking at the face of God; for then they would not be “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation.” But it means that they always have access to the throne of God.

There is no business so pressing but that it can wait while

God gives audience to one of His messengers who comes with a plea for one of His stricken children. What a wonderful thought! and how full of encouragement, and at the same time of warning!

10. True Greatness

Present Truth, August 27, 1903

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:1-4

Matthew 18

¹ When the disciples asked the Lord who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,

² He set a little child before them and said,

³ Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

JUDGED by this standard, John the Baptist, by the Saviour's own award, was the humblest man that had lived until that time.

Matthew 11

¹¹ Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist.

John was willing to be only a voice in the wilderness, and to spend his life in preparing the way of another. God could trust him to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ, to do a wonderful work which would move the nation, without taking any glory to himself. He was willing to decrease that another might increase, and could rejoice in seeing it.

John 3

²⁶ And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with you beyond Jordan, to whom you bore witness, behold, the same baptizes, and all men come to Him.

²⁷ John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him.

²⁹ He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of

the bridegroom, which stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease.

John was little in his own eyes. Therefore he was...

Luke 1

¹⁵ ...great in the sight of the Lord.

But the Lord is no respecter of persons. John had no monopoly of greatness. Christ said, after He had spoken of John:

Matthew 11 [RV]

¹¹ Yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

If a man is willing to go lower than John in humility, he can be counted greater in the kingdom of heaven. The position of the greatest is not reserved for any man. It is for him who will excel all others in humility. And because of this, there will be no soreness or jealousy in the striving, for those who come the nearest to the greatest will be most like him in humility.

This is why there never can be any division in the church of Christ over the desire for greatness. The Spirit that animates the members of Christ's body is one of humble, loving service, which seeks nothing for itself.

1 Corinthians 13

⁵ [Love] seeks not its own.

Greatness is not measured there by titles or offices, but by child-like humility, and he who serves most rules most. No member will ever envy another his position in the church, because only those who are free from envy will seek positions of humility, and those who love to serve will serve as much without a position as with one.

11. Jesus and the Children

Present Truth, July 26, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for August 5

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:1-14

“Who is greatest?”

IT WAS a burning question with these Galilean fishermen; it has been such with mankind in all ages of the world. The feverish striving after wealth which is a marked characteristic of the present generation is really an outgrowth of the desire for the power and high social position which money confers upon its possessor.

The ambition to be great is by no means confined to worldlings. It has wrought fearful execution within the pale of the church. It was the religious leaders of the Jews, the Pharisees and scribes, sitting in Moses' seat, who delivered the Saviour to be crucified, being moved with envy because His influence with the people was greater than theirs.

The entrance of this same ambitious spirit into the primitive church robbed it of its purity, fervent love, and whole-souled devotion, and turned it into the corrupt ally of a more corrupt civil government, the combination making a persecuting power which has never seen its equal.

The Master well knew the evil effects of worldly ambition, in blighting the spiritual life, and closing the faculties to divine truth. He had told the Pharisees:

John 5

⁴⁴ How can you believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that comes from God only?

It must have been with the deepest concern that He saw this spirit growing in the hearts of His disciples. As brought out in the parallel passage, *Mark* 9:30-50, they had been dis-

puting of this very matter on the way, and as a natural consequence, they were wholly unfit to understand the important instruction their Lord was giving them with reference to His death and resurrection.

Mark 9

³⁰ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and He would not that any man should know it.

³¹ For He taught His disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day.

³² But they did not understand that saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

³³ And He came to Capernaum: and being in the house He asked them, What was it that you disputed among yourselves by the way?

³⁴ But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

The opportunity was seized of teaching an important lesson which doubtless lingered long in the minds of the disciples. A child is called, and placed in the midst; then follow those immortal words which have sounded down through the ages:

Matthew 18

³ Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

We can readily picture the scene. There was the circle of anxious, troubled disciples; beyond them the multitude; in the midst a little child, with the upturned, slightly wondering face, the trustful look, and sweet innocence so characteristic of childhood. The picture lent force to the words.

Here we have the answer, marvelously compact, clear as a sunbeam, yet arising out of the profoundest depths of wisdom, to a question which all the great sages of antiquity had discussed and argued for ages, but had never settled.

What is there in the character of a child that makes it an example to Christians? Noticeably,

- an utter absence of the ambition to rule, and
- abundance of simple unwavering faith.

Unless woefully deceived again and again until forced to do otherwise, the child has implicit confidence in its parents, and looks to them for everything. Even so the Christian may and should look to his Heavenly Father to supply all his needs.

The Lord regards the inhabitants of the fallen world as His children; and His great heart of love yearns after His wayward sons and daughters. He says:

Jeremiah 3

¹⁴ Turn, O backsliding children,...and I will bring you to Zion.

⁴ Will you not from this time cry unto me, my Father, You are the guide of my youth?

Isaiah 49

¹⁵ Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet I will not forget you.

Similar expressions abound in the Word. Seemingly the Lord has taken every possible means of encouraging man to recognize Him as their Father, and realize the lasting joy and peace which flow from such recognition.

Mark supplies another incident which is well worth noticing in this connection. It seems that the disciples had not only disputed as to who should be greatest, but had already begun to name their prerogatives. As John related it,

Mark 9

³⁸ We saw one casting out devils in your name, and he did not follow us: and we forbade him, because he did not follow us.

Of course, if the disciples were to exercise this kind of spiri-

tual jurisdiction over the minds and consciences of men, it was quite important that they should have a clearly defined head; hence their question as to who should be greatest. But such an idea was far from the mind of the Master. His commandment was,

³⁹ Forbid them not.

And this instruction applies with equal force to the present day. The true Christian of every age are to be like Christ,

Hebrews 7

²⁶ ...holy, harmless, undefiled.

There is at the present day a growing tendency on the part of church people to legislate sinners into the kingdom. Sunday desecration, for instance, is to be put down by force. The church is to take the law in its hands, and compel men, whether they will or not, to yield an outward homage to so-called Christian institutions. This is nothing more or less than the papacy. The weapons of the true church are not carnal but spiritual. Christians who thus seek to rule over the consciences of their fellow-man are most effectively denying their Lord and Master.

Humility is set down as the secret of true greatness.

Mark 9

³⁵ If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all.

Distinction in the cause of Christ is gained through self-sacrificing service. The secret of the marvelous power exerted by Paul, is revealed in his words:

1 Corinthians 9

¹⁹ Though I be free from all man, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

In this respect, Paul simply followed his Lord and Master, who said,

Mark 10

⁴⁵ The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Offenses must come, but woe to those by whom they come. An offense is here used to designate that which will induce sin. It is bad enough to enter the paths of sin ourselves; but it is an awful crime to draw others into sin. Nevertheless, such offenses do abound on every side. Satan's agents are busily engaged; allurements to sin are spread out on every side, many of the most dangerous ones ostensibly innocent and harmless. Our only safeguard is the divine Word; but it will never fail.

Psalms 119

¹⁶⁵ Great peace have they which love your law, and nothing shall offend them.

In verses eight and nine of *Matthew 18*, the reference is evidently not to literal hands and feet, for the resurrected body will not be disfigured in any way:

Matthew 18

⁸ Wherefore if your hand or your foot offend you, cut them off, and cast them from yourself: it is better for you to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

⁹ And if your eye offend you, pluck it out, and cast it from yourself: it is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

The meaning is rather, as Mr. Barnes observes that:

Temptations to sin, attachments, and employments of any kind that cannot be pursued without leading us into sin, be they ever so dear to us, must be abandoned, or the soul must be lost....It is better for us to go to heaven without enjoying the things that caused us to sin, than to enjoy them here, and then be lost.

The metaphor used is a singularly appropriate one, inas-

much as a person's besetting sins often seem as much a part of himself and as hard to give up as his members. The power of the drink habit is well known; the reader may have heard more than one of its victims say,

"I would gladly give my right arm, if I could get rid of this terrible curse."

Thank God such cases are not hopeless; but severe measures must be taken, the offending member must be summarily removed. God will perform the operation; but the sinner must be willing to have it done, and must bear momentary suffering. There is no anesthetic provided, but something better: divine strength to endure the suffering.

It is related of a surgeon who lived and plied his calling before the discovery of chloroform, that he would give these directions to his patients:

"First look at your diseased limb, then look at me, and don't take your eyes off mine for an instant."

It would be hard to give better directions to the repentant soul. First look at your sin, consider well your hopeless condition; then fix your eyes on the Saviour and keep them there. Give the Lord a chance to make a clean job of it. An operation interrupted by the patient coming to, and refusing to have it proceed further, would involve much additional suffering, and might result in death.

Yet how often do we not subject the Lord to this embarrassment. Some darling habit is given up, the sacrifice is laid on the altar; but before it is entirely consumed, we snatch it away again, and cherish it for a time till it grows to dangerous proportions; then the effort is made again. This is mere trifling with the Holy Spirit, choosing alternately between Christ and Satan, and enjoying neither the indifference of the world nor the peace of God.

Matthew 18

¹¹ For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

¹² How do you think? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine, and go into the mountains, and seek that which is gone astray?

¹³ And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoices more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

¹⁴ Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

These verses, in which the Saviour's mission is likened to that of a shepherd seeking his lost sheep, take on new meaning and beauty as we come to understand the intimate relation in which an Eastern shepherd stands to his flock.

Travelers tell us that the Syrian shepherd of today not uncommonly knows all his sheep by name, and can call any one to his side by repeating the name. He guards his flock by day and by night, and risks his life to save them from the attack of robbers or wild beasts.

Christ is the good Shepherd. His sheep know His voice, and follow Him. They are helpless themselves in the presence of an enemy; they have no recognized leader except the Shepherd, who leads them through green pastures and by the living waters, and protects them from all dangers.

That which is not good in itself can never do anybody any good. Good can come only from good, not from evil. One may say as much as he pleases, "Let us do evil, that good may come,"¹¹ but good will never come from it. From evil, only evil can come.

And this is true in every respect. Just as one cannot become good by doing evil, so one cannot receive good by taking that which is bad. Life cannot come from that which tends to pro-

¹¹ *Romans 3:8.*

duce death. Healing cannot come from poison.

To expect to gain health by taking poisons into the system is even more senseless than to expect to get strength by living on nothing. Eat that which is good, and only that which is good, namely, the life of Christ, and He will make you good.

12. How To Be Humble

Present Truth, October 29, 1896

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:2-4

THE disciples were asking which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, when

Matthew 18

² Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set Him in the midst of them.

The little one stood in their midst wonder-eyed, but confident that it was a loving voice that called. Thoughtless of itself the child only knew that it was the natural thing to do to obey the call.

Then Jesus said,

³ Verily I say unto you, except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

The disciples were to humble themselves as the small child. Now, it is a fact that there is no more absurd spectacle than to see a proud person trying to act humbly. The proud heart cannot be humble. The little child was humble because it did not try to be so—it was so without trying. The little one was not thinking of itself, but only of the one who called it. The innocent child is artless because he has not yet learned to be envious and self-conscious.

The way then to be humble is to let self go. Let the humiliation of Jesus show what a senselessly wicked thing the heart of self is, and then it will be possible for a man not to...

Romans 12

³ ...think of himself more highly than he ought to think.

Let the conceited heart, which makes so much trouble, acknowledge its utter worthlessness, and it will not make the pitiful failure of trying to stimulate a humility that does not exist.

13. As Little Children

Present Truth, January 19, 1899

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:3, 6, 10

Matthew 18

³ Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It is written in the prophecy of *Malachi*,

Malachi 4

⁵ Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

⁶ And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

From *Luke* we learn that the object of this work of Elijah the prophet is to prepare people for the appearing of Christ. Of John the Baptist it was said,

Luke 1

¹⁷ He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

To make ready a people prepared for the Lord is to cause them to become as little children, for only such can enter into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children is to put in the fathers the heart of a little child. As a result of this work done in the spirit and power of Elias, the fathers and children will become one in spirit.

It is for the lack of this child-like spirit that so many parents have had to grieve over the rebellious dispositions of their children. It takes a humble, child-like spirit on the part of the parent to deal successfully with the soul of the little one, and only as parents themselves become as little children can they

have a saving influence over the young.

Children are very precious to the Lord.

Matthew 19

¹⁴ Of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus says,

Matthew 18

¹⁰ Take heed, that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

⁶ Whoso shall offend [“cause to stumble,” RV] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.

It is not the Lord's fault the children are so often a cause of trouble and anxiety to their parents. Some feel that it is almost hopeless to expect to see their children converted, but if they would only become as little children themselves, it would open the way for the Lord to work mightily in their behalf. He earnestly desires to save the children, and often all that hinders Him is the unwillingness of the parents to cooperate with Him, and reveal in their own lives the beauty and attractiveness which would win the children.

Let us notice one or two of the promises which the Lord makes to parents, when they allow themselves to be made like little children by the message of Elijah, which is to prepare people for the Lord. From these promises parents may learn what the Lord is willing to do now for their children, if they themselves will cease to hinder His working.

Isaiah 44

³ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring.

The result is seen in conversions on every hand,

⁴ And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses.

⁵ One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

When a person receives the Spirit of God its influence does not cease with himself. It extends to his children and beyond. Out of him flow rivers of living water.

John 7

³⁸ He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹ (But this He spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Hosea 14

⁴ I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for my anger is turned away from him.

When their own backsliding is healed, the promise is given to God's people,

⁷ They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine.

The receiving of God's fullness is the safeguard against backsliding. While a place is reserved in the heart for the world it will always assert itself and be master. When God is allowed to fill the life, He will keep that which is committed to Him.

And just as He can do this for those who trust in Him with all their heart and lean not to their own understanding, so He can and will do it for their children. Parents may be sure of the continued salvation of their children by knowing for themselves what it is to be kept from falling.

This is not a speculation. God has sworn to it. His covenant

with Abraham that He would write His law in his heart was...

Genesis 17

⁷ ...between me and you and your seed after you in their generation for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you.

Genesis 18

¹⁹ For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.

In *Isaiah* 59:20-21, we learn what this covenant would do for the seed of all...

Isaiah 59

²⁰ ...them that turn from transgression in Jacob.

²¹ As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord, my Spirit that is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed, says the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

Ephesians 6

¹ You fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Be yourselves a channel for the Divine blessing and it will nourish your children, so that they will grow up into Christ. They will have to meet with temptations just as their parents do, but the promise is to both,

Isaiah 49

²⁵ I will contend with him that contends with you, and I will save your children.

14. Despise Not One of These Little Ones

Present Truth, July 16, 1896

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:7

It was Christ himself who said:

Matthew 18

⁷ Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come: but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

WE CAN look for no higher authority than this, and here the express statement is made that offenses will come.

The line of thought is that of offenses against “little ones.” In the preceding verse Christ declared that it were better for a man to have been drowned in the deep sea, with a millstone about his neck, than to have committed an offense against one of the little ones that believed in Him:

⁶ But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

And all this was said as the little child stood in the midst of them,—that little toddling boy whom Christ had called to Him, and had set there as a simple and unmistakable object lesson to enforce the reply He was about to make to those who had asked,

¹ Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

Such as that little child, He told them, would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,—and indeed they who were not such as that little one would not even enter there. And such was His love for those little ones, and for those who should humble themselves to be like them, that He identified himself

with them, and said:

⁵ Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receives me.

Then he who commits an offense against one of these little ones with whom Christ so identified himself commits an offense against Christ. And yet He said these offenses would come,—and have they not? Indeed, how bitterly have Christ's little ones been misused! Just such little ones as those whom He took in His arms, and pressed to His heart, and said,

Matthew 19

¹⁴ ...of such is the kingdom of heaven.

How long has been the list of offenses committed against them! How many men have rendered themselves subject to that denunciation,

Matthew 18

⁷ Woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

How little they thought that an angel of light stood before the Father in heaven, the guardian spirit of each of these little ones, and brought accusations of every offense committed.

How little they recognized the fact that these very little ones in whom Adam's sin had sown the seeds of death, Christ came to save from that death, as the anxious, tender shepherd seeks the lost and helpless lambs in the mountains, and rejoices over it as it is found more than over the ninety and nine that were left in the fold,—it being His will that...

¹⁴ ...not one of these little ones should perish.

15. The Shepherd's Care

Present Truth, September 20, 1894

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:12-14

Matthew 18

¹² How think you? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine, and go into the mountains, and seek that which is gone astray?

¹³ And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoices more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

¹⁴ Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

SOMETIMES men and women get discouraged, and think that the Lord does not care for them. They do not consciously charge the Lord with being unsympathetic and forgetful, but they feel their own failings so keenly that they do not think they are worth being cared for. They feel as though the loss of one insignificant person would make no difference to the Lord.

It is to such people at such times that the Saviour's words are of peculiar importance. The man who had a hundred sheep did not think it a trifling matter that one had gone astray. He might have said,

"It is only one, and I will not bother with it."

But men who talk in that way do not preserve their property. He who should talk like that about one sheep, because it is only one, would say the same of every other one, and so one by one they might wander away until he had none left.

The shepherd well knows that the preservation of his entire flock depends upon his watchful care over each member of

the flock. To be indifferent to the fate of any one, because it is only one, is in reality to be indifferent to the fate of the whole. Therefore since the safety of the whole depends upon the shepherd's care for each one, it is really the case that his solicitude is the same for each one as for the whole.

Even so it is with the Great Shepherd and His flock. His care for each individual is equal to His care for the whole.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁵ [Christ] died for all.

Hebrews 2

⁹ But...He...tasted death for every man.

Each individual receives as much of the merits of Christ as does the whole world. To say that the Lord is unmindful of any one of His creatures, is the same as saying that He does not care for anybody.

It is not in reality, therefore, a sense of our own unworthiness that causes us to become discouraged, but ignorance or forgetfulness of God's character. He who knows the Lord, must trust Him.

Psalm 9

¹⁰ They that know your name will put their trust in You.

It is thought to be a terrible thing for the infidel to charge God with cruelty and indifference; but how much worse it must seem for a professed Christian to say what amounts to the same thing!

They who know the Lord will not become discouraged because they know that He does not forsake those who trust in Him.

16. Restoring the Erring

Present Truth, August 31, 1893

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:15-17

Matthew 18

¹⁵ Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone, if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother.

SOME ancient authorities omit “against you,” in this text. That this course is to be pursued in all cases, and not simply where a personal offense has been committed, is shown by:

Galatians 6

¹ Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.

Self is not to appear in the transaction. The man is not to go to his brother because he has been injured, but because his brother's course is injuring the brother himself. He is to go to save his brother, and not to seek reparation for himself.

Let it be remembered that as Christ “emptied himself” (*Philippians 2:7*), so His followers are to allow Him to take self away, so that He may appear. Whatever is different from Christ, is antichrist.

Romans 15

³ [Christ] pleased not himself.

Therefore to be jealous for one's own rights and feelings, is to manifest the spirit of antichrist.

- Is it any worse for a man to lie about us than it is for him to lie about our neighbor?
- Is it any worse for him to steal from us than it is for him to steal from our neighbor?

- Is it any worse for him to use any kind of violence toward us than it would be to do the same to any other men?

Evidently not, yet self prompts the reply,

“No; but it seems worse, because it hurts us worse.”

Ah, but if self were gone, and Christ were in its place, it would not hurt us worse.

Romans 5

⁸ God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

When Christ was reviled, and slandered, and rudely treated, His only thought was of the injury which His tormentors were doing to themselves. So if a man does wrong, we are to be moved with compassion for his infirmity; and our feelings are not to be affected at all by the fact that his enmity is directed to us personally. Therefore when the brother is in a fault, we are to go to him with the one thought of restoring him.

A Real Revival

But who is to go? The answer is,

Galatians 6

¹ You which are spiritual.

All men are alike by nature. The sins which are committed by any person, are the outgrowth of the sinful nature that is common to all. Therefore when any sin comes to our notice, instead of producing disgust or contempt for the sinner, it should cause us to think,

“That is a specimen of what I am by nature.”

Therefore before we go to set that one right, we must be sure that we are spiritual, for if we are not, we are partakers

with him in his sin, and cannot do him any good.

Thus we see that the perception of a fault in another throws us right back on ourselves. If there is any feeling in us save such a burning love for the sinner as Christ himself had, then we may know that we are not spiritual, and that our first duty is to seek the Lord for ourselves.

Perhaps by the time we have become spiritual, the offending brother will also be spiritual; or we may find out that what we thought was sin in him was only the reflection of our own selves. But, it is asked:

“If I do not think that I am spiritual, ought I not to tell somebody else who is spiritual, the elders or a committee, for instance, so that he may be helped at once?”

The Lord says,

Matthew 18

¹⁵ ...go and tell him.

Tell whom? Tell the one who is in error. You dare not tell anybody else, for you have no warrant in Scripture to do so.

“But perhaps he may go so far as to be irreclaimable before I get in a position to help him.”

That is nothing to you; the Lord can take care of him without any of your unsanctified help. Everything that you do while not spiritual will only make the matter worse. Besides, if you fully realize that you are not spiritual, it need not take you an hour to become so; the Lord is not hard to find, since...

Acts 17

²⁷ He [is] not far from every one of us,

—and He gives the Spirit freely to all who ask Him for it:

1 Corinthians 2

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that

are freely given to us of God.

“But,” and it is astonishing how many exceptions we may find to the word of God,

“If I know that some other person knows of the fault, may I not talk it over with him? Suppose everybody knows it; is it not then common property?”

What does the word say? “How do you read?”

Matthew 18

¹⁵ Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

That is definite, and should be sufficient. If all the members of the church were loyal to the word, and they would be if they were spiritual, and if one of the number committed a sin so that they all knew it, not one of them would speak to another about it, but each one would go to the offending one alone, and seek to reclaim him.

And it would not be human effort, but it would be Christ himself working and speaking through them for the salvation of a soul in danger.

See how wonderfully God has provided for the purification of His church. If one commits a sin, and all know it, then each one is driven at once to seek the Lord for himself, and no one may rest until he knows that Christ dwells in him.

So that if men followed the word of God, a revival would be the first thing that would follow the commission of a grievous sin by any member. Is it not a simple yet most effective means? God forgive His people that it has been so little used.

The Longsuffering of Christ

Matthew 18

¹⁶ But if he will not hear you, then take with yourself one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

We may not talk with them about the matter, but take them along to assist in restoring the offender. And all must go...

Galatians 6

¹ ...in the spirit of meekness.

But if the word of God is followed it will not be often that matters will come to this step. The erring one will listen to the voice of Christ, if that is the only voice that he hears.

Remember also, that once going to him, not to upbraid, but to pray with him and strengthen him, is not sufficient. The Lord says,

Romans 10

²¹ All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

The longsuffering of God bore with men one hundred and twenty years in the days of Noah.¹² Christ bears long with us, and does not upbraid us, and we ought to learn from Him how to be patient with the erring.

Suppose a case where all know of the sin, yet all are so loyal to the word that no one will speak of it to any but to the sinner. If there are forty who know of it, and, after they have sought the Lord, each one goes alone to labor for the one in fault, as Christ would, who can imagine the effect upon his heart? It would be melted unless it had become exceedingly hard. Such cases there may be.

Matthew 18

¹⁷ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican.

One or several have been to him alone. Then three or four have gone together.

¹² **1 Peter 3** ²⁰ Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

- And how have they gone? “In the spirit of meekness.”
- Whom have they represented? None but Christ.
- Whose words have been spoken? Only the words of the Lord.
- What has been the sole object? To restore the offender to Christ.

As God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, so Christ has been in His servants reconciling the sinner to himself.

2 Corinthians 5

²⁰ As though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be reconciled to God.

Then how is it when it comes before the church? Just the same. One alone tried to reclaim the sinner. Then several together labored for him. And now the whole body is to seek to save him, only as Christ would.

It is impossible that he should be brought before the church for trial, as before a court, because a trial always implies a judge and a possible condemnation. But the church is for the purpose of representing Christ to the world, and:

John 3

¹⁷ God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world.

Christ refused to judge when He was on earth, and is not yet sitting in judgment; therefore the church cannot sit as a court without accusing the Lord of neglect of duty. All the church, then,—the body of Christ,

Ephesians 1

²³ ...the fullness of Him that fills all in all,

—is aroused for the restoration of one diseased member. It is as though God himself did beseech the erring one, for He does do it through His church. He who resists that appeal is not re-

sisting men but God, because self has not appeared; only the word of God has spoken all the way through. What then?

Matthew 18

¹⁷ But if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican.

All has been done that can be done, and now “let him be.” The church has cleared itself from all complicity with the sin, and is pure, because their obstinate one in rejecting the word of the Lord, has rejected the Lord himself, and consequently is no longer a member of His body. Yet he is not to be treated as an enemy, for the heathen and the publicans are to be loved and labored for.

Now we can see how it is that whatever shall be bound or loosed on earth shall likewise be bound or loosed in heaven. It is not because heaven has pledged itself to abide by every decision of man, but because the word that is settled in heaven, and which alone binds and looses, has been allowed free course on earth.

Other points in this same line will be noticed in other articles. But studying the Divine model, we know how to detect and avoid error. If we know what constitutes the true church of Christ, and how it acts, we shall know the characteristics of apostasy.

17. Binding and Loosing

Present Truth, August 31, 1893

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:18

Christ says,

Matthew 18

¹⁸ Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

DOES this mean that God has pledged himself to be bound by the decisions of men? Does it mean that whenever any body of men calling themselves the church of Christ, shall decide that certain ones are worthy of heaven, and that certain others are not, God will accept their judgment as His own? Hardly; for that would be to step down from the throne, and to exalt man above himself.

John 13

¹⁶ The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than He that sent him.

Moreover one scripture cannot be used to offset another. Christ has expressly forbidden His followers to judge; and He has not contradicted himself. Let us therefore study this question of binding and loosing.

When Christ declared that He had not come to judge the world, but to save the world, He also said,

John 12

⁴⁸ He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

The Lord also said to Moses:

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren,

like unto you, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

¹⁹ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

From this we see that the word of the Lord is of supreme authority. It is to be the judge in the last day. Therefore whatever is bound or loosed contrary to the word of the Lord, is not really bound or loosed, for it will be reversed in the judgment.

Consequently we know that the binding and loosing that men do, that is to stand in heaven, is the binding or loosing that is done by the word of God through them. This is made more manifest by the words of the Lord to the young prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah said that he could not speak because he was only a child.

Jeremiah 1

⁷ But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatsoever I command you, you shall speak.

⁹ Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build.

How was it that Jeremiah was set to do all this? It was by having the words of God in his mouth. What then was the power that was to pull down and to build up? It was the word of the Lord. The words of the Lord are found in the Bible, for the Bible itself is the word of the Lord. Therefore only as men have it dwelling in them, so that they speak it, and have all their acts perfectly in harmony with it, can they bind or loose anything.

Thus we see that what is bound or loosed on earth is bound or loosed in heaven, only by the word of the Lord which is settled for ever in heaven.¹³ Whatever is not in harmony with the word of God, is done against God, and therefore cannot stand.

But the word of the Lord is pure¹⁴, and must not be adulterated with human opinions. Men must not put their interpretation upon the Scriptures, or draw inferences from it, and then say that they are following the word. The word must be taken just as it reads, without addition or alteration.

God has said just what He means, and we are not warranted in acting “according to our best judgment,” when we do not understand it in any given case. We must wait until we do understand it. Moreover we must remember that it is not permitted to the church to make precedent. It is the church’s duty to obey, and not to command.

Ephesians 1

²² [Christ is] head over all things to the Church,

Colossians 1

¹⁸ ...that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

The Holy Scriptures are sufficient to make a man...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁷ ...perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Whatever the Lord wishes done He has placed in His word. Therefore if there ever should arise any case about which nothing can be found in the Bible, that would be sufficient evidence that nothing is to be done in that case.

¹³ **Psalm 119** ⁸⁹ For ever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.

¹⁴ **Psalm 30** ⁵ Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.

18. The Prayer of Faith

Present Truth, July 16, 1896

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:19

CHRIST'S words in regard to the answer to prayer are unequivocal. In one place He says:

Matthew 18

¹⁹ If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

There is no mistaking the plain language of the statement. To him who believes, then, all things that are worthy to be accomplished are possible,—for wherever two agree, in asking, their prayer of faith will be effectual. Then what remains is to believe, have faith, and pray.

Mark 9

²³ If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes.

Mark 11

²² Have faith in God.

²⁴ What things soever you desire, when you pray believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

19. There Am I

Present Truth, July 23, 1896

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:20

AMONG the comforting assurances of His continued personal care for His disciples, that in the 18th chapter of *Matthew* is one of the most definite and positive, where Christ says:

Matthew 18

²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

There was no limit of time, place, or persons, attached to this promise. It is just as good, and is to be counted upon as fulfilled, just as much today as the hour it was spoken. That this should be so is something which the scoffer rarely considers.

Genesis 16

¹³ You God see me,

—seems more than ordinarily applicable when one considers that wherever two or three are gathered together in His name He is actually there, though unseen.

If this fact were only realized the seat of the scornful would be empty. The knowledge that He is present will cause every believer to respect all gatherings, however humble, where the name of the Lord is called upon.

20. A Lesson on Forgiveness

Signs of the Times, February 3, 1888

Notes on the International Lesson, February 19

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:21-25

THE parable which forms the principal part of this lesson is recorded only in *Matthew*, but the principle which it inculcates is stamped upon every page of the Bible. Peter came to the Lord and asked,

Matthew 18

²¹ How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Doubtless Peter thought that he was stretching the grace of forgiveness to its utmost limit, for he had not then learned so fully of Christ as he afterwards did. Imagine his surprise when Jesus answered,

²² I say not unto you, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

We cannot understand by this that Jesus intended to limit the number of times that one should forgive another to just four hundred and ninety, but that he intended to express an indefinite, unlimited number. As Schaff aptly says:

“It is a symbolical expression for never-ending forgiveness. Love is not to be limited by the multiplication table.”

Our Saviour’s words recorded in *Luke 17*, convey the same idea:

Luke 17

³ If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

⁴ And if he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.

The Christian's life is to be one constant stream of love; he is never to cease to forgive until offenses cease.

Although the matter of rebuking is not directly in the lesson, it is so closely connected with it that it ought not to be passed without a notice. From the text last quoted, some have supposed that they were not required to exercise forgiveness unless the trespasser expressly asked for it, and that they were warranted in severely censuring anyone who offended them. They do not understand the spirit with which they are to rebuke the offender. Paul explained it when he said to Timothy:

2 Timothy 4

² Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

Still more it is explained in:

Galatians 6

¹ Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.

And our Lord himself makes it still more plain:

Matthew 18

¹⁵ Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone; if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother.

These texts show that the object of the "rebuke" is not to irritate the trespasser, and make him feel bitter, but to win him from his evil way. The one trespassed against is to go with a spirit of forgiveness in his heart, utterly forgetful of the fact that he has been injured, but mindful only of the fact that the one before him has by the course which he has taken, wronged his own soul. His object must not be to make the brother feel that he has injured him; self must not appear. He must simply try to win the erring one to the right path.

The parable which followed our Saviour's answer to Peter, shows not only the duty of forgiveness, but also the danger of not forgiving. Following is a summary of this familiar parable.

A certain man owed the king whom he served, ten thousand talents, about fifteen million dollars. The debtor had nothing with which to meet that debt, so, according to custom, he was commanded to be sold, together with his wife and children, and all that he had. Then the unfortunate man fell down and prayed,

Matthew 18

²⁶ Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.

His lord well knew that he could not pay, but was moved with compassion, and forgave him the debt.

Then that same servant went out and found a fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence, about fifteen dollars. Forgetful of the favor that he had just received, he took his fellow-servant by the throat, and demanded immediate payment of the paltry sum.

The poor man made the same plea that the first servant had made to his lord, but the hard-hearted servant, who had been forgiven so much, would not listen to the cry for mercy, and cast his fellow-servant into prison. When the master heard what had been done he said:

³² O you wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you desired me:

³³ Should not you also have had compassion on your fellow-servant, even as I had pity on you?

³⁴ And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

The first lesson to be drawn from this is the lesson which our Saviour himself emphasized.

³⁵ So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their

trespasses.

What an awful thought for those who cherish resentment in their hearts, over any real or fancied wrong. It matters not if our sins have been once forgiven; if we so far forget that fact, and lose the influence of it to such a degree, as to refuse to forgive our brother, it will be as though we had never been forgiven. When we pray, we are to say,

Matthew 6

¹² Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

If we do not fully and freely forgive every injury that is done to us, when we repeat the Lord's prayer we ask the Lord to remember our sins against us. If we refrain from praying the Lord's prayer, or its equivalent, we cannot have any favor or pardon from God, for:

Matthew 7

⁸ He that asks receives.

So if we do not forgive, there is no hope for us. Jesus himself said,

Matthew 6

¹⁴ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;

¹⁵ But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This is not an arbitrary decree, that is, a decree depending solely on the will of the Maker, but is fixed by the very nature of things. It is like all of God's decrees, a part of His eternal justice. It would be simply impossible for God to forgive an unforgiving man, because when God forgives, it is not a mere form, but a cleansing from sin.

But God does not cleanse anyone from sin who does not repent of it and desire freedom from it. He does not force forgiveness upon anybody; that would be an impossibility. And

the man who will not forgive, cherishes sin, and shows that he does not want forgiveness. He is proud, and would dispute for his “rights” with the Almighty himself.

But what of the man who has once received pardon from God? He certain must be willing to forgive everybody. If not, he shows that he has no appreciation of the love of God. He shows an utterly selfish disposition, and indicates that he feels that he has received only his just due, in the pardoning love of God. He acts as though everything belonged to him by right.

Take the case of the man in the parable. When his debt was forgiven, he virtually received from his master a gift of fifteen million dollars. Now what can we think of a man who has just received fifteen million dollars as a free and unmerited gift, who will refuse to give a needy fellow-creature the paltry sum of fifteen dollars? Language is inadequate to express the meanness of such a man. Surely he is not worthy of the slightest consideration.

Well, that which God bestows in forgiving our sins is infinitely greater than anything we can bestow upon our fellows in forgiving their trespasses. If we have really felt the pardoning love of God, the little trespasses of our fellow-men against us will appear as nothing. When we have received so freely of the boundless love of God, it is but a small matter for us to let a little of that love overflow to our fellow-men. And this is what the apostle had in mind, when he wrote:

1 Peter 4

¹⁰ As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

The parable shows that God forgives upon conditions. His pardon is on condition that we really and humbly desire it, and that we continue in the same humility. The sin is not blotted out as soon as it is pardoned. If it were, God could not deal with us as the king did with his servant. The merit of

Christ's blood is set down opposite the sins of the one who is forgiven, and if it remains there until...

Acts 3

¹⁹ ...the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,

—they will be blotted out. But if the forgiven one shows by his actions that he is unworthy of the grace of Christ, and attempts by his evil course to make Christ the minister of sin, then the favor is withdrawn, and he stands face to face with his sin, the same as though he had never been forgiven.

He will then be required to pay all that he owes to the Lord, which will be impossible; for he is not able even to live uprightly and do his duty for the future, and he has behind him a debt, to meet which he has nothing. He must then be eternally a debtor, and must receive eternal punishment.

How wonderful is the love of God, which provides free pardon for all! Who can fail to allow the goodness of God to lead him to a thorough repentance?

21. Seventy Times Seven

Present Truth, July 27, 1893

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:21-22

Matthew 18

²¹ Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

²² Jesus said unto him, I say not unto you, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

DOUBTLESS Peter thought that he had stretched the matter of forgiveness to its utmost limit when he asked if he should forgive his brother seven times; and the reply of Jesus must have astonished him.

Seventy times seven is practically without limit, for remember that this is with only one, and there are very few that would be called upon to forgive one brother four hundred and ninety times. Or even supposing a brother were so great an offender as that, where is the soul so mean as to keep tally of every call for forgiveness, so as not to exceed the exact number? One who would do that would not really forgive at all. Surely the Lord has not left any provision for the cherishing of enmity.

But we have something which makes the case even stronger. Luke (xvii. 4) thus records the words of Christ concerning our dealing with a brother:

Luke 17

⁴ And if he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.

Seven times in a day, days without number, are we to forgive the one who trespasses against us, if forgiveness be needed so often. If a brother shall do the same thing seven times in one day, and each time ask forgiveness, we are to

grant it freely.

But whether the brother asks for forgiveness, or not, is to make no difference with our feelings toward him. We are to feel the same toward him if he does not ask to be forgiven, that we do if he does ask forgiveness. We are told to forgive one another,

Ephesians 4

³² ...even as God has for Christ's sake forgiven you.

If God had not manifested forgiving love to us before we asked for it, we would be lost.

Romans 5

⁸ But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance:

Romans 2

⁴ ...the goodness of God leads you to repentance.

So we are to win an erring brother to repentance by love. A bitter spirit will never do it.

Proverbs 15

¹ A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger.

Our object, however, in calling attention to these texts is not exhortation, but encouragement. It is of very little use to exhort a man to forgive, as a matter of duty, if he has not himself felt the touch of Divine forgiveness, which is the spring of all tenderness. But we write for the encouragement of those who feel that they have sinned too greatly to be forgiven, or that they have so often asked forgiveness for a single failing, and so often repeated the same fault, that God must be weary of forgiving. God is not a man. Says He to us:

Isaiah 55

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your

ways my ways, says the Lord.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Those who despondently imagine that God cannot forgive their oft-repeated sin, virtually say that God is not so forgiving as He demands that we shall be, and in so doing they greatly wrong God. His infinity is no less in the direction of love and tenderness than it is in that of wisdom and power. Why, we cannot even know how to forgive if we do not learn from Him.

And whether we know how to forgive or not, the fact remains that we are required to forgive the same brother times without number, even to seven times in one day, for the same offense, and that God is infinitely more willing to forgive than man can be.

This is not said for the purpose of encouraging anybody in wrong-doing; and let no one say that the emphasizing of this matter will lead people to think that they can sin with impunity. If the forgiving love of God would tend to confirm men in sin, God would not have made it known. The fact is that nothing but the love of God can turn a man away from sin. The world was in sin, and God manifested to them His infinite love, in order that they might be able to cease from sin. The fact that some will despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, does not cause Him to withdraw His love, and should not prevent us from dwelling upon it, for the encouragement of any who may want to do God's will.

But it is not alone by what God requires of us that we may learn what He is anxious to do for us. The death of the Son of God is the pledge of God's infinite love for us, and of His inconceivable desire to cleanse us from sin by the application of His healing forgiveness.

Romans 8

³² He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

The gift of Christ comprises everything. And trusting in that unspeakable gift, the humblest and most debased sinner may look up from the midst of his sore temptations, and confidently say:

Romans 8

³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

22. Four Hundred and Ninety Times!

Present Truth, July 16, 1896

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:21-22

Peter came to the Lord and said:

Matthew 18

²¹ How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?
till seven times?

And Christ's answer was:

²² Until seventy times seven,

—four hundred and ninety times. Peter asked this because he had in mind what Christ had just said in reference to the adjustment of differences between the brethren. The arbitration which the Lord then advised is the only proceedings at court to which the Lord ever gave His direct sanction. When this course is followed, and His advice taken throughout, He may be called upon to act as counsel.

But mark how different the whole affair is from a common proceeding at law. First it is necessary for the complainant to go alone to the one that has wronged him and with a kindly persuasion attempt to win him to do that which is right, that, if possible, he may gain his case without any publicity as to the facts whatever, and at the same time gain a friend and brother instead of making an enemy.

But if this should not succeed, even then he is not to be summoned to appear and defend himself against the accusations made. No, the complainant with his one or two witnesses must go to find the culprit, and there, in such seclusion and privacy as he may desire, propose to hold their court of arbitration. The appeal is to the culprit—not to the court.

But if this proves useless, then, and not till then, the matter is to be made public and the congregation informed. Then if

he will not listen to this third and public appeal for a settlement,—what then? Take the matter to the civil or criminal court? No,

Matthew 18

¹⁷ ...let him be!

Remember this was not in the absence of a system of judicial procedure. Law courts were in existence, and their methods well developed. But Christ counseled no recourse to them. It was with this in his mind that Peter asked if he should forgive seven times,—and Christ answered,

“Four hundred and ninety times!”

23. A Lesson in Forgiveness

Present Truth, April 14, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, April 21

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:21-35

IN THIS lesson the two things which are to be especially emphasized are first, the Lord's willingness to forgive us; and second, how we can avail ourselves of that willingness. When Jesus said to Peter,

Matthew 18

²² I say not unto you, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven,

—He was not setting up a standard for man which was in any way different from that which the Lord himself follows in dealing with us. In fact His instruction to Peter grew out of His own spirit of compassion, for He was “full of grace,” and in this respect He was simply revealing the character of God, who is...

Exodus 34

⁶ ...merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

Forgiveness Easy

It is not hard for God to forgive those who wrong Him. There is no struggle in the Divine mind between the desire to punish and an inclination to forgive.

1 John 4

⁸ God is love,

and

Psalm 119

⁶⁴ The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 138:

The work of destruction is a “strange work” to Him who is infinite in love.

1 John 1

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The Ground of Pardon

The fullness and the freeness of this spirit of forgiveness are clearly revealed in this case of...

Matthew 18

²³ ...a certain king which would take account of his servants.

The great debt was acknowledged as due, but when the servant simply asked for some consideration,

²⁷ Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

When putting it in His own words, He said,

³² I forgave you that debt, because you desired me.

There was no ground for this action except in the spirit of compassion felt by the lord of that servant. There was no dispute about the fact of the debt and it was a very large one, “ten thousand talents.” But,

²⁷ The lord of that servant was moved with compassion.

This is to reveal to us the character of the Lord whose...

Psalms 103

¹⁹ ...throne is in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

It is the same view that is given to us in the dealings of the Lord with the children of Israel.

Psalms 78

³⁷ For their heart was not right with Him, and neither were they steadfast in His covenant.

³⁸ But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath.

These things are written for our encouragement,

Romans 15

⁴ ...that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

The Lord is the same today as of old.

Malachi 3

⁶ I am the Lord, I change not.

Psalms 130

⁴ But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

⁷ Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.

Let no one forget that the Lord is willing, and more than willing to forgive. If we were only as willing to confess our sins as He is to forgive them, the whole debt would be canceled without delay.

What Sin Is

Sin is in its very nature treason against the government of God.

1 John 3

⁴ Sin is the transgression of the law,

—and it is such a transgression against the fundamental law of God's kingdom that it involves the very dethronement of God himself, and the putting of self in the place of God. No other ruler, except...

1 Timothy 1

¹⁷ ...the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God,

—could offer a free pardon to all who had rebelled against Him (and that means all the inhabitants of this world), with-

out endangering the stability of His government. But in the plan of salvation for sinners through the gift of His only begotten Son,

Psalm 85

¹⁰ Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Thus,

Romans 3

²⁶ [God is] just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

Thus the forgiveness which is so freely offered is not the reckless act of an irresponsible monarch who endangers the very existence of its own kingdom by the extreme exercise of the pardoning power. Such a revelation of love as is given in the cross of Jesus has won the hearts of the universe, unrepentant man only excepted, in an eternal allegiance to...

Psalm 24

⁷ ...the King of glory.

John 12

³² And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto me.

Psalm 103

¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul,...

³ Who forgives all your iniquities.

How to Receive the Pardon

But we must also note the further teaching of this lesson with reference to the way in which this forgiveness can be received by us. The forgiven debtor went out and straightway became an unforgiving creditor. Then his lord said unto him,

Matthew 18 [RV]

³² You wicked servant, should not you also have had mercy on your fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on you?

As the result of this unforgiving spirit the servant lost the benefit of the compassion which had been extended toward him, for...

³⁴ His lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due him.

And then comes the application of the lesson:

³⁵ So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

The same terrible fact is thus stated in another place:

James 2

¹³ He shall have judgment without mercy, that has showed no mercy.

But this does not grow out of any arbitrary refusal on the part of God to show mercy, as a punishment on a specially wicked class, but it is because in showing the unforgiving spirit we cut ourselves off from forgiveness.

Jesus teaches that we can receive forgiveness from God, only as we forgive others. It is the love of God that draws us unto Him, and that love cannot touch our hearts without creating love for our brethren.

To cherish an unmerciful spirit toward others, is to close the heart against the mercy of God toward ourselves. As if this, above all others, was the sin that His followers needed to be warned against, the one for which they were in the greatest danger of shutting from their hearts the light and love and peace of heaven, Jesus after completing the Lord's prayer added, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

He who is unforgiving, cuts off the very channel through

which alone he can receive mercy from God.¹⁵

Forgiveness Means Cleansing

But even this is full of encouragement, when we stop to consider it, for it shows that:

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.¹⁶

This comes to us through the gift of Jesus,

Romans 3

²⁵ Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

But the love of God is His own life, the power of His own presence, and this cannot be accepted simply for ourselves. From its very nature it must flow out to others, for it is an overflowing love, and it is only by serving as a channel for it that we can receive it at all.

God does not want reservoirs to hold His love, but channels through which it may freely flow to others. But,

No one can give place in his own heart and life for the stream of God's blessing to flow to others, without receiving in himself a rich reward. The hillsides and plains that furnish a channel for the mountain streams to reach the sea, suffer no loss thereby. That which they give is repaid a hundredfold. For stream that goes singing on its way, leaves behind its gift of verdure and fruitfulness.¹⁷

¹⁵ Editor's note: The quotation is from Ellen G. White, and is partly found in *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 113, and *Gospel Medical Missionary*, January 7, 1914. The grammar varies a bit from the last source, so Waggoner is probably quoting from a letter or unpublished testimony.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 113.

¹⁷ *Idem*, p. 81.

Such is the law of the kingdom:

Luke 6

³⁷ ...forgive, and you shall be forgiven:

³⁸ Give and it shall be given unto you.

24. Forgiveness

Present Truth, August 2, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for August 12

Timeline: V-8 (Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness)

Matthew 18:21-35

THIS lesson will be best understood by considering it in connection with that of last week¹⁸, and taking into account also the intervening verses.

After discoursing of true greatness, and warning against offenses, the Saviour gives directions for the proper settling of any differences that might arise between brethren. The person who has been wronged is to go and tell the wrong, not to his neighbors and friends, that it may be mooted about as public property, but to the responsible person, and to him alone. If this first effort at reconciliation is unsuccessful, further measures are to be tried.

Were the divine instruction faithfully carried out, society would have to look elsewhere for subject matter for conversation which is largely given up to discussing the injuries, real or fancied, which someone has received. The so-called harmless gossip is really a most reprehensible thing. Injuries only fancied assume serious proportions, slight misunderstandings ripen into feuds, ending perhaps in bloodshed, all because of the pernicious habit of talking about the things which do not concern us.

While the Saviour was discoursing on injuries, Peter asked the question:

Matthew 18

²¹ Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?

The answer was:

¹⁸ See the earlier article in this section, *Jesus and the Children* (Article 11, section "Retirement").

²² I say not unto you, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.

However, to show that it was not a matter that could be settled by figures, the ensuing parable was spoken, which teaches clearly that an unforgiving spirit is not justified under any circumstances. Strictly speaking, man has nothing to forgive. Sin is so manifestly against God, and God alone, that David could appropriately say in the penitential Psalm:

Psalm 51

⁴ Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight.

Any wrong done to a human being is really done to the great Creator himself, whose arms of infinite love encircle every one of His children. This is especially true of the Christian, whose life is said to be...

Colossians 3

³ ...hid with Christ in God.

He lives, as it were, within a charmed circle. To the extent that he has submitted himself to the Divine will, he is surrounded by barriers which effectually shut out all disturbing elements of every kind except such as conduce to his own growth in grace and the advancement of the Gospel. Not only is he shielded from evil men, but the arch-fiend himself is denied access to him except insofar as the Father permits. Of this Job's experience is an illustration.

Surely such loving and assiduous care from One so powerful should relieve the Christian of fear lest he should suffer severely at the hands of men, and likewise of any revengeful feelings toward those who do him wrong, since they are powerless to act independently of God. Paul wrote:

Ephesians 4

³² Be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake forgave you.

And Christ said:

Luke 6

³⁶ Be you therefore merciful even as your Father in heaven is merciful.

How full and abundant is our forgiving to be? Even as God's. But,

Psalms 57

¹⁰ [His] mercy is great unto the heavens!

Surely man can never attain to such a marvelous development of this grace. Very true, he cannot attain to it, but God be thanked, it is possible for the humblest Christian to obtain it. Justification is a free gift, but so also is sanctification. Christ died to pay the penalty of our sins, but He has risen from the tomb, and desires to live over again, in the person of His obedient follower, the same perfect life that He once lived upon this earth.

The Christian life is truly an incarnation of the Divine in the human. Hence the forgiving Spirit and all the other spiritual graces are...

James 1

¹⁷ ...from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.

Through the...

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...exceeding great and precious promises,

we become partakers of the Divine nature, and it really becomes natural for us to forgive those who wrong us. It may be said,

"I want to forgive but I cannot."

The answer is, Pray for a forgiving spirit: ask God to help you to see the solemn fact that while any trace of bitterness remains in your heart; your condition before God who judges

according to the truth, is more hopeless than of the person who has wronged you.

In many cases the unforgiving spirit proves a stubborn foe largely because it is regarded in the light of a privileged member. Some Christians, like Jonah, think they do well to be angry, or at least think it is one of the minor sins, when the provocation is sufficiently strong. Such a view is wholly wrong.

The grace of forgiveness occupies a most important position. If it is absent, or has but a weak and sickly growth, the Christian life as a whole suffers the effect most keenly. How is the forgiving Spirit imparted? Even as faith,

Romans 10

¹⁷ ...[it] comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

If you would have it in larger measure than at present you must pray for it; you must take time to read your Bibles, you must watch unceasingly. Christ is the perfect example:

- Wicked men plotted to take His life;
- His own disciple betrayed Him by an act of basest perfidy;
- His other disciples forsook Him in His hour of trial, and one denied Him with an oath;
- The soldiers crowned Him with thorns, and spat upon Him;
- The multitude derided Him.

Yet never did one impatient word escape His lips, but instead there came from His heart of infinite love that wonderful prayer:

Luke 23

³⁴ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

The same Spirit will animate the Christian today. He will do more than tolerate passively to submit to wrong treatment.

There will be absence of hate, and abundance of warm, hearty love. The renewed heart, though sorely grieved by sin, has an unutterable longing for the salvation of the sinner, recognizing him as the purchase of Christ's blood.

"I can forgive an injury" says someone, "but I can never forget it."

This feeling is really a very common one, though not always frankly avowed. Is it right? Of course not. The Word says:

Leviticus 19

¹⁸ You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Such forgiving is certainly not like that which our Heavenly Father has shown to us. Suppose He should reason the same way:

"Man has rebelled against my authority, I will forgive him this, but to restore him to favor is impossible. Henceforth I can never regard him with the affection I had for him before. He does not deserve my friendship."

How different would be our prospects under such a regime! Fortunately, this is an impossible supposition. The fact is that the Lord has given the most precious thing that Heaven could provide, His only begotten Son; and He not only provides for our perfect and complete restoration to our former estate, but grants us now His comfort and love, in richest measure.

Similarly we are not only to forgive him who has wronged us, but as Paul tells us,

2 Corinthians 2

⁷ ...comfort him lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow.

How cruel does the act of the debtor seem; himself forgiven an enormous sum, he seizes his fellow-servant by the throat,

and exacts the uttermost farthing. Yet this is what we see taking place all about us in the world today. The worship of mammon is almost universal. Everywhere hearts, crushed and bleeding, are trampled underfoot by men whose insane striving after wealth makes them oblivious to everything else.

Not only is this spirit seen among the very wealthy. Sympathy for the poor and the needy is sadly wanting. The feeling of a common brotherhood needs to be cultivated. It gets its strongest stimulus from the practical recognition of a common Fatherhood.

And herein lies the essence of the whole matter of forgiveness. Let the Christian fully awake to the joyful fact that the Lord has really forgiven his every sin, has completely washed his guilt away by the blood of His Son, so making him perfectly...

Ephesians 1

⁶ ...accepted in the Beloved,

—and he cannot help but freely and fully forgive any injury which may have been inflicted upon him.

25. The Transfiguration (1888)

January 20, 1888

Timeline: V-9 (The Transfiguration)

Matthew 17:1-9

Matthew 16

²⁸ Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

THAT our Saviour did not refer to His coming at the end of the world is evident from the fact that in His discourse on that event, in *Matthew 24*, He foretold a long period of persecution that was to intervene. And that He did not refer, as some have supposed, to the day of Pentecost or to the destruction of Jerusalem, nor to the spread of the gospel, is evident, because:

- A. Christ did not come in any sense of the word either at Pentecost or at the destruction of Jerusalem;
- B. The spread of the gospel is not the coming of Christ in any sense of the word; and
- C. The gospel work had already been begun by Christ and had indeed been carried on from the days of Abel.

In *2 Peter 1:16-18* we are set upon the track of that which our Saviour did really refer to in *Matthew 16:28*. That text reads as follows:

2 Peter 1

¹⁶ For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

¹⁸ And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

The apostle here refers to the transfiguration scene which took place about a week after Christ's statement found in *Matthew 16:28*, and the account of which immediately follows those words. That account reads as follows:

Matthew 17

¹ And after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain apart,

² And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.

³ And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

⁴ Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you will, let us make here three tabernacles; one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

⁵ While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him.

Remembering that Peter referred to this event as proving the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that it follows closely upon Christ's statement that some standing there should see Him coming in His kingdom, and that just before He made that statement he was speaking of His second coming (*Matthew 16:27*), we must conclude that in the statement made in verse 28, Christ referred, not to His actual coming at the end of the world, but to a miniature representation of that coming.

In his book, *Life of Our Lord*, p. 321, Samuel J. Andrews makes the following clear statement of the case:

The promise that some then standing before Him should not taste death till they had seen "the Son of man coming in His kingdom" (*Matthew 16:28*), or had seen "the kingdom of God come with power" (*Mark 6:1*), was fulfilled when, after six days, He took Peter, James, and John into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them.

These apostles now saw Him as He should appear when

having risen from the dead, and glorified, He should come again from Heaven, to take His great power and to reign. They saw in the ineffable glory of His person, and the brightness around them, a foreshadow of the kingdom of God as it should come with power; and were for a moment “eyewitnesses of His majesty.” 2 *Peter* 1:16.

Many errors still remained to be removed from their minds, especially respecting the time of its establishment (*Acts* 1:6), but the great fact of its supernatural character they could not mistake.

Now let us briefly notice the details of this wonderful scene, to see how they agree with what we are told of the second coming of Christ in His kingdom.

1. The Cloud

Matthew 17

⁵ ...a cloud overshadowed them.

So of Christ it is said,

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold, He comes with clouds.

He departed in a cloud, and He is to return just as He went away.

Acts 1

⁹ And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

¹¹ Which also said, You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

2. Shining Raiment

Matthew 17

² His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.

Mark says that:

Mark 9

³ His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

And Luke says that:

Luke 9

²⁹ His raiment was white and glistening.

So of Christ's coming we are told that it shall be...

Matthew 16

²⁷ ...in the glory of His Father.

One, prophetically describing that coming, says:

Habakkuk 3 [margin]

³ His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.

⁴ And His brightness was as the light; He had bright beams out of His side.

John, who afterward had a view of His coming, said,

Revelation 19

¹² His eyes were as a flame of fire.

And Paul speaks of "the brightness of His coming" (2 *Thesalonians* 2:8) as being so great as to destroy the wicked. None but those who have been strengthened by the Lord can behold the glory of His coming and live.

3. Translation and Resurrection

When He comes the second time, He comes to take His people to himself, and this He does by raising the righteous dead,

and translating the living. Says Paul:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Again he says:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

When Christ comes on His throne of glory, with a cloud of angels, to give reward to the righteous, there will be two great classes of them:

- A. Those who shall be translated without seeing death, and
- B. Those who shall be raised from the dead.

These,

Colossians 3

⁴ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear,...shall...also appear with Him in glory.

Now representatives of these two classes were with Him on the mount of transfiguration. If they had not been, it would not have been a true representation of the “power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” as Peter says it was.

Elijah was Translated

All Bible readers are familiar with the fact that Elijah was translated without seeing death. See *2 Kings* 2:1-11. The record says that as he and Elisha went on, and talked,

2 Kings 2

¹¹ Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven.

So Elijah was there with Christ in the mount, as a representative of those who, when Christ comes, shall be caught up to meet the Lord without tasting death.

Moses was Resurrected

Concerning Moses, we have the record:

Deuteronomy 34

⁵ So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

⁶ And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor; but no man knows of his sepulcher unto this day.

Turn now to *Jude*, where we read:

Jude

⁹ Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

What could cause a dispute between Christ (who is Michael) and the devil, concerning the body of Moses? Only this one thing:

- the devil has the power of death (*Hebrews 2:14*);
- he brought sin into the world, and death comes by sin;
- those who die he considers as his lawful prey, and
- he refuses to open the house of his prisoners (*Isaiah 14:16-17*), which is the grave.

He is the strong man keeping guard over his house; but Christ is the stronger than he, who has entered into his house, overpowering him (*Luke 11:21-22*), and who now has the keys of death and the grave.

Revelation 1

¹⁸ I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

This power Christ gained by his death:

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that *through death* He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

But long before His death and resurrection He had this power by virtue of the promise and the oath of God, which were the surety that He would be offered.

Knowing these facts, and reading that Christ contended with the devil over the body of Moses, we are forced to the conclusion that their dispute was concerning the resurrection of Moses, Satan claiming that Christ had no right to take him. But in every contest with Satan, Christ has come off victorious, and so Moses was raised from the dead, and appeared with Christ on the holy mount, as the representative of those who, at the second coming of Christ, shall be brought from their graves to ever be with the Lord.

If there should still be a lingering doubt in the minds of any that Moses was really raised from the dead, and they happen to think that it was only his disembodied spirit that appeared on the mount, we will state:

- A. That the transfiguration is expressly declared by Peter to have been a representation of “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and that at that time he and James, and John were “eyewitnesses of His majesty,” which shows that it was a view of Christ in His kingly glory;
- B. It is absolutely certain that when Christ comes there will be no such thing as disembodied spirits, because, says Paul, He “shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (*Philippians* 3:21), and this

change is performed for both the living and the dead. *1 Corinthians* 15:51. When the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, it is with their own bodies glorified like the body of Christ. Therefore,

C. Since, as shown above, the transfiguration was a representation, on a small scale, of this glorious event, it is certain that Moses must have been there in person, and not in shadow.

The transfiguration stands for us, as it did for the apostles, as a sure pledge of Christ's second coming in power and great glory; and yet:

2 Peter 1

¹⁹ We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts.

Let us study this sure word of prophecy, that we may walk in the light, and be prepared for the dawning of the "perfect day."

26. The Transfiguration (1898)

Present Truth, April 7, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-school Lesson for April 17

Timeline: V-9 (The Transfiguration)

Matthew 17:1-9

The Coming and Kingdom of Christ

WE FIND the key to the proper understanding of this lesson in the last verse of the preceding chapter.

Matthew 16

²⁸ Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

This experience gave to the disciples,

Matthew 17

¹ ...Peter, James, and John his brother,

and a right understanding of the record of it will give to us, a view of the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

From Luke's record it appears that Jesus went up into the mountain to pray.

Luke 9 [RV]

²⁹ And as He was praying, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and dazzling.

Then Moses and Elijah...

³¹ ...appeared in glory,

—and talked with Him. In this brief record we are to see...

Mark 9

¹ ...the kingdom of God come with power.

We may then properly inquire,

“What are the essential things for a kingdom?”

Evidently they are territory, king, and subjects. And how are they brought before us in the narrative? Let us consider.

The Territory

Jesus brought the disciples...

Matthew 17

¹ ...up into a high mountain.

But what did that signify? Let the scripture answer. In the song of Moses, which will be sung by those who...

Revelation 15

² ...stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God,

Revelation 11 [RV]

¹⁵ [When] the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ,

—we read of God's purpose concerning His people:

Exodus 15

¹⁷ You shall bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of your inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which You have made for You to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, Lord, which your hands have established.

That this means the establishment of the kingdom of God is shown by the following verse, which says:

¹⁸ The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

Again we read:

Micah 4

¹ But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

² And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk

in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

With this should also be read the words of the prophet Zechariah:

Zechariah 14

¹ Behold the day of the Lord comes...

⁴ And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west...

⁵ ...and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with You.

⁹ And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.

¹⁰ All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem...

¹¹ And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction [curse, RV]; but Jerusalem shall abide.

This is “New Jerusalem,” the capital of God’s kingdom, which John saw...

Revelation 21

² ...coming down from God out of heaven,

—and which will come down upon the mount of Olives, and so it will cover the very place where the cross was set up and the mount from which our Saviour ascended.

Thus the very fact that they were upon the “high mountain,” viewed in the light of these scriptures, teaches that through the cross of Jesus the world would be won for the territory of the “King of glory,” of which New Jerusalem upon the mount of Olives would be the capital.

The King

It was “the Son of man” who was to be seen “coming in His kingdom,” and although He was, and always will be, “the Son

of man,” yet to express the truth that:

Luke 9

²⁶ He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels,

Matthew 17

² [He] was transfigured [or transformed] before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.

Here is the king, of whom the Lord has spoken:

Psalms 2

⁶ Is it not I who my king have established
On Zion, holy mountain of mine?

And the time was near at hand when in His triumphal entry, as...

Luke 19

³⁷ He was come at night, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God...

³⁸ Saying, Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord.

The Subjects

When the Son of man shall come in His kingdom there will be but one class of subjects as to character, for:

Isaiah 60

²¹ Your people also shall be all righteous.

But there will be two classes as to experience, for:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ ...the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

That is to say, some will pass through the grave while oth-

ers will be translated without seeing death.

This is taught in the brief statement that:

Matthew 17

³ ...there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

Of Moses we read:

Deuteronomy 34

⁵ And so Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word Lord.

⁶ And He [the Lord] buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knows of his sepulcher unto this day.

Now it was not an intangible, shadowy spirit (if there be such a thing) which appeared on the mount of transfiguration, but it was “Moses,” and Moses in his own body too, raised from the dead by Him whose servant he was. Of the experience in bringing him forth from the domain of the enemy we have a glimpse in:

Jude

⁹ Yet Michael the Archangel [whose voice raises all the dead¹⁹
²⁰], when contending with the devil, He disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

Can anyone doubt as to the result of the dispute “about the body of Moses?” Did Christ ever fail in any struggle with the devil? And so Moses was there as the representative of that...

Revelation 7

⁹ ...great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,

¹⁹ **1 Thessalonians 4** ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

²⁰ **John 5** ²⁸ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵² ...[who] shall be raised incorruptible,

Matthew 8

¹¹ ...and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

But some will not come under the power of the grave, for:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ ...we shall not all sleep.

Those of the last generation who...

Revelation 14

⁷ ...fear God and give glory to Him,

—and so gain...

Revelation 15

² ...the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name,

1 Corinthians 15

⁵² ...will be changed,

⁵³ In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

Then Elijah, who passed directly from earth to heaven without seeing death, was there on the mount as the representative of all these. The record of his experience is found in *2 Kings 2:1-11*:

2 Kings 2

¹ And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah in the heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

¹¹ ...and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

And so we have the picture complete. It is a view of “the Son of man coming in His kingdom.” The territory will be the...

2 Peter 3

¹³ ...new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

The King will be the Son of man who will be acknowledged as:

Revelation 19

¹⁶ ...King of kings and Lord of lords.

The subjects will be those who have been redeemed from the earth, some of whom will be brought forth from their graves, as Moses was; others of whom will go directly from earth to heaven without seeing corruption, as Elijah did; but all of whom will appear “in glory,” as did both Moses and Elijah,

Luke 9

³¹ Who appeared in glory, and spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Colossians 3

⁴ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory.

Transfigured by Beholding

Having noted the main teaching of the lesson, we may call attention to some of the details. Much is suggested in the fact that it was...

Luke 11

¹ ...as He was praying,

—that He was transfigured or transformed. The Holy Spirit instructs us:

“Be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind.

But it is by beholding that we...

2 Corinthians 3

¹⁸ ...are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

And this is that heart communion with God which is the very essence of true prayer. So it was as our representative and as an example to us that He was transformed while praying. That...

Matthew 17

² ...His face did shine as the sun,

—was the result of the removal for the moment of the veil by which His glory was hidden in His humanity. When He shines forth undimmed as...

Malachi 4

² ...the Sun of righteousness,

Isaiah 60

¹⁹ The sun shall no more be your light...but the Lord shall be unto you an everlasting light, and your God your glory.

Hear Him

Matthew 17

⁵ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him.

This is the second occasion upon which the Father testified with an audible voice to the work of the Son among men. “Hear Him,” is the command now given. He did not come to destroy God’s law, or to make any change in “the eternal purpose,”²¹ or to introduce any new element into the plan for the salvation of man. But He who was the Word “in the beginning”²² and who had always been the expression of the thought of God in all God’s relation to everything outside of himself, had now come in the flesh to live the Word among men and for men. It is the Son, of whom it is written,

²¹ **Ephesians 3** ¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

²² **John 1** ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Hebrews 5

⁸ Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered,

–who prayed in the face of the cross,

Matthew 26

³⁹ Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will,

–whose example we are to follow. And it is only in this way that we shall obey the injunction, “Hear Him.”

Matthew 7

²⁴ Whosoever hears these sayings of mine and does them [is the] wise man [who builds] upon the rock.

27. The Transfiguration (1900)

Present Truth, July 19, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for July 29

Original title: The Transfiguration. The Power and Glory of Christ's Coming

Timeline: V-9 (The Transfiguration)

Luke 9:28-36

Luke 9

²⁸ And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, He took with Him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.

²⁹ And as He was praying, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and dazzling,

³⁰ And behold there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elijah;

³¹ Who appeared in glory, and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

³² Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him.

³³ And it came to pass, as they were parting from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles; one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah; not knowing what he said.

³⁴ And while he said these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them; and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

³⁵ And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my Chosen: hear Him.

³⁶ And when the voice came [was past] Jesus was found alone. And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.

IT WILL readily be seen that in order to understand this lesson we must read that which immediately precedes it, since reference is made to certain sayings of Jesus. We need to know what “these sayings” are.

If we read from the 18th verse, we see that they include His question as to whom the people and the disciples said that He was, and the information concerning His betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection. Then He spoke about taking up the cross and following Him, and said that whoever would save his life should lose it, while he who would lose his life for Christ's sake should save it, closing with these words:

Luke 9

²⁶ Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

²⁷ But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

In *Matthew* it is given,

Matthew 16

²⁸ There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

And *Mark* has it:

Mark 9

¹ There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

Then follows the story of the transfiguration. From these verses alone we are warranted in concluding that the transfiguration revealed the power and glory of Christ's coming in His kingdom, and was a likeness of that event. But we are not obliged to draw conclusion, for we have the fact stated in plain language. One of those who were with Jesus when He was transfigured writes thus:

2 Peter 1

¹⁶ We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

¹⁸ And the voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

Those three men, Peter, James, and John, were the ones who stood by when Jesus was speaking, who saw the kingdom of God come with power. They saw the Son of man come in His kingdom. So by studying the transfiguration we may know the nature of Christ's second coming, and some of the results of the power of it.

In the first place, we see that the coming of Christ will be visible and personal. There will be no "secret rapture," no coming secretly and snatching the saints away while others are entirely unconscious of it. Such an idea is a fabrication of a disordered human imagination, with not the slightest foundation in Scripture. He will come like a thief in the night, it is true, in that He will come when people are not expecting Him; but:

Revelation 1

⁷ He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.

He ascended to heaven in full view of the disciples, until a cloud received Him out of their sight; and as they stood gazing up at the place where they had last seen Him, two angels appeared to them, and said,

Acts 1

¹¹ This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

When Christ comes He will come in all the glory of heaven, so it is said to us,

Colossians 3

³ You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

⁴ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory.

In the mount, at the representation of His coming, two saints appeared with Him in glory, as representatives of the millions of glorified saints at the last day. At that time there will be two classes:

A. Those who have been asleep in the graves, and

B. Those “which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.” *1 Thessalonians 4:15*.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Of those who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, so that they are taken to heaven without ever having died, Elijah was the representative on the mount of transfiguration. In the 2nd chapter of *2 Kings* we have the account of the translation of Elijah. He never died, but was taken to heaven just as the righteous will be who are alive at the coming of Christ.

On the other hand, Moses died, and the Lord buried him in the land of Moab. *Deuteronomy 34:1-7*. Yet he was present in glory on the mount of transfiguration. How did he get there? Evidently by a resurrection, for there is no other way by

which a person once dead can come to life, and go to heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁷ So shall we ever be with the Lord,

—wrote the apostle after saying that the dead should be raised first at the coming of the Lord, and then the living should be changed. The only way to be with the Lord is by the translation of the living or by the resurrection of the dead.

But let no one get the idea that death is translation. It is not in any sense of the word. Those who die are never translated, but if they are righteous they will be translated at the coming of the Lord. Moses, however, like Elijah, was taken to heaven before the mass of the saints.

But someone will say that we have no evidence of the resurrection of Moses, and that we have nothing but assumption to show for it. That is a mistake. The fact that Moses died, and that he was nevertheless in the mount with Elijah, talking with Christ, is sufficient evidence that he had been raised from the dead. We need no further evidence.

But there is incidental reference to the resurrection of Moses. The Apostle Jude exhorts us not to speak evil of any person, and says that:

Jude

⁹ [Even] Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil He disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

Satan is the one...

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ ...that had the power of death.

He claims all the dead as his lawful prey. But Christ came to spoil him of his goods, and has the keys of the grave. But for the one mistake of Moses, when...

Psalm 106

³³ ...[he] spoke unadvisedly with his lips,

—he would undoubtedly have been translated as Enoch was; but after having tasted death, God would raise him from the dead. Satan, however, disputed the right of Christ to take away one whom he claimed as his prey, but his opposition amounted to nothing, and so Moses appeared with the Lord in glory.

Thus we have the assurance that the power of the coming of the Lord is the power of the resurrection. It is the power that transforms people from corruptible to incorruptible; therefore everybody who believes in and works for the coming of Christ ought to be a transformed person, living in the Spirit.

What were these two glorified saints doing on the mountain with Jesus? They were talking with Him of:

Luke 9

³¹ ...His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

What were the three disciples doing? They were asleep. Did Jesus take them up there with Him to go to sleep? Most certainly not. He took them with Him in order that they might have the conversation, and see the glory that should follow His crucifixion.

They did indeed see and hear something, for they were awakened by what was going on; but if they had been awake all the time,—and they certainly could have kept awake if Jesus did,—they would not have been taken by surprise when Jesus was taken and crucified, and they would not have shamefully forsaken Him.

1 Thessalonians 5

⁶ Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

Mark 13

³⁵ Watch therefore; for you know not when the Master of the

house comes, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning:

³⁶ Lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping.

Luke 9

³⁴ They feared as they entered into the cloud.

Yet it was in the cloud that Jesus received the messengers from heaven; the voice that spoke to Jesus, proclaiming Him the Son of God, came from the cloud, and that voice “came from heaven.”

Clouds and darkness are round about the throne of God in heaven²³, therefore they are not to be feared. The clouds only cover the glory of the Lord, and the darkness is to Him as the light. Therefore let no one mourn when darkness comes, but rather always and in all things give thanks to the Father,

Colossians 1

¹² ...who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

¹³ Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son:

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

²³ **Psalm 97** ² Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.

28. The Valley and the Mountain

Present Truth, October 4, 1900

Timeline: V-9 (The Transfiguration)

Matthew 17:4-9

IT IS very true that one cannot always dwell on the mount of transfiguration. Peter found it a good place to be, and desired to make a permanent residence there; but he had to come down.

There are occasions, as in secret prayer or a gathering of believers, when “the heavenly vision” is so vivid that we seem to see Jesus transfigured before our natural eyes; but these are for our encouragement, and cannot continue all the time.

The mistake, however, which many make, is in supposing that their connection with the Lord must necessarily be less close in the intervals between these revelations. Remember that when the disciples came down from the mount of transfiguration Jesus came with them, and one of the greatest manifestations of His power took place at its foot.

These special occasions are given us in order to make us realize how near the Lord is to us all the time. He is just as near us in the “Valley of Humiliation” or of the “Shadow of Death,” as on the top of the “Delectable Mountains.”²⁴

²⁴ These are references to John Bunyan’s book, *The Pilgrims Progress*.

29. Heaven on Earth

Present Truth, February 27, 1902

Timeline: V-9 (The Transfiguration)

Matthew 17:5

WHEN Peter and James and John were on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus,

Matthew 17

⁵ A bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Peter describing this occurrence, says:

2 Peter 1

¹⁷ There came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

¹⁸ And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

The three disciples with Jesus were in the very cloud whence the voice came; for we read that:

Luke 9

³⁴ They feared as they entered into the cloud.

Yet the voice came from heaven. Heaven was at that time, at least, on earth.

And so it is always to those who live near to God, and who walk with Him:

- Jacob found that the lonely spot in the wilderness was none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven, because God was in that place.
- Christ, who “is in the bosom of the Father,” could speak of himself, when talking with Nicodemus, as “the Son of man, which is in heaven.” *John* 1:18; 3:13.

If we have been raised up with Christ, we have been made

to...

Ephesians 2

⁶ ...sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Thus God has given us heaven in which to go to heaven, in order that when we get there at last we shall be at home.

30. What Does It Mean?

Present Truth, June 7, 1894

Timeline: V-9 (The Transfiguration)

Mark 9:9-10

AS JESUS was coming down from the mount of transfiguration, with Peter, James, and John,

Mark 9

⁹ He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

¹⁰ And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

What did it mean? It meant just that, and nothing else. But they were sure in their own minds that it could not mean that Christ should really die and rise again, and so they kept wondering and speculating as to what it could mean. And that is the way that thousands of the followers of Christ are doing today. They read something in the Scriptures and straightway they ask,

“What does this mean?”

They feel quite sure that it must have some mysterious meaning different from what the words themselves indicate, because they have it settled in their minds how it must be, and are sure that the thing actually declared cannot ever take place. Thus they miss the instruction and comfort of the Scriptures, and are unprepared for the things that come.

If the disciples had learned to take the Lord at His word, they would not have been thrown into such confusion when He was crucified. They learned better afterwards; let us learn now from their example to believe that the word means what it says.

31. The Scribes and the Scriptures

Present Truth, June 14, 1894

Timeline: V-9 (The Transfiguration)

Mark 9:11

AT THE first advent of Christ, the scribes were saying that He could not come until a certain event had taken place. This is shown by the question of the disciples as they came down from the mount of transfiguration:

Mark 9 [also Matthew 17:10]

¹¹ Why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?

In our own day, while we are waiting for Christ's second advent, in power and glory, we find this history repeated. The scribes—or those who occupy the seats of authority and learning in the church—are saying that certain events must occur before Christ can come again; and their sayings are largely believed. They say,

“The millennium must come first!”

or,

“The Jews must first return to their ancient land and inhabit it as of old!”

By this means the attention of vast numbers is largely diverted from the thought of Christ's second advent.

The scribes based their assertions upon the Scriptures; for the prophecy had foretold the coming of Elijah before the day of the Lord, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the fathers.

Malachi 4

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

⁶ And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and

smite the earth with a curse.

Predictions made today are likewise professedly based upon Scriptures; and as the people are generally but little acquainted with the inspired word, they are quite ready to believe that the popular theories regarding the millennium and the return of the Jews are somewhere and somehow supported by Scripture; especially as it makes no particular difference to them how either event is ushered in. The current theories concerning them are but palliatives to soothe and lull to sleep those who ought to be aroused and stirred to earnest action over the prospect of their Lord's return.

The reckoning of the scribes was wrong; for the Saviour said,

Matthew 17

¹² Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.

Then we read,

¹³ The disciples understood that He spoke unto them of John the Baptist.

Nor are the scribes of our day any nearer the truth in their theories of what must occur before the coming of Christ. But as long as people are content to know so little of the word of God, they cannot avoid falling into all manner of spiritual deceptions. The only safety for any individual in this respect lies in studying and knowing that word for himself. The student of Scripture must search deeply and thoroughly into his subject if he would be made wise unto salvation. The Lord says,

Hosea 4

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

And the knowledge which they lack is the knowledge of His word. Without that word they are without a lamp unto their

feet and a light unto their path²⁵, and that they should miss the way is inevitable. That word is the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is...

1 John 1

⁹ ...the true light, that lights every man that comes into the world.

But there are many false lights, and he who has not the true light will inevitably be attracted to one of them, and thus be led astray. The important question for each of us is not,

“Why do the scribes say this or that?

but,

“What do the Scriptures say?”

The Scripture is for us as well as for them. The Holy Spirit, the Guide into all truth, is free to all who ask for it in faith. But the tendency of the age is against prayerful and reverent study of the word of God. A great deal is written to criticize the word, but little or nothing to urge upon people the necessity of knowing what it says.

The Christian must not allow himself to drift with the current, but must set his face steadfastly against all worldly and atheistic sentiments, whether coming from the publicans or the scribes.

Galatians 4

³⁰ What do the Scriptures say?

If you would enter into life, you must be able to answer this question.

²⁵ **Psalm 119** ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

32. Only Believe

Present Truth, August 22, 1901

Timeline: V-10 (The Demon-possessed Boy)

Mark 9:24

THE man who came asking Christ to heal his afflicted son, said,

Mark 9

²⁴ Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

And many people who have read the account have supposed that they ought to utter the same petition. To all such we say, Do not do it; the Lord doesn't ask you to pray for faith, but simply to exercise the faith that His Word has given you. That is amply sufficient, for...

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?²⁶

The man's words were self-contradictory, and that is sufficient reason why we should not use them. First he said,

²⁴ Lord, I believe...

That was good, and was enough, if it was true; but he immediately added,

²⁴ ...help my unbelief.

And that showed that he did not believe. Belief and unbelief cannot exist together. If one has the slightest degree of unbelief, he has no belief at all. So if one has faith as a grain of mustard seed, he cannot have any unbelief,—he has faith enough to remove mountains if necessary. So let us not say that we believe, and the next instant deny it.

²⁶ John Rippon, *A Selection of Hymns*, 1787. Rippon was the editor. The hymn itself has been attributed to George Keith or Robert Keen.

Did you ever think what an insult it is to God, to ask Him to help you to believe Him? It is equivalent to telling Him that you do not believe Him. Now be frank and definite with the Lord, and say to Him straight out,

“Lord, I don’t believe You.”

You dare not say that to the Lord’s face, do you? No; you dare not; for if you do, immediately the question will come,

“Why do you not believe?”

And for that you have no answer.

You say,

“I cannot believe.”

Why not? What has the Lord said or done, that has made it difficult to believe Him? Has He ever told an untruth? You answer promptly,

“No, He cannot lie.”

Is it so? Then you cannot help believing. It is not difficult to believe one who always tells the truth. The easiest thing in the world is to believe the Lord. Then be content to say,

“Lord, I believe.”

Ask the Lord to forgive your unbelief, and be assured that He will do it; but don’t add to your sin in the very asking for forgiveness.

At the Feast of Tabernacles

*After the Retirement phase,
Jesus made surprise appearance at
the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem.*

*He spent many days teaching there,
calling attention to His God-appointed role
as the Light and Life of the world,
and the Good Shepherd.*

*We are indebted to the Gospel of John
for the seven chapters that cover this event.*



VI	1	Secret Journey to the Feast of Tabernacles
VI	2	Teaching in the Temple
VI	3	The Adulteress
VI	4	The Light of the World
VI	5	The Argument About Descent From Abraham
VI	6	The Man Born Blind
VI	7	The Good Shepherd

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	DA	Ch.
...	7:2-13	452	49
...	7:14-52	452-460	49
...	7:53-8:11	460-462	50
...	8:12-30	463-466	51
...	8:31-59	466-469	51
...	9:1-41	470-475	51
...	10:1-21	476-484	52

1. Knowing the Doctrine

Present Truth, February 23, 1899

Timeline: VI-2 (Teaching in the Temple)

John 7:14-29

IT WAS the feast of Tabernacles, when every Jew was expected to be in Jerusalem. Every road that led to the city would be thronged with rejoicing multitudes going to the feast, glad of the opportunity of a whole week's holiday, and the chance to greet old acquaintances and to form new ones.

It was expected to be an occasion of general enjoyment and relaxation from toil, while commemorating the wonderful deliverance which God had wrought for Israel, although, since mankind are always the same, we may believe that with many, present associations more than past mercies and thoughts of God's goodness, were the cause of their good feeling.

With this crowd of merry-makers Jesus did not mingle. He was not anxious for more advertisement. He knew how to estimate the verdict of a crowd, and that popular clamor and popular applause are alike vanity. Even when Jesus worked and taught in the presence of multitudes, He would do so in quietness.

Isaiah 42

² He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

³ A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.

To minister healing to a single afflicted soul in secret was more to Him than to win the passing plaudits of thousands. So Jesus waited until the people had all gone up to the feast, and then He himself proceeded to Jerusalem in the most quiet manner.

John 7

¹⁴ About the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.

¹⁵ And the Jews marveled, saying, How does this man know letters, having never learned?

¹⁶ Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

The question asked by the people was,

“Where did this man get his knowledge?”

The doctors and scribes had never had Him for a pupil, yet He taught with authority that the scribes had not. Ah, He had been taught from above. His teaching was not human speculation, but Divine revelation. It is not by searching that men find out God, but by opening their eyes and hearts to God’s revelation of himself.

Here is a school in which all may learn, and none are so poor that they cannot pay the price. If any man wills to do His will he shall know the teaching. Whoever is willing to do the will of God, will certainly know that will. He will not only be taught, but he will know without doubt the source and authority of the teaching.

God has set teachers in the church, whose business it is to assist people to see the light, to lead them to the truth, but God has never appointed any man to tell another what the truth is, that is, to be his authority for him as to what he should believe, and what he should not. To every man is the right and power given to decide for himself on the most momentous questions. The teacher may hold up the light; the man must for himself know that it is light. Open a man’s eyes, and you do not need to go with him to tell him what is light and what is darkness.

While Jesus was teaching in the temple some of the people were listening and learning, but others were speculating, whether he was the Christ or not.

“Have the rulers settled that this is the very Christ? Has it become a part of ‘our faith,’ so that we may venture to believe it, without fear of arraignment for heresy? Never mind, we know all about this Man...”

John 7

²⁷ Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ comes, no man knows whence He is.

²⁸ Then Jesus cried aloud as He taught in the temple, You both know me, and you know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom you know not.

²⁹ But I know Him; for I am from Him, and He has sent me.

Yes; it was true that they knew Him, and whence He was; and therefore they were without excuse for not knowing that He was the Christ; for the Scriptures plainly set forth the circumstances and place of His birth. Seeing, they did not see, and hearing, they did not understand.

Matthew 13

¹⁴ And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive.

The same condition of things exists today. People pass by common things because they are so common, not realizing that it is by such means, and not in some startling manner, that God reveals himself. He who despises “the day of small things” will never stand in “the great day.” *Zechariah* 4:10; *Revelation* 6:17.

2. Unlettered Learning

Present Truth, December 10, 1896

Timeline: VI-2 (Teaching in the Temple)

John 7:15

John 7

¹⁵ And the Jews marveled, saying, How does this man know letters, having never learned?

THE Greek word here rendered “letters” is the word meaning “writings” or “Scriptures.” A learned man, one well acquainted with books, is commonly called “a man of letters,” or a literary man.

Now there are many books, but only one that is so prominent as to be sufficiently designated by the term “the Book,” and that is the Bible; for the word “Bible” means simply book. So “the writings,” when used in the Bible without qualification, mean the sacred writings, or the Scriptures. The text above quoted should therefore be rendered, as it is in some versions,

“How does this man know the Scriptures, never having learned?”

Like John the Baptist, Jesus never studied in the Jewish schools.

Luke 1

⁸⁰ [John] was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

So Jesus dwelt at Nazareth, subject to His parents, a humble carpenter, until He came prominently before the people at His baptism. Yet no two teachers ever aroused greater interest among the people, or attracted more attention. People flocked to hear them, and hung on their words. The officers of the law said of Jesus,

John 7

⁴⁶ Never make spoke like this man.

And the people were astonished at his teaching,

Matthew 7

²⁹ For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

That Jesus had not studied in the schools of the doctors of the law,—the theological seminaries of that time,—is shown by the questions which the priests and elders put to Him as He was teaching in the temple,

Matthew 21

²³ By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?

Yet He had wisdom, both in asking and in answering questions, that put to silence all the learned doctors, while His teaching was so simple that...

Mark 12

³⁷ ...the common people heard Him gladly,

—because they could understand Him; and the ability to put deep things into simple, easily understood language is the mark of the greatest wisdom.

How did Jesus get this wonderful knowledge? From the Word of God. All Jewish children were taught the Book of the Law, according to the command of the Lord by Moses:

Deuteronomy 6

⁶ These words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart:

⁷ And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Many parents of course did this carelessly, and, especially in

later times, mingled with their instruction many idle traditions learned from the doctors. But those children who had faithful parents knew the Holy Scriptures from childhood. With the child Jesus this was no routine task, for He says,

Psalm 40

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God; yea, your law is within my heart.

The Holy Scriptures, studied in the humble house in Nazareth, and opened to His understanding by the Spirit of God, were the beginning and the sum of all the wisdom that Jesus had.

As with Jesus himself, so with those whom He chose to accompany Him, and to send forth to preach,—they were men in humble station, not having studied in the theological schools. Their learning was derived from the Scriptures.

The rulers were astonished at the power and knowledge of these humble fishermen preachers, as they had been with Jesus. We are told that when the rulers...

Acts 4

¹³ ...saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

The word “ignorant” is unfortunate, as applied to the apostles. “Unlearned” they certainly were, according to the fine standards of the schools; but they were not ignorant. Why then do we have such a statement in the sacred record? In reality we do not, and the occurrence of the word in our English version is an interesting illustration of the very point we are studying. Thus:

The two words “ignorant men,” in *Acts* 4:13, are from one Greek word, *idiotai*, the plural of *idiotas*. The reader will at once recognize in this our common word *idiot*, and will at once conclude that the English rendering is much more mild

than the Greek text.

But wait a moment. The primary and ordinary meaning of this Greek word is, “a *private person*,” one of the common people. But as certain public teachers began to style themselves philosophers, and to claim for themselves a monopoly of wisdom, so that a man must have a recommendation from them—a certificate that he had “been through” the prescribed course—before he could have any standing as a scholar, it came about that all who had not such public recognition were considered ignorant.

The fact that our translators adopted this secondary use of the Greek word instead of its real meaning, shows how much they were under the influence of the same spirit. The Danish and Norwegian versions have “laymen” in the place of “ignorant men,” and the German has “men of inferior condition.”

Here is encouragement, and a lesson. The encouragement is that people in the most humble and despised walks of life may, by devoted study of the Word from a sincere desire to know and to do God’s will, acquire wisdom that will astonish even the worldly-wise.

Deuteronomy 4

⁵ Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it.

⁶ Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

Proverbs 2

¹ My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you;

² So that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding;

³ Yea, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for

understanding;

⁴ If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

⁵ Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom: out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

⁷ He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous: He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

⁸ He keeps the paths of judgment, and preserves the way of His saints.

⁹ Then shall you understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

The lesson is that in the church of Christ, there are no ranks and degrees—no class distinctions. The church, following in the steps of the schoolmen of heathen times, have made two classes: clergy and laity. The *clergy* are the special, elect class, who have the keys of knowledge; and *the people* are to take what the clergy are pleased to dole out to them.

But the Scriptures teach us that all in the primitive, true church were *laymen*, that is, they were simple, ordinary people, whose only distinction from others was that which the Holy Spirit gave them.

Jesus, himself an ordinary laborer, chose fishermen and sent them forth to preach, and because they were thus sent forth they are called *apostles*. But they were *laymen*, and such they would be called today, if they were alive and in England or America. That those who teach the Word should form a special class, distinguished from other people by title, dress, etc., was not only not contemplated by the Lord, but was directly opposed by Him.

It is true that “there are diversities of gifts,” and all men have not the same work, yet all in the church are brethren, and the greatest among them is he who does the most service. Let, therefore, no one be puffed up in his own mind with the

thought that as a preacher he is above others in the church, and let no one be discouraged because his state is lowly. It was Tyndale's declaration that he would...

“...make the boy that drives the plow in England to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope does.”

That possibility is now before every plowboy, and he who truly improves it, although his name be unknown outside of his neighborhood, has a place in the church infinitely higher than that of Pope.

3. Conflicting Voices

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

Timeline: VI-2 (Teaching in the Temple)

John 7:16-18

MANY persons are troubled to know how to decide what is the truth, when there are so many voices, each claiming to be the truth, yet all disagreeing. It need not be difficult; Christ gave a sure rule by which we may know the truth, and avoid being deceived. He said,

John 7

¹⁶ My teaching is not mine, but His that sent me.

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself.

This of itself is sufficient. God is anxious to have men saved. Therefore He has made the way of salvation very plain. He has provided that no one who is earnestly seeking after truth in order that he may serve God, shall be deceived.

Let the reader stop to think, and he will remember that those who have such difficulty in deciding what the truth is, are those who are seeking some excuse for their rejection of it. They wish to continue in their own way, and they ease their conscience by persuading themselves that their way is as likely to be right as any other, since there are so many different voices.

Following the text above quoted, is another statement of how we may know the truth:

John 7 [RV]

¹⁸ He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory: but he that seeks the glory of Him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

This was said with reference to Christ, but it applies to every one whom Christ has sent. The false teacher seeks his own glory. We may sometimes detect that desire in the subtle

flattery that he gives to some. Self will in some way be prominent in everything. But the teacher who is sent by the Lord has only the Lord's message to deliver. Self does not appear at all.

Again, Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews,

John 5

⁴² But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.

⁴³ I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.

This is similar to the first text quoted:

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

The reason given why the Jews could not receive Christ, who spoke the name of the Father, is that they had not the love of God in them. They did not wish to do the will of God, and therefore it was impossible for them to understand.

The skeptic Hobbes once said that if the proposition that the sum of the squares of the two sides of a right-angled triangle equal the square of the hypotenuse, were opposed to men's self-interests, or their right to rule, there would not be anybody able to understand it. Some would say,

"It maybe so,"

—but they would not be able to make a clear demonstration of it, or to see it when demonstrated by others. A willingness to receive the truth is the essential thing to knowing the truth; and the blessed thing is, that whoever is willing and anxious to know the truth, cannot be deceived.

But some people are so timid, so fearful of being led astray, that they hesitate about accepting what they really know to be the truth. There is no doubt in their minds that a certain thing is the truth, but they do not know what may be in-

volved in it. They fear that it will lead them farther than they wish to go, and so they hold back.

In this we see an unwillingness to receive the truth. It makes no difference that they may be perfectly willing to accept what they now see; the fact that they fear what it may lead them to, shows that they are not really in love with the truth, since no truth can ever lead one into error.

Now what is the result of such a course? Just what we might expect, namely, that they will before long greedily accept some palpable error. He who rejects the voice of God, will readily accept a false voice. Strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, comes only on those who receive not the love of the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

It is not the love of some single truth, that will save men from deception, but the love of *the truth*. He who rejects the truth, must necessarily believe a lie; for there is nothing else but falsehood left for him to believe. And he who does not love the truth, and the whole truth, no matter what the consequences may be, is necessarily shut up to loving a lie.

The only safeguard against deception,—against being led astray by voices that are not the voice of God,—is to accept unhesitatingly the voice that is unmistakably the voice of God.

John 8

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed;

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 10

¹⁴ I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

4. The Knowledge of God is Power

Present Truth, November 23, 1899

Timeline: VI-2 (Teaching in the Temple)

John 7:17

Jesus said,

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His [God's] will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself.

THERE is no knowledge but the knowledge of God; and the knowledge of God is given for use, for action, and not for speculation. God wishes men to do His will, and to this end He makes known the knowledge of it.

But it is God who works both to will and to do, so that the real knowing of God's will is the doing of it. The knowledge of God is power, even the power of an endless life, since to know Him is life eternal.

John 17

³ And this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

Hence he who really knows the Lord is one with Him—one in thought, in spirit, in life. When the new covenant is finally made with men, all will know God from the least to the greatest, and His will then will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Jeremiah 31 [Hebrews 8:10-11]

³³ But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

³⁴ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will

remember their sin no more.

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

5. Christ as Teacher

Present Truth, December 3, 1896

Timeline: VI-2 (Teaching in the Temple)

John 7:17, 31-32, 46

John 7

³¹ And many of the people believed on Him, and said, When Christ comes, will He do more miracles than these which this man does?

³² The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

THE trouble with the Pharisees and chief priests was that their character and teaching suffered by comparison with that of Jesus.

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this man.

This was the testimony of the officers who were sent to seize Him.

Matthew 7

²⁹ He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

The people listened to Him more readily than to them, and this aroused their jealousy. And the people knew that the priests sought His life.

Yet the priests and rulers might have retained the confidence of the people, even in the presence of Jesus, if they had only been willing to learn of Him, and accept His spirit and the wisdom that filled Him. For that, however, they were too proud, and so they took away the key of knowledge; they entered not in themselves, and those that would enter in, they hindered by every means in their power.

Luke 11

⁵² Woe unto you, lawyers! for you have taken away the key

of knowledge: you entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in you hindered.

There was another reason why the wrath of the leaders of the Jews was aroused against Jesus. It was that the people who heard His living words of truth, not only lost relish for the old traditions that the elders retailed, but they actually came to know more than the leaders themselves.

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, He shall know the doctrine.

The rulers were not willing to do, and therefore they did not know; while the poor people who desired to do God's will knew the truth. David said,

Psalms 119

¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the aged, because I have kept your precepts.

It is the earnest desire of every true teacher that the people shall learn, and the more they learn, the better he is pleased. If in time they surpass him in knowledge, then he will be but the more pleased. Even that is a testimony to the idea of his teaching.

This will often be the case when one leads his hearers to the Word. If he does not limit by his own construction, but opens it, and allows the people to see for themselves, it will often be that souls will see more than he does.

He who is not willing that this should happen, seeks his own glory, and not that of God; he preaches himself, and not the Word.

6. Spiritual Drink

Present Truth, March 2, 1899

Timeline: VI-2 (Teaching in the Temple)

John 7:37

John 7

³⁷ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

SUPPOSE that some poor traveler, just arrived in Jerusalem after a long wearisome tramp, all dusty and travel-stained, and parched with thirst, had heard that call, and had taken Jesus at His word; if he had come to Him expecting to find real water, that could actually quench his thirst, would he have been disappointed?

Did Jesus mean what He said? Could He have supplied a drink of pure, sparkling water to a thirsty man, and given him real refreshing? His words were very plain, and He was speaking to a plain people—to the common people, who are accustomed to take things very literally. Did they have a right to take Him at His Word? Let us see.

The ancestors of this same people were at one time wanderers in a desert, where there was no water.

Psalms 107

⁴ They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

⁵ Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

God told their leader to go to a rock and strike it with his staff, saying that water would come forth, so that the people might drink. And it was so.

Psalms 78

²⁰ He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed.

So the fathers...

1 Corinthians 10 [margin]

⁴ ...did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them: and that Rock was Christ.

Jesus himself stood upon the rock, and it was from Him that the water came. The rock that the people saw was but the visible agent of the invisible Christ. The Christ that furnished that water in the wilderness, real water, which quenched the thirst of man and beast,—was the same Christ that stood in the temple and cried,

John 7

³⁷ If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He was as able to provide water for a thirsty man in the temple as He was to provide it for a thirsty multitude in the desert, for:

Hebrews 13

⁸ [He is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

Someone will say,

“I thought it was spiritual water that Jesus offered; I didn’t suppose He meant to be taken literally.”

So it was spiritual water that He offered; even as the water that flowed from the rock in the wilderness, to the refreshing of thousands of thirsty men and cattle, was spiritual drink. The spiritual is not imaginary, but very real. It is only by the things that we can see, that Jesus makes known to us the reality of the things that we cannot see. Everything that God has created is designed to teach us the reality of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;

Colossians 1 [RV]

¹⁶ For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether

thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him;

¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

He is the image and the fullness of the invisible God, and is wholly spiritual; therefore everything that comes from Him, and is in Him must be spiritual.

Did you never drink water from the same Source that the Israelites drank from in the desert? No one ever drank water from any other source.

Isaiah 2

¹⁸ [God is] the fountain of living waters.

Stop a moment, and think where the water comes from that you drink. It comes from the earth, from springs, or wells that have been dug. Now when you see a spring of water gushing forth from the rocks, you see just what the children of Israel saw in the desert. They did not see Christ, and few of them ever believed that He had anything to do with providing it. They died in unbelief. They saw no more than you see when you drink water from a spring or a running brook.

Can you not see back of that well or spring? Do you not know that the spring is only the aperture whence the water emerges; it does not furnish the water, any more than does the tap in your bathroom. There are bodies of water stored up in the earth, yet the earth does not produce it, and if it were not continually replenished, the stock would be exhausted.

The clouds, however, pour out water abundantly upon the earth, and so we have a constant supply. The streams flow on in undiminished rate year after year. But the clouds do not manufacture water; they are simply floating bodies of water gathered together by evaporation and condensation. The earth supplies the clouds, and the clouds supply the earth. You say therefore that there is no new supply of water, but only that which was in the beginning.

That which was in the beginning, however, was from Christ,

Colossians 1

¹⁸ ...who is the Beginning.

That which was from the beginning, was the Word of life.

1 John 1

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.

Out of Eden there went a river, which, unlike any rivers now on this earth, divided into four parts, going toward the four points of the compass, and so watering the whole earth. That Eden, with its tree of life, is now in heaven, God's dwelling place. There, from the throne of God, flows the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.

Revelation 22

¹ And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

It is from this river of God's pleasure (Eden) that God allows those to drink, who seek shelter under the shadow of His wing.

Psalms 36

⁷ How excellent is your lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings.

⁸ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house; and You shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures.

As that river, flowing right from God's dwelling place from God himself furnished moisture to all the earth, even so it is still.

Psalms 65

⁹ You visit the earth, and water it; You greatly enrich it with

the river of God, which is full of water.

So the water that refreshes the earth, and gushes forth from it to renew the life of mankind, is direct from God himself. We never drink a glass of water without unconsciously complying with Christ's invitation,

John 7

³⁷ If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink!

But because men do not realize whence the water comes, they do not receive the fullness of life that is in it. They drink unworthily, not of faith, not discerning the Lord.

All the visible gifts of God are His means of conveying to us, and enabling us to lay hold of, His invisible gifts. The water of life proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, and which Christ offers freely to all who thirst and will come to Him, is the Spirit of God. It is God's own life, for:

Romans 8

¹⁰ ...the Spirit is life.

But,

Deuteronomy 12

²³ ...the blood is the life.

Christ gives us His life, in that He sheds His blood for us, and the cleansing through the blood is the salvation by His life, which is but the quickening by the Spirit.

Romans 5

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Romans 8

¹⁰ And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall

also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

So,

1 John 5 [RV]

⁸ There are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three agree in one.

To drink from the water of life, which comes from the throne, is to drink the blood, the life of Christ; for in the midst of the throne is the slain Lamb (*Revelation 5:6*), from whose side flow the water and the blood that agree in one.

But the rain that falls from heaven refreshing the earth, and giving life to all, is from the river of God. We may know that when we receive this gift as God bestows it on us, recognizing Him in it, we are receiving the Spirit of life in Christ, and are drinking His precious blood, which cleanses from sin. Thus,

Isaiah 45

⁸ ...the skies pour down righteousness.

This is veritable, living truth, not fancy.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ In Christ...old things are passed away, and all things are become new,

—so that through the familiar things of this earth we can see even now the living realities of the new earth. How this should admonish us to take God's good gifts just as He gives them to us in their purity.

The life of Christ is perfect; we should therefore avoid those things which savor of the curse, which have in them anything of death. If one takes the pure water that God gives, and puts into it any death-dealing drug, as alcohol in any form, tea, coffee, etc., is he not unconsciously doing despite to the Spirit of God? He is rejecting God's perfect gift, and saying that something less than the perfect life of Christ—some admixture

of death—is good enough for him.

What a terrible thing it is, how ungrateful, to take God's rich gift of life, and mingle with that which tends to destroy, before we receive it. Let us receive the life just as He gives it to us, and take it by faith, discerning the life, and the victory over death will be ours.

7. The Water of Life

General Conference Daily Bulletin, February 24, 1899

Timeline: VI-2 (Teaching in the Temple)

John 7:37-39

John 7

³⁷ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

³⁸ He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.

Christ the Fountain of Life

Now suppose that some poor, simple-minded person, who had just at that moment arrived, after a long journey, and was footsore, travel-stained, weary, and thirsty, had come into the temple at that moment, and had heard this voice,

³⁷ If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink,

—and he had come up and said,

“I want a drink.”

Do you suppose he would have got what he wanted? or would the Saviour have said,

“O, my dear fellow, you made a mistake; I did not mean what I said to be taken literally!”

Would he not have been obliged to say that with some shame? Now God has a right to expect that when He speaks, people will take Him at His word. Why? Suppose a father offers something to His child; and the child believes the father, and says,

“Yes, I will take that.”

And then the father says to the child,

“I did not mean that.”

That would be embarrassing; because the child honored the father by believing that he could not say anything but what he meant.

Now I want all to see that the Lord Jesus Christ meant exactly what He said,—that we can come to Him and drink,—and if that day there had been in the temple a man so simple-hearted that he thought this meant those who wanted a drink, then the Lord would have given it to him right there. He would have had what he wanted; and in the drink that he got, he would have received more than anyone else could see in the water.

Psalm 36

⁵ Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and your faithfulness reaches unto the clouds.

⁶ Your righteousness is like the great mountains; your judgments are a great deep: O Lord, You preserve man and beast.

⁷ How excellent is your loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings.

⁸ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house; and You shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures.

⁹ For with You is the fountain of life; in your light shall we see light.

The word “pleasure” in the 9th verse is “Eden” in the original. “Eden” means “pleasure,” or “delight.” So the text really says,

“You shall make them drink of the river of your Eden.”

The River of Life a Real Stream

Revelation 22

¹ He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal,

proceeding out of the throne of God; and the Lamb

The sparkling water, wasn't it? We are familiar with that term. You who have lived in the mountains know more about it than those who have lived on the plains. You know what living, sparkling water is. And this water that flows from the throne of God is the life of God; and the life is the life of men. Then it is sparkling water, isn't it?

In that light shall we see light. It is God's own life flowing from His throne. Do you believe there is any such thing? Is there a real river flowing from the throne just now? Yes. Where does it flow? A river that flows must go somewhere. Here is a throne, and from it is gushing every moment, and has been from the days of eternity, and will be until the eternity of eternities, a river of life, flowing on and on, without stopping. It is the river of life. Where does it go?

It is a real river. If we were there, I suppose we could see it. Some would, and some would not; but it is a river that may be seen, felt, drank from, and bathed in. The real thing is flowing. Where from? From the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Revelation 7

¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

¹⁷ For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of water.

Where is the Lamb? In the midst of the throne.

Revelation 5

⁶ And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.

In order that we may have an object-lesson, let this desk represent the throne of God. From it flows the river. It is the throne of God; and the Lamb—the slain Lamb—is in the midst of the throne; and from the throne is that ever-flowing stream

of life.

John 19

³² Then came the soldiers, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him.

³³ But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they broke not His legs:

³⁴ But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

³⁵ And he that saw it bore record, and his record is true; and he knows that he says truth, that you might believe.

That was an important thing. See with what detail and emphasis it was stated.

³⁵ He that saw it bore record, and the record is true, and he knows that it is true.

There came out blood and water from the side of the Lamb that was slain; and the blood is the life, isn't it? So on the cross Christ gave His life for us. His life has always been given for us; and the cross is merely the manifestation that that life has been given.

That one instant when he hung there between the heavens and the earth, offered for man, was a revelation of the eternal glory of God, that He has always given His life to man. The blood came from Jesus that men might see that He has given His life for them. There was the water and the blood. One saw that, and he bore record, and we know his record is true.

1 John 5

⁸ And there are three that bear record,—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one.

All are life:

- The Spirit is life, because of righteousness;
- The blood is the life, and
- The water is the water of life, flowing out from the side of the Crucified One.

Jesus said at one time,

John 2

¹⁹ Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up.

And then the Jews began to find fault with Him: but He spoke of the temple of His body, for He had said,

Psalm 40

⁷ Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God; yea, your law is within my heart.

When the tabernacle was built, it was a very feeble representation of the true sanctuary, which the Lord pitched, and not man. There was an ark in the innermost place, and upon that ark were cherubim; and from between the cherubim the glory of God shone forth, indicating that that was a representation of the throne of God, who sits between the cherubim.

But underneath the cherubim were the tables of the law, showing that righteousness is the foundation of His throne; the law of God is in the very midst of the throne.

But the law of God was in the heart of Christ, showing that His heart was the throne of God; so that when He hung upon the cross, God's heart was pierced, and from that place where the law dwelt there flowed out the stream of life. What was it? The pure river of the water of life, flowing from the Crucified One.

And the stream that flows this minute from the throne of God, is just as real a stream as was the water and the blood that flowed from the heart of Christ, and it is the life of God. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life from that flowing stream.

Revelation 22

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

John 7

³⁷ If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

Christ spoke this of the Spirit; therefore that stream of life which flows from the throne of God is simply the Spirit of God, flowing out into all the world. The Spirit and life of God are therefore flowing forth.

1 Corinthians 2

¹³ Spiritual things...

¹⁴ ...are spiritually discerned.

If we were there at the side of the throne, some would see the river, and some would not see it. He who has his eyesight trained to discern spiritual things would see the stream flowing. The man who is not spiritual would not see anything. One might say,

“O, I see the bright and sparkling water flowing from the throne of God!”

And another would reply,

“I cannot see it.”

Did you ever hear people say, “I cannot see it”? When a man cannot see, what is the matter with him? He is blind. Then,

Revelation 3

¹⁷ I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire,...and anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see,

—not to be blind. The man who is spiritual would discern the water of life flowing from the throne of God, and would see the Spirit of God. Why does the world not receive the Spirit of God? The Lord tells us why:

John 14

¹⁶ I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever;

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: but you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you.

The world does not receive the Spirit of God, because it does not see Him; and these natural eyes never can see Him. But the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened by the Spirit of God, so that we can see Him: and then when you and I learn to see the Spirit of God with the eyes of the understanding that are enlightened by the Spirit, then the Spirit which dwells in us will quicken our mortal bodies, and by and by make a complete transformation, by giving us a spiritual body, when our eyes will see even the Spirit of God.

But we must now have spiritual eyesight with which to discern things, in order that the body may be made spiritual, because there is no use of a spiritual body for a man who is not spiritual. When a man gets spiritual, the Lord will give him a body to correspond.

When the children of Israel were in the desert, where there was no water, they became thirsty, and they murmured. They said:

“What kind of general is this Moses, who has brought us out here, with all this army and all these cattle, where there is no water?

“The very first qualification required of a general is for him to know how and where to find good camping-places. What good is a general, no matter how perfect he may be in other ways, if he cannot take care of his men, and give them something to eat and drink?

“Men must have good camping-places; for they cannot fight or live without water; so one of the principal requirements in a general is that he be able to look ahead for camping-places where there is a stream of water.

“But this man Moses—well, anybody who knows anything would know better than to bring a company of people out into this place. He just brought us out here to kill us, instead

of giving us the victory. We could have died just as well in Egypt as here. In Egypt there were graves in which to bury us; but here our carcasses will fall, and they will not be buried.”

But Moses did not bring them there. The Lord did that, and He knew there was not water there. But that made no difference. He wanted them to learn this lesson,

John 7

³⁷ If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He brought them there, that they might be in the very place of that man whom we spoke of as coming into the temple and asking Jesus for water. Water could not be obtained by digging in the wilderness, because there was just hard, dry, barren soil all the way down. It looked like a hopeless case. Then the Lord said to Moses,

Exodus 17

⁵ Go on before the people, and take with you of the elders of Israel; and your rod, wherewith you smote the river, take in your hand, and go.

⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.

You know what Horeb is. It is the mountain of God. The law was spoken from there. The Lord told Moses to go to Horeb, and smite the rock. Moses did that, and the water ran in dry places like a river. They all drank; they stooped down and bathed in it; they cooled their parched faces and tongues; they led their cattle to it to drink; they refreshed themselves in the water that flowed from the rock,—but they forgot God, their Rock.

Jeremiah 2

¹² Be astonished, O you heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be very desolate, says the Lord.

¹³ For my people have committed two evils; they have for-

saken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

The Israelites drank real water from the rock, and it was all they had to drink for years; they camped right there in that spot for a full year. So even though we limit ourselves to that year, there was no other water except that which came from that rock, and they drank from that.

1 Corinthians 10

³ They all did eat the same spiritual meat;

⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.

Then they drank right from Christ. When He told Moses to smite the rock for water, He said, in effect, what Jesus afterward said,

John 7

³⁷ If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

Isaiah 55

¹ Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters.

And they came, and drank spiritual drink, but they died at last of thirst. And why? Because they forgot God their Rock. We have the same lesson before us. Those persons actually drank water from the body of Christ, but they did not recognize the marvelous miracle that was wrought among them. We imagine that they could not think of anything else.

But we can better understand the matter when we remember that a long time afterward, when Jesus was in the desert, and fed His people with bread that came directly from himself, multiplying it till five thousand or more were fed, within twenty-four hours they said (*John 6:30*),

“If you would only show us a miracle! What sign do you show, that we may believe on you?”

When we read that, we can readily understand how the children of Israel in the desert could forget the miracle that had been performed there.

The Earth Watered by It

Some of you may soon pass Niagara Falls, and as you gaze you may wonder where all the water that pours over that precipice comes from, and where it goes. Why is not the source exhausted, or the earth overflowed?

Ecclesiastes 1

⁷ All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, there they return again.

Where do they come from? The water comes from away up yonder in the hills. Why doesn't it run dry? Because it comes from the heavens, in the clouds. The clouds drop down water abundantly; and it fills the earth, and then flows forth. Where did the clouds get the water? It evaporated from the earth, and they became filled with water. Then the earth gave it to the clouds, and the clouds gave it to the earth. But which originated it,—the earth or the clouds? You see that is just as far as any scientific textbook takes us. But that is not satisfactory at all. Now read the true scientific answer:

Psalms 65

⁹ You visit the earth, and water it; You greatly enrich it with the river of God, which is full of water: You prepare them corn, when You have so provided for it.

¹⁰ You water the ridges thereof abundantly; you settle the furrows thereof; you make it soft with showers.

Thank the Lord that the river of God is full of water, and never runs dry. It is always running. Do you not see? The rain comes down from heaven, filters down from the river of God. You and I have drunk from the rock, and have forgotten God the Rock. We have been drinking from the life of God all our lives, and have not known it. We are just as bad as were the

Israelites.

They were forty years in the wilderness, drinking from the fountain of life, from Christ,—spiritual water; and there are men in the earth today who have been twice forty years drinking from that same fountain, and have never given praise for it. Spiritual water will make a man spiritual when he takes it as such; for it is the life of God. The Israelites did not take it by faith, and they died.

How near is the Lord, and how real are these things! yet we have been living in an unreal world. The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal. That which is for only a little while is the unreal thing. It is the unseen thing that will endure.

Therefore we want to get out of this unreal world, which exists for only these mortal eyes, to see and live in the real, the unseen, world. Then we shall be able to see, to all eternity, things that wicked men can never see.

Drinking the Life of God

We have a drink of water here,—living water. Where does it come from? The throne of God, where Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain, is. It flows from His heart. It is the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin. The blood of Christ is a real thing.

That water which flows from the throne of God is His life, and His life is the light.

1 John 1

⁷ If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another; and the blood of the Son of God cleanses us from all sin.

Is that a real thing? or is it only a figurative expression,—a mere form of words? Can we actually bathe in the blood of Christ, and live by it? Yes; for what is the blood? It is the life. The life is in the blood. By whatever means Christ conveys the

life to us, that is the blood, the life. He gives it to us. It does not necessarily have to be always in one form. There are innumerable forms in which life is conveyed to us; but it is all the one life. Remember, the Spirit and the water and the blood agree in one; they all come to one.

The Cleansing Power of the Life

Water is life, and it has life-giving powers. The River Seine receives all the sewage of the city of Paris. No small amount of filth goes into that river every day; yet the water of life is powerful enough to cleanse all the filth of Paris. It can do that, and here is the evidence: all the refuse, waste, filth—the sewage of every sort of that vast city—go into the River Seine; but forty miles below, there is not a trace of impurity. The water is just as pure, sparkling, and life-giving as any water in the world. It is running, living water.

This marvelous property is just the same as that of the air. You want to get away from dead, stagnant air; the wind begins to blow, and it becomes fresh. We say,

“What a fine thing this wind is! It will blow away the disease germs, and will purify everything.”

O, the life swallows up death! We all come, putting death into this great ocean of life, which swallows it up, so that we live. All about us is death, disease; and it is swallowed up by the air, and we live. The filth is brought into the living water; it flows, and men say it works itself pure. That is as well as we can express it.

But whence comes that water—the River Seine, or any other river? From the throne of God. It is living, flowing water, and:

- the fact that water gives life to us when we drink it;
- the fact that water refreshes our bodies when we put it upon them;
- the fact that water has wonderful healing properties, not

only when we take it within us, but when we put it upon our bodies;

- the fact that water cleanses the impurities from our bodies when we take it in, washing all the tissues;
- the fact that water cleanses that which is put into it, and divides it from its death-dealing properties, so that we may take the same water, and it gives life to us,

—all these facts speak to all of the marvelous cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Do you not see how, in the treatment at the sanitarium, the gospel of Jesus Christ can be easily preached? We are dealing with real things. We have been groping as if we were in the dark; but the Lord has given us the Spirit to anoint our eyes, so that we can see; and then in these waters that we take, we shall see the blood of Christ, that cleanses from all sin.

In the tabernacle there were tables of stone, and the law was engraved upon them. It was dead stone. But we come to the living stone. In the true tabernacle, in God's throne, where the Lamb slain is, there is the living stone, enshrining the living law; and the water that flows from that is impregnated, full, charged with the righteousness of the living law of God; and whosoever drinks from that, drinks what?

Matthew 5

⁶ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

When a man is thirsty, and gets filled, how does he get filled? By drinking. He hungers and thirsts after righteousness; then he eats and drinks righteousness, and he is filled with righteousness. Righteousness comes from the throne of God,—flows out in a stream of life. The heavens drop it down; because He visits the earth, and waters it with the rain from heaven.

Righteousness from the Clouds

In like manner the prophet says:

Isaiah 45

⁸ Drop down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.

O, how easy the way of righteousness is made, and how real it is! and O, what a blessed thing, what a pleasure, it is to drink water! Yes; and more than that, the man who sees this, will never drink anything else but water.

Of course God lets the water come up through the fruits; and when we take the fruit, we are drinking it still, because that water which has come up through the grapevine, and then been stored up in little clusters, Jesus speaks of as His blood. The rich juices of the fruit are water.

But whoever knows that water is the water of life, will never mingle with that pure water of life something which will deteriorate it. He will not put some poison in it, if he knows that it is the life of God, because that would be saying to the Lord,

“I know that this is your perfect life; but I do not care anything about all the perfect life; a little of it is good enough for me. I will take it degenerated.”

What is he doing? He is crucifying to himself the Son of God, saying, I do not care anything about Him; I will put Him to death, and let His life go.

Is it a hobby or a fad that we do not drink tea and coffee? There is no fad about it. I think the sooner the time comes when we leave the very word coffee out of our vocabulary, and do not get some substitute for it, we shall all be the better.

[Voices: “Amen.”]

If a thing is bad, why do you want to get a substitute for it?

Get rid of it. A man in England wrote, not long ago, that the very best substitute he knew for fresh air was tobacco smoke. Why do men want a substitute for air? What is the fresh air to us? Life. When you get a substitute for life, you have death. Let us never choose death rather than life!

O, I delight in drinking water, as I never have before; I delight in bathing. Why, I come right to the throne of God. A man may get righteousness in bathing, when he knows where the water comes from, and recognizes the source. The world is a good deal nearer the gospel than it knows anything about when it says that:

“Cleanliness is next to godliness.”

Ah, but cleanliness *is* godliness.

John 15

³ Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Ephesians 5

²⁵ Christ...loved the church, and gave himself for it;

²⁶ That He might purify it and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

Or, by a “water-bath in the word.” That is the way it reads in the Danish, and that is literal, too. Just bathe in the word. That is not figurative, that is not sentimental; God wants His people to live now as seeing the Invisible, so that they will walk in the sight of the river of God, and drink from the throne of God, and all they do will be eating and drinking in His presence.

I do not think anybody who gets hold of this will now wonder,

“Couldn’t I take a little tea or coffee?”

or,

“I wonder if they take this at the sanitarium? I wonder if Sister White does this? If somebody else does this, couldn’t I do it?”

O, every man will stand drinking from the throne of God, and he will not ask whether somebody else drinks or not; but he himself will get as near the Fountain-head as possible. When we see a stream coming right out from a rock, we get as near as possible to the source, and drink.

Eating and Drinking in the Presence of God

So when we know that these are from God, and we drink from Him, God himself is standing right here:

John 7

³⁷ If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink.

And every time we quench that thirst, what is it for? God wants to give water to every thirsty soul, that we should eat and drink, and so not forget Him.

Suppose you and I were kept alive without eating and drinking, we would say,

“I have life in myself; I keep myself alive; I am not dependent on anybody.”

We do say it, in spite of all God has done. But God, in his infinite mercy, provided that we should eat and drink in order that we could know that we have life in Him. Every time we get hungry we come to Him and eat; every time we feel thirsty, we come to Him and drink; and every time we take in an inspiration of air, we are breathing the breath of the Almighty. We eat and drink in His presence.

When we get over into the new earth, we shall all see the river of life. We must see it now, because you and I will never get over there to see it if we do not see it before we get there. It is the Spirit of God, and we are to be filled with it; so that, as I said this afternoon, the food we eat is spiritual food.

When we get over into the kingdom of God, the water will flow all the time; and it will go out, as we read in *Ezekiel*, and water all the earth. Sometime we will be wandering on some of our places on the other side from the New Jerusalem, and come to a little rivulet. It is refreshing the earth, and we drink from it. We trace that stream along up, and we find that it gets larger. That is a curious thing. Here as we go up against the flow of a stream, we always find that it gets smaller; but there it will get larger. Soon it is united with a larger stream, and presently a still larger one, and we will pass along rapidly, and presently we are right at the throne of God.

Now we are not yet over in the new earth; but, thank the Lord,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things are become new.

So now when we see this very stream of water we are coming to, it will lead us direct to the throne of God, and we shall drink from the fountain of life, and our souls will live.

Let us rejoice in this; let us drink; let us get our souls full. O, who would forsake the water that flows from the mountain, clear and sparkling, for water that is standing in a puddle? Would you? You have done it. I, also. We have hewed out a broken cistern, and wanted to keep the water there.

But when God has given us His own life, and it flows throughout the universe, who would take a substitute? Who would mingle something with it that is inferior to it? Can we not take the health reform, and preach it? It is the gospel of life. Just take it, rejoice in it, and be glad of it. Take it in its fulness, and we will drink of the River of Eden.

O, I thank the Lord for the refreshing showers. You sometimes sing:

Lord I hear of showers of blessings,

You are scattering full and free,
Showers the thirsty land refreshing,
Let some drops now fall on me.²⁷

But don't ever sing it that way again. The idea that when God is scattering showers full and free, you would ask for a drop or two! Get out under the heavens, where the rain is falling; let the water sift down over you, and take in the showers:

Hebrews 6

⁷ For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God.

Let us drink in the water every day. Then we are living in the presence of God. Ah, we shall not worry about the time when we shall see Him! We see Him now; we live in His presence now, and there will be no trouble about the coming of the Lord. We shall love His coming; for we shall love to be with Him all the time. It is a blessed thing to dwell in the presence of the Lord.

Revelation 22

¹⁷ Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

²⁷ Elizabeth Codner, Hymn: *Even Me* (Lord, I hear of showers of blessing), 1860.

8. Eloquent Living

Present Truth, August 31, 1899

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VI-2 (Teaching in the Temple)

John 7:46

John 7

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this man.

THERE are few people who can speak eloquently as the world counts eloquence; but to live eloquently is within the reach of all.

Jesus spoke as never man spoke; but the reason He could do this was because He lived as never man lived. Who does not respect a man, eccentric though he may be, if he lives in his everyday life what he preaches?

The reason that so few would be reformers fail to accomplish anything is that they have not first learned to reform themselves. The one that lives the Gospel, without a word, preaches sermons a thousand times more effective than the most eloquent discourse from one known to be a hypocrite.

While in prison, John the Baptist, hearing concerning the works of Christ, sent two of his disciples to Him to inquire,

Matthew 11

³ Are You he who should come, or do we look for another?

Instead of answering him as we would naturally think He would, He simply replied:

⁴ Go, show John again these things which you do hear and see;

⁵ The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.

In this case it was the works that testified to the true messiah-ship of the Saviour. So today, it is the works we do and

the words we utter that tell for or against the Gospel. May they all be wrought in Jesus Christ, so that:

1 Corinthians 10

³¹ Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may do it to the glory of God.

9. Casting the First Stone

Present Truth, January 11, 1894

Timeline: VI-3 (The Adulteress)

John 8:7

John 8

⁷ He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.

THUS Christ spoke to the scribes and Pharisees when they brought to Him the woman taken in adultery; and thus would He say today to all attempts of men to punish for sin.

And this clearly shows that it is wholly outside the province of the civil authority, or of any authority that men possess, to inflict penalties for the transgression of the law of God. God never leaves it for sinners to punish for sin.

The Apostle Paul exclaims,

Romans 3

⁵ Is God unrighteous, who takes vengeance?

⁶ God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?

Judgment and condemnation, and its execution, must be in righteousness; and therefore it can never be done by sinners. For all sinners are equally worthy of death. And he who assumes authority to cast a stone at the sinner, thereby claims to be without sin.

10. Saving, Not Stoning, Sinners

Medical Missionary, January 1905

Timeline: VI-3 (The Adulteress)

John 8:7

John 8

⁷ He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.

THESE well-known but little-heeded words of Christ, the model Medical Missionary, are of great importance to every missionary. The missionary necessarily comes in contact with people who, in a marked manner, have departed from the narrow way; and the medical missionary, especially, has to do with those persons whose wrong-doing has made itself apparent by its effect on their bodies.

Now the constant danger is, that seeing and handling those who seem to be sinners above others, we may become critical and Pharisaical, and thereby unfit ourselves for the work which we may have spent years in training to do. The effect of this counsel from our Saviour is, if heeded, to make us very considerate of those whose sins constitute their strongest plea for help from us, because it reminds us that we are all sharers in one common, fallen humanity.

“But I do not do the things that I condemn,”

—we are very likely to say. Perhaps not: but the question is, Do we indulge in some other sin, which doesn't seem so bad to us, because it is our own? If so, then we are most certainly out of place in casting stones at our neighbor, and will find that sooner or later they will rebound and strike us.

Matthew 7

¹ Judge not, that you be not judged;

² For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again.

While a specific sin was under consideration when the Saviour spoke the words of our text, He *did not* say:

“Let him that has *not committed this sin* cast the first stone,”

but rather:

“He that is without sin.”

There was no specification as to the kind. Anybody who has sin is disqualified for sitting in judgment upon any other sinner. All sin is one, and he who condemns another condemns himself.

James 2

¹¹ For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the law.

In our narrowness of view we often make differences where there are none. The drunkard has long been held up to the public gaze for pity and condemnation and the sin of drunkenness is by no means to be minimized, for we are assured that no drunkard has inheritance in the kingdom of God.

But it is well to note wherein lies the essential evil of drunkenness. Is it not in this, that the drunkard is the slave of his appetite? Many do not consent in their minds to be drunkards, and would gladly be free, and determine to break the bonds; but when they pass a saloon or get the smell of liquor, or feel a desperate craving, their resolution breaks down, and they indulge again, “just this once.”

The trouble is with the will. Now wherein is the difference between the victim of alcoholic liquor and the one who indulges his appetite for anything else against his better judgment? Both are slaves to appetite; only there is this difference, —that the slaves to alcohol are usually more unwilling slaves than are those who eat to gratify a perverted appetite, and not the legitimate, real demands of the body.

This is only one point; there are many others where we can make a similar application; and the effect of the Saviour's words, if kept in mind, is to make us more charitable to our neighbors and more strenuous with ourselves.

Well for us and for the world is it that while our sinful nature makes it impossible for us to judge others, it does not prevent us from working for their salvation. The work of the Gospel has been committed to sinners, so much so that even He "who knew no sin" had to be made sin for us, in order that He might save us from sin. We are best able to help others while conscious of our own failings, and while struggling, in God's strength, against them.

One thing should not be forgotten, and that is, that even if we get so Pharisaical as honestly to believe that we are not as other men are, we have no divine warrant for judging, for Christ, the sinless One, did not cast stones. He said:

John 12

⁴⁷ I came not to condemn the world, but to save the world.

The two things cannot possibly go together. So then:

1 Corinthians 16

¹⁴ Let all your things be done with charity.

11. The Source of Light

Present Truth, June 12, 1902

Timeline: VI-4 (The Light of the World)

John 8:12; 9:5

ATTENTION is called on this page to the mechanical power of the sun's rays, and also to their healing virtue; but no one should fall into the error of supposing that the power and virtue are inherent in the sun itself. That would be to make it a god, a thing that is commonly done, when men tell what the sun does, and trace the power no farther back.

All things are the servants of God, and the heavens simply reveal His glory. Jesus said,

John 8

¹² I am the light of the world; He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 1

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

And since His life is light, it necessarily follows that there must be life—healing virtue—in the light that comes from Him. There is life in sunlight, simply because the light that lightens our earth is but the glory of God's life, of which the sun is but general agent.

An instance of the healing power of light, which also shows that the light which our eyes can see is Christ's own life, is recorded in the 9th chapter of *John*. As Jesus passed by, He saw a poor beggar who was born blind. As His attention was called to him, He said,

John 9

⁵ I am the light of the world,

—and forthwith He gave the man sight. The light of Christ's life healed the blind man's eyes.

So we see that when the sunlight destroys disease germs, cleansing our earth, and making it habitable, and putting color into the cheeks of people, as well as upon the roses, it is the working of the same life of Christ that cleanses from all sin. Thus the whole creation preaches the Gospel.

Malachi 4

² Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.

12. Multiplication of Light

Present Truth, February 1, 1894

Timeline: VI-4 (The Light of the World)

John 8:12

John 8

¹² Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

CHRIST is the light of the world. Now, I can have all there is of the sunlight, and everyone else can have all there is too. From one gas jet or torch you may light a thousand other lights, and each one will be just as bright.

So Christ can die and give the whole of His life to one man, and have just as much to give to you and me and everybody, because there is no diminishing of it. It increases, and never gets any less. Each one gets all there is of Christ.

Each one of us can be crucified with Christ. He tasted death for every man. And yet each one gets the whole of His life; and still He has as much more. So He could give His life over and over again for each soul, and still be alive.

This is the quality of eternal life; always giving and never diminishing; always shining and never becoming dimmed.

13. His Time Was Not Yet Come

Present Truth, December 31, 1896

Timeline: VI-4 (The Light of the World)

John 8:20

John 8

²⁰ These words spoke Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no man laid hands on Him; for His hour was not yet come.

HOW many times they had tried to lay hands on Him. Only in the preceding chapter we learned that:

John 7

³² The Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him,

—but the officers returned without having so much as spoken to Him.

At one time the enraged Jews had Him in their hands,

Luke 4

²⁹ ...and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.

³⁰ But He passing through the midst of them went His way.

All the plotting of the enemies of Jesus availed nothing against Him, until His time came. Why was it? It was simply because He had been sent into the world by the Father to do a definite work, and:

Hebrews 3

² [He] was faithful to Him that appointed Him.

To accomplish the work was His sole thought and life, more to Him than food and drink and rest.

John 4

⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the

sixth hour.

⁷ There came a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus said unto her, Give me to drink.

⁸ (For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

³¹ In the meanwhile His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat.

³² But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that you know not of.

³³ Therefore said the disciples one to another, Has any man brought Him ought to eat?

³⁴ Jesus said unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.

He knew that the Father, who sent Him, was always with Him, and so He left the management of His case, and the protection of himself, to the Father. While He was thus devoted to the work of God, always doing those things that please Him, Jesus was as safe from injury as God himself; for it was God that was working in Him, and it is not possible that God would allow himself to be hindered or stopped in His work by man.

Jesus therefore needed not to waste one moment in worrying about His own safety; He knew that no one could do Him harm until the Father permitted it, and then when He had finished the work He had been given to do, it was His joy to suffer as well as it was to work.

But of what use is all this to us? Was it written simply as a matter of curiosity? When we have read it, and know the facts, is that the end of the matter? Is there no lesson of encouragement in it for us? Of course there is encouragement for us, for it was written only for our learning,

Romans 15

⁴ ...that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

But we often lose the lesson of Christ's life, because we fail

to recognize or to remember the fact that He was a representative man.

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.

1 John 4

¹⁷ As He is, so are we in this world.

God manifested himself in the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth, in order to show what He could accomplish in the flesh, not simply of one man, but of all men who will allow Him to dwell in them in His fullness.

Those who regard Christ as being peculiar, an exception among men, lose the benefit of the Divine manifestation in the flesh. True, He was peculiar, just as He gave himself for us, that He might purify unto himself a peculiar people. To those who receive Him, He gives power to become sons of God, own brothers of Christ, having equal rights and privileges with Him.

John 1

¹² But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

Romans 8

¹⁶ The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

He sends His disciples forth, even as He himself was sent forth, assuring them that they are loved by the Father just as much as He himself is, and that He is always with them.

John 17

¹⁸ As You have sent me into the world, even so have I also

sent them into the world.

²³ I in them, and You in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them, as You have loved me.

Matthew 28

²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

1 Peter 4

¹⁹ Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

The children of God, who are consecrated to His service, intent only on doing His will, have no more reason to fear than Jesus had, and no more reason to engage in self-defense. If their work is the Lord's, they may be sure that no man can stay that work, and that they are safe until the portion of it allotted to them is accomplished.

Let it be our sole business to finish the work God has given us to do, and resting calmly in the knowledge that our times are in His hand.

14. Being with Christ

Present Truth, December 31, 1896

Timeline: VI-4 (The Light of the World)

John 8:21

John 8

²¹ Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and you shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; where I go, you cannot come.

THAT is easily understood; of course those who die in their sins cannot go to be with the Lord; we all know that, for we have been taught from infancy that it is only the good who go to heaven when they die. Yes; we can well believe that those wicked Jews who persistently sought to take the life of Jesus, could not go to be with Him, if they died unrepentant.

But, hold a minute; not long afterwards Jesus used similar language to an entirely different class of people. Pass to chapter 13, verse 33, and we find Jesus saying to His beloved disciples, whom He tenderly addressed as “little children”:

John 13

³³ Yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Where I go, you cannot come; so now I say to you.

“Ah, yes,” says one, “but He meant that they could not follow Him then, because they were to live several years after His crucifixion and ascension. Later on He said to Peter, ‘You cannot follow me now; but you shall follow me afterwards.’” (*John 13:36*)

Yes, but the next verse shows us that Peter could not follow Him then, even though He should lay down His life for him. Now read a little further.

The words of Jesus, “Where I go, you cannot come,” very naturally filled the hearts of His disciples with sorrow. They

had indeed left all for Him, and had learned to depend on Him; and now the thought that He was going to leave them alone, troubled them. So Jesus addressed to them these comforting words:

John 14

¹ Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.

² In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there you may be also.

Now we know what time Jesus referred to when He said "afterward." The "afterward," when His disciples should be with Him, is when He comes again,

Hebrews 9

²⁸ ...the second time, without sin, unto salvation.

He has not yet come again, and therefore no soul has gone to be with Jesus since His ascension. Just as surely as He went away from this earth, so surely will He come again.

But it is no more sure that He went away, than that He went away for a definite purpose, and that purpose was to prepare a place for His disciples. The place is not yet prepared, for He has not yet come again.

Moreover since He is to return for the express purpose of receiving His disciples unto himself, it is certain that none are with Him now; for we may be sure that Jesus will not come to earth on a fool's errand; He will not come to take people to heaven, who are already there; and He would not tell them that He would come for them, knowing all the time that they were to be with Him many years before His return. No; whether a man dies a saint or a sinner, he cannot go to be with the Lord at his death.

The same words of comfort that Jesus spoke to the disciples are those which the Apostle Paul speaks to us all, by the Lord's authority.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

“So shall we be ever with the Lord.” How? By the resurrection of the dead, and the translation of the living. The dead do not go before the living. All wait until Christ's coming, and then all are...

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ ...changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption.

This change will take place “in the twinkling of an eye.” This will be as true of the dead as of the living. A thousand years of absolute unconsciousness is as no time at all. So to the saint who closed his eyes in death ages before the coming of the Lord, it will be the same as though he closed his eyes and instantly opened them again to behold the glory of the Lord. All the time between will be but as the twinkling of an eye. There will be no disappointment.

To the saints who, like Stephen, have in their last moments seen the Lord in glory, it will be the same as though they had that instant gone to be with Him. Their eyelids fell, the

dreamless sleep of years is to them no longer than the twinkling of an eye, and they raise their eyelids to see the Lord still standing to receive them.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

15. I Am

Present Truth, December 17, 1896

Timeline: VI-5 (The Argument About Descent From Abraham)

John 8:24-58

IN THE 8th chapter of *John* we have three distinct utterances of Jesus, in which He sets forth the fact of His oneness with Him who is...

Psalm 90

² ...from everlasting to everlasting.

Speaking to the carping Jews, who blindly refused to understand Him, He said,

John 8

²⁴ If you believe not that I am *he*, you shall die in your sins.

The reader will notice that the word “He” is in italics, an indication that it was added by the translators. There is in the Greek no hint of it. Therefore since the translators inserted it, we can well omit it, taking the words of Jesus without the addition. Thus we have,

²⁴ If you believe not that I AM, you shall die in your sins.

In verse 28 we have again the same addition of the word “he.” So we read,

²⁸ When you have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know that I AM, and that I do nothing of myself.

In verse 58 we have it clearly and plainly stated,

⁵⁸ Before Abraham was, I AM.

In these texts we have the truth set forth that Jesus...

Hebrews 9

¹⁴ ...through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,

—and that it is by a practical belief in His eternal nature that

we are saved from dying in our sins. The power by which we are saved, is the power of a self-existent life. Christ is the One who was—

Micah 5 [margin]

² [His] goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.

He is the One who is—

Hebrews 7

²⁵ He ever lives.

And He is the One who is to come—

Revelation 3

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly.

“I AM ____.” Fill out the blank with any good thing you please, and that is Christ, but yet only in part, for no one but himself can fill it out. That blank indicates infinity and eternity.

John 14

⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Revelation 22

¹⁶ I am the root of the offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star.

John 10

¹¹ I am the Good Shepherd.

⁹ I am the Door.

John 11

²⁵ I am the resurrection and the life.

Yea, all we need, and more than we can ask or think, we find in Him; and it is His cross, His being lifted up from the earth, that makes us know these things. Therefore,

Galatians 6

¹⁴ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord

Jesus Christ.

16. Knowing the Truth

Present Truth, December 29, 1892

Timeline: VI-5 (The Argument About Descent From Abraham)

John 8:31

THE blessedness of the religion of Christ is the positiveness of the knowledge which it gives. There is no conjecture, no uncertainty, but full assurance.

John 8

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed;

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Some people think that it is a presumption for anyone to say that he knows the truth. They may allow the claim in a general way, but when it comes to a particular thing, they think that the most that anyone can safely say is that he thinks he knows.

But the Lord has not left us to any such uncertainty as that. He wants a man to know the truth, and to know that he knows it.

Who will know? Those who are humble, and submissive to His will. Jesus said,

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

Hebrews 11

³ By faith we understand.

It is the Spirit of God that gives certainty in knowledge. Jesus said,

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak from him-

self; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

Again,

1 Corinthians 2

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God.

The promise to the people of God is,

Jeremiah 31

³⁴ They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

And that this knowledge is to be obtained in this life is evident from the words of the apostle,

1 John 2

²⁰ But you have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.

²⁷ But the anointing which you have of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you; but as the anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.

All Christians are to be the light of the world. This they are to be not alone by their lives, but by their word; for even though it may not be the lot of many to teach publicly, they are to...

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ ...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.

Now positive knowledge is an absolute necessity on the part of everyone who teaches. He who does not know, has no right to attempt to teach. It is not enough for one to think that

he knows; he must know that he knows, or else keep silence.

Suppose I meet a man on the road, and he asks me the way to a neighboring village. I am not sure of the way, but I do not like to appear ignorant, and so I point to the east. The man starts in that direction, but it happens that the village lies to the west. I have started him on the wrong road. If I did not know, it was my duty to tell him so, and he could have asked another man.

It will readily be seen that in such a case positive knowledge is necessary. How much more so must it be when the case is one of eternal life or death? For a professed Christian not to know for a certainty what he believes, is a sin. If he does not know, he is but a false light, leading people to destruction, where he himself must also go.

Matthew 15

¹⁴ If the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch.

But the positive knowledge of these things that have been already learned, is not all that is embraced in knowing the truth. He who knows the truth indeed, has the Spirit of truth, and therefore he recognizes truth when he sees it, although it may be a point that has never before been brought to his attention. Jesus says,

John 10 [also vs. 4]

²⁷ My sheep know my voice.

Truth is the voice of Christ. He who knows the truth will not have to stand hesitating and doubting and arguing a long time before he knows whether or not to believe the point that is presented to him for the first time. He knows the truth, and so as soon as the point is presented, he knows if it is true, or if it is error. He may not at once perceive all that there is in it, either of truth or error, but he knows if it is truth.

The certainty is not the special privilege of a few, but it is given to all who know the Lord, for He is the truth. He who

has it not may know that there is a great deal that he lacks. But he need not go along in that uncertainty, for the promise is,

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not, and it shall be given him.

17. The Purpose of Truth

Present Truth, December 7, 1893

Timeline: VI-5 (The Argument About Descent From Abraham)

John 8:32

To the Jews Jesus said,

John 8

³² You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

THE Saviour here stated the purpose for which men need the truth. Not that a man may be exalted, not that he may be exalted, not that he may take advantage of his fellow-men, but that he may be free, is the purpose for which he should search for the truth. If men could first realize that without the truth they are in bondage, they would search for the truth with more earnestness and with a different spirit than is commonly to be seen at the present time.

How often are Divine truths treated more as curiosities than as living principles which can save the soul. The Bible must not be searched as though it were but a great museum filled with the relics of the religious thought and life of a bygone age. Its truths are not given for the purpose of gratifying any inclination of the natural heart. Their purpose is, as Paul wrote to Timothy, to make men...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ ...wise unto salvation.

He who comes to them with any other purpose in view will fail entirely of attaining the end which God by their means has placed within his reach. To the tempter Jesus said,

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

The word of God has been given to men that they may live.

Life is in it, and if men will feed on the word, its life will be in them.

When God spoke the law amidst the lightnings and thundering of Mount Sinai, the terror-stricken Israelites removed afar off and said to Moses,

Exodus 20

¹⁹ Let not God speak with us, lest we die.

God cannot speak to man directly, for he cannot bear it. So He has veiled His terrible Majesty in the flesh of humanity, and His word has come to us through His apostles and prophets, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But it is none the less the word of God, and no less entitled to our reverence and implicit faith than though it came sounding in our ears with the awful tones of the voice of God, accompanied by lightnings from heaven, and convulsive tremors in the earth.

If the Jews had accepted the truth which Christ gave to them, it need not have been written of them, as it was by Paul, that:

Galatians 4

²⁵ Jerusalem which now is...is in bondage with her children.

But they did not want truth for the purpose of becoming free, for they imagined themselves to be already in possession of freedom. The use they made of truth was to exalt themselves, to bind it upon their garments in ostentatious display, while they flattered themselves that they were thereby elevated above the remaining majority of mankind.

And they were elevated above them in point of privilege, but that only laid upon them a greater responsibility of obedience to the Divine requirements. Having only their own exaltation in view, they lost sight of the truth they most needed to learn,—that Christ had come to free them from bondage, and that only by accepting Him they become...

John 8

³⁶ ...free indeed.

Self blinds the spiritual eyesight to the needs of the soul, so that the individual fails to see that he needs the truth—the word of God²⁸—because he is in the bondage of sin, and thinks that the chief value of truth is to exalt him above his fellows. It leads him to view the study of the word of God as an optional matter, and not a necessity.

No one can see the grandest and most important truths that are to be known, so long as self stands in his line of vision. When we approach the word, self, with all its preconceived wisdom, must be put away. We must come with a sense of our need, and a belief that life and freedom are contained in its sacred truths. He who will do this will know the truth, and experience the...

Romans 8

²¹ ...glorious liberty,

—prepared for the children of God.

²⁸ **John 17** ¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth.

18. Two Masters

Present Truth, July 11, 1895

Timeline: VI-5 (The Argument About Descent From Abraham)

John 8:34

A SERVANT of Satan is not a worshiper of God. The Saviour said,

John 8

³⁴ Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin.

But the servant of sin is the servant of Satan; for Satan is the author of sin. When we obey him, we sin. We cannot at the same time obey both Satan and the Lord, any more than we can serve both God and mammon. And we cannot worship God and at the same time disobey Him.

If we do not obey God—if, in other words, we sin—we do not worship God; but we do worship the power whom we obey; for obedience is an acknowledgment of the right and authority of the power to which it is given.

Hence when we sin we do homage to Satan; we acknowledge his way (for sin is his way, which he has set up in opposition to the way,—or law—of God), and thus render to him what we should have rendered to God; that is, worship.

Our obedience tells unmistakably whom we worship.

19. The Light of the World

Present Truth, November 19, 1896

Timeline: VI-6 (The Man Born Blind)

John 9:1-11

John 9

¹ And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

And Jesus said,

⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

⁶ When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

⁷ And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

IN THIS simple story we learn how literally true are the words of Jesus,

John 9

⁵ I am the light of the world.

Here was a poor man who in the midst of light was walking in darkness. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” and immediately gave the man sight.

It is very evident that the poor man was wholly dependent on Jesus and His word for his sight. Jesus was literally to him the light of day. But that case is only illustrative. What Jesus was to that man, He is to all. He is literally the light of the world.

John 1

³ All things were made by Him,

and,

Colossians 1

¹⁷ ...by Him all things consist.

God has set His glory upon the heavens:

Psalm 8 [RV]

¹ O Jehovah, our Lord, How excellent is your name in all the earth, who has set your glory upon the heavens!

The light of which the sun was made bearer, is nothing less than:

2 Corinthians 4

⁶ ...the light...of the glory of God.

All the light of this world came from the word of God, who said,

Genesis 1

³ Let there be light, and there was light.

It was this same word that gave light to the poor, blind man. There was no healing virtue in the clay, nor in the water; but the man obeyed the command, "Go and wash," and in those words of Jesus he found the light.

Psalm 119

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Thus he found that the words are most strictly and literally true. He who follows Christ cannot walk in darkness, because he has the light of life.

John 8

¹² Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The man upon whom this miracle was wrought was only a poor beggar, who until that day had never seen the light, yet as soon as the miracle was performed, he had more true knowledge of the light than all the learned Pharisees and doctors of the law had. Note his clear and decisive answers under cross-questioning. When there was a doubt expressed as to

his being the same blind man who begged by the wayside, he settled that question by saying,

John 9

⁹ I am he.

He was not ashamed to acknowledge his low degree. Neither was he ashamed to acknowledge his dependence upon Jesus for his sight. On being asked how his eyes were opened, he said,

¹¹ A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight.

It was a simple testimony to the truth, and therein lay its convincing power. The most learned man in the city could not have told it any better. Then there was a dispute as to the character of Jesus. First he bluntly declared,

¹⁷ He is a prophet.

Note that he did not give it as his opinion or belief, but as a fact that admitted of no dispute. In his simplicity he did not presume to advance theories, but stuck to what he knew, and that was far better than theories. If professed Christians, and Christian teachers, were better acquainted with the practical facts of the Gospel, there would be far less groping among systems of theories.

Further than these simple facts, the young man would not allow himself to be enticed. To the Pharisees' declaration that Christ was a sinner, he replied,

²⁵ Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

That was a fact which the Pharisees would gladly forget, but the young man held them to it; and it really settled the whole question. For to give sight to a man born blind, was a creative act, and showed divine power. That being admitted, there

could be no further question as to the character of Jesus.

The result was characteristic. The Pharisees could not gain-say the facts so simply yet graphically told by the young man, but they were bound not to accept the light that had so brightly dawned upon him, and so they said,

³⁴ You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us? And they cast him out [of the synagogue].

When men meet facts which they cannot overthrow and will not accept, they betray their confusion by appealing to their age, or their position, or their learning.

But the great lesson for us to learn is the reality of the light which God gives by His Word, and the positive assurance with which those must speak who have received that light. If all the philosophers in the world should unite to demonstrate that the sun is an opaque body, and that we actually receive no light from it, the most ignorant man in the street could say,

“I don’t know anything about your science, but I know I see.”

And with that fact he could overturn all their theories. So the simple man whose eyes are opened to see...

2 Corinthians 4

⁴ ...the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ,

—can silence every learned objection with the simple declaration,

“I was blind; now I see.”

Doubtless few will accept the truth through his simple testimony; but he may be sure that those who will not accept it on such evidence, would not accept it under any circumstances. One thing that an unlearned man knows is worth more than ten million things that wise men do not know.

20. Sight for the Blind

Present Truth, August 9, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for August 19

Timeline: VI-6 (The Man Born Blind)

John 9:1-17

THE student who confines his study to the verses indicated as forming the lesson, will lose a great deal, for some of the most striking features of the narrative are in the latter portion of the chapter. In our study, therefore, we shall proceed as though the entire chapter were included in the lesson.

The story is very simple, and easily learned. Jesus was passing by, and saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The disciples, full of the native childish curiosity that delights in the speculative rather than the practical, asked Him,

John 9

² Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

It was obvious enough to anybody who thought instead of wondered, that the man was not born blind in consequence of anything that he himself had done, and Jesus said that it was not because of any special sin on the part of his parents, but in order that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

Then adding that He must do the works of Him that sent Him while it was day, and that He was the Light of the world, He moistened some clay and anointed the eyes of the man with it, telling him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; the man did as he was told, and came back seeing.

How many who read this narrative realize that it is the true account of something that actually happened? To most of us, as we read the story of the various miracles of Jesus, they are more stories, and, while we nominally believe them, the

events recorded are so very far away from us, and so lost in the haze of the distance, that it is almost, if not quite the same to us, as though they never happened at all.

Our minds do not take hold of them as real occurrences, and we should be most surprised if we should see anything of the kind take place now. People do not expect miracles, and yet they are the ordinary working of God, and are being performed before our eyes every day.

That miracles, even such as the opening of the eyes of the blind, are the ordinary work of God, is shown by the words of Jesus, just before He opened the eyes of the blind man, and with reference to that event:

John 9

⁴ I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day.

To open the eyes of the blind is one of the ordinary works of God, and He is constantly at it. This man was born blind. That is, his eyes remained after his birth in the same condition that they were before he was born.

Every child, as well as every other animal, has eyes before coming into the world as a separate being, yet it cannot see. Its eyes are closed. When it comes forth to the light, the same miracle is wrought on it that was wrought on this man, for whom it was not performed at the usual time.

In his case God had delayed the process, in order that people might see that the opening of peoples' eyes is the result of special action on His part, and not of chance, or what people call "nature." This is what the lesson teaches us, and if we learn it and remember it, we shall have something of great value.

Acts 17

²⁸ In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

There is no life and no living except in Him, and nobody

can see except in and by Him, for He is light, and He is all the light that there is. Jesus is set forth as the revelation, the manifestation, of the Father:

John 1

¹⁸ No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

And therefore He is...

John 9

⁵ ...the Light of the world.

He is the Word of life that was in the beginning, and was manifested unto us:

1 John 1

¹ That which was from the beginning...the Word of life;

² ...which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

And this life is the light of men:

John 1

⁴ In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

From the statement that Jesus is the light of the world, coupled with the fact that immediately after saying it, He demonstrated it by giving a blind man his sight, enabling him to see as other men, we learn that the light that greets our eyes every morning, and that shines in the sun and moon and stars, is nothing else than the light of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

If we do not recognize this truth, we are walking in the light as though we were in the midst of darkness; we are blind. God is everywhere, filling heaven and earth, and if we do not see Him, it is simply because we are blind. We have eyes, but, they are of no real use to us.

1 John 1

⁵ This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no dark-

ness at all.

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

But whosoever lacks faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and love,

2 Peter 1

⁹ ...is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Compare the preceding verses. Whoever remains in sin is as blind as the man was of whom we are studying. Every heathen, that is, every one who does not recognize and worship the Lord, is as blind as the images of silver and gold in which he trusts. See *Psalms* 115:2-8.

The change from sin to righteousness is a new birth, and is analogous to the first birth, by which we come into the world. When a child is born into the world, it is a new creature, yet so common is the occurrence, that few ever think of the mystery of it.

Nobody in the world can understand the mystery of life, the mystery of birth, but all believe in it; yet at the same time most people have no faith in the new birth, by which a man becomes a new creature.

Both births are accomplished by the same power, and one is really no more mysterious than the other; both are equally beyond the power of human comprehension.

The same power that gives us our life in the first place, and that renews it day by day, has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Acts 17

²⁵ He gives to all life, and breath, and all things,

And He gives all things, even all things that pertain to everlasting life and godliness, in the gift of life that is bestowed on all men. The free gift has come upon all; but few will acknowledge that they are blind, and so they never see.

Christ is anointed...

Luke 4

¹⁸ ...to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind.

And He does this work by the same power by which He upholds all things. The proof that a man can be born of God, and can be made free from sin, is found in the fact that we live, and see the light of day.

“But,” someone will say, “you are confusing the spiritual and the natural.”

No; we are doing nothing of the kind. The perfectly natural, that is, the nature which is perfect, is spiritual. The exceeding great and precious promises of God are given unto us that by them we might be...

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The Divine nature is spiritual, for God is Spirit, and the only real, perfect man is the man who has that nature. Having that nature, we discern spiritual things,—we see God. Without that nature, we see nothing, but are in reality dead.

The miracles of Jesus that are recorded,

John 20

³¹ ...are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.

But life through Christ means sight, and perfect sight means the ability to recognize God in everything. If as we read the

Bible, its words were real to us,—if we did not read them as in a dream,—we should have the perfect life of the Lord; for His Word is Spirit and life.

Whoever studies this lesson and does not see that which he never saw before, who does not see and experience the life and light that are eternal, has studied to no profit. These things are not written merely in order that we may fill up a vacant hour, or that we may learn a few things merely as matters of history, but that we might have present, eternal life.

Are you really studying the lesson?

To every man who becomes a real man in Christ Jesus, there comes a change as real and as great as that which came to the poor man of whom our lesson tells.

People who have not had this experience think that they see as much as anybody, and they will not believe those who tell them of things not seen by the eyes of our body. Never having seen spiritual things, they do not believe that such things exist.

But when they accept Jesus, the light of the world, they can say,

John 9

²⁵ One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

We never become really conscious of our blindness until we see, and strange as it may seem, we cannot continue to see except as we remember and acknowledge that we are in ourselves blind. That is, we see only in the Lord.

The man who is spiritually blind, and therefore really blind, thinks that he sees as well as anybody else; but the man who in Christ receives his sight, knows that he sees, and no cross-questioning or brow-beating by skeptical philosophers can shake his testimony.

John 3

¹¹ We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.

Do you believe? then you can see. Do not wait to see before you believe, for it is not true, as commonly asserted, that “seeing is believing;” on the contrary, believing is seeing.

But remember this, that as long as you say concerning any truth of God,—anything that is spoken of in the Bible,

“I cannot see it,”

—you acknowledge yourself to be blind, and are therefore not competent to be a judge of anything spiritual. Such a one needs to be taught.

But he who has received from the Lord the eyesalve, and whose eyes have been anointed that he may see, needs not that any man should teach him.

1 John 2

²⁰ But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.

²⁷ But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.

That is to say, although we are all in need of more knowledge, and may learn from everybody and everything, when we have once received the light of the Lord, we are capable of discerning between truth and error, between right and wrong, and do not need to ask anybody whether or not that which we see is real. Such assurance as this is most blessed.

Ecclesiastes 11

⁷ Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.

21. They Cannot Be Separated

Present Truth, August 8, 1895

Timeline: VI-6 (The Man Born Blind)

John 9:28-29

IN THE days of Jesus of Nazareth there were many who did not believe in Him, but who professed to believe in Moses. Some of them said,

John 9

²⁹ We know that God spoke unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

To the one who stood up for Jesus, they said,

²⁸ You are his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

But what was the actual fact? They did not believe on Moses any more than they did on Christ. He said to them:

John 5

⁴⁵ There is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trust.

⁴⁶ For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

The highest testimony given to Jesus as the One sent from God, is this which the Lord spoke to Moses:

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and I will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

¹⁹ And it to come to pass, that whoever will not hearken unto my words which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

Acts 3

²³ And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not

hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

It is evident therefore that anybody must believe in Christ if he really believes Moses.

But there is another side. In these days we find many who profess to believe in Christ. They have no sympathy for the Jews who refuse to accept Him, and they wonder at the blindness of that people. But they do not profess to believe very much in Moses. Many of them openly depreciate his writings as out of date. If the authority of Moses is not openly discredited by them, he is at least slighted. Yet these same persons profess the most implicit faith in Christ.

What is the position of these last? It is precisely that of the Jews of old. Listen again to the words of Christ:

John 5

⁴⁶ Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

In vain are all professions of faith in Christ by those who discredit Moses. The two cannot be separated. He who believes the one must believe the other also, and he who denies the one denies the other as well; for both were sent by God with the same message. To deny Christ while professing to believe Moses is exactly the same as denying Moses while professing to believe Christ.

Happy will that man be who in the Judgment shall not be condemned either by the words of Moses or of Jesus.

22. The Open Door

Present Truth, November 30, 1893

Timeline: VI-7 (The Good Shepherd)

John 10:9

John 10

⁹ I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

THESE are the words of Christ, the Good Shepherd. Again He says,

John 14

⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life.

He is the way and the door by which a man may find access to a more desirable place than he now is in.

By nature, all persons are in a state of bondage. They are born into a prison, and this prison is represented by the carnal nature. Men may not realize the fact, like the Jews who said to Christ,

John 8

³³ We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man;

—but the truth is not affected by man's ignorance.

³⁴ Whosoever commits sin is the bond servant of sin.

All men are by nature sinners.

2 Peter 2

¹⁹ Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Satan is the author of sin. Satan overcame Adam, and thus the whole human family were brought into the bondage of sin. But,

1 John 3

⁸ The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

The Son of God, therefore, will destroy sin, and when sin is destroyed, its bondage is also gone. Christ is the way out of the dark realm of sin and bondage. He is the door that opens into the realm of light and liberty. In announcing His mission to the world, He quoted the prophetic words:

Isaiah 61

¹ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

This is release from the bondage of sin. It is the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound by the chains of their own evil natures, so that Satan, through them, leads them captive at his will.

The prison door is open; the shackles are loosed. This is the glad tidings of the Gospel to the fallen children of men. Jesus Christ has repealed the law of the realm of bondage, which is the...

Romans 8

² ...law of sin and death.

He has substituted in its place the...

² ...law of the Spirit of life.

He has overcome Satan, and overcome the world, so that all the power of evil in Satan and in the world is made subject to His will, expressed in this law of the Spirit of life.

Why then are not all men free? Ah, freedom has come to them, but they do not know it. Like the poor slave who (as we are told) was kept in bondage by his wicked master in the

Southern States of America long years after the emancipation proclamation by President Lincoln, so mortals are kept in ignorance now of that greater emancipation proclamation contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They are kept in ignorance by their wicked master, the devil. He does not want anyone to know that there is freedom and light and life in Christ. He could not prevent this freedom to man; so he tries to prevent them from receiving it by keeping them in ignorance of it.

But the message to you, reader, and to all who hear the glad tidings of the Gospel, is, the freedom is here. Life and immortality are here; they have been brought to light through the Gospel.

2 Timothy 1

¹⁰ But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

The work of liberation is not a future work, but one already accomplished. It only waits your acceptance. If you say as did Paul,

Romans 7

²⁴ O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?

—you may also say,

²⁵ I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The deliverance is yours, if you will take it. The prison door is open; will you walk out, or remain in your bondage?

Joshua 24

¹⁵ Choose you this day whom you will serve.

So spoke Joshua to the children of Israel. They could choose themselves whether they would be servants of God or not. And the same power of choice lies with each of us. The secret

of success in this matter lies in the use of the will. We can will to serve God, or we can will to serve the God of this world.

Romans 6

¹⁶ To whom you yield yourselves to obey, [says Paul,] his servants you are to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Every sin is prefaced by yielding on the part of the sinner; and every righteous act is also prefaced by yielding; but in the one case the yielding is to Satan, and in the other case to God. And the moment of temptation, when it seems that we must fall, we may yield ourselves to Him, and in that condition we will not yield ourselves to Satan, for we are controlled by the one to whom we yield ourselves.

And when you yield your will to God, you do not thereby lose your will, for God allies it with His own, which is a source of incalculable strength. And then you will know that:

Philippians 2

¹³ It is God that works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

23. A Thief and a Robber

Present Truth, September 8, 1898

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VI-7 (The Good Shepherd)

John 10:1, 9

John 10

¹ He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

Jesus is the door. He says:

⁹ I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

But how can it be that he who does not enter in by Jesus Christ is a thief and a robber? To many this seems inexplicable, but it becomes very plain when we consider the facts. Let us see what they are.

The one who does not enter by the door, is the one who thinks to save himself. He will not come to Christ, that he might have life. He will not accept Christ, and will not acknowledge the claims of Christ upon him. Sometimes he will not even confess that he is a sinner.

Whether he will admit that he is not as good as he ought to be, or not, the one who does not enter by Christ, keeps his own sins. The fact is that he has sins; for:

Romans 3

²³ All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

He who enters by the door, leaves his sins at the entrance; for no sins can pass that portal; but he who proposes to get to heaven by a way of his own, carries all his sins with him, on his own back.

The truth is, however, that both the man and his sins belong to the Lord Jesus. He has bought them.

Titus 2

¹⁴ He gave himself for us,

—and He also...

Galatians 1

⁴ ...gave himself for our sins.

Since Jesus has paid the price for us and our sins, both we and they belong to Him; and whoever does not give himself and his sins to the Lord is defrauding Him of what belongs to Him.

Let no one deceive himself with the idea that he can keep the commandments of God outside of Christ. As we have already seen, whoever does not give himself to the Lord is a thief and a robber to begin with, no matter how good a reputation for honesty he may have among his fellowmen.

And, moreover, he who does not believe the Lord, proves himself to be a liar, because by his unbelief he is charging the God of truth with being a liar.

John 3

¹⁸ He that believes not is condemned already,

—but:

¹⁸ He that believes on Him is not condemned.

What good will an earthly reputation for honesty be, when the Judge of all the earth knows the so-called honest man to be a liar, and thief, and a robber? Why will men who would scorn to defraud a fellow-man of a farthing, rob God as complacently as though He had no existence?

Give God His due; let Him have yourself and the sins which He has purchased; and let Him do as He will with His own. He will forever destroy the sins, and He will save the sinner with an everlasting salvation.

24. The Good Shepherd (1900)

Present Truth, August 16, 1900

Timeline: VI-7 (The Good Shepherd)

John 10:1-16

THE central thought in this lesson is contained in verse 11, the Golden Text,

John 10

¹¹ I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Who are the Flock?

But the shepherd cannot be considered apart from the flock, and therefore we will first pay a little attention to the sheep that are the objects of the good Shepherd's care.

When the Apostle Paul had assembled the elders of the church at Ephesus, and was giving them his last charge, he said,

Acts 20

²⁸ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He has purchased with His own blood.

Here we see that the church of God is the flock. In harmony with this, the Apostle Peter says:

1 Peter 5

¹ The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

² Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

³ Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall re-

ceive a crown of glory that fades not away.

Christ, the good Shepherd, stands and calls to His flock. His voice sounds through all the world, and He calls “whosoever will” (*Revelation 22:17*), to come. He says,

John 10

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

The whole human family are rightly the flock of God.

Psalms 100 [RV]

³ Know you that the Lord He is God; it is He that has made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Psalms 95

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

⁷ For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today if you will hear His voice,

⁸ Harden not your heart.

But we are lost sheep, for:

Isaiah 53

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.

Therefore it is that the Lord stands and calls to all the world. “The lost sheep of the house of Israel,” are all who wandering in sin. Jesus showed this, when He said,

Matthew 15

²⁴ I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,

—and immediately afterwards granted the request of the poor, heathen woman.

Luke 19

¹⁰ The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,

—and He came to save the world.

John 3

¹⁷ For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

The whole world therefore composes the rightful flock of the Lord; but whether they will continue to be really His sheep or not depends on whether or not they will hear His voice, and follow Him.

Ezekiel 34

¹⁵ I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, says the Lord God.

¹⁶ I will seek that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

¹⁷ And as for you, O my flock, thus says the Lord God: Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats.

The word “church” in the New Testament is from a compound Greek word which means *called out*. It is not a translation of that word, but is the word by which the translators concealed the force of the text.

We have read that the church and the flock of God are identical (*Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2*). We have also read that the good Shepherd stands and calls, and that those who hear His voice, and come to Him, constitute His real flock. They are “the called out.” They are the congregation of the Lord, and this is the word that should be read instead of the word “church.”

All who heed the voice of the good Shepherd, come to Him; but as they all come to Him, they must necessarily flock together. So here we have the Shepherd and His flock.

The Character of the Shepherd

And now as to the character of the good Shepherd.

John 10

¹¹ The good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Psalms 23

¹ The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

It is not necessary to quote the remainder of this familiar psalm. But contrast with this description of the good Shepherd the course of the unfaithful shepherds, the under shepherds whom the Chief Shepherd has placed as watchers for the welfare of the flock:

Ezekiel 34

² Woe be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

³ You eat the fat, and you clothe yourselves with the wool, you kill them that are fed; but you feed not the flock.

⁴ The diseased have you not strengthened, neither have you healed that which was sick, neither have you bound up that which was broken, neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither have you sought that which was lost; but with force and cruelty have you ruled them.

The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep, but the unfaithful shepherd, the hireling, not only runs away and leaves the flock, when he sees the wolf coming, but he himself eats up the flock. God does not devour His sheep, but feeds them with His own body.

The characteristic of a true shepherd is gentleness and unselfish devotion. David, the type of Christ, said:

1 Samuel 17

³⁴ Your servant kept his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock,

³⁵ I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth.

But if the shepherd protected the sheep from the beast of prey, only that he might have them to eat for himself, where is the unselfishness? Wherein is he then better than the beast

of prey?

Taking the matter in its most literal sense, we see that God has placed all the lower creation under the power of man, not that he should live from them, but that he should care for them, and protect the weak. The course of the Model Shepherd with His flock shows us that all that are placed within our power, whether it be man or beast, are to be protected and benefited by us, and not to be subjected to our selfish desires.

In placing man at this head of creation, and placing everything in subjection to him,—

Psalms 8

⁷ All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field,

—God has taken man into partnership with himself, and given him the opportunity of developing Divine characteristics. To care for the feeble, to protect the weak, is the work of God, and just to the extent that man becomes Godlike will he do the same to every living creature.

This is not at all apart from the subject of the lesson; for although we are the sheep of the Lord's pasture, we are also in our turn to be shepherds. Christ, the Chief Shepherd, is the Lamb of God, that bears the sin of the world:

John 1

²⁹ Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.

Therefore it is not at all incongruous that the members of the flock should also be under shepherds. Indeed, He chooses out of the flock some to be under shepherds of the remainder of the flock; for the elders or bishops of the congregation are members of the congregation.

Now the quality of mercy is not strained. The kind and tender shepherd is not partial in the exercise of his goodness.

Psalm 145

⁹ The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.

Psalm 103

⁶ The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

Matthew 5

⁴⁵ He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Luke 6

³⁵ He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.

Psalm 36

⁵ Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and your faithfulness reaches unto the clouds.

⁶ Your righteousness is like the great mountains; your judgments are a great deep; O Lord, You preserve man and beast.

Here we see that the saving mercy of the Lord to man is coupled with His mercy to the beasts. His care for the dumb animals, and for the birds, is given as proof of His solicitude for us. In like manner, therefore, the people who have that real mercy in their hearts, which will lead them to be benefactors of their fellow-men, will be kind to every creature that God has made. It is this characteristic that shows our union with the Divine.

Romans 15

¹ We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

³ For even Christ pleased not himself.

The goodness of a man is not shown by his attitude towards the strong and agreeable, but towards the weak and disagreeable. He who is fitted to be one of the Lord's under shepherds, will therefore be gentle to all, even to the most insignificant creature.

Christ is the good Shepherd, and He is an example to the flock, just as the under shepherds are exhorted to be. He gave himself for the flock; therefore all His flock are to give themselves for others.

1 John 4

¹⁶ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But it is not alone for those who are recognized as our brethren, that we are to give our service. Just as God chooses some out of His flock, to be shepherds over the rest, so He has set the whole flock,—all who have heard His voice, and have come out,—to act in the capacity of those who have not yet heard and obeyed. He has still other sheep that are not yet of this flock, and them must He bring; and to this end He commissions every one who has received the word of reconciliation. The Gospel is not one-sided. It is not merely for our salvation; but God makes known His love to us, in order that we may in turn make it known to others.

There is power in the love of the Lord. He is great, and He is love, so that His greatness is the measure of His love and gentleness. When He comes to deliver His people from the roaring lion that walks about, seeking whom he may devour, it is with such power that the heavens and the earth are shaken, and moved from their place; yet that mighty exhibition of power is but the manifestation of His tender love.

Isaiah 40

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.

¹¹ He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

But the oldest person on earth is in comparison with the

Lord but an infant, and so the Lord says:

Isaiah 46

³ Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

⁴ And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and I will deliver.

There is hope and comfort for all in Him who has said,

Hebrews 13

⁵ I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

E'en down to old age all my people shall prove

My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love:

And then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn,

Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.²⁹

²⁹ Hymn: *How Firm a Foundation*, from Rippon's *Selection of Hymns*.

25. The Good Shepherd (1896)

Present Truth, March 12, 1896

Timeline: VI-7 (The Good Shepherd)

John 10:4, 11, 16, 27-29

John 10

¹¹ I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

CHRIST occupies a multitude of relations to His people. He is...

Isaiah 9

⁶ ...the Everlasting Father,

—yet He is our Brother. So He is not only the Good Shepherd, but He is also the door into the sheepfold, and even the fold itself. Every good thing is found in Him.

The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep; and He gives it not in vain, as is indicated by the parable:

Luke 15

⁴ What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

⁷ I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

This teaches that the lost sheep will certainly be found, which means that God's people will be saved; for His sheep are His people.

Psalms 95 [RV]

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before

the Lord our Maker.

⁷ For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.

When the heathen Canaanitish woman besought Jesus to heal her daughter He said,

Matthew 15

²⁴ I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Yet He listened to her prayer, and healed her daughter, thus showing that this poor Gentile was one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. She was one whom He came to save. Further assurance is found in these words of Christ:

John 6

³⁷ All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.

³⁹ And this is the Father's will which has sent me, that of all which He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

He will therefore surely find all of His own, and He will keep all that He finds; for He says further:

John 10

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;

²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

²⁹ My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Surely, then, the "little flock" need not fear, even though the devil does go about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But the Lord said,

¹⁶ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there

shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Some people quote this text to justify the numerous divisions in the professed church of Christ; but they certainly do not read it thoughtfully. It is true that the Lord has other sheep—sheep that are wandering in the desert, and that are even in the jaws of a lion. But He will gather them, for His mission is to the lost, and then there will be “one fold, and one Shepherd.” Unity is the perfection of God’s plan. His desire for His people is...

John 17

²¹ That they all may be one.

It is only...

Ephesians 4

¹³ ...in the unity of the faith [that they come] unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

There is but one fold, although the sheep are scattered in many places. The church is the body of Christ:

Ephesians 1

²² And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church,

²³ Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

And:

Ephesians 4

⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling;

⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

⁶ One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Are not all men on the earth the lost sheep of the house of Israel? No; for all the sheep are to be saved; and but few men will be saved, compared with the multitudes that have lived

on earth.

Matthew 7

¹³ Enter in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.

At the last day mankind will be found divided into two classes,—the sheep and the goats,—and they will be separated, the one from the other.

Matthew 25

³³ And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

⁴¹ Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Then did not Christ die for all? Most certainly; for the Scriptures so declare. And He does not arbitrarily divide mankind into two classes—sheep and goats. Men themselves make that division; the Lord only separates the two classes when He comes.

Each individual has it wholly in his own power to decide in which of the two classes he will be. A very few words more will show how this is. Read these verses:

John 10

⁴ And when He puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice.

¹⁶ Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

There you have the whole story. Anyone who hears the voice of Jesus, and follows Him, is His sheep. To hear is to obey. The Word of God is the test.

They who, when it comes to them, reject it, in whole or in part, or straightway begin to contradict it, or to attempt to pervert it from its plain sense, or to excuse themselves for not obeying it, are marking themselves as goats.

The sheep hear the voice, and follow it. No matter where they are, nor how wholly lost they are, if they hear indeed, then they are sheep, and their salvation is as sure as God's existence.

Isaiah 55

³ Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.

Matthew 11

¹⁵ He that has ears to hear, let him hear.

Psalms 95

⁷ We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today if you will hear His voice,

⁸ Harden not your hearts.

The Perean Ministry

*After the visit to the Feast of Tabernacles,
Jesus withdrew to Galilee for about 6 weeks.*

*Then in the late Fall of 30 AD,
He embarked on a final trip towards Jerusalem,
spending about 4 months in the Perean area,
to the east of the Jordan river.*

*“A considerable part of the closing months of Christ’s ministry
was spent in Perea, the province on ‘the farther side of Jordan’ from Judea.
Here the multitude thronged His steps, as in His early ministry in Galilee,
and much of His former teaching was repeated.”*

The Desire of Ages, p. 488

*On this trip Jesus was much more public,
as the scene of His great sacrifice was drawing near,
and the people’s attention needed to be called to that great event.*

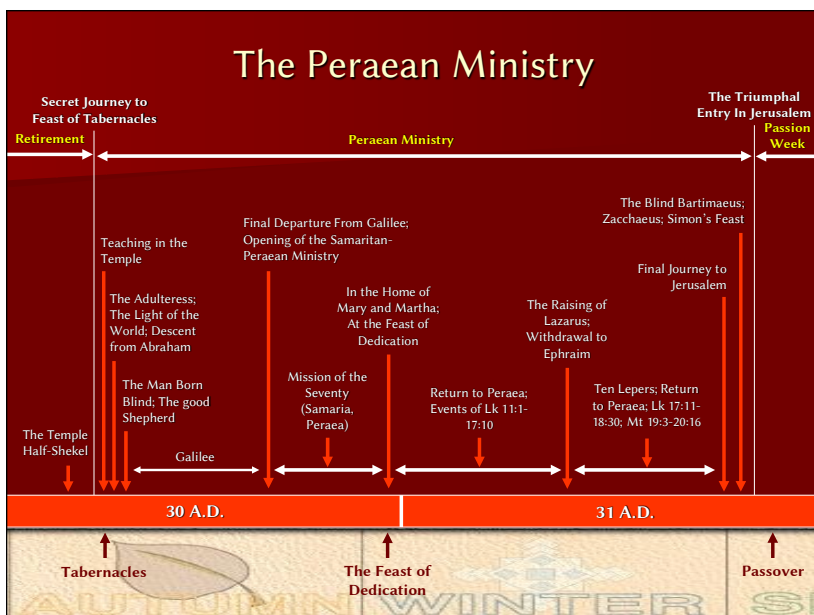
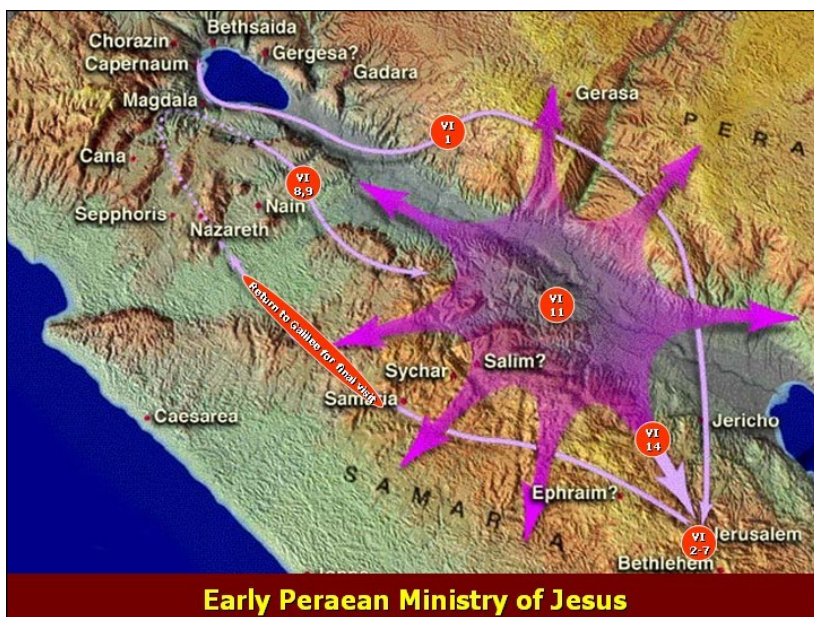
*He spent about 4 months ministering in the Perean region,
making two trips to Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
The second trip was made to raise Lazarus from the dead.*

*He also sent out the 70 disciples,
as he had done so with the 12 disciples earlier,
but with a wider commission:
to visit the Samaritan cities as well as the Jewish ones.*

*It is mainly the book of Luke that records these events,
and devotes 8 chapters to them.*

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VI	9	Opening of the Samaritan- Perea Ministry
VI	10	Tests of Discipleship
VI	11	Mission of the Seventy
VI	12	The Good Samaritan
VI	13	In the Home of Mary and Martha
VI	14	At the Feast of Dedication
VI	15	Return to Perea: Instruction on Prayer
VI	16	The Inner Light
VI	17	Dining With a Pharisee
VI	18	A Warning Against the Pharisees
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VI	31	The Dishonest Steward
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VI	36	The Ten Lepers
VI	37	When and How the Kingdom Comes
VI	38	The Unjust Judge
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VI	40	Marriage and Divorce
VI	41	Blessing the Children
VI	42	The Rich Young Ruler
VI	43	Laborers in the Vineyard
VI	44	Jesus Foretells His Death
VI	45	The Ambition of James and John
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VI	47	Zacchaeus
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VI	50	The Betrayal Plot

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1. A Mistaken Zeal

Present Truth, June 14, 1894

Timeline: VI-9 (Opening of the Samaritan-Perean Ministry)

Luke 9:54-56

WHEN certain Samaritans refused to give Jesus and His disciples lodging, James and John said to Him:

Luke 9

⁵⁴ Lord, will You that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?

⁵⁵ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, You know not what manner of spirit you are of.

⁵⁶ For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

The two disciples thought that they were prompted by zeal for the Lord. But He gave them to understand that He did not countenance such actions. He came to save men's lives, not to destroy them.

Hence it follows that the putting of men to death, for either their opinions or their practices, even though done professedly in the name of Christ, has been only of the devil.

It is quite likely that there was as much personal resentment in the proposal of the disciples, as there was zeal for the Master. It is very easy for men to dignify their selfishness and intolerance with the name of Christian zeal.

There has never been a time of persecution in this world, when the greater portion of it was not the gratification of personal malice. If the men had been acquainted with Christ, in whose name they professed to act, they would not have sought to punish others for not agreeing with them.

2. Christ's Courteous Forbearance

Present Truth, June 21, 1894

Timeline: VI-9 (Opening of the Samaritan-Perean Ministry)

Luke 9:56

WHAT an insight into the character of Jesus we get from His conduct when the people of this Samaritan village refused to receive Him. After telling how He rebuked the intolerant zeal of His disciples, the record closes with the simple statement,

Luke 9

⁵⁶ And they went to another village.

He came to save men's lives, and He had a burning desire to save them, yet He would not force His presence upon them. What a comment on:

Revelation 3

²⁰ 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.

He is anxious to come in, for His presence can give life. He begs to come in, yet He will not intrude His presence where it is not desired. Every man is left perfectly free. What infinite tact and courtesy!

It would do no good to try to compel men to receive Him, for that would be an impossibility. He is the personification of freedom, and comes to give freedom; and to attempt to force men to be free would be a contradiction. It would be to deny himself, and to defeat the very object for which He came.

So when men reject His advances, and refuse to receive Him, He sadly turns away to another place. Still is He knocking at every door, and still the Spirit pleads,

Hebrews 4

⁷ Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

3. Laborers for the Harvest

Present Truth, August 23, 1900

Timeline: VI-11 (Mission of the Seventy)

Luke 10:1-11, 17-20

The Seventy Sent Forth

THE Lord had sent out the twelve, with power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every sickness and every weakness, giving them this command:

Matthew 10

⁷ As you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely you have received, freely give.

Now He chooses seventy more, and sends them out on the same instruction, in almost the same language, a portion of which is our study for the day.

All Believers are Ambassadors

It is well enough to enquire in the first place why we should study this event.

“Of what use is it to us to know what the Lord said to those whom He was sending forth as preachers of the Gospel, since the most of us have no expectation of ever leaving home to preach, or of ever standing up before a congregation to speak the Word?”

If we study them merely as a matter of curiosity, and if the event is a mere historical circumstance to us, then it is of no value to us at all. Unless all that Jesus said to the seventy applies to us, and is of practical use to us, than it is of no use to study it; but since...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable,

—we may be sure that in the words addressed to the seventy, Jesus is speaking as directly to us as to them. This we may also know from the fact that to every one who has been reconciled to God by the Lord Jesus Christ, is a new creature in Christ, and has had put into him the Word of reconciliation, so that as an ambassador for Christ he should in Christ's stead appeal for sinners to be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.

To every man the Lord has given his work, and we need to study the commission given to the seventy, in order that we may know our duties and privileges as ambassadors for Christ, even though our mission field be no greater than our own immediate circle of acquaintances, and our work be done entirely in a private capacity.

Let Him That Hears Say, Come!

Revelation 22

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come.

Luke 10

² Therefore He said unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest.

Here we have additional proof that the instruction ad-

dressed to the seventy, and the power given to them, was not designed for them alone, but for all others whom the Lord should send out into the harvest. If it is asked,

“Whom will the Lord send out?”

—the answer is found in *Isaiah* 6:5-9. The young Isaiah saw a vision of God, and said,

Isaiah 6

⁵ Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Then one of the seraphim flew to him with a live coal from off the altar of God, with which he touched his lips, saying,

⁷ Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.

Then Isaiah continues the narrative:

⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.

⁹ And He said, Go.

From this we learn that every soul that has been cleansed from his sins, and who responds, to the call of the Lord, is sent forth with the Lord's message. He who has loved us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, has thereby made us kings and priests unto God.

Revelation 1

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

⁶ And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Who Are to Pray for Laborers?

Jesus sent the seventy forth into every place where He would come, and therefore He told them to pray for laborers to be sent out into the harvest of the Lord.

There is a thing here that is almost universally overlooked. It is this, that the Lord has not told anybody to pray for laborers, except those who are themselves laborers in the harvest. Whoever goes out at His bidding is told to pray that other laborers may be sent out; but no one is told to fold his hands in idleness, and pray that somebody else may be sent out in his place.

The prayer for laborers, by one who is not serving the Lord himself, is but a mockery. He who has not interest enough in the Lord's work to give himself to it body and soul, has not sufficient sense of the importance of the work to pray with the Spirit and with the understanding.

Only faithful workers can offer effectual prayers; but this does not by any means cut off those whose duties confine them to their own house, or even to a single room. Those who are but the lowest servants, but who do their work as unto the Lord, are servants of the Lord Christ.

Lambs' Protection Against Wolves

Luke 10

³ Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Shall the lambs therefore take every measure to protect themselves? Certainly; but what can a lamb do to protect itself against a wolf? Manifestly nothing except to keep close to the side at the shepherd. Its sole means of defense is to trust in its keeper.

Therefore those who are sent out into the harvest field are instructed to make no provision for themselves, but to trust to the Lord of the harvest. This is nothing else than the instruc-

tion given in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 6

³¹ Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek); for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The Hire of the Laborer

Luke 10

⁷ The laborer is worthy of his hire.

But too often the laborer forgets who it is that has hired him, and looks to men for his pay; and when he does this, he is sure to get into trouble. God is the One who sends forth the laborers into the harvest, and whoever has not been sent by Him has no business to go forth.

The case is very clear: If God sends a person out into the field, then that person is not to look to man for his pay, and if he knows that God has sent him forth, he will not be looking to man; and by the same rule, whoever looks to men for his support, thereby gives evidence that he has no knowledge of having been called and sent forth by the Lord, and should not expect to be considered one of the Lord's laborers.

Is it then wrong for those who work for the Lord to receive anything from men? Most certainly not; for the Lord has His stewards on earth, whose business it is to see to the distribution of temporal things, and such are all those to whom He has entrusted means.

But it should be remembered that those who have the Lord's money in their hands are not the hirers of the laborers, and that the laborers are not working for them, but only for the Lord. If the stewards are faithful, they will receive their

reward, and if they are not conscientious and faithful in the distribution of that which God has placed in their hands, they themselves will be the sufferers, and He will provide for His laborers in some other way, if they will but look to Him for their support.

Money not an Equivalent for Labor

There is altogether a false idea prevalent among men as to the value of labor of any kind whatever. Most people think that work can be paid for in money, and they speak of “receiving an equivalent” for the strength that they put forth. This is the origin of the common expression, “earning one’s living.”

But that is a thing that no person can do, for life is too precious to be compared with silver and gold. He who thinks that whatever money he receives, even though it be thousands a year,³⁰ is pay for his labor, has a very low estimate of the value of his life and strength.

Let us consider the matter for a moment. Men place a money value on a bushel of wheat, but this value is not constant, but changes from day to day. This in itself shows that the estimate put upon it is wholly arbitrary and fictitious. When wheat is scarce, it is dear, and when it is plentiful, it is cheap. If there were but one bushel of wheat to be distributed among a thousand persons, and there was no other food, its price would be enormous.

But there is a vast difference between the price of a bushel of wheat and its value. The value of wheat can be clearly seen when there is but a little of it for a company of men cast away on a desert island, with no other food. It is then seen to be their life, and it is worth just as much as a human life. Who can estimate that? It is beyond computation in money.

But a bushel of wheat has just as much life-giving power in

³⁰ This was written in 1900, when the average yearly income was \$675 a year. Many made less than this.

times of plenty as in famine. Its value is infinite, even as life is precious beyond all calculation. Life is a gift of God, being the gift of himself, and it is therefore evident that no one earns his living. We all receive our life before we have the power to do any labor whatever, and what we do is, or should be, a simple act of gratitude to God. We give ourselves wholly to Him, as the least that we can do for Him who has given himself for us.

Take now the man who is instrumental in saving a soul. What can he receive as an equivalent? The whole world is not worth as much as a single soul.

Matthew 16

²⁶ For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Thus it is evident that no amount of money can pay the person for his work. But he needs money to buy food, upon which the world has placed a money value, and this the Lord provides for him, by inclining somebody who has it to devote a portion to his use. Thus he works for the Lord, and receives his pay from the Lord, and a part of that pay comes through human agency, but the far greater portion comes direct from the Lord, through the agency of the Holy Spirit alone.

It is evident that the one who holds this view of labor and its value, will never be found striking for higher wages, or complaining because he is not treated as he ought to be. He will place his case in the hands of the Lord; whom he serves, and whose he is.

Receiving and Bestowing for Nothing

In giving instruction to the twelve, when they were sent out, the Lord said,

Matthew 10

⁸ Freely you have received, freely give.

The idea is not merely that of abundance, but of a gift. It might well be rendered,

“That which you have, you have received for nothing, therefore give it for nothing.”

This is the spirit in which all Gospel work should be done. Indeed, if everything that man does with his hands were done in the same spirit, it would infinitely exalt labor, and would be an effectual preventive of all labor difficulties. Moreover the laborers would fare far better that they do now. Trusting in God they would receive from Him all that they need, and they would give Him thanks for everything.

In this saying, that we have received life for nothing, and that we are to give it just as freely, we see again that whatever we receive for our temporal support, is not to be considered as pay for what we do. Whoever considers it in that light will be sure to lower the standard of his work to correspond to that which he receives. No one can do good work, as long as he regards himself as merely the servant of Lord, and as dependent on men for his support.

But whoever holds himself as the servant of the Lord, and as a debtor to all men, on account of the infinite and eternal gift that God has bestowed on him, will devote all his powers of body and soul to the perfection of the work that is given him. To render the best possible service will be the only thing that will occupy his attention. Such laborers, and, only such, will hear from the Master,

Matthew 25

²¹ Well done!

Power over Satan, Sin, and Death

Luke 10

¹⁷ And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through your name.

¹⁸ And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall

from heaven.

¹⁹ Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

²⁰ Notwithstanding in this rejoice, not that the spirits are subjected unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

There is wondrous power given to those who are wholly devoted to God, and wondrous protection is accorded them. The power is the power of God unto salvation and that salvation is complete.

The power given to every child of God is over all the power of the enemy,—power over all devils. This is evident from the fact that Christ saves us from sin. If there were any devil of which we were not master, any Satanic power beyond our strength in the Lord, then we should be still unsaved from our sin; but in that we are perfectly saved from sin, we have power greater than that of all devils combined.

This is true of the least child of God as well as the one occupying the position of greatest responsibility. And the possession of this power, which is simply the possession of the Lord Jesus, and which cannot be held apart from His presence, is protection. The dragon is...

Revelation 12

⁹ ...that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan.

But for him there would be no venomous beasts and serpents on earth. Before he took possession of the serpent to accomplish the fall of man, there was nothing on earth that was poisonous or deadly. Only the spirit of Satan, who is the destroyer, in any beast, makes it dangerous to man.

Therefore it is evident that whoever has complete mastery over the devil, so that the evil spirit cannot instill the slightest poison of sin into him, cannot be hurt by serpents and scorpions. In *Acts 28* we have an instance of this:

Acts 28

³ And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

⁴ And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffers not to live.

⁵ And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

Rejoicing in God

It is not in the possession of this power, however, that we are to rejoice or boast. He who has his mind set on this outward manifestation of the power of God, will be very apt to lose sight of that of which it is the manifestation, and will trust in the outward form instead of the inward reality. It is this that leads men to seek to make gain out of the gift of God.

The cause of our rejoicing is always to be only in this, that our names are written in heaven, and that we are sons of God. This is cause enough for rejoicing. Jesus said,

Luke 10

¹⁸ I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Revelation 12

⁷ And there was war in heaven; Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

⁸ And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and

night.

¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.

Satan is cast down to the earth as the result of Christ's victory over him. He spends his time...

Job 1

⁷ ...going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it,

1 Peter 5

⁸ ...seeking whom he may devour.

But in this very thing we have cause for rejoicing, because in that he is cast down to the earth we have the evidence that salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of His Christ are come to us. The knowledge of the danger brings to us the knowledge of victory. What if we do read,

Revelation 12

¹² Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath because he knows that he has but a short time.

Since we have been made alive with Christ, and have been raised up, and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places³¹,

Ephesians 1

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,

—we are altogether out of Satan's reach as long as we abide in Christ.

1 John 5

¹⁸ He that is begotten of God keeps himself and that wicked

³¹ **Ephesians 2** ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) ⁶ And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

one touches him not.

This is our joy and rejoicing.

4. The Harvest

Present Truth, August 23, 1894

Timeline: VI-11 (Mission of the Seventy)

Luke 10:2

Luke 10

² The harvest is truly great, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest.

DOES the Saviour mean by this that the Lord of the harvest is indifferent to the needs of the field, and must be moved to take an interest in it? Not by any means; for He himself is loudly calling,

Isaiah 6

⁸ Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

Then what does He mean by telling us to pray that He will send forth laborers into His harvest? The answer is suggested by the prayer which Isaiah, his lips burning with holy fire, uttered just after hearing the Lord's call. Isaiah said,

⁸ ...Here am I; send me.

Isaiah had no sooner prayed thus to the Lord, than the answer came,

⁹ Go.

The Lord immediately sent him forth into the harvest-field. This commission was to last,

¹¹ ...Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.

That is, until the end of the world. It therefore includes us. Therefore the answer which we are to expect to our prayer that the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers, is, "Go." Only unselfish prayers may be expected to be answered, and no unselfish person would ask the Lord to send somebody

else to do work which he himself is not willing to do.

But where are we to ask Him to send us?

Luke 10

² ...into His harvest,

—for that is what He tells us to pray for. And where is that?

Matthew 13

³⁸ The field is the world.

Christ's parting words were,

Mark 16

¹⁵ Go you into all the world.

But someone will say,

“I am ready to go, but I am waiting to find out what part of the world He wishes me to go.”

What! have you not learned the prayer? Read the command again. It does not tell us to pray that the Lord would send us to some particular spot, but into the harvest, which is the world. Well, you are there now, are you not? Then if you have a mind to work your prayer is answered. What shall you do?

Ecclesiastes 9

¹⁰ Whatsoever your hand finds to do.

It is a strange idea that many have, that they must get away from where they are, in order to be missionaries in the Lord's harvest-field. People who live in England, or in any other country, are in the world just as much as they would be if they should cross the ocean. The same principle that would make it necessary for them to leave the place where they are, in order to enter the harvest-field, would oblige them to leave any other place where they might be located. Thus they would continually be moving, accomplishing nothing.

He who cannot work for the Lord where he is now, will cer-

tainly not be able to work for Him in any other place where he may be. The journey from one place to another does not make one a missionary. A man may have traveled round the world, and still not be a missionary.

It is very evident that what a man is in his native land, that he will be in any other land. He who does the work of the Lord where he is now, will be likely to keep on doing that work if duty calls him somewhere else.

To be a missionary in the great harvest-field, therefore, is simply to:

Matthew 5

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

It is to...

Philippians 2

¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

¹⁵ That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world;

¹⁶ Holding forth the word of life.

Christ did not send,
But came himself to save;
The ransom price He did not lend,
But gave.³²

³² A. E. Hamilton, Poem: *The Ransom*.

5. All Powerful

Present Truth, June 28, 1894

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VI-11 (Mission of the Seventy)

Luke 10:17-20

Luke 10

¹⁷ And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through your name.

¹⁸ And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

¹⁹ Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

²⁰ Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

THE name of Jesus is all-powerful. He has by inheritance a better name than the angels.

Hebrews 1

⁴ Being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

God has given Him...

Philippians 2

⁹ ...a name that is above every name.

Acts 4

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

But it is not to be used as a mere charm. The seven sons of Sceva tried to cast out evil spirits by the name of Jesus, saying,

Acts 19

¹³ We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.

The only result was that the evil spirit cast them out. Why was this? Because they did not know the name that they used. It is something more than a sound; it is a life. Jesus said,

Luke 10

¹⁸ I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Revelation 12

⁷ And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

⁸ And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world.

Satan has been conquered again and again by the power of heaven. He was defeated and cast out of heaven in the beginning, and when Christ came to this earth,

Colossians 2

¹⁵ ...[He] spoiled principalities and powers,...triumphing over them in [himself].

Therefore whoever meets the devils with the power of heaven, is sure to triumph over them.

Satan fell as lightning from heaven. He is still an angel, though fallen. Sin has robbed him of his original glory, yet the brightness which he still retains far surpasses all human conception of glory.

2 Corinthians 11

¹⁴ Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

What wonder, then, that he deceives men who trust in appearances? By reason of the brightness which he still retains, he will be able to cause many to believe that he is the Christ. The life of Christ cherished in the heart will alone enable us to detect his devices, and to quench his fiery darts.

Great power is given by Christ to His disciples. It is a wonderful thing to have power over that old Serpent, and all of his kind.

Luke 10

²⁰ Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

It is very natural for man to rejoice in that which they can see. Wonderful phenomena dazzle the senses. Christian workers are apt to place their rejoicing in what the Lord has wrought through them. This is their danger. When they begin to glory in the works accomplished, the power by which they were wrought departs.

Our connection with Christ, who is our life, is to be our only rejoicing. We are not to look at the things which are seen, but that the things which are unseen;

2 Corinthians 4

¹⁸ For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

6. Who is My Neighbor? (1893)

Present Truth, November 30, 1893

Timeline: VI-12 (The Good Samaritan)

Luke 10:27-29

Luke 10

²⁹ Who is my neighbor?

THIS is the question that a certain lawyer once asked Jesus. The commandment,

Luke 10

²⁷ You shall love...your neighbor as yourself,

—had just been quoted, and the lawyer asked the question as though it were a difficult thing to know who one's neighbor is, so as to show love to him.

The reply of the Saviour was the parable of the Good Samaritan, in which it is shown that anyone with whom we may come in contact is our neighbor, and that we are to show helpful love to all.

Who is my brother? This is a question that to many minds seems as difficult of settlement as the other. The phrase, "The Brotherhood of Man" is very common, yet it is almost always wrongly used. When used to indicate that all men are equally sure of salvation, whatever their profession or practice, and that all religions are from one common stock, then it is grossly perverted.

But there is a sense in which it is true that all men are brothers, and he who studies the Bible carefully will learn that fact. As might be expected, the disciple who loved the Lord the most is the one who has the most to say about love to men. Let us read a few passages.

1 John 3

¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother

abides in death.

Does this mean that loving those who love us is proof of the new birth? The Saviour settled that, when He said,

Matthew 5

⁴⁶ For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans the same?

A man may be a heathen and do that. So while it is true that they who love the Lord are brethren in a peculiar sense, as members of the household of God, the word “brother” is used in the Bible to indicate any fellow-creatures.

1 John 3

¹⁷ But whoso has this world’s goods, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?

It is evident that this question is equal to a statement that the love of God does not dwell in a man who refuses to help a needy brother.

But suppose we take the term “brother” here in its most restricted sense. Are we to suppose that a man may be indifferent to the wants of another, provided that other is a heathen, and still have the love of God dwelling in him? Certainly not; for the words of Christ have settled that.

To be a Christian, then (for a Christian is one who has passed from death to life), means to have love for everybody, no matter who they may be. It is to have love—the love of God—dwelling in the heart. But the next verse settles the matter more clearly yet:

1 John 3

¹⁶ Hereby we perceive the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

That is, our love in laying down of our lives for the

brethren, is of the same nature as God's love in laying down His life for us. It is only His love in us that enables us to do that. But for whom did He lay down His life? Was it for His friends? No it was for His enemies.

Romans 5

⁸ God commends His love toward us, and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

The love of God, which is shed abroad in the hearts of Christians, is a love that embraces all mankind. It does not ask who the man is, before deciding to give him help.

The case then, seems to be this: As far as we are concerned, we are to treat all men as brothers; it must be left for them to show themselves unbrotherly, if they choose.

7. Who is My Neighbor? (1896)

Present Truth, April 30, 1896

Timeline: VI-12 (The Good Samaritan)

Luke 10:28-29

POLITENESS and courtesy should be the habit of our lives. Tenderness, thoughtfulness, kindness, should so invariably characterize every thought and word and act as to leave no room for a suspicion of roughness, thoughtlessness, or unkindness.

There is an unlimited breadth of consideration for others in the injunction:

Matthew 7

¹² Whatsoever you would that others should do unto you, do you even so unto them.

The surly question, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” was the impulsive reply elicited by the preliminary examination in the first murder trial.

Genesis 4

⁹ And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel your brother?
And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?

Was it not a certain lawyer who asked the Master what he should do to inherit eternal life? and the Master replied by asking him how he read the law, and what he found written there. He answered that he found there the injunction to love God, and to love his neighbor as himself. But when he was commended for this he asked again:

Luke 10

²⁹ And who is my neighbor?

Yes, who is my brother and neighbor? Who is this man to whom I should ever be polite, and courteous, tender, thoughtful, and kind, whom I should love as myself? Who is he indeed, and how shall I be able always to recognize him? Shall I

know him by his fair skin and the cut of his clothing,—because he is dressed in a scarlet uniform, and carries a saber or a Maxim gun? Who is my neighbor and my brother?

Luke 10

²⁹ But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

Did the question justify him? If not, then we are not justified in our caste prejudice, or our racial favoritisms. Mr. D. L. Moody, the Evangelist, has expressed himself with characteristic plainness upon some of the race and caste animosities which have come within his own experience and observation:

Down South you tell a white man that the negro is his neighbor and his brother, and he has got through all dealings with you. You cannot preach to him any more. It is the same in California. It will not do to tell the white man in California that the Chinaman is his neighbor and brother, or he will get mad at you. I was going down a street in San Francisco when a white hoodlum rushed out and seized a Chinaman by the queue and pulled him over flat on the walk. I interfered on behalf of the Chinaman; the hoodlum was mad at me, said he didn't think so much of me as he did of the Chinaman; he drew a knife, and I came near losing my life, just because I didn't want to see the Chinaman abused.

We are no better than the Jews who despised the Samaritans. We are a mean lot, the whole of us. It is so easy to be a priest or a Levite. Tell a high-toned man that the reeling drunkard in the city streets is his neighbor, and he will be indignant at you. We do not get acquainted with ourselves. If we did we should come closer to the knowledge of who our neighbor is.

We should become acquainted with Christ and He will show us ourselves.

The time is past in which we can have any doubt as to who is our neighbor and our brother, and as to what our duty is toward him. We know that to love the Lord, and your neighbor

as yourself, is written in the law, and that the reply of Jesus to the lawyer was,

Luke 10

²⁸ This do and you shall live.

8. Neighbors

Present Truth, March 30, 1899

Timeline: VI-12 (The Good Samaritan)

Luke 10:29

Someone once asked Jesus the question,

Luke 10

²⁹ Lord, who is my neighbor?

In His answer, Jesus told the story of the poor man who fell among thieves, and of the good Samaritan who showed mercy on him, while the priest and the Levite...

³¹ ...passed by on the other side.

Read the story in the 10th chapter of *Luke*. This was to teach that the real “neighbor” is one who shows kindness and love to any who are in trouble.

Here is a story of some little birds who were just such “neighbors” to one of their number who was in distress:

A gentleman in England, who lived in the country, had his attention called to a thicket of bushes near his house one day. He saw a number of birds there, whose loud cries and strange movements he could not understand.

He felt very curious to find out the meaning of it, so he crept close up to them and examined the bushes. There he found a female bird whose wing was caught in such a manner that she could not get away. Near by was her nest, containing several young birds. As she was kept a prisoner there, she was unable to get any food either for herself or her young ones.

He stood still, at a little distance, and watched what was going on. He saw a number of old birds come flying into the bush, bringing worms and insects in their mouths, which they gave first to the mother, and then to her young ones. She cheered them in their good work with a song of gratitude.

After watching this interesting sight till his curiosity was satisfied, the gentleman released the poor bird from her confinement. In a moment she flew to her nest with a merry song to her deliverer. And her kind neighbors, who had come to help her, flew away to their own homes, as soon as they saw she did not need their help anymore, singing as they went a song of joy.

9. The Secret of Neighborliness

Present Truth, August 30, 1900

Timeline: VI-12 (The Good Samaritan)

Luke 10:25-37

The Good Samaritan

THE story is a familiar one, but the need for it is as urgent as when it was first told, therefore we make no apologies for reprinting the whole of it, and here it is:

Luke 10

²⁵ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

²⁶ He said unto him, What is written in the law? how do you read?

²⁷ And he answering said, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

²⁸ And He said unto him, You have answered right: this do, and you shall live.

²⁹ But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

³⁰ And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

³¹ And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

³² And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

³³ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

³⁴ And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

³⁵ And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take

care of him; and whatsoever you spend more, when I come again, I will repay you.

³⁶ Which now of these three, do you think, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

³⁷ And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do likewise.

The good Samaritan is often referred to as the model of unselfish neighborliness, but the benefit of the reference is usually lost because the connection is forgotten. It is utterly useless to tell a man to love his neighbor as himself, unless he loves God with all his heart. If he does this, love to his neighbor will come spontaneously and naturally, as was the case with the Samaritan.

The Source of Love

1 John 4

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God.

⁸ He that loves not knows not God; for God is love.

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us.

Here we have the source of love. It is God. There is no real love except that which comes from God, and this love is shed abroad in the heart,

Romans 5

⁵ ...by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Whoever receives and welcomes the Holy Spirit, has the power to love His neighbor as himself, and will manifest love without an effort, for it will be his life, even as love is the whole of life, for God is love, and He is the life of all. One first begins to live when love springs up in the heart; for:

1 John 3

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.

1 John 4

⁷ Every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.

And to know God is eternal life:

John 17

³ And this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Loving Means Giving

We have now before us the source of love, but in what did it really consist? How does love manifest itself? What is its essential characteristic, its nature? This is made just as plain in the Bible as is the other. Let us set a few texts before ourselves, and extract the sum of their testimony.

John 3

¹⁶ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 John 4

¹⁰ Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 3

¹⁶ Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us.

Romans 5

⁸ God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Galatians 2

²⁰ The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Ephesians 5

² Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us.

²⁵ Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.

Can anyone fail to see the one prominent thing in all these scriptures? In what does love consist? Manifestly in giving. Everywhere we are told that the love of God is shown in that

He gave himself for us. Love is of God; but the only way we know love is in that He laid down His life for us.

Selfishness is not love.

1 Corinthians 13

⁴ Love vaunts not itself, is not puffed up,

⁵ Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not its own.

It needs no argument, but only the statement of the fact, to cause all to know that the most of that which is called love in this world is to a greater or less extent a desire to receive some benefit or pleasure for self. The one who loves, or thinks that he loves, another, is fully as much taken up with the thought of the pleasure that he is to derive, as he is with the thought of giving pleasure to the other.

The love that gives everything, and asks for nothing for itself, except the privilege of loving, is rare. It is found among men only to the extent that the love of God is shed abroad in the heart. Nevertheless that is what real love is. To love in deed and in truth is to give self for and to the object of affection.

Therefore when we read that the law of God demands that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind, it means nothing less than that every faculty and fiber of our being is to be given up to the Lord: He gave himself to us, without any reserve; and that was simply a manifestation of love; therefore when we love Him, we shall do the same thing.

Our soul, body, and spirit will be yielded to Him, for Him to use absolutely as He will. His Spirit will then be given entire possession of our bodies, so that we shall have no mind but the mind of God. If anybody thinks that this is a great thing, it can only be replied that we are talking about "the great commandment."

Giving in Order to be Filled—Consecration

In this connection it comes very natural to talk about consecration. A great deal is said about consecration to God, yet very few seem to know just what consecration means. Many say that they wish to consecrate themselves to God, but seem to think that it is a very difficult operation.

Now the fact is, it is nothing else than giving ourselves up to Him. To be wholly consecrated to God is to be wholly given to Him, and that means to love Him according to that which is written in the law. All one has to do to consecrate himself to God, is to let go of himself, and let God take possession.

Here comes in another interesting fact, which is very pertinent to the subject before us. It is that in every case in the Old Testament where we read about the consecration of priests, the Hebrew expression is that their hands were filled. A reference to the marginal reading of the *Revised Version* will show this in the following texts:

Exodus 29

⁹ You shall fill the hand of Aaron and his sons.

Exodus 32

²⁹ Moses said, Fill your hands today to the Lord.

Numbers 3

³ These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whose hand He filled to minister in the priest's office.

1 Chronicles 29

³ Moreover also, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, seeing that I have treasure of my own of gold and silver, I give it unto the house of my God.

⁵ Who then is willing to fill his hand this day unto the Lord?

2 Chronicles 29

³¹ Hezekiah answered and said, Now you have filled your

hands unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord.

From all these texts we see that when one was consecrated to be priest, his hand was filled so that he could bring an offering to the Lord: and the consecration of all the people consisted in their hands being filled, so that they could bring an acceptable offering. But all God's people are called to be priests,

1 Peter 2

⁵ ...to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

And the sacrifices with which God is well pleased are...

Hebrews 13

¹⁶ ...to do good and to communicate.

Therefore it is plain that when one loves the Lord with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, that is, when one's whole being is given to God, he is then filled by the Lord, so that he can serve his fellow-men, and thus he can fulfill the second commandment of the law, which is,

Matthew 22

³⁹ You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Who is My Neighbor?

And now we come to the question which the lawyer raised, namely,

Luke 10

²⁹ Who is my neighbor?

The word itself means "one who dwells near." It will be noticed that the Lord did not directly answer this question of the lawyer. He related a story, and then instead of asking who was the Samaritan's neighbor, so that it might be known whom he was to love (as the lawyer was told to do likewise),

He asked who proved himself to be neighbor to the one in need. Doubtless this seeming evasion of the question, or reversal of it, has troubled many; but the teaching must be clear upon a little thought. It is as though Christ would say to the lawyer, and through him to us,

“Don’t worry about who your neighbor is, but show yourself neighborly to everyone whom you come near; you do not have to be in doubt as to whom you are to love as yourself, but to let the love of God in your heart overflow to everybody near you; it is your own attitude that makes them neighbors.”

God gave himself unreservedly to all, without regard to who they were; all were alike sinners in need, and all were...

Titus 3

³ ...hateful, and hating one another.

Therefore we are to give up our lives for others, regardless of who they are. The fact is that anyone who is near us, and in need, constitutes him our neighbor, and we are to love him as ourselves.

Who of us have stopped to think what it means to love our neighbor,—everybody,—as ourselves? We do not need to enlarge upon the subject, but we are sure that if we begin in earnest to follow out this commandment of the law we shall find that it will work a revolution in our lives. But,

John 6

⁶⁰ This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?

Nobody can do it unless the love of God—the same love that God manifested in giving himself for us and all mankind—is in our hearts; and that is the case only when we are fully yielded to Him, loving Him with all our being. We love, only because He first loved us; that is, it is His love bestowed upon us that makes us able to love Him with all our life and mind and strength, and to love our fellowmen.

And what means this love as related to God? It means that we shall...

Matthew 4

⁴ ...live by...every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

It means that when God speaks we shall make no objections or excuses. It means that every one of the ten commandments, which grow out of these two great commandments (*Matthew 22:25-40*), will be obeyed by us without question or attempt at evasion. Is it difficult to know our duty to God and to men?

Luke 10

²⁶ What is written in the law? how do you read?

10. Who is My Neighbor? (1886)

Signs of the Times, November 25, 1886

Timeline: VI-12 (The Good Samaritan)

Luke 10:30-37

The following question has been asked:

According to the parable of the good Samaritan (*Luke 10:30-37*), who is our neighbor? Do verses 36 and 37 teach that they only are our neighbors who show themselves to be neighborly, and that it is only such that we are to love as our neighbor while we are to love others as enemies?

WE ARE not able to find in the Bible any distinction between the treatment of “neighbors” and “enemies.” If there were such a distinction, the parable referred to would certainly read differently from what it does.

Between the Jews and the Samaritans there was bitterness amounting to almost deadly hatred.

John 4

⁹ Then said the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that you, being a Jew, asks drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Luke 9

⁵¹ And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,

⁵² And sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him.

⁵³ And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, will you that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?

For this enmity it seems that the Jews were chiefly responsi-

ble, as they considered themselves far superior to the Samaritans, whom they regarded with contempt, treating them as dogs. The worst thing the unbelieving Jews could say in reproach of Christ was,

John 8

⁴ Do we not say well that you are a Samaritan and have a devil?

To call him a Samaritan was to brand him with infamy.

In the parable we have a man, presumably a Jew, since he was going down to Jericho from Jerusalem, who was maltreated by robbers, and left for dead. Some of his own countrymen, a priest and a Levite, passed by, and left him to his fate. But a Samaritan, one of the despised and hated race, came by, and did to the wounded man as is described. He could not have done more for him if he had been his brother.

Now the question is,

“Who was the neighbor to him that fell among thieves?”

The answer is,

Luke 10

³⁷ He that showed mercy upon him.

And this answer is accepted. The good Samaritan was neighbor to the disabled Jew, whom he treated as his own neighbor. And yet, the Jew was the enemy of the Samaritan. The only inference is, that when the law says,

Leviticus 19

¹⁸ You shall love your neighbor as yourself,

—we are to hold ourselves ready to serve anybody who needs our assistance, and are not stop to inquire whether the needy person is a “neighbor” or “enemy” and have two standards of action.

In other words, our enemies are to be treated as our neigh-

bors; or, better still, we are to act as though we had no enemies. In our dealings with our fellow-men we are not to consider if any man is our enemy, but are to treat all with kindly consideration. This is in harmony with our Saviour's words in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5

⁴³ You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

⁴⁵ That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

God dispenses the favors of His Providence impartially on the good and the bad. Blasphemers, as well as those who praise, are the objects of God's kind care. If we would be His children, we must do likewise. It is not in accordance with human nature so to do. This can be done only when we are fully imbued with the Spirit of Him who on the cross prayed for His relentless persecutors,

Luke 23

³⁴ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

11. Safe in His Hand

Signs of the Times, October 20, 1887

Original title: Thoughts on John 10:27-29

Timeline: VI-14 (At the Feast of Dedication)

John 10:27-29

John 10

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;

²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

²⁹ My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

THIS Scripture should fill every follower of Christ with encouragement. So long as they hear His voice, and follow where it leads, they are safe. No one, not even Satan, can snatch them away. God is “greater than all.” Though trials and temptations come,

1 Corinthians 10

¹³ God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Christ also says:

John 16

³³ In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

And to strengthen the assurance, He adds:

John 10

³⁰ I and my Father are one.

When both the Father and the Son unite for man's salvation, what confidence may we feel!

But while we gain courage from the fact that...

Hebrews 7

²⁵ He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,

—we are not to be presumptuous. Jesus said,

John 10

²⁹ No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

But He did not say that no man could not take himself out. This Scripture has been perverted, and made to teach that no follower of Christ can fall away. That this view is incorrect, is shown by many passages. We are exhorted thus:

Revelation 3

¹¹ Hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown.

We are told also,

Matthew 24

¹³ He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

For a positive testimony, see:

Hebrews 6

⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

⁵ And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

⁶ If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

Our Lord says also:

John 15 [see also *Revelation* 4:2-5; 3:16]

⁶ If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

The case, then, stands thus: So long as we hear the voice of

Christ, and are content to follow Him, trusting Him humbly and implicitly, no harm can befall us; His strength will enable us to repel all attacks. But when we begin to trust ourselves, we take ourselves out of His hands; or, if refusing any longer to listen to His voice, we are cast out. Let us all heed the words of the apostle Paul:

Romans 11

²⁰ Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.

12. All Things Given

Present Truth, February 22, 1894

Timeline: VI-15 (Return to Perea: Instruction on Prayer) and IV-15

(Sermon on the Mount)

Luke 11:13; Matthew 7:9-11³³

Matthew 7

⁹ What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

¹⁰ Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

Luke 11

¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

The natural conclusion would be,

“How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts.”³⁴

And this is really the way it does end, for the Holy Spirit comprises every good gift. God has given His Spirit freely, has poured it out abundantly to all. If we will but open our hearts to receive it, every good and perfect gift will come in its train, because all good gifts are in the Spirit.

James 1

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.

This does not mean simply that there is nothing good except that which comes from God; but every good gift comes down from above. God has withheld nothing; everything that He has, comes down to us.

³³ The instruction from *Matthew 7* would have come from the Sermon on the Mount, in the Galilean ministry. The instruction from *Luke 11* comes from the Perea ministry. Christ repeated some of His former instruction (with a few additions) in the Perea period.

³⁴ *Matthew 7:11* says “good things.”

There is no selfishness with God. He has not a single good thing in His possession that He has not given to us. Every good gift comes down,—is coming down now. He gives himself for us, and everything is in Him; and yet the enemy seems to paralyze the senses so that we seem incapable of comprehending the fact that everything is ours.

13. Confessing Christ

Present Truth, March 15, 1894

Timeline: VI-18 (A Warning Against the Pharisees)

Luke 12:8; Matthew 10:32

Matthew 10

³² Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Luke 12

⁸ Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.

IT IS by our lives that we confess or deny Christ. To confess Christ is to confess that He is the Saviour of the world, and specifically that He is our individual Saviour; and this can only be done by *manifesting* that He is our Saviour, in the fact that we are *saved* by Him *from our sins*.

Anything less than this would afford no evidence that Jesus is the Saviour of man.

When we choose our own way in preference to His, that is, when we do not let Him have His way in us, we deny that He is our Saviour, for we thereby virtually say that our way is better than His, and if that were true, He would not be our Saviour, for we could better save ourselves.

So it is by our life, and not by empty words, that we confess or deny Him, and determine whether He, before His Father and the angels, will confess or deny us.

14. Two Independent Kingdoms

Present Truth, September 6, 1900

Timeline: VI-19 (The Folly of Riches)

Luke 12:13-23

The Rich Fool

IN THE text of the lesson which follows, we insert in parentheses the parallel readings in the margin of the *Revised Version*. To the thoughtful student this alone will furnish food for an entire lesson:

Luke 12

¹³ And one out of the multitude said unto Him, Master [Teacher], bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.

¹⁴ But He said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

¹⁵ And He said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

¹⁶ And He spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

¹⁷ And he reasoned with himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits?

¹⁸ And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods.

¹⁹ And I will say to my soul [life], Soul [life], you have much goods laid up for many years; Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

²⁰ But God said unto him, You foolish one, this night is your soul [life] required of you; and the things which you have prepared, whose shall they be?

²¹ So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

²² And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life [soul], what you shall eat; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on.

²³ For the life [soul] is more than food, and the body than

raiment.

Not of This World

When Jesus was before Pilate, He declared himself to be a King, but took care to guard against any misconception, by saying,

John 18

³⁶ My kingdom is not of this world.

If His kingdom had been of this world, or if He had been willing to accept authority in things pertaining solely to this world, He would not have been put to death; for the very same persons who clamored for His crucifixion had but a very short time before sought to make Him a temporal ruler over them. But He would not accept the position.

This refusal of Jesus Christ to take to himself any degree of authority in political or business life is one of the most prominent features of His life history; yet to this day very few of those who profess to “walk even as He walked” (1 John 2:6), have learned it.

John 13

¹⁶ The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent than he that sent him.

If the Master of all, the One by whom the worlds were made, refused to exercise any authority in this world, while He was in it, what excuse have any of His followers for so doing? If He would not be a judge or a divider of property, why should His disciples?

If it be said that no one should be so well qualified as Christians to decide correctly in all affairs, it must be admitted; for the saints are to judge the world, and even angels,³⁵ and must

³⁵ **1 Corinthians 6** ² Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Know you not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

therefore be able to judge rightly things of this world that are of so much less moment.

But then it must be remembered that whatever is true of the saints is true in a far greater measure of Christ. He had the qualities that fitted Him for a judge or a ruler, far more than any other person who ever lived on this earth, yet He would not act that part.

His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore it would have been as much out of place for Him to exercise authority in worldly affairs as it would be for the Czar of Russia or the German Emperor to presume to sit as judge on the bench in England, or to dictate in the conduct of the Government.

If we do not recognize this principle, we fail to understand Christ and the power of His work; but when we grasp it, and hold to it, we shall find that it will help us through many difficult places.

God the Father,

Colossians 1

¹³ ...has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

Christ said of His disciples,

John 17

¹⁴ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

And again, speaking directly to them, He said,

John 15

¹⁹ You are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.

This makes it plain that Christ's followers have no business to interfere with the affairs of this world. Judgment over this world has not yet been given to the saints of the Most High, for Christ himself has not yet taken to himself the kingdoms of this world. We are rulers in a kingdom entirely different

from any on this earth.

The power of Christ is the power of the cross, which is so different from that which is common among men that it seems to most people utterly foolish and impracticable.

1 Corinthians 1

¹⁸ The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

And those who are saved are not authorized to use any other power. Indeed, why should they wish to? There is no power greater than the power of God, since all power comes from Him; and when one knows the “all power,” how can he wish for, or be content with, anything less?

But this power is a power that must be exerted by its possessor, namely God; men cannot manipulate it to suit their own pleasure or convenience, and that is why it is not popular. It does not work according to human methods. It has most influence under conditions that from a merely human point of view would seem most unfavorable.

Christianity in the First Centuries

A proof of this, and an answer to the oft-repeated statement that Christians, being the best people in the world, ought to have charge of the affairs of Government, is found in the history of the first three centuries after Christ.

There was one Government for the whole world, and it all centered in the person of one man,—the Emperor of Rome. The State was Pagan, and the laws were opposed to Christians and Christianity. In many instances they were framed with the express purpose of uprooting them, and the execution of them was entrusted to men who were mere law-machines. Surely no more unfavorable conditions could be imagined. In such a case one would naturally think,

“If we could only get our leading men in the church into

positions of influence in the Government, and get these oppressive laws changed, Christianity might make some progress, and justice would be done to all classes.”

But what are the facts in the case? Just these: Never in the history of the world has Christianity made such process as in that time when everything was most unfavorable. By the simple power of the preaching of the cross by men who were outlawed, a revolution in Government was effected, and laws favorable to Christianity were enacted.

And then, contrary to all human expectation, when Christianity was freed from all its bonds, and its leaders had the first places and unrestricted power in the State as well as in the church, its real power ceased. Men lost sight of the power by which the change in public sentiment had been effected, and it was demonstrated that Christianity has absolutely no power for good in the world, except the silent, mysterious power of the cross of Christ.

For most people, however, the lesson of history has been written in vain. The saints often get impatient, and cannot wait for the Lord to come, before beginning the control of affairs; they long to get things more into their own hands, so as to set them right; but they invariably fail.

By the preaching of the Gospel in its simplicity and power, and by godly living, Christians can exercise a power in the world, that is incalculable, and in no other way can they accomplish anything of importance.

What Would Become of the World?

It will be asked,

“Would not the world go to ruin, if Christians devoted all their energies to laboring for humanity in a private capacity, as did Jesus?”

The answer is, Yea; most certainly; but none would be in-

volved in the ruin except the reprobate, who will go to destruction in spite of all efforts to save them. The Scriptures set before us no other end of this present evil world than destruction.

1 John 2

¹⁷ The world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

The Gospel is for no other purpose than to gather out of this world all who are willing to be subjects of the Lord Jesus, and sharers of His everlasting kingdom; and the sooner this is effected, the better. The one great thing which hinders this consummation and the restoration of all things as in the beginning, is the unwillingness of professed followers of the Lord to let go of the world, and be solely the Lord's.

There are many men in the world, who are not professed Christians, yet who are unconsciously influenced by the Spirit of Christ to a great degree; and these, as long as they remain in the world, keep the evil elements in check, so that Government is not wholly corrupt.

These do not need to resign any position of trust that they may have, when they accept the Gospel, as every honest one among them certainly will when he sees the power of it; they have simply to let the perfect life of Christ manifest itself in them, and it will not be long before their services will not be wanted, and they will be thrust out of their positions of worldly honor.

And when all of these honest souls in the world have accepted Christ as their King, and have come out from the world, it will be the time for the end, for the world will then be wholly corrupt, with no leaven of good in it, and good for nothing except to be burned as rubbish.

A New Plane of Life

Nothing is plainer in the Bible, than that when a man is re-

ally converted he becomes...

1 Samuel 10

⁶ ...another man,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ ...a new creature.

He has the same flesh as before, and the same general outward appearance, nevertheless...

Romans 8

⁹ [He is] not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

The life of Christ is thenceforth to be manifested in his mortal flesh, so that it is no longer he that lives, but Christ living in him. Christ takes possession of his body, and there is the incarnation as truly as when Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary.

The mystery is enacted, of a man in the flesh living a wholly spiritual life. This he does, not by any power residing in the flesh, not by any power known to the world, but by the power of the Spirit of Christ. His life is a life of faith.

Hebrews 10

³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith.

The whole life is to be one continued series of acts of faith. The principle by which he is saved from sin, while still in sinful flesh, is to dominate all big relations with this world. He is a new creature, and experiences day by day the power that created the worlds. So just as by faith he understands that...

Hebrews 11

³ ...the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear,

—he knows that his life does not come from the things that his natural eyes see, and his hands handle, but from the Word of God. That is the truth which this lesson teaches.

Luke 12

¹⁵ A man's life consists not in the abundance of that which he possesses.

Another translation makes it more emphatic, rendering it,

“Even if one has a superabundance, he does not have his life of that which he possesses.”

It is true that God's life is in the food that the earth brings forth, and those things are a means of conveying the life to us; but the life was first, and does not depend on them. The life originates them, and not, they the life. If they are taken away, God can continue His life so us just as well, and if we have barns full stored up for future use, we have no more life than there is in us moment by moment.

The possession of storehouses full of food is no ground for trust; and the absence of all food is no ground for despair. God is always the same, and He is our life.

Our Rightful Share

Luke 12

¹⁵ Take heed, and beware of covetousness.

The Greek word rendered “covetousness” signifies to have or to claim more than one's share; to claim more than another. What is one's share? Just what he can use today, and no more. He may have more in his possession, and have it honestly; but he is to have it simply as a good steward of the manifold grace of God.

Matthew 6

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,

—is a prayer that ought to be prayed by every person, and prayed not as a form. He who does not from the heart make that petition, is trusting in another God than the living God.

1 Timothy 6

¹⁷ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out.

⁸ And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

He who lives by this rule will be...

Luke 12

²¹ ...rich toward God,

—even though he have no possessions of lands. He will...

1 Timothy 6

⁸ ...do good, [like the Master, and] be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

Such ones...

¹⁹ Lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come.

And that foundation is the only one that can be laid, namely, Christ Jesus. Thus they lay hold on eternal life, and hold it fast.

The principle of worldly kingdoms is,

“Get all you can.”

The principle of the kingdom of Christ is,

“Give all you can.”

This world says,

“Make my brother divide with me.”

The world in which Christ rules says,

“Let me divide with my brother.”

And the reason why Christians can thus differ from the rest of mankind is that they have an inheritance—Christ—which multiplies the more it is divided. He is their life.

The children of Israel in the wilderness ate of the spiritual meat which came down from heaven. It was spiritual meat, the very life of the Lord, and like all of God's blessings, it was...

Lamentations 3

²³ ...new every morning.

God wishes us to have a fresh supply every day, and not to eat stale food. So,

Exodus 16

¹⁸ He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.

There was the equality which is often talked about by socialists and communists, but never realized in this world. Only in following Christ can it be found.

Each one in the family of Christ looks after the welfare of the others, instead of his own, and thus each one is cared for by all the rest. And in this world as well as in the world to come, they all share equally in that which is the whole of life, —the righteousness of God in Christ.

15. Trust in Our Heavenly Father

Signs of the Times, June 16, 1890

Notes on the International Lesson, June 22

Timeline: VI-19 (The Folly of Riches)

Luke 12:22-34

Luke 12

²² And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat; neither for your body, what you shall put on.

THE “therefore” implies a reason based on what has gone before. Why take no thought for these things? Because:

¹⁵ ...a man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

It is evident that the most anxious thought should be bestowed on that which constitutes the chief part of life, and that excludes the things that are merely physical. When Jesus said,

John 3

³⁶ He that believes not the Son shall not see life,

—He showed that he who lives only in this short life does not live at all. He knows nothing of life. Only the immortal life is worthy of being called life. It alone is life indeed. When one looks at the matter in this light, it is easy to see that food and raiment are very small items in life.

Luke 12

²² Take no thought.

This gives no encouragement to improvidence and laziness. One part of the Bible does not cross another part, and the apostle Paul says:

1 Timothy 5 [see also 2 Thessalonians 3:10]

⁸ If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an

infidel.

Dr. Marvin R. Vincent, in *Word Studies in the New Testament*, says of the word rendered “thought,” that, being derived from a word meaning part, it...

...was explained accordingly as a dividing care, distracting the heart from the true object of life. This has been abandoned, however, and the word is placed in a group which carries the common notion of carnal thoughtfulness. It may include the idea of worry and anxiety, and may emphasize these, but not necessarily.

He cites as instances of the use of the word in the sense of the laudable care, *1 Corinthians* 7:32³⁶; 12:25³⁷; *Philippians* 2:20³⁸, where the sense of worry would evidently be out of place. He then adds:

In other cases that idea is prominent, as, “the care of this world,” which chokes the good seed. *Matthew* 13:22; compare *Luke* 8:14. Of Martha: “You are careful.” *Luke* 10:41. Take thought, in this passage [*Luke* 12:22; *Matthew* 6:25], was a truthful rendering when the A.V. was made, since thought was then used as equivalent to anxiety or solicitude. So Shakespeare (*Hamlet*):

The native hue of revolution
Is sickled o’er with the pale cast of thought.

And Bacon (Henry VII):

Hawis, an old man of London, was put in trouble, and died
with thought and anguish.

Somer’s “tracts” (in Queen Elizabeth’s reign):

³⁶ **1 Corinthians** 7 ³² But I would have you without carefulness.

³⁷ **1 Corinthians** 12 ²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

³⁸ **Philippians** 2 ²⁰ For I have no man [other than Timothy] likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

Queen Catherine Parr died rather of thought.

The word has entirely lost this meaning....It is uneasiness and worry about the future which our Lord condemns here, and therefore the *Revision* rightly translates, be not anxious.

Luke 12

²⁴ Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feeds them; how much more are you better than the fowls?

Here, again, the Lord, while chiding worry and useless anxiety, and teaching implicit trust in God, uses an illustration which precludes the idea of idly waiting for something to turn up. The birds do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, as did the rich man who trusted in his possessions and forgot God, yet God feeds them, while his anxiety profited him nothing.

But God does not feed the birds while they sit on a limb of a tree with open mouths waiting for Him to bring the food along. The psalmist, in praising God for His wonderful care for the dumb creatures, says of them:

Psalm 104

²⁷ These all wait upon you; that you may give them their meat in due season.

²⁸ That you give them they gather.

They gather what God provides for them, and are content with that which suffices for the present. Since men are of far greater value than the birds, there is every reason to think that God will take far greater care of them than of the birds. Therefore men have far less cause for anxious care and worry than the birds have. If God does not forget the birds, how much more will he not remember man, whom he has made in His own image? The fact that Christ commended us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," is proof that God designs for to give us each day the food that is necessary for that day.

In the same line, but stronger, is the reference to the flowers. Jesus said:

Luke 12

²⁷ Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

²⁸ If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?

The clause, “which is today in the field,” is better as in the *Revised Version*: “The grass in the field which today is.” That is, the grass in the field which today lives, and tomorrow is destroyed.

There is nothing more frail than the flowers of the field; and upon nothing else has God lavished a greater wealth of beauty. In the early spring the California plains are fairly dazzling with the brightness of myriads of flowers of different variety; yet in one day I have seen a plot of flowers so trodden down by men and cattle that no one would imagine that a flower had ever bloomed on the spot.

What should we learn from this? The infinite wealth of the resources of God. He can afford to clothe nature lavishly. And since it is in creation that the power and divinity of God are made known to us (*Romans 1:20*³⁹), He designs that from this we should learn to trust Him.

We may thank God for the birds and the flowers; not simply because they please our senses, but because they are object lessons of God’s tenderness. He who does not look at them in this light, does not derive from them half the comfort that he ought.

³⁹ **Romans 1** ²⁰ For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

Beneath His watchful eye,
His saints securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard His children well.⁴⁰

From all this, the practical, common-sense question is asked,

Luke 12

²⁵ And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

²⁶ If you then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take you thought for the rest?

This is in effect,

“Do not worry about that which you cannot affect.”

All the worrying in the world never accomplished a single thing; how foolish, then, to indulge in it, especially since it is an implied denial of God’s care for us.

³¹ But rather seek the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

³² Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good-pleasure to give you the kingdom.

That is the one thing of worth.

2 Corinthians 4

¹⁸ The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

How foolish, then, for men to waste valuable time worrying about that which is but for a moment, and neglect that which is for eternity.

Yet the worldling is far wiser than the professed Christian who plans chiefly for this world. The former has not had his eyes opened to see the world to come, and he plans as far ahead as he sees; but the latter has had opened before him an

⁴⁰ Philip Doddridge, Hymn: *How Gentle God’s Commands*.

eternal inheritance, yet he plans only for the present. Truly,

Luke 16

⁸ ...the children of this world are wiser in their generations than the children of light.

But although the kingdom of God is the one thing of worth, we are not to have anxious care and worry even for that. We are to seek it, yet with loving trust in the heavenly Father, who provides everything. We are commanded to “fear not,” because it is His good-pleasure to give the kingdom.

And right here, to strengthen this assurance, comes in God’s care for us in this present life. Surely He who cares so kindly for our temporal wants, will not neglect the greatest of all. Thus even the lilies become to us a pledge of God’s love, and of His faithfulness to give us eternal riches; for the lilies are a pledge that God will care for our temporal wants far more than for theirs; and if He will do that which is least, He surely will do that which is greatest. And so we can say, with the psalmist,

Psalms 92

⁴ For you, Lord, have made me glad through your work; I will triumph in the works of your hands.

16. Beware of Covetousness

Present Truth, July 19, 1894

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VI-19 (The Folly of Riches)

Luke 12:15-20

Jesus said,

Luke 12

¹⁵ Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

THIS exhortation was enforced by the parable of the rich man who, in consequence of abundant crops, proposed to pull down his barns, and build greater, so that he might say to himself,

¹⁹ Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

²⁰ But God said to him, You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; then whose shall those things be, which you have provided?

“The fool,” in the Bible use of the term, is the one who “says in his heart,”

Psalms 14

¹ There is no God.

God has revealed himself in every star in the sky, every leaf of the forest, every fountain of the hills, and in every breeze that blows. The heavens declare His glory, and the whole earth is full of His goodness. This revelation lies at the very foundation of all true knowledge, and is the easiest and most natural thing in the world. Whoever therefore does not recognize it is justly called a fool.

The rich man in the parable talked and acted as though there were no God. He who really believes that there is a God,

must believe that He is just what He has declared himself to be,

Hebrews 11 [RV]

⁶ ...a rewarder of them that seek after Him;

—a tender, loving Father. Therefore whoever believes that there is a God, will know that He alone is able to preserve life, and that He delights to supply the needs of His children.

The rich man acted as though his life depended solely upon himself; and thus he said in his heart,

“There is no God.”

But this parable is not for the rich alone. The poor need it as well. The exhortation,

Luke 12

¹⁵ ...beware of covetousness,

—is needed by the poor as well as by the rich. The poor man who bends all his energies towards the accumulation of wealth, or the one who has no hope or expectation of becoming rich, but who is in constant anxiety over the future, is trusting in earthly goods just as surely as any rich man. Whoever acts though his life depended wholly on itself, is thereby denying the existence of God.

In the 6th chapter of *Matthew* the Saviour tells us that we cannot serve two masters; if we serve mammon we cannot serve God. Then He proceeds to show us that serving mammon consists in anxious care and worry about the future. Anxious thought as to what we shall eat, drink, and wear, is a characteristic of the heathen. Therefore the professed Christian who allows himself to doubt, or who is covetously anxious about the future, is denying the faith. Covetousness is idolatry.

Matthew 6 [RV]

³² Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all

these things.

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

For,

Philippians 4

¹⁹ My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory.

Psalms 33

³ Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.

⁴ Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

17. Consider the Lilies

Present Truth, June 23, 1898

Timeline: VI-19 (The Folly of Riches)

Luke 12:27-28

Luke 12

²⁷ Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

²⁸ If then God so cloth the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?

JESUS has sent us to school to the lilies, and has appointed them our teachers in the way of life. We have not by any means exhausted the lessons that they have to give us; indeed, few of us have made more than a beginning, for although the instruction that they give is so simple that a child can understand it, yet no philosopher of the schools can compare with them in depth of wisdom.

What are we to consider about the lilies? “How they grow.” It is not how they look, but how they grow. One would naturally suppose that, since Jesus was talking of clothing, and how we are to be provided with what is necessary, He would have directed us to the looks of the lilies, to see how tastefully they are dressed; but such a supposition is evidence of our need of instruction. We are so ignorant of the first principles of the wisdom which the lilies teach.

1 Samuel 16

⁷ The Lord sees not as a man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

It is not that the Lord despises outward beauty; far from it.

Psalms 96

⁶ Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

And He has promised to...

Psalm 149

⁴ ...beautify the meek with salvation.

He delights in beauty; but He knows that as corruption comes from within, and not from without (*Mark 7:18-23*), so beauty, to be real, must come from within. He severely rebuked the scribes and Pharisees, because they made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, while within they were full of impurities, and said,

Matthew 23

²⁶ You blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like a lily. How is that? Is a lily then so much more wondrously beautiful than other things? Jesus did not say so. Some lilies are more gorgeous, but others are very plain, and scarcely noticeable. It is quite likely that when Solomon was arrayed in his royal apparel on State occasions, his clothing would outshine a whole bed of ordinary lilies. Yet in all his glory he was not clothed like the most modest lily that grows. Why? because no matter how gorgeous and beautiful his clothing was, it was all put on; it was no part of himself; but the beauty of the lily's dress is the lily itself. All that it looks to be, it is.

Thus it is that the lilies, who are teachers by Divine appointment, teach us that the only clothing that is of any real value is that which cannot be put on and off, but that which grows; that which is formed from within. Even such clothing did the Apostle Peter write about, saying to the women,

1 Peter 3

³ Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel,

⁴ But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

How strange that people should proudly boast of that which is no part of themselves! Not only is our clothing no part of ourselves, but the very fact that we are obliged to wear manufactured clothing at all, is proof of our fallen and degraded state.

God is clothed with light as a garment,⁴¹ for He himself is light.⁴² His clothing is the beauty of His own character. His clothing, like that of the lily, is what He is. Even so it was with man in the beginning, for man was made in the image of God.

It was not until they lost their first estate through sin, that our first parents had any need of clothing that must be put on from the outside. So that upon which most people bestow so much care and worry, and in which they take so much pride, is the mark of their shame.

Until the kingdom is again restored as in the beginning, all mankind, the children of God as well as the wicked, will be obliged to wear manufactured clothing; but let them not worry about it, nor be proud of what is no part of them. What should they do?

Matthew 6

³³ Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.

Then clothing and everything else that is necessary will be added. "Seek the kingdom of God." Where shall we seek for it? The Saviour has given us the answer:

Luke 17

²⁰ The kingdom of God comes not with observation:

²¹ Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

This agrees with the exhortation to put on apparel that is...

⁴¹ **Psalm 104** ² Who covers yourself with light as with a garment: who stretches out the heavens like a curtain.

⁴² **1 John 1** ⁵ God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

1 Peter 3

⁴ ...the hidden man of the heart.

Where the King is, there is the kingdom; and the King is the Word of God, that...

John 1

¹⁴ ...was made flesh.

This Word is in us, in our mouth, and in our heart, that we may do it (*Deuteronomy* 30:14). If we yield ourselves to it, we shall be filled with righteousness. We shall grow up “trees of righteousness” (*Isaiah* 61:3), and our clothing will be “the robe of righteousness” (*Isaiah* 61:10), the product of the growth from within.

He who is able to supply us with this beautiful clothing, of which no one can boast, because it comes only with humility, can very easily provide the other necessary clothing. Temporal things are very easily managed by Him who handles eternities.

The lesson therefore which we learn from the lilies is that of absolute dependence and trust.

Luke 12

²⁷ Consider the lilies how they grow.

How do they grow? They simply grow. They grow by the power of God in them, which they do not try to resist.

You will remember that the name “Israel” was given to Jacob when he ceased all his struggling against the Lord, and cast himself wholly upon the Almighty. His strength was demonstrated to be nothing, and so he let the Lord support him (*Genesis* 32:26-28). Now the Lord says,

Hosea 14 [RV]

⁵ I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

That is,

Isaiah 40

³¹ They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.

Their beauty will be “the beauty of holiness” (*Psalms* 96:9). Their clothing will be not simply that which can be put on and off, but, like that of the lily, it will be the product of the growth of grace within, it will be themselves, and will endure to all eternity.

18. The Glory of Watchfulness

Present Truth, September 13, 1900

Timeline: VI-20 (Awaiting the Master's Return)

Luke 12:35-46

IN THE list of lessons for the quarter this lesson is styled “The Duty of Watchfulness;” but we have substituted “glory” for “duty,” and we think that the student will agree, as he studies the lesson, that the change is justified. Here is the lesson text:

Luke 12

³⁵ Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning

³⁶ And you yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He comes and knocks, they may open unto Him immediately.

³⁷ Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He comes shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

³⁸ And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

³⁹ And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

⁴⁰ Be therefore ready also; for the Son of man comes at an hour when you think not.

⁴¹ Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, do You speak this parable unto us, or even to all?

⁴² And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

⁴³ Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when He comes, shall find so doing.

⁴⁴ Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He has.

⁴⁵ But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delays His coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants, and

maidens, and to eat and drink, and be drunken;

⁴⁶ The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for Him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

The Girdle

The exhortation is,

Luke 12

³⁵ Let your loins be girded about.

The first question that must necessarily occur to the one who desires to obey the command is,

“With what shall the loins be girded? What is the girdle?”

This question is answered in *Ephesians* 6:14, in the place where we find the description of the armor which will enable us to stand ready when the Lord comes:

Ephesians 6

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.

And what is truth? This is the question asked by Pilate, but the Lord had given the answer before Pilate thought of asking it:

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth; your Word is truth.

Psalms 119

¹⁴² Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth.

The law of God, set forth in the ten commandments, is the girdle with which we are to be bound about. It is righteousness, and its possession shows our oneness with the Lord Jesus himself, of whom it is said,

Isaiah 11

⁵ Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins.

Of what use is the girdle? With our present mode of dress we do not appreciate it as much as we would were we accustomed to wear the flowing garments of ancient times, and still used to a great extent in the East.

It will readily be seen that while the loose, flowing robes were very comfortable while not engaged in any active exercise, they would be very inconvenient if one were trying to run, or wrestle, or were working. They would get in his way, impeding his movements, and frequently causing him to stumble. Therefore whenever a man wished to work or run, he girded himself—bound up his garments so that he could work or run without stumbling.

The Christian life is a race, and a battle, and therefore all are exhorted to have their loins girt about. Activity must characterise all the people of God. They are servants, and they must be at work, or at least ready to run in His service at a moment's notice. Now read:

Psalm 119

¹⁶⁵ Great peace have they which love your law, and nothing shall offend them,

—or “cause them to stumble.” The law of God is love, and he in whose heart the love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, cannot be made to stumble by anything that anybody may do. If others are perverse, he is patient; if others are disobedient, he cannot be induced to make that an excuse for him to depart from the right way. He will literally not be offended, for love is not provoked.

1 Corinthians 13

⁵ [Love] does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil.

The Holy Spirit of promise, “the Spirit of adoption,”⁴³ puts

⁴³ **Romans 8** ¹⁵ For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba,

God's law into the mind,⁴⁴ and thus the loins of the mind are girt up, according to the injunction:

1 Peter 1

¹³ Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Is it not easy to see that this steadiness of purpose, this steadfastness of mind, this quietness and confidence, trusting in the Lord, is what is meant by having the loins girt? It means the possession of the mind and character of the Lamb of God.

This fact becomes plain when we read ahead in the lesson, to verse 45. We may learn the condition of the servant whose loins are not girt with truth: he begins to smite his fellow servant, and to live a life of carnal pleasure. The law of love received into the heart, would prevent all that.

Shining Lights

The lights are to be burning, as well as the loins to be girded. What are the lights? The answer is ready to hand:

Matthew 5

¹⁴ You are the light of the world.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

And what is it that makes the followers of Jesus the light of the world? It is the possession of the truth,—the being girt about with it—having the mind transformed by it. Thus:

Philippians 2

¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

Father.

⁴⁴ **Hebrews 8** ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

¹⁵ That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world;

¹⁶ Holding forth the Word of life.

Here we see that the possession of truth in the heart, having the law written in the heart, is the only preventive of murmurings and disputings,—the smiting of the fellow-servants, which characterizes those who are unbelieving. And the possession of the law of love makes one a light; for:

Proverbs 6

²³ The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.

1 John 1

⁵ God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

His light is His life, and He clothes himself with light:

Psalms 104

¹ ...You are clothed with honor and majesty.

² Who covers yourself with light as with a garment.

His clothing is His own life of righteousness. He covers all who believe in Him with His own robe of righteousness, so that they themselves are light. Christ is the light of the world, because He is the shining of the Father's glory; and John...

John 5

³⁵ ...was a burning and a shining light.

Yet neither Christ nor John the Baptist went about with a halo round their heads, as depicted by the "old masters;" nor was there anything about their appearance to dazzle anybody. Their light was their life. The light is the Word dwelling in the heart, and controlling the life.

Christ, the true Light,

John 1

⁹ ...lights every man that comes into the world,

—so that each one may, if he will, also be a light. The light abides in the darkness, and the darkness does not shut it in, so as to put it out. A light that will not shine in the dark, is of no use. That is to say, a Christian who cannot live a Christian life in the midst of the temptations of the world, is not a Christian.

Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, and this darkness will be deeper and deeper the nearer we come to the end; but the Lord is to rise upon His people, and His glory is to be seen upon them, so that they will be changed...

2 Corinthians 3

¹⁸ ...from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The deeper the darkness, the brighter will their light shine.

No One Lives for Himself

But what has all this to do with watchfulness? Just this, that the one who is watching for the coming of the Lord will be shining. It cannot be otherwise. It is by beholding that we become changed into glory, and whoever is looking for the return of the Lord Jesus in the clouds of heaven, is looking at Him now by faith, looking into His face:

2 Corinthians 4

⁶ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is not merely that God has shined in our hearts to give to us the light of the knowledge of His glory, but that He shined into our hearts, in order that we may give to others the light of the knowledge of that glory; and this we do by walking in the light as He is in the light, and allowing the light from the face of Jesus to shine upon and through us.

Psalm 34

⁵ They looked unto Him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.

While we are watching, we are shining, although as unconscious of the light that shines from us as Moses was. This follows from the fact that we shine only while we are looking at the Lord; and when we are looking at Him, it is evident that we cannot be self-conscious.

It is impossible, however, for anyone to be in a proper condition without being a light to others. So it is not merely a duty to be watching for the return of the Lord, but it is a glory. Just in proportion as the glory of the coming dawn increases, will the glory of those who are watching for it increase.

But no one who is engaged in strife or controversy, in murmuring, in fault-finding or complaining, can be said to be looking for the coming of the Lord, no matter how much he may talk about it. What is the inspired exhortation?

James 5

⁹ Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest you be condemned; behold, the Judge stands at the door.

Many are so ignorant of this truth, that they even engage in controversy over the coming of the Lord! What incredible blindness! How strange that men should quarrel over the Gospel of peace, and thereby lose possession of it! Therefore,

1 Thessalonians 5

⁶ ...let us watch, and be sober;

⁵ [For] we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

19. A Royal Waiter

Present Truth, September 13, 1900

Timeline: VI-20 (Awaiting the Master's Return)

Luke 12:37

WHAT a sensation would be created if a member of any of the royal families of Europe should provide a dinner for a multitude of people, and should himself stand behind the guests, with a servant's cap and apron on, serving them with food.

Yet in our lesson this week we read these words of Christ:

Luke 12

³⁷ Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He comes shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

The King of kings serving His servants! What greater honor could He bestow upon them? Could anything more perfectly show the dignity of service? It is shown:

- A. In the fact that the Lord himself does not consider it beneath His dignity to be a servant, and
- B. In the honorable position given to the servants.

And yet there are professed Christians who feel themselves above common labor, and who feel that those who serve are of a lower class than they are.

Can there be any question as to how such ones really regard the Lord?

20. Waiting for Fruit

Present Truth, August 9, 1894

Timeline: VI-21 (Divine Justice and Mercy)

Luke 13:6-9

Luke 13

⁶ He spoke also this parable: A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

⁷ Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why does it cumber the ground?

⁸ And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it;

⁹ And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that you shall cut it down.

This parable is in the line of the words of the Saviour in:

John 15

¹ I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

² Every branch in me that bears not fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

These scriptures contain a lesson of encouragement and of warning. They show the longsuffering of God. He is not hasty in His judgments. He does not cut a man off at once, because of his failures. His word is,

Romans 10

²¹ All day long have by stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

His great desire is to save, not to destroy. When professed Christians manifest impatience with the erring, and are ready to condemn them, they misrepresent God.

There is encouragement for those who are conscious of their defects, and of the poor service which they render. After the man had borne with the fruitless tree for three years, it is

not supposable that he would cut it down because the fruit which began to bear the fourth year was small. So after the Lord has borne with us for years in our utter neglect of Him, much more will He be merciful to us when at last we heed His voice.

Romans 5

¹⁰ If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

But the text contains a warning against presuming upon the mercy of God. We are not to continue in sin, that grace may abound. We are cautioned against thinking that we can freely transgress because we are under grace. It is not safe to trifle with God.

Proverbs 29

¹ He that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Therefore, as the Holy Ghost says,

Psalms 95

⁷ Today, if you will hear His voice,

⁸ Harden not your hearts.

21. Christ the Liberator

Present Truth, November 17, 1892

Timeline: VI-22 (The Crippled Woman)

Luke 13:10-13

Luke 13

¹⁰ And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

¹¹ And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

¹² And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, you are loosed from the your infirmity.

¹³ And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

IN THE verses following we find the statement made by Christ, that the woman had been bound all those years by Satan. Christ loosing her, was therefore a direct evidence of His power over Satan.

In this miracle we have an illustration of the loosing of men from the bondage of sin. Sin binds its victims:

Proverbs 5

²² His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be held with the cords of his sins.

John 8

³⁴ Everyone that commits sin is the bondservant of sin.

1 John 3

⁴ Sin is the transgression of the law.

Therefore the bondage is that of a law-breaker.

Romans 8

⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So the poor woman with the spirit of infirmity accurately il-

lustrates the condition of the sinner. She was bound down; so is the sinner. She was bowed together so that she could not lift herself up. She was obliged to go looking down toward the earth. So the psalmist, describing his sinful condition, says,

Psalm 40

¹² My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.

The woman would fain have walked upright, but she could in no wise lift up herself. So the sinner would often gladly do that which is right, but he is not able.

Galatians 5

¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would.

Nevertheless the sinner's case is not hopeless.

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

This being the case,

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Christ said that this scripture applies to Him,

Luke 4

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

To the woman that was bound Christ said,

Luke 13

¹² You are loosed from your infirmity.

So it is with His word that He looses men from the bondage of sin.

John 8

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which had believed Him, If you abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples;

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The Jews boasted that they were not in bondage, but Jesus showed that they were, by saying,

³⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that commits sin is the bondservant of sin.

³⁵ And the bondservant abides not in the house for ever; the Son abides for ever.

³⁶ If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

The bondage, therefore, is the bondage of sin, and the freedom which Christ gives is the freedom from sin. Christ said that it was by the Spirit that He gave liberty. So we read that:

2 Corinthians 3

¹⁷ Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

The Spirit gives liberty, because it is righteousness; it is the source of the law, for:

Romans 7

¹⁴ The law is spiritual.

The fruit of the Spirit is obedience to the law. For:

Galatians 5

²² The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

²³ Meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.

Those who have this Spirit, and are led by it, are free, because they keep the law; for the psalmist said,

Psalm 119

⁴⁵ I will walk at liberty; for I seek your precepts.

As Christ healed the poor, infirm woman by His word, so He sets sinners free by His word. His word is law; He speaks the words of the Father; and the commandment of God is life everlasting, because it is His own life.

John 12

⁵⁰ And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

The words that Christ speaks are Spirit and life:

John 6

⁶³ It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

And since it is the Spirit that makes free, it is evident that the reception of the words of Christ will make the sinner free. As the bondage is the bondage of sin, and the words of Christ are the words of righteousness, the receiving of those words is in itself the freedom from bondage.

Simple faith in the word of Christ is sufficient to give the sinner his liberty; but to every one who has thus been made free, the words of inspiration come,

Galatians 5

¹ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

22. Lawful Work on the Sabbath

Signs of the Times, June 30, 1890

Notes on the International Lesson, July 6

Timeline: VI-22 (The Crippled Woman)

Luke 13:10-17

THE story of the lesson may be told in few words. Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath, and saw a woman in the congregation, who through infirmity was bent so that she was forced to go in a stooping position. For eighteen years she had been thus afflicted. Jesus called her to Him, and saying,

Luke 13

¹² Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.

He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

This miracle, instead of calling forth praise, only aroused anger in the heart of the ruler, who harshly told the people that if they wanted to be healed, to come on one of the six working-days, and not on the Sabbath. Jesus put His adversaries to shame by pointing out that this was an act of mercy, of far greater importance than the watering of stock, which they themselves would attend to on the Sabbath-day.

The title of the lesson suggests the statement that Jesus made on another occasion when He had performed a miracle of healing on the Sabbath. Said He,

Matthew 12

¹² It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days.

This recognizes a law for the Sabbath, and that law is the fourth commandment. All that Jesus had done was in the direct line of His mission.

1 John 3

⁸ For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He

might destroy the works of the devil.

The binding of the poor woman was one of the works of Satan, and in loosing her, Jesus was destroying Satan's work. It is lawful to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free on the Sabbath-day.

Inasmuch as the official lesson notes "the Sunday-sabbath" is made the subject of comment. It must receive attention here, although the lesson does not hint at any question as to which day is the Sabbath. We quote the following from *Peloubet's Select Notes on the International Lessons*:

Sunday is just as really the seventh day and the Sabbath-day as is the Saturday-Sabbath of the Jews. All the difference lies in beginning the count from a different point. Bush well says:

"All that the commandment expressly requires is to observe a day of sacred rest after every six days of labor. The seventh day, indeed, is to be kept holy, but not a word is here said as to the point from which the reckoning is to begin. The seventh day is not so much the seventh according to any particular method of computing the septinary cycle, as in reference to the six working-days before mentioned; every seventh day in rotation after six days of labor."

That those who offer this excuse for not keeping the seventh day of the week do not regard it as valid is shown by the fact that they reject the Saturday-Sabbath. If their theory be true, then they must admit that Saturday is just as much the Sabbath as Sunday. This they will not do.

Further, they would accuse a man of being a Sabbath-breaker if he paid no attention to either Sunday or Saturday, even though he rested regularly every Tuesday. This shows that they do not at all believe that the commandment requires simply one day in seven, and that it makes no difference where we begin to count.

If this theory were true, then it would follow that there is in

reality no Sabbath-day; one day of the week would be the Sabbath just as much as any other day. But the commandment is not indefinite. It speaks of “the Sabbath-day,” literally, “the day of the Sabbath,” and says that:

Exodus 20

¹⁰ ...in it you shall not do any work.

Now what day is it in which no secular work is to be done? It is the seventh day that God blessed and sanctified after he had rested upon it.

Genesis 2

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

² And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

³ And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

Did the Lord rest on one particular day, or not? Of course He did. He could not rest on no day in particular. So there must have been a definite place from which to count. And that all men have always believed that there is a definite place from which to count, is shown by the fact that everywhere, in all countries, and in all ages, they have counted from the same place. Even those who argue that the Sabbath is any seventh day after six days of labor, agree with the rest of mankind in calling the day on which they rest, the first day of the week. How can a day be both the first and the seventh?

But the folly of the idea that we can begin to count where we please, and so make the seventh day come just where we want it, and that the commandment warrants this course, may be shown by trying it on something else. Who would claim that if a man has seven sons you could make the first-born the seventh, simply by beginning with the last one and counting

backwards? If a question of property were involved, would any court listen for a moment to such nonsense? No; for no pettifogger⁴⁵ would have the audacity to insult the court with so puerile a plea. But men will juggle with divine precepts in a way that would do discredit to the intelligence of a child.

The indignation of the ruler is an example of hypocrisy that is very common. It was not because he was so zealous for the Sabbath, for if he had been he would have known that in healing the woman, Jesus was fulfilling the highest design of the Sabbath. But he hated Jesus, and took this means to arouse the prejudices of the people against Him.

Religious prejudice is easily aroused, and is a bitter thing to have to meet; but, as in this case, it is almost always aroused where the individual has done no wrong. All the religious persecution that has ever disgraced humanity, whether by pagans or professed Christians, has been directed against those who were doing right, but who did not bow to the false standards set up by the persecutors.

The significance of the miracle of healing the deformed woman should not be overlooked. Jesus was anointed...

Luke 4

¹⁸ ...to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

His miracles were done that men might know that He was...

John 20

³¹ ...the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, [they] might have life through His name.

When the woman whom Satan had bound in body for eighteen years was loosed from her infirmity, it was designed as a striking object-lesson, illustrating His power to release men

⁴⁵ Pettifogger: an inferior legal practitioner, especially one who deals with petty cases or employs dubious practices.

from the bondage of sin, in which Satan has held them for years.

His compassion for the woman in her infirmity should cause us to come to Him with boldness, because He is touched with the feeling of our spiritual infirmities.

23. Sabbath Healing

Present Truth, September 27, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for October 7, entitled, "Jesus Dining with a Pharisee"

Timeline: VI-25 (Dining with a Chief Pharisee)

Luke 14:1-14

THE story is so interesting that it will bear frequent repetition, and no better words can be found with which to express it than those provided for us by the Holy Spirit, and here we have them:

Luke 14

¹ And it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched Him.

² And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy.

³ And Jesus answering spoke unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

⁴ And they held their peace. And He took him, and healed him, and let him go;

⁵ And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

⁶ And they could not answer Him again to these things.

⁷ And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

⁸ When you are bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than you be bidden of him;

⁹ And he that bade you and him come and say to you, Give this man place; and you begin with shame to take the lowest room.

¹⁰ But when you are bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade you comes, he may say unto you, Friend, go up higher: then shall you have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with you.

¹¹ For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.

¹² Then said He also to him that bade him, When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbors; lest they also bid you again, and a recompence be made you.

¹³ But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

¹⁴ And you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

There are not less than three distinct lessons in this one, and we must take a brief glance at them each.

Why Jesus Healed on the Sabbath

In the first place we have the fact that Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath day. Some of the most striking miracles that Jesus performed were done on the Sabbath; and one of the striking features of the case is that in every instance the person healed was not in imminent danger of death.

It was not absolutely necessary, in order to save the person's life, that he should be healed at that instant. The next day would have done quite as well, as far as the diseased person was concerned. Jesus knew the prejudice of the Pharisees against this kind of work on the Sabbath day, yet He healed on the Sabbath. Why was it?

That there is in the fact that Jesus performed cures on the Sabbath day some lesson for us to learn, other than what we are to learn from miracles in general, is evident from the attention that is drawn to it.

If anybody thinks that it is to show us that the feelings of people are to be ignored, he greatly mistakes the character of Christ. Courtesy is as much a Christian grace as mercy; and He who summed up all the law and the prophets in the sentence,

Matthew 7

¹² Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them,

—would certainly never go out of His way to give needless offense to any person. Let no one ever think that it is any part of true Christianity to disregard the sentiments, or even the prejudices, of others.

Although God has said, “Six days shall you labor,” giving us full freedom to labor on any and all of “the six working days,” He would never have any Sabbath-keeper labor on Sunday for the annoyance of any neighbor who regards that day as the Sabbath, and who wishes to rest on it. Teach him the truth from the Word of God, and not by trampling upon his uninstructed idea of it.

The Nature and Object of the Sabbath

But here, in addition to healing a man, there was a great truth to be taught concerning the nature and object of the Sabbath. It is suggested by the question,

Luke 14

³ Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?

A thing is “lawful,” not when it can merely be done by suffering, as it were, but when it is that which the law requires. From the action of Jesus on this occasion, as well as on many others, we learn that the law of the Sabbath includes healing. To heal men on the Sabbath day is to fulfill the obligation of the Sabbath. The work of Jesus was and is...

Luke 4

¹⁸ ...to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

The announcement of this mission was made in a synagogue on the Sabbath day, and many of the miracles of Jesus

were directed to the object of showing that the Sabbath, when rightly understood, marks the accomplishment of this work. It brings the liberty of the Gospel, and all its blessings.

It would never do to allow the people to remain under the false impression that the Pharisees had given of the Sabbath. They had perverted the law of God, and Christ's mission was to...

Isaiah 42

²¹ ...magnify the law, and make it honorable.

What is the Sabbath? and what is it for? The answer may be given in brief. The Sabbath is God's rest; for when God had created the heavens and the earth in six days, and everything, that He had made was "very good," He rested on the seventh day.

Exodus 20

¹¹ Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

He says,

Ezekiel 20

²⁰ Hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.

The Sabbath is for the purpose of making us know God as the One who sanctifies:

¹² Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.

It marks God's completed work, and since...

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ there is a new creation,

—it marks the completion of a new creature in Christ. We are saved by the works of God, and not by our own. Our sal-

vation is accomplished by the same power that created the world,

Romans 1

¹⁶ For...the Gospel...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes,

—and that power is seen in everything that is made.

So just as God's resting on the seventh day marked the completion of a perfect, new creation, so the keeping of God's Sabbath,—God's rest,—not in form merely, but in Spirit and in truth, is the seal of a perfect, new creature in Christ. By it the intelligent believer indicates that he no longer trusts his own or any human work for salvation, but only the perfect, finished work of God in Christ.

The Sabbath the Fullness of Salvation

God is the Creator of all things. That fact constitutes His right to rule.

Psalms 100

³ Know you that the Lord He is God; it is He that has made us, and we are His.

Psalms 95

³ The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is His also.

⁵ The sea is His, and He made it; and His hands formed the dry land.

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

⁷ For He is our God.

The last proclamation of the everlasting Gospel which is to be preached just before the end, "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people" as a witness to all nations, the announcement the fullness of which is to make ready a people prepared for the coming of Christ, is this:

Revelation 14

⁷ Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

But this knowledge is just that which the Sabbath is designed to keep in our mind.

Psalms 111

⁴ He has made a memorial for His wonderful works.

Through His work we have salvation; in the works of His hands we triumph; therefore the Sabbath, which makes known to us the wonderful, finished works of the Lord, is that which reveals to us to the full, the sanctifying power of God. Thus it is the seal of God, which the Holy Spirit will put upon all true believers who live till the coming of the Lord.

And as the forgiveness of sins, when fully appreciated, brings with it the healing of all diseases, and the healing of the body is the outward, visible sign of Christ's power to cleanse from sin, it was most fitting that some of the most wonderful works of healing should take place on the Sabbath day. It was to show that the Sabbath brings God's perfect rest to both soul and body.

Sabbath-Keeping is Freedom from Sin

The Bible leaves no room for any controversy as to which day is the Sabbath. The seventh day is the Sabbath, the last day of the week, after the first six days of labor. So it was in the beginning, so it was proclaimed in the law from Sinai, and in harmony with this truth Christ lived, He who is the revelation of God's living law.

The Scriptures nowhere indicate that there ever was or ever could be any question of this truth. Of course the Bible tells us of people who deny the Lord himself; but we are speaking of those who know Him.

There is no more ground for question as to which day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord than there is as to who is God. Whoever knows God perfectly must know the Sabbath, since He gave the Sabbath for the express purpose of revealing himself.

Having stated the truth that the seventh day is the Sabbath, the memorial of God's perfect creation, Inspiration devotes itself to showing the depth and breadth of the holy law of which the Sabbath is the seal, and how we should keep it. The exhortation is,

Ephesians 4

³⁰ Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice;

³² And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

If we do not in any respect grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed, we shall of course receive the seal, that which marks God's perfect work, namely, the Sabbath; and this text shows us what true Sabbath-keeping is.

It is the perfection of the life of Christ in us. It is freedom from all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and malice, and evil-speaking, and the manifestation of the kindness and love of God.

It consists not merely in outward service, but in the full surrender of spirit, soul, and body to Him who has called us, and who is faithful to His promise to sanctify us by the power by which He made all things.

The Sabbath Blessing

Whatever God blesses He makes a means of blessing.

Exodus 20

¹¹ The Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

He sent it forth on its mission of carrying blessing to mankind. It is a truth that God has poured out His blessings freely on all men; the very possession of life is the blessing of the Creator; but it is the Sabbath that makes known to mankind the fullness of God's blessing:

- It brings with it to all who accept it for just what it is, the knowledge of such a blessing as they never before dreamed of, no matter how long they have had experience as Christians.
- It was given in Eden, and pertains to Eden, and brings the joy of Eden with it.
- It is, in fact, a remnant of Eden left in this sin-cursed world, to win us to Eden restored.
- In it we find the power of the world to come.

Says the Lord,

Isaiah 58

¹³ If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words;

¹⁴ Then shall you delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father [and that heritage is Christ]; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Psalms 34

⁸ Oh then taste, and see that the Lord is good.

Accept His perfect rest,—His Sabbath,—and keep it, and know now the joy of the Lord.

Before Honor is Humility

Proverbs 15 [also Proverbs 18:12]

³³ ...before honor is humility.

These are the words of the one to whom God gave wisdom,

and they are repeated, to show that they are sure. Let us not make the mistake of supposing that humility will win honor, and that when the honor has come, we can dispense with it.

Humility is not cringing. It has nothing in common with the spirit of fawning upon a superior, in order to gain a favor. Humility is the character of God, for He is meek and lowly in heart; and in His humility we find rest.

So we see that the lesson concerning humility goes naturally with the Sabbath. The word rendered “before” does not indicate preceding, but in the presence of. That is, humility always stands in the presence of real honor; humility accompanies honor.

We must not think that the instruction to take the lowest place is obeyed if we take it as a mere form, thinking all the time in our hearts that we are really entitled to the highest place, and only waiting until so body shall put us there, so that we can enjoy the applause or the envy of others. We all know by nature more or less of this false humility.

True humility does not take the low place, with the inward feeling that the higher place is deserved, and feel hurt if the honor of the higher place is not given. The Spirit of Christ teaches us to take the lowest place with contentment and joy, as all that rightly belongs to us, and when we are invited to the higher place to occupy it with the same meekness that we did the lower.

Proverbs 18

¹² ...before honor is humility.

That is, where humility is not, there is never any real honor. This lesson can be practically learned only from Christ, who occupied the very lowest place, and did the most menial service, with all the dignity of a King, and who fills the highest place with all the humility of a servant.

Recompense at the Resurrection

Luke 14

¹² When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbors; lest they also bid you again, and a recompence be made you.

¹³ But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

¹⁴ And you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

The instruction given here would, if followed, change the whole face of what is called society. It utterly excludes the idea of “our set.” We maybe sure that Christ, who was kind to all, does not mean that we should shut brethren and kindred and friends away from our society; far from it. The teaching is that we should not be exclusive; should not shut ourselves up to any one class, but should count the weakest and lowest and most needy as most deserving of our hospitality and care.

¹⁴ ...you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

The resurrection of the just, at the second coming of Christ, is the time of reward. Nowhere are we given the idea that at death we enter upon our reward. That thought is entirely foreign to the Bible.

We may rejoice in spite of death, because the love of God is stronger than death; but there is nothing in death itself to cause joy. It is an enemy; hateful and cruel. The corruption that the body undergoes in death is an indication of its horrid character.

But the coming of the Lord and the resurrection, at the end of the world, brings the reward of entering into the presence of the Lord, and sitting at meat with Him. Then we shall see the full illustration of the teaching of Christ. There and then we shall see that Jesus has bidden to His feast the poor, the maimed, and the blind,—all the outcasts,—and that He makes

them sit with Him as His equals, and serves them as though they were His superiors. What marvelous exaltation and dignity, what honor, there is in the humility of Christ!

Luke 14

¹⁵ Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!

24. The Great Supper, and the General Invitation

Present Truth, October 4, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for October 14

Timeline: VI-26 (The Great Banquet)

Luke 14:15-24

JESUS was dining at the house of a Pharisee, and the struggles of the aristocratic guests to get into places of prominence had led to some remarks on how to behave on such occasions, and also to some instruction about whom to invite to a feast.

Luke 14

¹⁵ And when one of them that eat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

¹⁶ Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many;

¹⁷ And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

¹⁸ And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray you have me excused.

¹⁹ And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray you have me excused.

²⁰ And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

²¹ So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

²² And the servant said, Lord, it is done as you have commanded, and yet there is room.

²³ And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

²⁴ For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

The Lord's Marriage Feast

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the “certain man” here spoken of represents God, for the parable was suggested by the words of the man who said,

Luke 14

¹⁵ Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

We know that the second coming of Christ to earth will be for the purpose of bringing His people into the marriage feast, to which they have already been invited, at which time:

Luke 12

³⁷ He shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Of the wedding itself we read in *Isaiah* 49:13-23; 54:1-17; 62:1-5; *Revelation* 19:5-9. It has been long since the invitation was first issued, and it is now supper time,

James 5 [RV]

⁸ ...for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Therefore this lesson is most timely, and has the deepest interest for us. Of the many important things taught by it, we shall merely suggest a few.

Some Must Attend

One most comforting thought is that:

Hebrews 4

⁶ ...some must enter therein.

Think what a disgrace it would be for any person in “society,” to make a feast, and then find that no person cared enough for him to answer his invitation. Now God cannot suffer any such thing to happen to Him. He has provided a feast liberal enough for all, and He cannot, for His own sake,

enjoy it alone. He must have some to share it with Him.

But since so many refuse the invitation, it is the more evident that “whosoever will”⁴⁶ may come. No matter who they are, nor what their condition, all may come; nay, some must come. Let us therefore never say nor think,

“I am so poor, so insignificant, so weak and sinful, that the Lord will not receive me.”

It is just such ones that the Lord compels to come to His feast.

God’s Commands are Invitations

And here we get a clear view of the nature of the commandments of God. Most people regard them as hard requirements, as a cutting off of their privileges. No; they are nothing of the kind; they are invitations to a feast.

When Her Majesty “commands” people to dine and lodge at Windsor, nobody complains of hard bondage. The Queen’s invitations are always commands, which cannot be slighted without the grossest disrespect, but nobody wishes to refuse, since all are delighted to be thus honored.

So the commandments of God are but the gracious invitations to come to His supper. In sending out His invitations He shows His liberality, for the invitation takes the shape of a wedding garment. He sends to each one the robe of His righteousness, in which to appear at the feast. No more delicate, and at the same time more urgent, invitation could be issued.

His commandments set forth His righteousness, and therefore they...

1 John 5

³ ...are not grievous.

⁴⁶ **Revelation 22** ¹⁷ And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

All Things in Christ

The lesson teaches us that everything must be forsaken, in order to comply with the invitation of the Lord. Is that hard? Listen:

Matthew 19

²⁹ Every one that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

We are called upon to give up a little that we could at best enjoy but for a few days, for the everlasting enjoyment of all things, And it is not all in the future, that the promises take effect. Here and now God gives us eternal life, and...

2 Peter 1

³ ...all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue.

Psalms 84

¹¹ No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

God does not wish to deprive us of any of the good things of life,—houses, lands, friends, but He wishes us to receive them all at His hands. When we desire nothing beside Christ, then we shall find that we have all things in Him. Whatever cannot be held without letting Christ go, is not worth having, but is injurious.

Does the parable seem to close in a hard, abrupt manner? It makes the host say,

Luke 14

²⁴ I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Well, whose fault is it? They were invited, but would not come. How can they expect to stay away from the feast, and at the same time eat it? The fact that they were bidden, shows

that they are free to come; and since even the outcasts are compelled to come, in order that there may be a company, how sure anybody that is bidden may be of a welcome. Therefore,

Luke 14

¹⁷ Come; for all things are now ready.

2 Corinthians 6

² Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

25. Come; For All Things Are Now Ready

Present Truth, July 9, 1903

International Sunday-school Lesson for July 19

Timeline: VI-26 (The Great Banquet)

Luke 14:15-24

Luke 14

¹⁵ And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

¹⁶ Then said He unto them, A certain man made a great Supper, and bade many:

¹⁷ And sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

¹⁸ And they all with one consent began to make excuse.

Christ the Servant

THIS is a parable, and at the same time more than a parable. It is the description of an actual occurrence. Substitute God for “a certain man,” and you have the account of what has actually taken place. God has prepared a table for man, not merely that to which we daily sit down, but infinitely more glorious.

The servant whom He has sent with the invitations is none less than His own Son, the faithful Servant of whom He says so much through the prophet Isaiah. This is shown even in the 3rd chapter of *Hebrews*, which declares Christ’s superiority to Moses, in that while Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, Christ was faithful in the same house as a Son; for it shows that He served faithfully as a Son.

Christ has always been a servant, although a Son. When He came to this earth in the flesh of man, He changed only His form, not His nature or character. He was in the form of God;

Philippians 2

⁷ [He] took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

It was only the form of a servant, that He needed to take; the character of servant He already had from eternity. He came to this earth in visible form, in order that He might make men know how He had always been occupied, and to invite them to the heavenly table that had been prepared for them. And He will retain this office of servant in His Father's house, after the saints have all been taken home to glory; for He says that:

Luke 12

³⁷ He shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

What marvelous condescension! What unheard-of hospitality! a King to act in the capacity of waiter to His subjects! Christ, the King of glory, inviting His subjects to supper, and He himself serving as table-waiter! Who can help loving the One who shows such simple, kindly, unaffected, yet boundless hospitality? and who, in view of it, can ever refuse to do any needed service to his fellow-men?

But this is not the special feature emphasized in this lesson. Our minds are directed to the call to supper. What is the call? —It is the call to salvation; the call to eat of the hidden manna, which is promised to overcomers,⁴⁷ and to be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house.⁴⁸ God prepares a table for us here, in the presence of our enemies;⁴⁹ but He is calling many sons unto glory,⁵⁰ that they may sit down to table with-

⁴⁷ **Revelation 2** ¹⁷ He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it.

⁴⁸ **Psalms 36** ⁸ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house; and you shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures.

⁴⁹ **Psalms 23** ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

⁵⁰ **Hebrews 2** ¹⁰ For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

out having their ears assailed by the clash of arms and the hoarse shouts of raging foes.

When the Preparation was Made

And,

Luke 14

¹⁷ ...all things are now ready.

When were they prepared? The answer is found in:

Hebrews 4

³ We which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest; although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

The works were finished from the foundation of the earth, and then, of course, the rest was prepared. When God had ended all His work in the creation of this world, and, beholding all, saw that it was “very good,” He called man to enjoy His table, and spread before him everything that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food. The tree of life, with its varied products, is...

Revelation 2

⁷ ...in the midst of the Paradise of God.

And it is there that man is now called to eat from it. The table that is laid under its wide-spreading branches will never lack an abundant supply of the most delicious and wholesome food.

The Court Dress

Whenever there is a court function, the king prescribes the manner of dress that those presented to him shall wear; and no one feels that the requirement is unjust. It would not be showing due respect to His Majesty, to enjoy His hospitality in unseemly, negligent attire; and those who are invited do not regard the outlay required as anything to be compared

with the honor of being the king's guest.

Far more fitting is it, then, that the King of kings should prescribe a court dress, the wearing of which is obligatory upon all who come before Him. This dress is holiness; and it is not for the King's sake, but for our sakes, that this is required; for without it, it would be impossible for us even to look upon God. Thus it is a necessity; for who wants to be a guest at the King's table, and never see his royal Host?

The Dress that God has Prepared

But God, as becomes the King of kings, is more gracious than earthly monarchs. Many worthy people are barred by poverty from ever appearing at an earthly court; but God leaves no ground for complaint, because when He prepares the supper He also provides the dress necessary to be worn. This is also ready;

Ephesians 2

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before prepared, that we should walk in them.

God has not simply overseen the preparation of this clothing, but He has actually made it with His own hands. He himself has woven the material, and stored it up, ready for use.

Psalms 31

¹⁹ Oh, how great is your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You; which You have wrought for them that trust in You before the sons of men!

All things are indeed ready, and no one may have the slightest reasonable excuse for declining His gracious invitation, since He himself clothes His guests with the royal robe that He has himself prepared.

Isaiah 61

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salva-

tion, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with jewels.

What are the “All Things”?

Revelation 21

⁷ He that overcomes shall inherit all things,

–for Christ himself is the heavenly dress that we are to “put on” (*Romans 13:14*), and:

Colossians 1 [RV]

¹⁷ ...in Him all things consist.

It cannot be otherwise than that:

Romans 8

³² He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

And,

Luke 14

¹⁷ ...all things are now ready;

–all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things are ready and waiting for those who will heed the gracious call to supper.

1 Corinthians 3

²¹ All things are yours;

²² Whether...the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

²³ And you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.

Flimsy Excuses

With all these riches included in the invitation, men begin...

Luke 14

¹⁸ ...with one consent to make excuse.

And such trivial excuses!

¹⁸ I have bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it.

But he has no assurance that he will live even to see it; and if he does, he cannot take possession, and hold it, because the one from whom he has bought it cannot give a valid title. Every guest who sits down to God's table is a son, and as such is:

Romans 4

¹³ ...heir of the world,

—yea, of...

Revelation 21

⁷ ...all things.

Yet many who are invited will refuse the invitation, for the sake of a poor piece of land to which they have no real right!

The next one has a still weaker excuse:

Luke 14

¹⁹ I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them.

But what are five yoke of oxen, compared with...

Psalms 50

¹⁰ ...the cattle upon a thousand hills,

and

¹¹ ...all the fowls of the mountains.

And what of the other one's excuse? Truly, a wife is of more value than fields or flocks; nevertheless his excuse,

Luke 14

²⁰ I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come,

—is the weakest of all. The others must needs leave their possessions; they have to give up something, even though

they are to get something infinitely better; but this man has to give up nothing, since his wife is invited as well as he. He has no excuse whatever, and has not the grace even to ask to be excused, but bluntly refuses to come. Foolish and ungrateful man, to reject the only course which would ensure him the everlasting company of his loved ones.

Invitations and Commands

It is not a light thing to slight the invitation of a king; for all the king's invitations are commands, and take precedence of all others. A man may make excuses to anybody except the king. To reject his invitation is to show contempt for his dignity; and this is disloyalty.

The king cannot beg a favor, or entreat a man's attendance on him; he bestows favors, and issues commands. Note that the invitation is imperative: "Come!" No excuse can be accepted, because there is no ground for any; and when the neglectful ones stand in the king's own presence, no one will have the face to offer an excuse, but every mouth will be stopped.

All God's invitations are commands, but all His commands are promises, and, as already noted, He not only prepares the feast, but provides everything necessary for our appearance at table. He himself will conduct us there, even carrying the young and the lame. Therefore,

Jude 1 [RV]

²⁴ Unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy,

²⁵ To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.

26. Making Excuses

Present Truth, September 7, 1893

Timeline: VI-26 (The Great Banquet)

Luke 14:16-24

IN ONE of the parables of our Lord there is set forth the tendency of men when invited to the performance of spiritual duties, to make excuses. The parable is recorded in the 14th chapter of *Luke*:

Luke 14

¹⁶ Then He said unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

¹⁷ And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

¹⁸ And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray you have me excused.

¹⁹ And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray you have me excused.

²⁰ And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

²¹ So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

²⁴ For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

All these excuses appeared valid enough to the ones who made them, but the master of the house, when he heard them, was “angry.” He understood the nature of the excuses, and the reason why they were given. He saw and felt a slight that had been put upon himself. He saw that their excuses were not excuses, but were evasions prompted only by selfishness; and he determined that they should be excluded from the benefits he thought to confer upon them.

When afterwards they might come to him expecting his favor, they would find that their excuses had not possessed in his mind the validity which they had seemed to have in their own. They would find the stern decree gone forth,

²⁴ None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

The master of the house who made the feast, is God. He has sent out His invitation to men and told them how to come to His feast, but on every hand His messengers are met with excuses. Men do not want to come in the way that God has appointed. That way is a little too difficult and rough; they want one that is easier and more convenient.

There is one path that leads to the Master's house over steep hills and through dark valleys, and is stony and thorny and beset with many difficulties. Not many are inclined to choose this path.

There are others that look far more inviting, that seem to lead to the same place; and the greater number choose one or the other of these, where they can travel along at their ease. But they do not know that the rough path, the path that is inconvenient and narrow and seemingly so difficult to travel, is the only one that leads to the desired destination. They do not know that the way that is smooth and easy at the start, is the way that is rough and dark at the end, and terminates in the midst of obstacles that cannot be surmounted.

No man objects to heaven. It is the path that leads there that he does not like. All men would go to heaven if they could go in their own way; but few, comparatively, will get there, because there is but one way, and that is a way which no man naturally desires.

The excuses which pass current in the minds of men will turn out to be counterfeit at the bar of God. Pause, reader, and consider carefully whether you will dare to offer to God, in

the great reckoning day, the excuses with which you have satisfied, or sought to satisfy, your conscience and justify your course here. Will they not look different to you when you stand face to face with Him at His judgment bar, not with an earthly reputation to be secured, or worldly wealth or position to be attained, but waiting the decision which is to determine the eternal destiny of your soul?

Will you not then be seized with a terrible feeling of uncertainty as to whether God will look at the matter just as you did,—whether His all-searching eye, which read your inmost thoughts and motives, may not have seen with clearer vision than your own, and beheld self-interest where you imagined there was none? Well may you fear, if in that day you have no better foundation to stand on than the excuses which satisfy men.

There, in letters of fire, will appear before you the law of God, which demands death upon every transgressor. There, in its fourth precept, will appear the words,

Exodus 20

⁸ Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

⁹ Six days shall you labor, and do all your work:

¹⁰ But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work.

Will you dare to say to God,

“Yes, Lord, that is the way it reads, but you meant that we should keep holy the first day of the week.”

Will you dare to say,

“Lord, that meant that we were to observe any one day out of the seven.”

- Will you dare to explain to God the meaning of His law?
- Will you dare assert before Him that He did not mean just what He said?

- Will you dare tell Him to His face that His law has been abolished?
- Will you dare tell Him that His requirements were too inconvenient and hard?
- Will you dare affirm that you were right because you did like the majority, or like the dignitaries of the church told you to do, albeit it was not just what God's word had commanded?

No; no. Not one of these excuses will find its way through the trembling lips of those to whom it shall be said, "Depart." One piercing glance from the eye of the Infinite will discover the hidden motives of each heart, and they will stand speechless and self-condemned.

God himself has provided the only foundation upon which we can stand with the assurance at all times, even when we are brought into His presence in the Judgment hour.

1 John 3

¹⁶ God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.

¹⁷ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

1 John 4

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.

1 Peter 1

²³ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever.

²⁴ For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away:

²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the

word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

That word will pass the test. Standing upon it, and it alone, you have a foundation which will be secure amidst the wreck and dissolution of earthly things, and give you all confidence in the day of God.

27. Taking Up the Cross

Signs of the Times, July 14, 1890

Notes on the International Lesson, July 20

Timeline: VI-27 (The Cost of Discipleship)

Luke 14:25-26

Luke 14

²⁵ ...and He turned, and said unto them,

²⁶ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

THE Saviour had just spoken a parable which showed the gracious invitation that God extends to all, and now, in order that none who accept it may have occasion to say afterwards that they were deceived, He tells them plainly the conditions required of everyone who follows Him.

The Lord does not want anybody to follow Him blindly. He would have them know all that is involved before they begin; in that case, they will not be as likely to give up in discouragement. He conceals nothing of the hardness of the way, but rather sets that forth as an inducement.

It is very natural to look upon laws that are unfavorable to the free exercise of religion, as a real hindrance to religion. Persecution is looked upon as a calamity to the church. Now while nobody should court persecution, yet it is by no means certain that it is the greatest calamity the church can suffer in this world.

It is true that when these unfriendly laws are repealed, it is easier to induce people to identify themselves with the cause of God; but it is not true that more real strength is added to the church by the many who join in times of peace than by the few who unite in the face of persecution.

Those who accept God's truth, knowing that it will involve persecution and loss of friends and property, will not become

frightened when those things come. But those of whom it is said that they would accept the truth if they could see their way clear to do so, are the ones who, if the way were cleared so that they could join, would fall back as soon as the way should again become obstructed. It should not be forgotten that the church's brightest period was when the whole pagan world was against it.

This brings us to the statement that men often make when some practical truth is presented to them, that they "could not make a living" if they obeyed it. They seem blind to the fact that thousands have obeyed it under more trying circumstances, and have not failed to make a living.

But suppose they could not; that does not make any difference. Christ calls us to obtain the future immortal life, and if this has to be lost in order to gain that, it is only giving up a small thing for something infinitely greater.

Matthew 10

³⁹ He that finds his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for my sake, [said Christ,] shall find it.

Thus it appears that in reality the only prospect one has of making a living is by obeying Christ.

Revelation 12

¹⁰ Salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ,

—come to those who...

¹¹ ...loved not their lives unto the death.

Verse 26 of *Luke* 14 must be read in the light of verse 33, and other texts. When it is said that a man cannot be a disciple of Christ, if he does not hate father, mother, wife, children, life, etc., it means that he must hold them all as secondary to the cause of God. That the word "hate" does not in this passage mean animosity and malice, may be learned from the fact

that:

Romans 13

¹⁰ Love is the fulfilling of the law,

—and that it...

¹⁰ ...works no ill to his neighbor;

—and that we are commanded to:

Ephesians 4

³¹ ...put away...all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking,...with all malice.

Also from the fact that the apostle Paul gives express injunctions to husbands to love their wives even as Christ loved the church:

Ephesians 5

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.

The commandment,

Exodus 20

¹² Honor your father and your mother,

—would forbid feelings of enmity against them. Therefore we are to understand that Christ means that nothing is to be so loved as to shut out love for Him. He is to occupy the first place. This will often bring one into direct antagonism with his dearest friends, as stated in:

Matthew 10

³⁵ For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

³⁶ And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

And sometimes he will be brought where he will have to reject even his own life. Not that he loves life and friends less, but that he loves Christ more.

This, then, is the cost of the kingdom of God. Christ does not secure any followers on false pretenses. He sets before them all the difficulties as well as the grand result, and then asks each one to deliberately calculate whether or not he can undertake it.

Mark 10

²⁹ And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

³⁰ But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

He who does not count the cost is liable to be put to shame. Happy is the man who, when he sits down to reckon, has his vision so clear that he can view things in their proper relation, approving the things that are more excellent, so that he may know that one moment of heaven will outweigh all that he can suffer on earth. In comparison with the...

2 Corinthians 4

¹⁷ ...far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

—the afflictions that now may be suffered are light. Indeed, the apostle Paul, who had opportunities for accurate calculation, such as no other man ever had, reckoned that:

Romans 8

¹⁸ The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

28. The Plain Word

Present Truth, November 22, 1894

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VI-28 (The Lost Sheep)

Luke 15:1

Luke 15

¹ Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.

Mark 12

³⁷ And the common people heard Him gladly.

THERE is no record or intimation that Jesus required some one to go about with Him to explain His words to the people. There is no suggestion that the people needed to have some learned man stand between them and the Lord, to interpret to them His words.

What was the difference between the teaching of Jesus and that of the scribes and doctors of the law? They both used the same Scriptures, and quoted the very same words. When Jesus went into their synagogues, He read the appointed lesson for the day. But the difference was that His teaching was simple, while theirs obscured the sense. The people could understand Him, and could not understand them.

The words that Jesus spoke were the same that the ancient prophets had spoken, for:

Hebrews 1

¹ God, who...spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

² Has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.

They were the same words that the apostle spoke after His ascension; for the word of salvation which...

Hebrews 2

³ ...at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,...was con-

firmed unto us by them that heard Him.

They are the very same words that we find in the Bible to-day.

When the prophets spoke, the people understood them. Their warnings and reproofs were not always heeded, but they were understood. When God sent a prophet with a message to a king or a people, He did not send another man to explain the prophet's message to them. The violent death of the prophet was often the evidence of how well his unwelcome message was understood.

Even so it was with the apostles. When Peter spoke on Pentecost the people...

Acts 2

³⁷ ...pricked in their heart, [and cried out,] What shall we do?

And,

⁴¹ They that gladly received his word were baptized.

When Paul...

Acts 24

²⁵ ...reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,

—Felix needed no interpreter to make the words plain. So well did he understand the words that he trembled under them.

In all these cases, an “interpreter” would only have confounded the minds of the hearers. Query:

- If the people who heard the words of the Lord when they were spoken understood them without the aid of an interpreter, why cannot we?
- Are the common people now less acute and intelligent than they were then?

- Is not the confusion of mind that exists concerning the Scriptures due to the fact that there are so many who have set themselves to “tell what they mean,” thus leading the people to suppose that they do not mean what they say, and that they cannot be understood by the simple-minded?

“But,” we are asked, “Did not Christ and the prophets often use figurative language, in speaking parables?” Yes, they did, but the people understood them nevertheless. If at any time the disciples did not understand the sayings of Christ they went to Him and He made His meaning clear. That was a sensible thing to do.

Why should we not act as wisely? If we wish to know what the Lord means when He speaks, we should go to Him and ask Him. What if we cannot talk with Him face to face? He has left His representative, of whom He has said,

John 14

²⁶ He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Scriptures themselves contain their own explanation. If we wish to know what a parable or a prophecy means, we must find a meaning in the word.

No man on earth, be he Pope or peasant, has any authority to attach to them any arbitrary meaning out of his own mind. Whoever presumes to do so, puts himself in the place of God, setting himself forth as God.

29. To Save Sinners

Present Truth, September 13, 1894

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VI-28 (The Lost Sheep)

Luke 15:1-2

Luke 15

¹ Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.

² And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receives sinners, and eats with them.

THE Pharisees thought this the worst reproach that they could bring against Jesus. They did not realize that it was His glory, and the reason why He came to earth.

1 Timothy 1

¹⁵ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

And He says,

John 6

³⁷ Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.

Strange as it may seem, there are very many people today as ignorant of the mission of Christ as the Pharisees were. They are deterred from coming to the Lord, by the thought that they are great sinners, when that is the very reason why they should come. Not only does He receive them, but He invites and urges them to come. He says,

Romans 10

²¹ All day long, I have stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

The two parables that follow the verses in *Luke* above quoted, illustrate the relation of Christ to lost sinners.

- The man went to search for the lost sheep, because it was his own.

- The woman searched for the lost piece of silver, because it belonged to her.

So when Christ comes to seek and to save that which is lost, He is seeking His own. This should at once set at rest all doubts as to whether or not He will receive and accept us. He has already accepted us, and will receive us if we will come.

But how will He receive us? The next parable, that of the prodigal son, answers this question. He receives us gladly, because He is looking and longing for us.

Luke 15

²⁰ When he was yet a great way off, [the prodigal's father] saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

Christ has shown how greatly He desires us, and that:

Galatians 1

⁴ [He] gave himself for us.

How did the prodigal son come home? Just as he was,—starving and in rags. He could not come any other way. He had spent all he had, and there was no one to give him anything. He could not come dressed in fine clothes. If he had waited to make himself respectable, he would have died. Moreover, there would have been nothing to call forth compassion, if he had come well-dressed and strong. It was his weak and dejected appearance that called out all the father's pity.

There was no hesitation on the part of the father because the son came in rags. In this respect also the picture is true to life. The true parent loves a child, and not the clothes that it wears. Clothing makes no difference with the love of a father for his son. The father was not mourning for the fine clothes that his son took away. He had clothing enough for himself and for his son. What he mourned was his lost child. So when the son returned, the father was content, and the condition in

which he came made no difference.

This is given to show that God's love for us is not diminished by the fact that we are covered with the filthy rags of sin. He has righteousness enough to supply all our lack. And so we come back to the first word:

Luke 15

² This Man receives sinners, and eats with them.

To those who are...

Revelation 3

¹⁷ ...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,

He says,

²⁰ 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.

Best of all, He himself provides the feast. He is the bread and water of life. His flesh and blood are true food and true drink.

Psalms 23

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

30. Lost and Found

Signs of the Times, July 21, 1890

Notes on the International Lesson, July 27

Timeline: VI-28 (The Lost Sheep); VI-29 (The Lost Coin)

Luke 15:1-10

Luke 15

¹ Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.

THE publicans were those who gathered the *publienum*, or government revenue. The publicans of the New Testament were, according to Trench,

...men of an inferior sort, who did the lower work of the collection. They were everywhere hateful for their rudeness, their frauds, their vexations, and oppressions; we possess long lists of opprobrious epithets with which, among the Greeks, they were assailed.

But there was that which made keener yet the scorn, and more intense the hatred, with which the Jewish publicans were regarded by their own countrymen. They were nothing less than renegades and traitors, who for filthy lucre's sake had sided with the enemy, and now collected for a profane heathen treasury that tribute which was the evident sign of the subjection of God's people to a Gentile yoke. This scorn and hate found utterance in a thousand ways; no alms might be received from their money chest; their testimony was not received in courts of justice; they were as the heathen, and in some sort worse than the heathen.

Their calling was a lawful one, yet full of temptation. The natural tendency of most men would be to take advantage of the opportunity which it so abundantly offered to make money dishonestly, since nothing but an eager desire for money would tempt one to put himself under the ban of public sentiment; and the fact that the publicans were everywhere despised, would naturally tend to give them a despicable character.

That as a class they were very bad is shown by the connection in which they are frequently referred to—"publicans and sinners;" also by Christ's statement that an incorrigible church-member was to be regarded...

Matthew 18

¹⁷ ...as a heathen man and a publican.

Yet they were not wholly depraved, nor insusceptible to good influences, as is shown by many instances. They were sinners, it is true, but still in a more hopeful condition than were the self-righteous Pharisees.

Matthew 21

³¹ Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

We find this verified in *Luke 7:29-30*,⁵¹ where we are told that the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized of him. They also flocked to hear Christ's teaching, as noted in this lesson, because He had a message of hope for them.

Luke 15

² And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receives sinners, and eats with them.

The pride and bigotry of the scribes and Pharisees are shown by this murmur. But we may leave them, to consider the charge that they brought against Jesus. "This man receives sinners." It is a cause for joy to know that the Pharisees told the truth on this occasion. Christ receives sinners. He said,

John 6

³⁷ Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

⁵¹ **Luke 7** ²⁹ And all the people that heard Him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

He sends out the gracious invitation,

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

Romans 5

⁸ God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

He calls sinners to himself, and receives them, because they are sinners, and He alone has the power to cleanse from sin. Would that every despondent sinner might believe the words spoken of Christ,

“This man receives sinners.”

Poor, blind Pharisees! They trusted to themselves that they were righteous, and did not know that they were sinners, even worse than the despised publicans. Had they known that, they might have proved to their everlasting joy the truth of that which they supposed was a bitter reproach; for Christ would have received them likewise.

Verses 4-9 contain two vivid illustrations of God’s interest in sinners. The first one is this:

Luke 15

⁴ What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

⁷ I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

In this the reasonableness of Christ’s receiving sinners is

shown. Anybody would go to search for a lost sheep, even though it was only one out of a hundred. God's creatures are His flock. How natural that He should seek after the lost ones.

Matthew 18

¹¹ The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

And since He came at an infinite personal sacrifice, to save the lost ones, who can for a moment doubt that He will gladly receive those who come to Him? How is it possible for a sinner to doubt the willingness of Christ to receive him? He gave His life for no other purpose than that they might come to Him.

Titus 2

¹⁴ [He] gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.

Luke 15

⁷ Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

But where are they that need no repentance? Not on this earth, certainly;

Romans 3

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

It will not do to say that Christ meant that there is more joy over one sinner that repents, than there would be over ninety-nine that needed not to repent, if there were any such. It is evident that those who need no repentance must be the unfallen angels and the inhabitants of other worlds.

But this is a minor matter. The great point is that not only is Christ willing to receive sinners, but He calls for them, and rejoices when they come.

Luke 15

¹⁰ Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the

angels of God over one sinner that repents.

It does not say that there is joy among the angels over one sinner that repents, although we may be sure that they who are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, are deeply interested in everything that concerns them. But there is joy “in the presence of the angels.” The Father and the Son do not conceal their joy “over one sinner that repents.”

Who, then, may despise the day of small things, or esteem it a small thing to convert one sinner? What if the labor be hard, and the expenditure great, and only one soul is saved as the result, is it a small thing to add to the joy of Heaven? And does not this give us a clue to the meaning of the words which the Lord will say to the faithful servants, namely,

Matthew 25

²¹ Enter into the joy of your Lord

The joy of the Lord is to see sinners repent and be saved. This joy is great because the salvation has been achieved at an immense sacrifice. If we are permitted to share the joy of the Lord, it will be to rejoice over the salvation, not of ourselves, merely, but of others, and especially of those whom our influence has helped to bring to the knowledge of the gospel.

31. This Man Receives Sinners

Present Truth, October 11, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for October 14

Timeline: VI-28 (The Lost Sheep); VI-29 (The Lost Coin)

Luke 15:1-10

Luke 15

¹ Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.

² And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receives sinners, and eats with them.

³ And He spoke this parable unto them, saying,

⁴ What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

⁷ I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

⁸ Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, does not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

⁹ And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

¹⁰ Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.

WHETHER keeps in mind the instruction recorded in the 14th chapter of *Luke*, cannot fail to see that the 15th chapter is the natural sequence of it.

Jesus had told the Pharisees that when they made a feast they should invite “the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind,” and had, under the form of a parable, shown that it is

just such ones whom God compels to come to the great marriage supper which He prepares. It was inevitable, therefore, that Christ, as the true Teacher, should receive and eat with the outcast people.

Judea was under the power of Rome, and was compelled to pay tribute. But the Jews, remembering their past glory and independence, were never reconciled to the idea of paying tribute; and the men who would stoop so low as to accept the post of collecting money from their own nation, to give to the hated ruling power, were looked upon as the basest betrayers of their country. No “respectable” person would have anything to do with them.

It is quite evident that it was a calling not to be adopted by anybody who cared much for the opinion of others. Those who engaged in it would be, for the most part, men who esteemed money as of more value than a good reputation; and being ostracized to a great extent by society, they naturally degenerated.

Moreover, the plan on which the tax business was conducted was calculated to make the publicans hard and grasping, and unscrupulous in their methods. The collecting of taxes was entrusted by the Romans to men who could pay out of their own pockets a fixed sum, covering all that was required from the district that was allotted to them, and they in their turn undertook to collect the sum from the people, together with as much additional as they could possibly wring from them. This of course made them hated the more. For Jesus to associate with such people was to show a deliberate disregard for the usages of “society.” But,

Mark 12

³⁷ The common people heard Him gladly.

Nothing sets forth in clearer lines the essential kindness and gentleness of Jesus than the fact that all the publicans and sinners voluntarily drew near to hear Him. Men of that class do

not go where they are “preached at,” and talked to condescendingly. Nobody, in fact, voluntarily goes into any society where he cannot be received as an equal, unless he has some selfish end in view; and this could not be the case with any who came to Jesus, since He had no money nor worldly gain of any kind to give them.

Luke 15

² This man receives sinners, and eats with them.

They came to Him because He did indeed receive them as equals. This is what is implied in the Greek word here rendered “receive.” Among the illustrations of its use we have the following expressions:

“to let come to oneself;”

“to receive favorably;”

“to receive hospitably.”

In Homer it is used always in the sense of to *wait for*, to *expect a thing*. It shows that Jesus did not merely tolerate the presence of these despised, often degraded, creatures, but that He longed for them, expected them, waited for them, and welcomed them gladly when they came. They could associate with Him as freely and with as little restraint as with their own class.

Yet these sinful people did not misunderstand Jesus. They did not think that He was such a one as they were. They knew that He was as different from them as light is from darkness, and that was just why they came to Him. They wanted that which He had, and which He wished to impart to them.

While they could meet Him without any restraint, we may be sure that there was never in their intercourse with Him anything of the coarseness or looseness that would characterize their association with one another. They would not feel that they must hold themselves in check while talking with Him, but they would instinctively and involuntarily drop their

own rough ways, and fall in with His gentle and refined ways.

This is the power of Divine goodness. Thus it is that association with Jesus changes the sinner into His image. Whoever lives consciously in the presence of the Lord, will inevitably be lifted out of himself, and will be made into the likeness of Christ.

Love, the Leveler

The Lord loves us, and has given himself for us. His love is real and perfect; it is His life. He gives His life for us and to us, that we may be one with Him, equal sharers of His life. This love, when it is seen and appreciated, does away with all talk or thought about inequality.

We know that He is infinitely greater and wiser than we are, but that does not hinder us from coming into His presence without fear, and associating with Him on terms of equality, for:

1 John 4

¹⁸ Perfect love casts out fear.

When there is true love between two persons, no thought of difference of rank or station ever enters the mind of either. If one looks upon the other as in any degree inferior, that indicates lack of perfect love; and if one thinks that the other regards him as inferior, that shows the same, and also unbelief in the reality of the love of the other.

Love equalizes, always lifting the inferior to the level of the superior. True love levels, but always by bringing up and not by casting down. Thus,

Ephesians 2

⁴ God,...for His great love wherewith He loved us,

⁵ ...quickened us together with Christ,...

⁶ And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Receiving His Own

Why should not Christ receive sinners? Will a man not receive that which belongs to him, whenever he can get it? Indeed, there is really no question as to receiving; that is shut out by the fact that he will seek for his own. Even so Christ showed how natural it was that He should receive the sinners who flocked to hear Him. He was God's Representative:

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

Psalms 100

³ The Lord He is God; it is He that made us, and His we are; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Christ is...

Hebrews 13

²⁰ ...that great Shepherd of the sheep,

John 10

¹¹ ...the good Shepherd.

Isaiah 53

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

How then could it be otherwise than that He should come to seek the wandering sheep? No man having a hundred sheep would say, if one wandered away,

“No matter, it is only one,”

—and so make no effort to recover it. If he did so with one, then he would do the same with another one, and still another one, until he would not have one left. Indifference with regard to one, shows indifference for all. It is by looking after and guarding the single ones, that he keeps the whole.

Therefore by the natural action of a man with his sheep, or

of a woman with that which is her dowry, Jesus justified His course in welcoming sinners to himself.

The Safety of One the Safety of All

See how this forever disposes of the timid sinner's objection,

“The Lord does not trouble himself about so insignificant and worthless a being as I am.”

Do you not see that, even if He had no personal love for you, His own interest demands that He seek for you until He find you? If He cannot keep the least of His flock, by what can He assure the rest that He can protect them? He has made us for His own praise, but surely there will be no praise to Him if He loses us all, and does not care.

We may at once and for ever dismiss from our minds all thought of our own insignificance in this connection. In the one that is lost, the Lord sees the whole. A thing is worth what it costs, or at least a wise purchaser will make it worth what it costs him. So God will make every man whom He finds, worth what He gave for him.

Isaiah 13

¹² I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

John 3

¹⁶ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The gift was great enough to purchase the world, yet the price of the world was given for each individual.

Galatians 2

²⁰ Christ...loved me, and gave himself for me.

Ephesians 4

⁷ Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

When the Lord rises upon a man, and His glory is seen upon him, no price can be set upon his value. If men will pay a fabulous price for any old article that has been handled by some famous man, what must be the worth of one who has received the touch of the Lord Almighty?

We may think of ourselves in this way as worth an infinite sum, and not be made conceited by the thought, since all the value that we have or ever can have will be only the marks of the Lord's hands upon us. It is all of Him, and not of us.

In the cases referred to by the Lord, the persons had lost a part of that which represented their living. That explains their solicitude for it, and their joy on recovering it. Now just such honest, simple-hearted joy as these persons felt and manifested upon receiving their own, the Lord feels when He finds any of His own lost ones, only in as much greater degree as He is greater than any man. He is glad, and He does not attempt to conceal His joy.

Verse 10 of this chapter is too often misread. This is indicated by the words of the song so often sung:

Over a sinner returning,
Now let the angels rejoice.⁵²

People read it as though it said that there is rejoicing *among* the angels of God when a sinner repents. That is no doubt true; for if "all the sons of God shouted for joy" when the world was first created, we may be sure that they have no less joy when a new creation appears.

But what the text says is that there is joy *in the presence* of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. That indicates

⁵² Fanny Crosby, Hymn: *Come to the Fountain*, 1883.

that it is God himself who manifests and leads in the joy. He is as genuinely glad at heart as are the man and the woman who recover the lost sheep and the lost coin.

Increasing the Joy of Heaven

What a glorious thought that even here and now we can add to the joy of heaven, and that, even if we cannot sing a note, we may increase the music of heaven! Every saved sinner adds to the harmonies of heaven a note that no angel could ever produce. Thus it is that:

Ephesians 3

¹⁰ ...the manifold wisdom of God,

¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,

—is made known through the church unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Who would forego the pleasure of making the heart of God glad, and of hearing Him sing for joy? This joy of the Lord is our strength:

Nehemiah 8

¹⁰ The joy of the Lord is your strength.

Zephaniah 3

¹⁷ The Lord your God is in the midst of you, a mighty One who will save; He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing.

This is the joy of His salvation. His joy is the joy of a mighty One in His own strength, the joyful contemplation of His own work, just as when on the seventh day He rested from all His work, and delighted himself with the sight of the perfection of the work which His hands had made.

He rests in His love, and in it we may also rest, and rejoice and be glad for ever in that which He creates.

32. The Prodigal Son

Signs of the Times, July 28, 1890

Notes on the International Lesson for August 3

Timeline: VI-30 (The Prodigal Son)

Luke 15:11-24

THERE are few more comforting passages of Scripture than the parable of the prodigal son. Coming in the connection that it does, it carries its explanation with it: it is a most graphic representation of the love of God for the rebellious sons of men, and of His longing to receive them to himself again.

It is true that it was spoken for the special benefit of the scribes and Pharisees, who murmured because Jesus received publicans and sinners, being designed to show how more than willing God is to receive the most degraded and despised sinners; but this very fact makes it the more valuable, for if He will receive such, we may know that He will receive all. It is a vivid illustration of the saying,

John 6

³⁷ Him that comes unto me I will in no wise cast out.

The younger son in the parable may stand for all sinners. Everything that they have they have received from God; yet, forgetful of their obligation to Him, they have despised His ways, and have...

Isaiah 1

⁴ ...gone away backward.

We may not press too closely the main points in the narrative, which are necessary to give it form; yet it seems allowable to compare the young man's joining himself to a citizen of the country, when he began to be in want, to the sinner's plunging deeper into sin in order to shake off the first convictions of sin. How often when the want of God first makes itself felt, a man thinks to satisfy the want by joining himself

more closely to the world.

Luke 15

¹⁵ ...and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

¹⁶ And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.

He was now deserted by the false friends that flocked around him in his prosperous days, and was denied even the poor privilege of trying to satisfy his craving with the coarsest kind of fare. The husks, it is hardly necessary to say, were not the husks of corn, but were the pods of the carob tree, which somewhat resembled the locust.

¹⁷ And when he came to himself, he said...

¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father.

Although his position as a feeder of swine, forsaken by his companions, and starving, seems a most pitiable one, he was far better off now than when he was spending his substance in riotous living. Then he was intoxicated, and unable to distinguish the proper relation of things. Now the dizzy whirl had ceased, and he came to himself. He was in just as bad condition before as now, but he didn't know it. The worst thing about backslidden professors is not that they are...

Revelation 3

¹⁷ ...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,

—but that, being in this condition, they know it not.

The office of the Holy Spirit is to convince of sin and of righteousness. Often the conviction is produced in a way that seems very humiliating. Too often, when the conviction has been brought about by plain reproof, the sinner becomes angry at the reproof, thinking that it was administered for the purpose of humiliating him. He does not realize that the humiliation which he feels is due entirely to the position in which he has placed himself, and which the reproof has revealed to him.

The reproof which brings conviction shows the kindness of God in seeking to rescue him from his fallen condition. The witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God is no surer evidence that God cares for us than is the reproof of His Spirit, which brings the shame of conviction.

Hebrews 12 [Proverbs 3:12]

⁶ Whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.

Note how quickly the father cuts short the confession. He does not wait for him to go into a detailed account of all the evil deeds that he has committed. It is enough that the son has returned repentant to his father's house. He is alive, and coming back to put himself under the father's care and guidance.

The son had no claim on the father; he had spent all the portion of the estate that would have fallen to him, yet the father receives him on the same footing as though he had never gone astray.

And so the great point to be learned from this parable is that God receives sinners just as they are. If the poor prodigal had thought, when he came to a sense of his need, that he must fix himself up with a decent suit of clothes before he could go to his father, he would never have gone. The sinner is justified only by faith; and faith comes only when self-trust ceases.

Whoever is overwhelmed with the sense of his sin, and despised, perhaps, by men, may know that for him there is hope, for:

Luke 15

² This Man receives sinners.

33. A Wasted Life Restored

Present Truth, October 18, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for October 28

Timeline: VI-30 (The Prodigal Son)

Luke 15:11-24

EVERY reader of the Bible is thoroughly familiar with the story of the prodigal son; but we write as well for those who know little or even nothing of the Word, and therefore we repeat the story as it fell from the lips of Christ, in order that every detail may be fresh before us:

Luke 15

¹¹ And He said, A certain man had two sons:

¹² And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided unto them his living.

¹³ And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

¹⁴ And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

¹⁵ And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

¹⁶ And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

¹⁷ And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,

¹⁹ And am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants.

²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

²¹ And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son.

²² But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

²³ And bring here the fatted call, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

The context shows clearly that this story is meant to illustrate how God welcomes those who have wandered from Him, when they return. It is in connection with the story of the lost coin and the lost sheep, both of which were told to show the righteousness of Christ's action in receiving sinners, and eating with them. Immediately following the statement that there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repents, it is one of the most vivid pictures of the condition of the wanderer from the Father's house, and the joy that awaits him on his return.

Life the Portion

What is the portion of goods that falls to us, and which the Father has dealt out to us? It is life, with all that it contains, and all its glorious possibilities. This is plainly stated in the text, where we read that the father...

¹² ...divided unto them his living.

Literally rendered, this would read, "he divided to them his life." The Greek word is the ordinary word for life, which in an accommodated sense is used also of the means of life. Note that it was not only to the younger son that he gave the portion, but to both.

Acts 17

²⁵ [God] gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

He is our life, and He gives himself to all.

Ephesians 4

⁷ Unto every one of us is given grace according to the mea-

sure of the gift of Christ,

and,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁵ He died for all.

Psalms 145

⁹ The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.

Matthew 5

⁴⁵ He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Life is the distinguishing characteristic of the true God, our Father; He is “the living God,” and that which we inherit from Him is life. Having His life, we have all that we need, yea, far more than we can ask or think.

Hating Life

The glorious inheritance of life has not been appreciated by us. The fact that the young man proceeded immediately to squander his substance with riotous living, shows that he did not care for it; even so the way that we have wasted our lives shows that we have not loved life. Men may protest that they love life, and they may be alarmed at the sight of approaching death; yet if they love ways that end in death, they really love the death to which those ways inevitably lead.

True wisdom is life, for:

John 17

³ This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

And wisdom says:

Proverbs 8

³⁶ All they that hate me love death.

God says:

Hosea 4

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

How people deliberately throw life away! They trample under foot the commandments of God, yet:

John 12

⁴⁹ His commandment is life everlasting.

They act in almost every particular in opposition to the law of the Spirit of life from God, seeming to study ways of getting out of harmony with it. They shut the life-giving breath of God out of their sleeping and living rooms, and when they are forced to get where it does circulate in freshness and purity, the women carefully shut as much as possible out from their lungs, by tightly lacing themselves, and the men pollute it with their vile tobacco smoke.

Their habits of eating and drinking are such as to weaken the body and vitiate the mental powers. The youth are making themselves imbecile by the use of cigarettes and the practice of nameless vices; and as are the youth, so are the adults. Evil habits are only strengthened by age.

Everywhere there seems to be a mad rush to get rid of life as rapidly as possible; and when failing strength alarms people, they resort to stimulants and patent medicines to whip up the flagging life in order they may still have a little to spend with riotous living. It is too often the case that even professed Christians try to make God a minister to their profligacy, in that when they pray to Him they ask amiss, in order that they may consume the strength upon their lusts.

James 4

³ You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.

In all those ways men show that they hate life, and wish to consume it and get rid of it as soon as possible. They do not think that this is so. The young man did not think that he de-

spised the substance which he received from his father. He would have said that he thought a great deal of it, but if he had appreciated it he would not have wasted it. In his thoughtless folly he loved poverty and wretchedness, instead of wealth. This is seen in that he exchanged his wealth for want.

People will say that they do not like to be ill; yet when they continually pursue a course that produces all sorts of ills and pains, it plainly appears that they really love the result. They think only of the momentary gratification of appetite; but they should remember that the taste of a thing is not all experienced in the few moments that it is in the mouth. Actions do not end at the instant of performance. They think that certain things taste good or produce a pleasant sensation; but they ought to be able to see that the sorrow, the regret, the pain, the ills, that follow are just as much a part of the taste as is the first sensation. Sin has death in itself, and therefore whoever loves sin loves death.

The word rendered “riotous” in the text is literally, “without salvation,” unwholesome. In the young man’s actions there was no saving grace. So in our natural lives there is destruction, and not life.

Romans 3

¹¹ There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God.

¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.

¹³ Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

¹⁴ Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

¹⁵ Their feet are swift to shed blood:

¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways:

¹⁷ And the way of peace have they not known.

Romans 7

¹⁸ I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good

thing.

God has put eternity into the hearts of all men:

Ecclesiastes 3 [RV, margin]

¹¹ He has set eternity in their hearts,

—so that there can be no excuse, and none need be lost; yet they give diligence to squander it as fast as possible.

In Want

Luke 15

¹⁴ And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

The words “in want” are the same that in *Romans* 3:23 are rendered “come short”:

Romans 3

²³ All have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God.

God has given us His glory, for when He created man He...

Psalms 8

⁵ ...crowned him with glory and honor.

But we have wasted this inheritance, and now we lack it.

Jeremiah 2

¹¹ [We] have exchanged [our] glory for that which does not profit.

Amos 8

¹¹ Behold, the days come, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine for bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

The words of the Lord are true food and drink, and man is to live by every one of them. All the want and wretchedness that is in the world is due solely to a failure to appreciate and keep the words of the Lord. There is not a physical, any more than a spiritual, want that is not traceable to this rejection of

the word of God.

And there is none to give. Fair-weather friends forsake one as soon as the storm comes. There is none to help the one whose life is wrecked, and there is no one who could do it if he were so disposed. The end shows the beginning. The young man becomes a swineherd, the most degrading occupation imaginable, and now he sees what it was that he was doing all the time. He thought once that he was in “high life,” but now he can see that since his former practices reduced him to this condition, it is a fact that they were, even in the moments of the greatest exhilaration, nothing else than swine herding.

There are thousands of seemingly refined people who would be shocked beyond measure if the veil that hides the future could be removed for an instant, and they could see themselves from the other end of the line. Then they would see that the things in which they now boast are loathsomeness. Their glory is in their shame, in that they mind earthly things:

Philippians 3

¹⁹ Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

The young man had work now, and plenty of it, but it yielded no results. He was still starving. The swine could eat, but nobody would give him even their coarse food. He was working for nothing, and fasting.

Well, why not? He had been working for nothing all his previous life, in that he had been working to reduce his patrimony to nothing as fast as possible, and why should he complain when he obtained that for which he had been working?

Romans 6

²³ The wages of sin is death.

Those who despise the riches of the goodness and forbearance and longsuffering of God treasure up unto themselves wrath.

Romans 2

⁴ Or do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

⁵ But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasure up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Proverbs 1

²⁹ For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

³⁰ They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

³¹ Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

³² For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

Yet God is better to us than we are to ourselves, and He will not cast off for ever.

Awakening to Consciousness

At last the young man “came to himself.” All this time he had been beside himself. While he thought he had been living, he was dead. Whoever lives in sin is dead while he lives. He carries about with him a body of death. Affliction is not an unmixed evil.

Psalms 119

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept your word.

People wonder why it is that the Lord allows them to suffer so much as they do. If they had come to themselves they would understand that what they are suffering is only the second stage of their pleasure. Nobody suffers anything for nothing. There is in reality no difference between this present affliction and that former seeming pleasure, and this last is the most blessed part of the whole, in that it brings us to our

senses. If the whole of this present life were one of enjoyment then we should never wish to pass from death to life.

Abundance at Home

In the Father's house there is superabundance. Christ has come that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. *John* 10:10. There is no limit to His store of goodness. He divides to us His life, and yet has as much left. And since He has as much left after giving to all, and is always of the same mind, it follows that there is hope for us even after we have wasted our lives with riotous living.

Christ fed the hungry multitudes with the five loaves, supplying bread from His own being, and there was more left after all had been supplied than there was at the beginning. So in the case before us, there is no intimation that the father had been impoverished by the division of the property. Even His hired servants had enough and to spare; and when the prodigal son returned he was admitted to his former place in the family and there was no hint of lack. He shared the same as though he had never left home.

So God receives us, even after we have wasted our talents of strength and life, and gives to us liberally without upbraiding us for our folly. When we come repenting, and acknowledging our sin, there is no need for Him to keep reminding us of it. He forgets it, and supplies us so abundantly that there is nothing left to remind us of it.

Psalm 25

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth.

This is a prayer that is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and we may be sure that it will be answered. If God does not remember them, we may well forget them in the abundance of righteousness and strength that He bestows. All that we need to remember is that we are weakness and sinfulness in ourselves, and that we live only by the supplies given to us by

our Father moment by moment. Let every trembling sinner know that with the Lord there is mercy, and...

Psalms 130

⁷ ...with Him is plenteous redemption.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

Isaiah 65

¹⁷ And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Ephesians 5

²⁵ Christ...loved the church, and gave himself for it;

²⁶ That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,

²⁷ That He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

For every ill there is a remedy in Christ. For every disease there is perfect healing. Jesus Christ makes perfectly whole. The wasted energies way be restored;

Isaiah 40

³¹ For they that wail on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings of eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Psalms 103

² Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits;

³ Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;

⁴ Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies;

⁵ Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

He will show us the path of life, in which there is fullness of

joy and pleasures forevermore.⁵³ Whoever returns to the Father's house has the promise:

Psalms 36

⁸ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fullness of your house; and You shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures.

⁹ For with You is the fountain of life.

Coming to Christ and learning of Him, we find out how to live, so as to be able not only to eke out an existence in spite of the errors of the past, but to counteract all those errors.

Let every oppressed and afflicted person, who is suffering from the effects of past mistakes and sins committed in blind ignorance and unbelief, know that in God is perfect healing of body and mind. It is not to be found in any quack medicine, but in following the law of life in Christ.

Jesus Christ is the great Physician, who never loses a case that He undertakes, and He in no wise casts out anyone who comes to Him. Then come to Him, and find food and clothing and "unsearchable riches."⁵⁴

⁵³ **Psalms 16** ¹¹ You will show me the path of life: in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

⁵⁴ **Ephesians 3** ⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

34. An Assured Welcome

Present Truth, March 9, 1899

Timeline: VI-30 (The Prodigal Son)

Luke 15:11-32

IN THE parable of the prodigal son, the Saviour sets forth some of the principles which guide His dealings with repentant sinners. There is no depth of wretchedness or degradation so vile that it is beyond the reach of His divine compassion.

It is true that all, like the son in the parable, have no rightful claim upon the Lord. They have already received all that He had to give, and have wasted their substance in riotous living. But God's gifts are immeasurable. Men may think within themselves that they have surely exhausted the love and forbearance of God, but it is not so, for:

Psalms 118

¹ His mercy endures for ever.

They believe He loved them once, but that was in a time when they were comparatively innocent. If they would approach Him now, they feel that only anger and condemnation would meet their advances.

Many who, like the poor swineherd of the parable, have come to themselves, feel that they dare not approach the Lord as they are. They doubt the sufficiency of His love to pardon the sins which have become horrible in their own eyes, and Satan seeks to instill into their minds a fear to approach unto God until their own vivid impressions of guilt are somewhat dispelled.

But if they listen to his cunning suggestions and wait, in the vain hope of presenting themselves in less unworthy form, that which deadens the consciousness of sin will also take away the desire to return to the Lord.

God knows us for what we are. He is not disappointed with us when we discover our own unalterable weakness.

Isaiah 48

⁸ I knew that you would deal very treacherously,

—He says, and the love which could foreknow our treachery, and yet love us, provided for our being girded with faithfulness.

Isaiah 11

⁵ And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

We may come boldly, just as we are, to the throne of grace and find mercy for our need, because He who is our High Priest above, and who was tempted in all points like as we are, is not ashamed to call us brethren.⁵⁵ He does not deal with us according to our merits, or the multitude of our transgressions, but:

Titus 3

⁵ ...according to His mercy He saved us.

When the prodigal son ventured to think of returning home, he dared not hope that he would be accepted as a son. If he might only be a servant, his lot would be incomparably superior to his present situation. It did not dawn on his mind that he was still regarded as a son.

God does for us more than we can ask or think.⁵⁶ His mercy is great unto the heavens and His faithfulness reaches unto the clouds:

⁵⁵ **Hebrews 4** ¹⁵ For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 2 ¹¹ For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

⁵⁶ **Ephesians 3** ²⁰ Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

Psalm 36

⁵ Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and your faithfulness reaches unto the clouds.

Though we believe not, yet He abides faithful.⁵⁷

Isaiah 41

⁹ I have chosen you, and not cast you away.

So every one who is anxious to return to the Lord may come with confidence. God has given to all such the words to say, and this fact is assurance that the word will not be spoken in vain.

Hosea 14

² Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.

The promise to those who make use of these words in faith, is,

⁴ I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for my anger is turned away from them.

And what is the position of those who thus return to the Lord, on His own invitation? It is given in the words of the father to the older son:

Luke 15

³¹ Son, you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours.

The Lord has promised that He will never leave us, nor forsake us,⁵⁸ and He makes us, as His children, His heirs, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.⁵⁹

And the wonder of it is that this position of inconceivable

⁵⁷ **2 Timothy 2** ¹³ If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny himself.

⁵⁸ **Hebrews 13** ⁵ I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

⁵⁹ **Romans 8** ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

blessedness and unending delight is not merely for those who have never wandered from the Father's side, but is offered freely to all who are now in the depths to which their sins have brought them, who are feeding on husks and in need of all things. All these may arise from their degradation, and go unto their Father with the full assurance that, while they are yet a great way off, the Father himself will meet them with loving welcome and full forgiveness.

35. A Sound Mind

Present Truth, June 28, 1900

Timeline: VI-30 (The Prodigal Son)

Luke 15:17-18

THE prodigal son had wasted all his substance in riotous living in a far country, “seeing life” and “having a good time,” as so many say. So he doubtless thought, until his money was gone, and he began to starve to that extent that he envied the hogs their miserable food. But,

Luke 15

¹⁷ When he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and, I perish here with hunger!

¹⁸ I will arise and go to, my father.

The expression, “to come to one’s self” is a familiar one, and is used to indicate that one has recovered his consciousness after a period of unconsciousness or mental aberration. The young man had been insane, crazed by appetite and passion and the glitter of the world; but at last he had come to his senses, and he saw things just as they were.

His case is given as a representative one. No sinner is in his right mind. There is a common notion in the world, that when a man becomes a Christian in earnest, so much so that he makes an abrupt and radical change in his life, he is “out of his head;” but that notion is on the principle that every insane or intoxicated person thinks that others are in his condition, and that he himself is sound in mind.

The truth is that the true Christian is the only perfectly sane person.

2 Timothy 1

⁷ For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

He gives us His own mind, which is the highest wisdom,

even though the world may call it foolishness. No person on earth ever went insane through accepting the Gospel of Christ. Such a thing is impossible.

The Lord casts out evil and unclean spirits, and leaves the afflicted soul that was wild and uncontrollable,

Mark 5

¹⁵ ...clothed and in his right mind.

Peace and quietness come by the Gospel. So whenever you hear of one who has “religious mania” know that it is through failure to lay hold on the eternal life which is the sum of Christianity.

36. God's Prompt Response

Present Truth, October 18, 1900

Timeline: VI-30 (The Prodigal Son)

Luke 15:17-21

WHEN the prodigal son “came to himself” (*Luke 15:17*), recovered his senses after his career of madness, he planned out a speech to make to his father, as soon as he could see him on his return, and this is what he proposed to say:

Luke 15

¹⁸ Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight,

¹⁹ And am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants.

But it will be noticed that he did not repeat all of this speech. He *did* say,

²¹ Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son,

—but he got no further. His father gave him no time to make his request to become a hired servant. He had returned and acknowledged his sin, and had confessed his unworthiness to be called a son, and that was enough. At once the father exclaimed, “My son!” So God calls us to return, saying,

Jeremiah 3

¹³ Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God.

1 John 1

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Yes, and He does not wait for us to go into all the details; He does not require us to recount all the evil deeds that we have done. As soon as we say,

“I have sinned,”

He breaks in with,

“You are righteous.”

When we say,

“I am not worthy to be called your son,”

He exclaims,

“This my son.”

Thus He fulfills His word:

Isaiah 65

²⁴ While they are yet speaking, I will hear.

37. Providing for the Future

Present Truth, October 25, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for November 4

Timeline: VI-31 (The Dishonest Steward)

Luke 16:1-13

Luke 16

¹ And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and was same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

² And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of you? give an account of your stewardship; for you may be no longer steward.

³ Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord takes away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

⁴ I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

⁵ So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much do you owe unto my lord?

⁶ And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take your bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

⁷ Then said he to another, And how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take your bill, and write fourscore.

⁸ And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

⁹ And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

¹⁰ He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

¹¹ If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

¹³ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate

the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

God the Householder, Men the Stewards

THAT this parable was designed to give instruction concerning heavenly things is self-evident; therefore we may understand that God is represented by the householder, and that we are His stewards. This is corroborated by the following:

1 Peter 4

¹⁰ As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

This much being plain on the face of the text, we may use it as a guide to the rest.

Stewards of Life

Ephesians 4

⁷ Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

The grace of God is given to us in Christ. He is the brightness of the Father's glory (*Hebrews 1:3*), and the grace which God bestows is...

Ephesians 3

¹⁶ ...according to the riches of His glory.

This grace is given, not to a few, but to all, as we just read.

Titus 2

¹¹ The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

But,

Colossians 3

⁴ Christ...is our life.

He is not the life of a few only, but of all, for He is “the life.” *John* 14:6. There is no other life.

John 1

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Acts 17

²⁵ He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

“The gift by grace”⁶⁰ is the gift of life in Christ. Christ, the life, is given to every man, and His life is the manifestation of the manifold grace of God, of which we are appointed stewards. Life, therefore, constitutes the goods which the Householder has committed to our charge.

Called to Account for Squandering Life

The steward was not accused of outright theft, but of wasting his lord’s goods, which amounts to the same thing. The expression is identical with that in the 15th chapter, where it is said that the prodigal son “wasted his substance.” The life of God is that over which we have been made stewards, and we have wasted it.

Few regard life as a sacred trust to be cherished. Most feel that their life is their own to do with as they please; but such should know that they will be called upon to give account of their stewardship. People may go on recklessly for a time, but the day of reckoning will surely come.

Ecclesiastes 11

⁹ Rejoice, O young man, in your youth; and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know, that for all these things, God will bring you into Judgment.

Romans 13

¹² Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

⁶⁰ **Romans 5** ¹⁵ But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and *the gift by grace*, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.

A Timely Warning

It is not the province of any parable exactly to fit, in every detail, that which it illustrates. In reality, there is no chance to provide for the future, after we are called to account; but this parable is given as a warning, while yet there is time; so the steward is represented as making provision for himself, after his lord had called upon him to give an account of his affairs. After all, the same chance is given us, for we read the last message of the everlasting Gospel:

Revelation 14

⁷ Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His Judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

This warning message is even now sounding, giving us an opportunity to get our accounts into such condition that we may without fear present them for examination.

Giving In Order to Save

The steward's plan for providing for his future is that which is especially recommended to our attention. He called his lord's debtors and began to make distribution to them, for that is what his act amounted to. In taking off fifty measures of wheat and twenty measures of oil from the accounts of the two debtors, the steward actually gave them that much.

Now there is no reason to suppose that his lord was any loser by this transaction or that the steward was in any way wronging his employer. So clumsy a device as altering bills and defrauding the proprietor is easily detected, and when the lord discovered the fraud he would have punished the steward, instead of commending him. It is quite evident that the steward made up the difference himself, for he certainly had something that he could call his own, after his period of service.

Someone may ask,

“Why need he be troubled about how he should live after being deprived of his stewardship, if he had property of his own?”

The answer is simple: He had some means, but not enough to last him long; so instead of foolishly hoarding up that little, he freely gave it away, knowing that it would return to him many times increased when he needed it. If he gave something to his lord’s debtors, they would gladly receive him into their houses, and he would never lack for a home after the settlement with his lord. With wise foresight he provided for the future.

True Wisdom and Foolishness

Luke 16

⁸ The lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world in their generation are wiser than the children of light.

How is this? It is this way: The children of this world give diligence, as well as they know how to provide for the future as far as they can see. It is true they do not see beyond this present life, but they are wise in their generation.

The children of light, however, have eternal life set before them, yet many of them act as though this life were all. In this they are not so wise as the children of this world. They cling to this life and its possessions as though it were all, forgetting that:

Luke 17

³³ Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

The man of the world, knowing nothing of anything more than this life, holds fast to it and all that it contains; but the child of light, if he be as wise in his generation as the child of the world, freely gives up this life with all its treasures, that he may possess the eternal life.

A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he gave away, the more he had.⁶¹

Laying Up Life Treasure in Heaven

The Saviour says:

Matthew 6

²⁰ Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal;

²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

To the young ruler, He said:

Matthew 19

²¹ If you will be perfect, go, and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven.

1 Timothy 6

¹⁷ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy;

¹⁸ That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

¹⁹ Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life,

–or, “on the life which is life indeed.” All these words correspond to those in our lesson:

Luke 16 [RV]

⁹ Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that then it shall fall, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

Are we to conclude from these things that heaven can be purchased? Not by any means. We cannot buy heaven; but by giving up this life, we get the eternal life; and we show that we give up this life, when we give up that which pertains only

⁶¹ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, Part II*.

to this present world. The lesson is summed up in these words:

Colossians 3

² Set your affections on things above, not on things on this earth.

³ For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

⁴ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory.

We have no power over life, to retain it; God alone, the Author of life, can preserve it; so when, instead of trying to hold to this present life, and to the things that pertain to it, we give it over into His keeping, we have it awaiting us at the Judgment, when we give account of our stewardship.

And how do we give our life with its treasures to God? Christ tells us:

Matthew 25

⁴⁰ Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.

Proverbs 19

¹⁷ He that gives to the poor lends to the Lord.

The grace of Christ, of which we are made stewards, is the grace of giving.

2 Corinthians 8

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.

As He showed His love for us by giving himself for us, so we show our love for Him by giving ourselves to others. This we may do, even if we have no money. Strength is that by which money is earned, and therefore he who gives his strength for the welfare of others gives more than the one who gives thousands in money, but withholds himself.

This Present Life a Section of Eternity

The way in which we use this life determines whether or not we shall have the life to come. This life is a sample cut off from eternity, that we may show how we appreciate it. If we waste this life, how can we expect God to continue it to us eternally?

Luke 16

¹¹ If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how will you commit to your trust the true riches?

¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, how will you give to him that which is your own?

If we do not use earthly things wisely, we cannot expect to be entrusted with things of infinitely greater value. Let us then use this life as not abusing it, remembering that we have to provide not merely for a few years, but for eternity, and that the only way to do that is to give all to Him who is eternal.

38. The Rich Man and Lazarus (1890)

Signs of the Times, August 4, 1890

Timeline: VI-32 (The Rich Man and Lazarus)

Luke 16:19-31

THERE is probably no portion of Scripture that has been the subject of more controversy than this one, and none which has been more the subject of that grossest of all exegetical view—private interpretation; that is, interpretation according to sound, and not according to sense; interpretation according to one's previously-conceived opinions, without any regard to the context or to the testimony of other portions of Scripture, on the same point.

Accordingly, the first and chief work of the commentator on this passage is to disabuse the minds of his hearers of erroneous notions, by showing what it does *not* mean.

That this scripture is of the nature of a parable is evident, because to give all its terms a literal application would make nonsense of it. The characters are spoken of as individuals in the flesh, having all the organs and all the desires of men in the flesh. They have eyes, tongues, bosom, power of speech, thirst, love of brethren, etc. But how could Lazarus be in Abraham's bosom? If Lazarus was taken there, then all the saved must be there, likewise, and that is an impossibility. This, of itself, shows that this is not a literal narrative.

More than this, the general testimony of Scriptures as to the condition of men in death, shows that it is impossible that this should be the story of an actual transaction. In *Ecclesiastes* 9 we read:

Ecclesiastes 9

⁵ For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

⁶ Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in any

thing that is done under the sun.

And this agrees with the words of Job:

Job 14

²¹ His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

David also says:

Psalms 146

³ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

⁴ His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Hezekiah also said:

Isaiah 38

¹⁸ For the grave cannot praise you; death cannot celebrate you; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

These are strong, positive statements. They cannot be ignored or explained away, without denying the inspiration of the Scriptures of which they form a part. We must believe that they mean just what they say; and therefore we know that the portion of Scripture that we are studying cannot mean that two persons actually carried on a conversation after death.

Since a man knows nothing in the grave; he is unconscious of the prosperity or the adversity of his sons; and his thoughts have ceased, it is evident that a man could not after death feel any solicitude for the welfare of his brethren. But someone will cry,

“Why have we not as good right to affirm consciousness after death from this passage in *Luke*, as you have to affirm unconsciousness after death from the texts that you have just quoted?”

For this reason: If we should affirm from one text that the

dead are conscious, and from another that they are unconscious, then we make the Scripture contradict itself, and thus deny its inspiration. But the statements quoted from Solomon and David and Job and Hezekiah are positive statements of fact, and the verses in *Luke* are not literal statements, as we have shown. Therefore we must interpret the figurative or inferential in harmony with the positive and literal; or at least we must so interpret them as not to contradict the positive.

Take another thought. David was a good man; beloved of the Lord, as well as Abraham was. But of David, Peter said when he was full of the Holy Spirit,

Acts 2

³⁴ For David is not ascended into the heavens.

And Paul said,

Acts 13

³⁶ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

If David has not ascended into the heavens, then neither Abraham nor any other saint has ascended into the heavens. Let us now note a few points to the parable itself.

Luke 16

²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died; and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died; and was buried.

What was carried into Abraham's bosom? Was it the same Lazarus that laid at the rich man's gate? Was he carried there in person? It has already been seen that this could not be. Those who interpret the parable as teaching the condition of men in death, uniformly say that only the soul or spirit of Lazarus was taken to Abraham's bosom. But mark, there is no change in the subject. The same one who died was carried.

¹⁶ ...the beggar died, and was carried.

Shall we say that this means, “The beggar died, and *his spirit* was carried”? Let us see how it would work in another instance. I am telling about a tornado, and I say,

“I ran out of the house and was thrown down.”

Someone asks,

“Did it hurt you?”

I reply,

“How could I be hurt by the falling down of the house, when I was not in it?”

And then you say,

“Why, you didn’t say anything about the house being thrown down; you said that you were thrown down.”

And this is the fact. My statement was that I fell down; if I meant to say that the house fell down, I should have said so. Likewise, what the text says is that Lazarus died, and that he, the same that died, was carried into Abraham’s bosom. If it be claimed that it was simply his body that died, then it was his body that was carried. If we say that it was the soul that was carried, then it was the soul that died.

In like manner we say of the rich man that the same thing that died was buried. But if it be claimed that the statement that “the beggar died and was carried,” etc., means that he died and that his soul was carried, then it must also be claimed that the statement that “the rich man also died, and was buried,” means that the rich man died and his soul was buried.

All this serves simply to show that the passage is not a literal narrative of an actual occurrence, and that therefore it has no bearing whatever on the condition of man in death. The fact that dead men are represented as talking, no more

proves that it is natural for dead men to talk, than the fact that in *Judges* 9:8-15 the trees, the vine, and the bramble-bush are represented as talking, proves that it is natural for trees and vines to use spoken language.

It should also be remembered that the angels do not carry the saints to their reward at death. Jesus said that they who served Him by doing deeds of kindness to those too poor to recompense them, should be recompensed...

Luke 14

¹⁴ ...at the resurrection of the just.

The resurrection of the just is when the Lord himself descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

The voice of the archangel calls them from their graves.

John 5

²⁸ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

²⁹ And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

It is at this time that:

Matthew 24

³¹ He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

It is then that they see the cutting off of the wicked, and not till then. Although probation ceases at death, the judgment

does not decide the destiny of men till after that,⁶² even till the coming of Christ.

1 Corinthians 4

⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad.

Therefore we know that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was not given for the purpose of showing the condition of men in death. The things which it relates could take place only after the coming of Christ, and the resurrection.

What, then, is taught by this portion of Scripture? That is a more difficult thing to tell. Nobody is justified in telling positively what a parable means, when that parable is not explained in the Scripture.

2 Peter 1

²⁰ No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.

Which means that no scripture is an explanation of its own text. If commentators and Bible students had spent as much time studying this scripture as they have in trying to fit it to their own opinions, no doubt there would have been more knowledge of its meaning.

We may be sure, however, that incidentally it proves that death ends probation. It also proves that earthly prosperity is not a sign of the favor of God. This was a very necessary les-

⁶² **Hebrews 9** ²⁸ So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

son for the Jews to learn. They despised the poor, and thought that to be rich was an evidence that God was pleased with them. Of course those who held that idea would very easily get into the habit of employing questionable means to increase their wealth, persuading themselves that the end would justify the means.

Another thing that should not be overlooked is the proof that the Bible is the highest authority. No phenomena can take the place of plain Scripture statements.

Luke 16

²⁹ They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

³¹ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

This is true in a general sense. If one will not be convinced by the Bible, nothing will convince him; and when one comes to believe a thing because of certain phenomena that he has witnessed, as, for instance, of a future life because of the supposed appearance of departed friends, his form of belief is always that which the Bible does not sanction.

This was especially applicable to the Jews, however, for since they refused to be convinced of the genuineness of Christ's claims by Moses and the prophets, who testified of Him, His wonderful resurrection only hardened them.

39. The Rich Man and Lazarus (1900)

Present Truth, November 1, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for November 11

Timeline: VI-32 (The Rich Man and Lazarus)

Luke 16:19-31

THE Pharisees had the idea that a man's pecuniary condition in this world was an index of the measure of God's love for him, and of his state in the next world; and this idea, through the teaching of the Pharisees, came to be quite prevalent among the Jews.

Indeed it is not very difficult for such a notion to find acceptance, since all men are prone to believe that worldly prosperity is the chief end of human existence. It is easy for the well-to-do to imagine that it is well with them, as regards the world to come; while the poor are always inclined to think that their hard lot is due to the fact that God does not care for them.

Men have ever been ready to look upon affliction as a judgment from God, instead of a means of conveying needed instruction and blessing. This was the burden of the three friends of Job. They continually charged him with having been a very bad man, saying that his pitiable condition was proof of it.

It was to counteract this false idea, that Christ spoke the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He had shown, by the parable of the unfaithful steward, how necessary it is to lay up treasure in heaven, closing with the words,

Luke 16

¹³ You cannot serve God and mammon [or riches].

¹⁴ And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided Him.

¹⁵ And He said unto them, You are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the

eight of God.

Then He proceeded to speak the well-known parable which illustrates this saying. That it is a parable, and not a narrative of an actual occurrence, is evident from the text. The language is figurative.

It is true that at the beginning we have what might take place anywhere, and, indeed a picture of a very common condition—riches and poverty in close connection and sharp contrast; but soon we read that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into

²² ...Abraham's bosom.

What a capacious bosom Abraham must have, if all the good are carried to rest in it!

"Oh," one says, "that is but a figurative expression for Paradise or heaven."

Exactly, and that shows that the whole story is a parable, and that we are not being treated to an actual conversation between a man in Heaven and another in Hades.

Just as "Abraham's bosom" is figurative, so we have, by a figure of speech, dead men represented as talking, although...

Ecclesiastes 9

⁶ The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

⁷ Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished, neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.

In like manner trees and plants are represented as talking, and going forth to choose a king. *Judges* 9:7-15. To one who knows the Scriptures, this parable in *Luke* would no more convey the idea that the dead are conscious, and interested in the affairs of life, than would Jotham's parable make them believe that trees and vines and brambles walk about the coun-

try conversing and transacting business with one another.
Read a few statements:

Job 14

¹⁰ Man dies, and wastes away; yea, man gives up the ghost,
and where is he?

¹¹ As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays, and
dries up:

¹² So man lies down, and rises not; till the heaven a be no
more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

When Christ comes, and “the heavens pass away with a
great noise” (2 *Peter* 3:10), then those...

Daniel 12

² ...that sleep in the dust of the earth,

John 5

²⁸ ...shall hear His voice,

²⁹ And shall come forth: they that have done good unto the
resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the
resurrection of damnation.

Then will be fulfilled these words:

Job 14

¹⁴ If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my ap-
pointed time will I wait, till my change come.

¹⁵ You shall call, and I will answer You: You will have a desire
to the work of your hands.

While waiting for this change, the condition of the dead is
one of corruption, as we read:

Job 17

¹³ If I wait, the grave is my house; I have made my bed in the
darkness.

¹⁴ I have said to corruption, You are my father; to the worm,
You are my mother and my sister.

And the change, at the call of the Lord, is thus described:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

These texts are quoted, not for the purpose of explaining the parable, but to remove a false idea of it. It is not designed to teach anything whatever as to the state of the dead; but since some have regarded it as doing so, these texts are quoted to show the facts in the case.

With one's mind disabused of this misapprehension, the teaching of the parable is plain enough. It shows that:

James 2

⁵ God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him.

And that those who, regardless of the Lord's poor, heap up treasures to themselves, will find that those riches will eat their flesh like fire.

James 5

¹ Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

² Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

³ Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days.

⁴ Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

⁵ You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; you have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

Psalm 49

¹⁸ Men will praise you, when you do well to yourself.

But,

Luke 16

¹⁵ That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

The parable contains not only a warning to those who “trust in uncertain riches,” but comfort to the poor and afflicted. They have not the slightest reason to think that God has forgotten them. We read concerning His people:

Isaiah 63

⁹ In all their affliction, He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them, and carried them all the days of old.

Life seems a long-drawn-out torture to the afflicted soul who does not see and know the Lord; but he should remember that life is more than a few years long. If we receive evil things, as well as good things, with thanksgiving, as from the hand of our Father, and know that we suffer only with Christ, eternity is ours, and:

Romans 8

¹⁸ I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

Think how insignificant the longest life of poverty and affliction will seem, when looked back upon after a hundred thousand million years of fullness of joy in the kingdom of God, which will be but the beginning of eternity.

2 Corinthians 4

¹⁷ Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the

things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Whatever your condition in life, whether you have wealth and ease, or poverty and affliction, never forget to take the long view, and you will be kept from becoming either high-minded or downcast.

40. Ready to Forgive

Present Truth, September 27, 1894

Timeline: VI-33 (Forgiveness, Faith, and Service)

Luke 17:4

Luke 17

⁴ If he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.

WE ARE to forgive even as God has for Christ's sake forgiven us:

Ephesians 4

³² And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

And of God's readiness to forgive, we read,

Psalms 86

⁵ You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy to all that call on You.

The Lord does not ask us to be more kind in forgiving than He is; therefore we may know that whenever we turn to the Lord, saying, "I repent," we are forgiven.

Romans 10

¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Faith Needed

When Jesus told His disciples how ready they should be to forgive, they immediately said to Him,

Luke 17

⁵ Increase our faith,

—or, "Give to us faith." They recognized the fact that it is not in human nature to forgive so freely. It is not so difficult to forgive an occasional offense, provided it is not a very great

one; but to forgive a persistent offender,—one who repeats the same injury time after time,—is a rare thing. Without faith it cannot be done.

What does faith do? It lays hold of God's righteousness, and appropriates it for the forgiveness of our own sins. When our faith makes real to us the fact that God freely forgives us, although we have repeatedly committed the same transgressions against Him, then, and only then, can we be longsuffering with our fellow-men.

This instruction with regard to forgiving, therefore, is not simply an admonition, but a wonderful comfort, since it shows us how God forgives us.

41. Increase of Faith

Present Truth, August 1, 1895

Timeline: VI-33 (Forgiveness, Faith, and Service)

Luke 17:5

WHEN the Lord spoke of the necessity of forgiveness, the apostles said to Him,

Luke 17

⁵ Increase our faith.

Many people today make the same prayer, and make it in vain because they do not recognize the Lord's answer.

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

If a person desires more faith, he has but to listen more attentively to the Word of God. There is no other place from which faith can come, and so we must go there for it.

Hearing the Word

But let it be remembered that it is the Word of God, and not that of men, that is to be heard. If men are really sent from God, and preach only the Word, then it is all right; but let it never be forgotten that faith cannot come from hearing the word of men.

It is evident, therefore, that when men speak we must be able to discern whether or not they are speaking the Word of God. That means that we must know the Word of God for ourselves. We must study it for ourselves, recognizing God's voice in it, to know exactly what it says.

If this is done there will be no difficulty in the matter of faith. That man who gives himself patiently to the study of the Word of God, will have faith just as surely as he will have strength if he eats good food and breathes pure air.

42. Unprofitable Servants

Signs of the Times, February 11, 1889

Timeline: VI-33 (Forgiveness, Faith, and Service)

Luke 17:7-10

Luke 17

⁷ But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

⁸ And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird yourself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward you shall eat and drink?

⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

¹⁰ So likewise you, when you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

A VERY important lesson is conveyed by our Lord's illustration in *Luke 17:7-10*.

It is not among Catholics alone that it is considered possible to perform works of supererogation.⁶³ There are very many who, by their actions at least, hold that they can place God under obligations to them. Love of approbation, and the overvaluing of one's own deeds, are so universal that there are very few who do not at times have some traces of that disposition.

With some the idea obtains that God keeps a debit and credit account, charging each individual with his evil deeds, and giving him credit for all his good deeds, and that if the good overbalance the evil, then God owes him a reward. With this idea, more or less clearly defined, most worldlings flatter themselves that their case will be all right at the last.

⁶³ "works of supererogation — (in the Roman Catholic Church) actions believed to form a reserve fund of merit that can be drawn on by prayer in favor of sinners." Also (general meaning), "the performance of more work than duty requires." (Oxford English Dictionary)

Many professors often imagine that God is under some obligation to them, and they manifest it in various ways. If they have given somewhat liberally to the cause of God, and have not been prospered as they think they should be, they withhold their gifts. They do not propose to work for the Lord unless they can receive at once large returns on the investment.

Others find it difficult when times are hard to make as good a living for their families as they desire, and so they say,

“We cannot afford to keep the Sabbath.”

Which is as much as to say,

“If God does not furnish me with everything I want, He need not expect my services.”

Still others look for their reward in appreciation of their work by their brethren. If their efforts are not estimated at their true value, they become discouraged, and refuse to work because they are not appreciated.

Now against all feeling of this kind, our Lord utters a rebuke. Summing up the case, he says:

Luke 17

¹⁰ So likewise you, when you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.

The truth is that the obligation is upon the side of man. The fact that God created us and preserves us alive, places man under obligation to give his whole service to God. Jeremiah says,

Lamentations 3

²² It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.

Every moment of man's life places him under greater obligation to God than he can ever hope to fulfill. And as this mercy is extended to all, it is not alone the professed Christian

who owes service to God. Sinners are under as much obligation to God as though they had made a profession to serve Him.

But if we repent, and obey the commandments of God in every particular, how does the case stand then? We are still unprofitable servants. God is none the richer for our service. There is a vast amount of sin that we have committed in the past, and as we can do no more than our duty from day to day, we are still largely in debt. Were it not that Christ has been set forth...

Romans 3

²⁵ ...for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God,

—the best of men would fail to obtain heaven. And so after all that has been done, eternal life must be...

Romans 6

²³ ...the gift of God,...through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A proper appreciation of this would serve to keep us humble, and prevent many mistakes made on account of our self-sufficiency.

Let us be careful lest we become lifted up because of the faith that we have, and so lose the grace of God which is promised to the humble. The more real faith we have in Christ the more will we acknowledge our entire dependence upon Him, and our own utter weakness. Let us heed these words of the apostle:

Romans 12

³ For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

43. All Virtue in Christ

Present Truth, November 29, 1894

Timeline: VI-33 (Forgiveness, Faith, and Service)

Luke 17:10

THAT there is no virtue in works the Saviour taught His disciples when He said,

Luke 17

¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.

Our relation to God is not the relation of two independent parties one of whom hires himself to the other, for we are dependent upon God for all that we have, while He is dependent upon us for nothing. We are His because He created us and redeemed us. We are therefore under obligation to serve Him with our powers of mind and body. This is our duty, and it is all we can do. And therefore, whatever works we may perform, we are not entitled to claim any reward from Him because of them.

No man can put the Lord under any obligations to him, because the Lord, being omnipotent and omniscient, cannot become in any way dependent upon men. It is true that He speaks of man as His hired servants, laboring in His vineyard (*Matthew* 20:1-16; 21:28-44), and has promised to reward every man according to his works (*Matthew* 16:27; 25:14-46). But this is only a manifestation of God's love and generosity to men, and not the fulfillment of any obligation under which man has placed Him.

For fallen man there is no virtue, no sanctifying power, no merit to which he can claim anything from God, outside of Jesus Christ. And,

Hebrews 13

⁸ [He is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever,

—having just as much merit at one time as another, since He has all merit. Having Him we have His merit and His holiness, and the same at one time as at another, and we can have no more, since that is all that there is. There is no other and no greater worthiness for us than that of Christ.

And since He has given himself freely to us, we have nothing to do to become righteous and worthy but to receive Him into our hearts by faith. This is the very purpose for which Christ suffered and died; and any religion that is built upon the merit of good works and penance, ignores this vital truth which God has at an infinite cost established and revealed to men.

44. Present Blessings

Present Truth, March 11, 1897

Timeline: VI-34 (The Raising of Lazarus)

John 11:21-22

JESUS met Martha and Mary, after the death of Lazarus, each of them in reproachful sorrow,

John 11 [also vs 32]

²¹ Lord, if You had been here, my brother had not died.

Martha, however, did not allow regret for the past to shut out all comfort for the present, as she added,

²² But I know that even now, whatsoever You will ask of God, God will give it You.

It was a confession of faith for a present blessing, though even then she was hardly prepared to believe that Jesus would immediately raise Lazarus to life, and found it easier to believe for the future—that in the resurrection of the last day her brother should rise again. The Lord had comfort for them just then and gave them their brother risen from the dead. But the lesson of Martha's confession is for all time.

It is natural enough to regret the past; to feel that if only this or that had not occurred, or if only the Lord had interposed and ordered differently, we could now have faith and courage.

But whatever the past, there is blessing from the Lord for every one just now. He has present comfort for those who sorrow under bereavement, and present forgiveness and good cheer for those who sorrow over past failures and misfortunes.

God lives to bless and comfort and work in the eternal present.

45. Life by the Resurrection

Present Truth, February 4, 1897

Timeline: VI-34 (The Raising of Lazarus)

John 11:24-43

WHEN Jesus said to Martha that her brother Lazarus should rise again, she replied,

John 11

²⁴ I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

His answer to her was intended to open her mind to the understanding of the fact that as the resurrection at the last day was through Him, so He was able at that time to raise her brother from the grave. Lazarus was now dead, and awaiting his resurrection from the dust.

Martha understood that fact. She had sat at the feet of Jesus and been taught of Him. She knew what death was. If she had been in error, He who alone had the power of life and death was before her—of Him it was said,

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus,

—and He would have told her the truth. He would have done that which was the expression of His love for them, and given the assurance that was best for them. This is what He did.

If Lazarus had not been dead, but entered into a blissful immortality, Jesus, who loved them both, would have told Martha so, and explained to her how unkind an act it would be to call back the loved one to the cares and trials of the world.

But He told her nothing different from that which she had said. Lazarus was dead. As to this fact, and the understanding of what death was, there is evident harmony in the thought and words of Martha and Christ. The sisters said,

“Our brother is dead, come and see where we have laid him.”

Christ went, looked upon him in the grave where he had been laid, and said,

John 11

⁴³ Lazarus, come forth.

And he came, not from the heavens,—a transfigured, seraphic being,—but from the grave, the man Lazarus, bound with grave clothes.

46. The Resurrection

Present Truth, March 29, 1894

Timeline: VI-34 (The Raising of Lazarus)

John 11:25

John 11

²⁵ I am the resurrection and the life; he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

THE doctrine of the resurrection from the dead is the bright light that shines through all the gloom of mortal existence.

And in the darkest hour, when standing beside the form of one bound to us by the closest ties, we look upon the folded hands from which the burden of life has dropped, there are no words that comfort us like these. The hope of man is in a coming restoration; and all that strikes against the doctrine of the resurrection strikes against that hope.

A Pillar of the Faith

That doctrine underlies the Christian faith, and he who holds it not has not the faith. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy of some...

2 Timothy 2

¹⁸ ...who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already; and overthrow the faith of some.

There are doctrines in our own day which tend directly to belittle the doctrine of the resurrection, making it nearly if not altogether a superfluous thing; and now, as in the apostle's day, they will result in the overthrow of the faith to such as receive them.

The teaching of...

Titus 2

¹¹ ...the grace of God, that brings salvation, [and] has appeared unto all men,

¹² [is,] that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

If this is our position, we are in obedience to the Gospel. And this glorious appearing of Christ is for...

Daniel 12

² ...those that sleep in the dust,

—as well as for...

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁵ ...we who are alive and remain, [unto His coming].

For we are told that:

¹⁶ The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

And with this knowledge we are to comfort one another while He tarries beyond our sight.

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Resurrection of the Saints

Faith in the resurrection of Christ implies faith in the visible, bodily reappearing of all those who sleep in Him, at the last day. And without faith in the resurrection of the saints, there can be no faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And without faith in this, no hope can be derived from the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 15

¹⁴ If Christ be not raised, [says Paul,] then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

And he adds,

¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

And to the Thessalonians he writes,

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁴ If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

The resurrection of Christ, in visible, bodily form, as He appeared to His disciples after the crucifixion,⁶⁴ and the resurrection of His saints in like manner, and their dependence for life and immortality upon His resurrection, are doctrines that stand or fall together. But they cannot fall, because they rest on the word of the Lord.

At the Second Coming

The glorious second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the just, and the bestowal upon the righteous of their reward, are the events that transpire together. For when Christ comes His reward is with Him,

Revelation 22

¹² ...to give to every man according as his work shall be.

Luke 14

¹⁴ ...for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

The resurrection will be as universal as death has been. The Saviour said, that:

John 5

²⁸ The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

²⁹ And shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

But we are told that every man shall come in his own order;

⁶⁴ **Luke 24** ³⁹ Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have.

1 Corinthians 15

²³ Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.

They that are not Christ's do not appear at His coming. That resurrection is...

Luke 14

¹⁴ ...the resurrection of the just;

John 5

²⁹ ...the resurrection of damnation,

—follows afterward. The Apostle John saw in vision:

Revelation 20

⁴ ...the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, [and] they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

God is the Author of life, and the only source from which life can come. The righteous have eternal life, the life of Christ himself. They cannot be held by death, any more than Christ himself could be held in Joseph's tomb. Those who have the righteousness of Christ must also have His life; for righteousness is eternal. They may be laid away in the grave; but they still have life in Christ:

Colossians 3

³ [Their] life is hid with Christ in God.

And,

Colossians 3

⁴ When Christ, who is their life, shall appear, then shall they also appear with Him in glory.

Revelation 20

⁶ Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power; but they shall

be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

And,

Revelation 14

¹³ Blessed, [also,] are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works to follow them.

47. The Resurrection and the Life

Present Truth, July 2, 1903

International Sunday-school Lesson for July 12

Timeline: VI-34 (The Raising of Lazarus)

John 11:25, 32-46

IN A LESSON from the 11th chapter of *John*, on the raising of Lazarus, who could think of any other verse than the 25th as the Golden Text? More majestic words were never uttered on earth than these:

John 11

²⁵ I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that lives and believes in me shall never die.

No Death in Christ

Millions of times they have been repeated over the dead, to the unspeakable comfort of the living; yet so prodigal are we with the “exceeding great and precious promises” of the Lord, that we allow them for the most part to go to waste, unused by us in our daily life.

Something more than a glimmering of the fullness of the truth seems to have been in the mind of Martha, when she met Jesus with the words:

²¹ Lord, if You had been here, my brother had not died.

²² But I know, that even now, whatsoever You will ask of God, God will give it You.

She recognized the fact that the presence of Jesus is a protection from death. This is what most of us have yet to learn. We still sing,

Abide with me when night is nigh;
For without Thee I dare not die,⁶⁵

⁶⁵ John Keble, Hymn: *Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear*, 1820.

—forgetful of the fact that with Him there is no death; because:

John 11

²⁵ [He is] the life,

and,

2 Timothy 1

¹⁰ [He] has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

In Him, even the dead find life; much more, therefore, shall those who live in Him, and He in them, be preserved from death. Some such may, indeed, as Christ himself, and Paul, and others, offer their lives as witnesses to the truth, but it will be in the joyful consciousness that they are victors over death, that the sting is withdrawn, and that it is impossible for them to be held by it.

Daily Resurrection Power

Let us think of this golden truth, “I am the resurrection and the life,” a little more closely, that we may know how to make it practical in our daily lives; and not merely on funeral occasions.

Life is the most common thing in the world, yet it is the thing that, in general, is least understood. Christ is the resurrection, because He is the life; and He is the life, because He is the resurrection. Each one involves the other; for the resurrection means the accession, the springing up, of new life; and this we have day by day.

If Christ as the resurrection were not in all men, even the wicked, not one of them could live a single day. As Christ was “slain from the foundation of the world” (*Revelation* 13:8), even so He was risen from that time; hence the words of the psalmist, nearly a thousand years before Christ’s full revelation in the flesh, were true at the time.

Psalm 68 [RV]

¹⁸ You have ascended on high, You have led your captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, yea, among the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell with them.

¹⁹ Blessed be the Lord who daily bears our burden, even the Lord God, who is our salvation.

Not alone the trusting ones, but even the unthankful and the unholy receive “moment by moment new life from above;”⁶⁶ but too often this gift of God profits them not, because they do not by faith lay hold upon the eternal life so freely bestowed, and it passes from them.

Everyone can see for himself that this is not fancy, but plain, sober, simple truth. We know that all life comes from God, and that we have but one breath of it at a time. Now this life that comes to us fresh every moment is the power, the very essence, of the resurrection. Moment by moment God is making it easy for us to grasp the truth that He is the resurrection and the life, and that at the last day,

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁴ ...this mortal shall put on immortality.

We become weak and faint, and through God’s gift in Christ we experience strength and refreshing. We are wounded and sick, and new life heals our wounds and restores our wasted frame. What is this but the visible working of the resurrection,—the swallowing up of death by life?

For all men,

Psalm 68

¹⁸ ...yea, for the rebellious also,

—Christ has received this wondrous gift; and that all may know that it is for them, He gives them the use of it now. Their use or abuse of it now will determine whether or not they can have it to all eternity. If they are wholly unapprecia-

⁶⁶ Daniel Webster Whittle, Hymn: *Moment by Moment*.

tive and unmindful of it, squandering it, even hating it, and, worst of all, hating the righteousness that He bestows with it, they will sooner or later lose it entirely. What use to continue gifts to those who care not for them, and do not use them?

Those who recognize the Giver, and glorify Him by their thanksgiving, showing love for His righteousness, will have the life continued to them, so that with it they may practice righteousness throughout eternity, and enjoy an indescribably greater fullness of it.

Those who in Paul's day said that the resurrection was already past,⁶⁷ were guilty of a grave error; and their teaching tended to lead people from faith into sin; for without the resurrection as an ever present reality no one could walk with Christ,

Romans 6

⁴ ...in newness of life.

The resurrection is not past, but proceeding; and for those who come to the knowledge of the truth there will one day be a realization of the fullness of it, when to life is added immortality.

But what about the statement that those who live and believe in Christ shall never die? It is true, even as Jesus said; and it has been demonstrated in the cases of Enoch and of Elijah, and possibly of others, whose names are not recorded. Believing in Christ means receiving Him;⁶⁸ and absolutely perfect faith in Him must bring the fullness of His life as a present experience, in resisting the ravages of mortality.

Faith enables one to please God; and we are told that Enoch was translated because through faith He pleased God.

⁶⁷ **2 Timothy 2** ¹⁸ Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

⁶⁸ **John 1** ¹¹ He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

Hebrews 11

⁵ By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

What, then, is to hinder anybody from being translated? Nothing, except lack of that perfect faith which appropriates the fullness of God in Christ as the resurrection and the life.

We can now appreciate better than ever before the force of our Saviour's question:

Luke 18

⁸ When the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?

For centuries the Lord has been waiting to see the development and manifestation of just this degree of faith; for He cannot come again until every nation, people and tribe has had at least one example of it among them.

It is a blessed thing for us that the Lord saves even those who are of "little faith":

Matthew 8

²⁴ And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inso-much that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep.

²⁵ And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

²⁶ And He said unto them, Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Matthew 14

²⁹ And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

³⁰ But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and

caught him, and said unto him, O you of little faith, wherefore did you doubt?

But why not now enjoy the fullness of the blessing of the life that strengthens with all might according to the power of His glory that gives life to the dead?

48. What Do We?

Present Truth, February 4, 1897

Timeline: VI-35 (Withdrawal to Ephraim)

John 11:46-52

THE diverse influence of witnessing the effect of the power of the Spirit of God is well marked in the result upon those who stood by, of the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. Many who saw it believed on Him.

John 11

⁴⁶ But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

⁴⁷ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees, and said, What do we? for this man does many miracles.

⁴⁸ If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

⁴⁹ And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, You know nothing at all,

⁵⁰ Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

⁵¹ And this spoke he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

⁵² And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

At the voice of Christ the righteous dead arose from the grave, but the unrighteous living, who were dead in their sins, clung nevertheless to their living death. They made this exhibition of Divine power a pretext for bringing His case before an extra-legal assembly called together on purpose. Here they argued, that, for political reasons, the influence of Christ must be crushed, and He himself put out of the way,—lest the Romans come and take away their place and nation.

The futility of this argument was proved by the event, not

so many years after, when Jerusalem was utterly destroyed and both their place and nation indeed taken away, while only those who believed in Christ and remembered and observed His warning words, directing them how and when to escape, were saved.

But the words of the high priest Caiaphas are particularly remarkable, in that he, being a wicked man and the tool of the Roman power, while advising, with cold-blooded cruelty, the death of Christ, at the same time, unconsciously, states the mission upon which He came to the world,—to die for the people,—and prophesies its success in the ingathering from all nations of the children of God.

How manifestly here the wrath of man is made to praise God!

Psalm 76

¹⁰ Surely the wrath of man shall praise You: the remainder of wrath shall You restrain.

49. The Jewish Rulers and Their Deeds

Present Truth, April 19, 1894

Timeline: VI-35 (Withdrawal to Ephraim)

John 11:47-50

IT IS a popular fallacy, into which many fall quite unconsciously, that the Jews in the days of Christ's flesh and of the early church were an exceptional class of men—more wicked and murderous than men are nowadays.

The Bible teaches us, however, that the works of the flesh pertain to the flesh, and not to the times.

Galatians 5

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Human nature is the same in all ages, and it manifests itself in a very similar manner under similar conditions.

One thing those Jews shared in common with quite a proportion of human kind in the present generation: they denounced the wickedness of their fathers, and looked upon former ages as barbarous. They built the tombs of the prophets, and said,

“If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them of the blood of the prophets.”

But when the Saviour came, He taught the people not as the scribes—“book-men” as the Anglo-Saxon version puts it—speaking only the word of the Father. The practice of following the word of God, and rejecting the traditions of men, made His ways very unpopular with the rulers. Their errors of

life and teaching were exposed, and the truth was undermining their very existence as religious leaders of the people.

We read the lesson badly when we fail to see that the story is one of men of the ordinary kind of flesh, who, having rejected truth and its Author, while professing loyalty to truth, were led on to the commission of the very sins of which they condemned in their fathers.

It was not because they delighted in bloody deeds more than other men, but as He was challenging their authority, and unsettling the minds of men as to the forms and traditions of the elders, established by common consent and usage, they easily deceived themselves into a belief that they were acting for the good of society and the nation in crucifying Jesus.

John 11

⁴⁷ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man does many miracles.

⁴⁸ If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

⁴⁹ And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, You know nothing at all,

⁵⁰ Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

Saul the persecutor was evidently not a man who delighted in cruelty. His whole manner of life forbids such an opinion of him. He thought he was doing God's service, and his case exactly illustrates the lengths to which a man of naturally cultured and not unkindly disposition may go when he is deceived by the idea that God commissions men to advance truth or put down error by employing force, either by personal violence or by the forms of law; for there is no difference.

The Sanhedrin that murdered Stephen was not composed of men who had no regard for a reputation for mildness and justice. Archdeacon Farrar gives an interesting sketch of the ordinary methods of this body in his *Life and Work of St. Paul*. He says:

Generally speaking the Sanhedrin were not a sanguinary tribunal. They shuddered at the necessity of bloodshed, and tried to obviate its necessity by innumerable regulations. So great was their horror at putting an Israelite to death, that any means of avoiding it seemed desirable.

Simeon Ben Shatach is the only conspicuous Rabbi who, for his cruelty in deciding causes, is said “to have had hot hands.” Josephus expressly marks it as disgraceful to the Sadducees that, unlike the rest of their nation, they were savage in their punishments. We are told that if even once in seven years—a Sanhedrin inflicted capital punishment it deserved the opprobrious title of “sanguinary.”

The migration of the Sanhedrin forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem from their “Hall of Squares,” which was beside the great Court of the Temple, to the Chanujoth or “shops,” which were under two cedars on the Mount of Olives, is expressly stated to have been due to their desire to get to a greater distance from the sacred precincts, in order that they might not feel it so sternly incumbent upon them to inflict the strict punishments of the law.

But if, after strict and solemn voting, a man was condemned to any of the four capital punishments, the utmost care was taken to remove from the punishment all semblance of vindictive haste....

On pronouncement of the sentence the condemned was handed over to the Shoterim or Lietors of the Sanhedrin, and led to the place of execution. An official stood at the door of the Judgment Hall holding in his hand a handkerchief; a second on horseback was stationed just inside of the first, and if, even at the last moment, any witness could testify to the innocence of the condemned, the first shook his handkerchief, and the second galloped at full speed to bring back the ac-

cused, who was himself allowed to be led back as many as four or five times if he could adduce a single solid proof in his own favor.

Failing this he was led on with a herald preceding him, who proclaimed his name, his crime, and the witnesses on whose testimony he had been condemned. At ten paces distance from the place of death he was bidden to confess, because Jewish no less than Roman law valued the certainty derived from the “*confessorium reum*” and the Jews deduced from the story of Achan that his punishment would be, as regards the future world, a sufficiently complete explanation of his crime.

A bitter draught containing a grain of frankincense was then given to him to stupefy his senses and take away the edge of terror. At four cubits’ distance from the fatal spot he was stripped bare of his upper garments, and according to the older and simpler plan of procedure was then stoned, the witnesses simultaneously hurling the first stones.

This was not the kind of hearing that Stephen found, when they rose up and slew him in an outburst of fury, just as any mob might do. This body that generally had respect for at least the forms of fairness and justice, by taking one step after another in their opposition to truth, had lost all restraint; and as their conduct was condemned by the truth, they took the course that intolerance always has taken and always will take to silence the reproving voice—they used the power which they had at hand.

No sort of natural disposition is able to restrain from excesses of evil when the spirit of intolerance rules the heart rather than the Spirit of grace.

Many times since, sage men, who reprobated the acts of the Jewish rulers, have sat in council and condemned the innocent in the name of Jesus as the Sanhedrin did in the name of God. And whether the victims were innocent or guilty in the religious conduct of their lives makes no difference; for to his

own master every man must give an account.

50. A Willing Captive

Present Truth, February 21, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for March 8

Timeline: VI-35 (Withdrawal to Ephraim)

John 11:47-48

FOR a long time the death of Jesus had been decided upon by the chief priests and the rulers of the Jews, as a thing necessary for the welfare of the nation. Gathered together in council, they had said:

John 11

⁴⁷ What do we? for this Man does many miracles.

⁴⁸ If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

Then the high priest, Caiaphas, vexed at the failure of the others to suggest a way out of their difficulty, said:

⁴⁹ You know nothing at all,

⁵⁰ Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

There was no question in their minds but that Jesus must die; the only thing to be considered was how to accomplish it; for often had they been foiled in their efforts to seize Him. Strange that they did not stop to think that it was Divine power that wrought the mighty miracles of which they complained, and which enabled Jesus to thwart their plans without the slightest visible effort.

But now their hellish designs seemed about to be crowned with success. Judas, one of the intimate acquaintances and followers of Jesus, had bargained to betray Him into their hands, and was only waiting a convenient opportunity.

He knew where Jesus often went with His disciples for meditation and prayer, and where He often spent the night,

and by some means had information that Jesus would go there after the Passover Supper; and he told the plotters that now was their time. It was night, and none of the people would be present to make an outcry or to attempt to protect the Great Teacher.

John 18

³ Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

⁴ Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom do you seek?

⁵ They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am He. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them.

⁶ As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

⁷ Then He asked them again, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

⁸ Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He; if therefore you seek me, let these go their way:

⁹ That the saying might be fulfilled, which He spoke, Of them which You gave me have I lost none.

A twofold purpose was served by this quiet manifestation of the Divine power of Jesus: it secured immunity for the disciples, and it afforded opportunity for any whose hearts were not as hard as steel to submit to the One whom they were seeking to make captive. It was not for himself, but always for others, that the mighty works of Jesus were done.

How a perverse heart can blind one's senses! There was a band of armed men felled to the ground by an invisible power accompanying a quiet Teacher, yet they proceeded with their work without seeming to be impressed by the fact that they had not the slightest power against Him. If they had possessed even the slightest sense of humor they would have slunk out of the garden in shame, when Jesus the second time asked them,

⁷ Whom do you seek?

At the first utterance of the words they had fallen backward, as though shot down by a volley from an opposing army; yet when the question was repeated, they replied the same as before,

⁷ Jesus of Nazareth.

The words of Jesus,

⁸ I have told you that I am He,

contained volumes of subtle irony that would have put less obtuse men to confusion. It was as though He said:

“Well, I have already told you that I am the One you seek; why did you not take me?”

His words and actions reveal Him as the calm, unperturbed Master of men. He, the condemned outlaw, dictated terms to His would-be captors, and, though utterly unarmed, He did not go with them until He was fully ready.

In the words of Jesus, twice repeated to His pursuers, Jesus declared far more than the mere fact that He was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought. Notice that the word “He” is in *italic*, indicating that it is not found in the Greek text. What He really said was, “I am,” just as He had once before said to the Pharisees,

John 8

⁵⁸ Before Abraham was, I am.

On the stormy sea He had said to the disciples,

John 6

²⁰ I am; be not afraid.

And again to the unbelieving Jews:

John 8

²⁸ When you shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall

you know that I am.

In His reply to the armed mob, Jesus declared not only that He was Jesus of Nazareth, but also that He was the I AM who appeared to Moses in the desert of Sinai, and who had led the ancestors of this people out of bondage. They were seeking to capture the Deliverer of their race, the Saviour of the world, of whom the prophet had said,

Isaiah 59

²⁰ The Redeemer shall come to Zion.

Then followed an incident which emphasized the fact that He was the Deliverer.

John 18

¹⁰ Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

¹¹ Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up your sword into the sheath; the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?

But this was not all. Turning to His captors,

Luke 22

⁵¹ Jesus answered and said, Suffer you thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him.

The hands of Jesus were evidently already bound, but here was an enemy who had been wounded in the assault on Him, and the case called for help. True to His character, Jesus could not see one in pain without going to his assistance, so politely excusing himself to the guard for seeming to rebel against their authority, He disengaged one of His hands, and healed the wounded servant, and then again submitted to be bound and led away to a mock trial and execution.

Yet even after all this, that mob of priests thought that they had Jesus in their power; yes, He was in their power, but their power was only that which was given them from the same

source whence He derived His power. The words of Jesus so plain.

John 19

¹¹ You could have no power at all against me, except it were given you from above,

—were true of these men, and if they had not been completely blinded by sin and hate, they would have seen it.

In the very moment of betrayal and capture, Jesus was revealed as the Saviour of sinners, and as the Mighty One, the I AM. The healing of the servant's ear was an assurance of the forgiveness of his sins, if he had been willing to accept it. But this crowd of wise rulers did not have the wisdom of the humble shepherds of Bethlehem, and so they led away the Lord of glory to be crucified.

Why did Jesus consent to go with them? Is it not strange that none of them thought to ask this question? An angel from heaven had been seen strengthening Him, and He declared that He could pray to the Father and at once have...

Matthew 26

⁵² ...more than twelve legions of angels,

—every one of whom would be more than a match for thirty legions of men. It should have been apparent even to those men, that Jesus was submitting to be bound simply because He was, as He still is, the Saviour.

- He was a willing captive, in order that no soul on earth need be other than a willing captive.
- He voluntarily submitted to death, in order to reveal to mankind the way of life.

No manner of resistance could have revealed the power of Jesus so much as His voluntary submission to His enemies. They were actuated by the powers of sin and darkness; but by His victory over them, even when they were allowed the

fullest freedom against Him, He shows us how completely He can deliver us from them when we put our trust in Him.

51. The Ten Lepers

Signs of the Times, August 11, 1890

International Lesson Notes for August 17, 1890

Timeline: VI-36 (The Ten Lepers)

Luke 17:11-19

IN THE RECORD of the healing of the ten lepers we have, as in the record of all miracles, proof of the divinity of Christ, and an aid to that faith which will give us eternal life.

John 20

³¹ These [miracles] are recorded that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His name.

In this miracle we see in an especial manner the depth of the love of God, for we see it bestowed on those who had no appreciation of it. From a study of this miracle we shall receive additional proof in the Scripture that:

1 John 1

⁹ [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Leprosy a Type of Sin

Leprosy is one of the most loathsome of diseases. It is constitutional, involving the whole system. It may be said to be a living, progressive death, in that, one after another, the different members of the body lose all sensibility, and finally drop off, the disease inevitably ending in death. It is a disease incurable by any means known to man. So loathsome is it that it forever shuts away its victim from the society of the uninfected.

In all these things it is a fitting type of sin. Sin is a constitutional disease—a disease affecting the whole system. The Lord says to those who have departed from Him, and loaded themselves with sin:

Isaiah 1

⁵ Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

⁶ From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

It is incurable by any means known to man.

Proverbs 20

⁹ Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

Job 9

²⁰ If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

Jeremiah 2

²² For though you wash yourself with niter, and take much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before me, says the Lord God.

If a person is diseased in only one member, that member may be cut off, and the spread of the disease be checked in that way, if it is incurable. But when the vital organs are diseased, and the whole body is affected, there is no hope. As the leprosy separates its victims from the society of the pure, so with sin.

Isaiah 59

² Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you.

“It is possible,” says one who has seen much of leprosy, “for lepers who have means to secure such medical treatment as removes most of the external signs of the disease.”

So sinners may by their works outwardly appear unto men to be righteous, but within they are full of hypocrisy and iniquity, and all uncleanness.

The Cleansing Touch

But although the leprosy is so loathsome and so dangerous, Jesus did not fear it, not did he shrink from contact with it.

Matthew 8

² And, behold, there came a leper and worshiped Him, saying, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean.

³ And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be you clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

It was not because leprosy was pleasant to Jesus that He touched the leper; we cannot suppose that it was any more attractive to Him than to other people. But His love for men was so great that he would touch the leper, in spite of his loathsomeness, that He might cleanse him from it.

So sin is not pleasant to the eyes of God; it is most loathsome. Even to our eyes it often appears hideous; how much more so must it seem to the pure and holy God. Nevertheless He so loved men that...

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ He was made in all things like unto His brethren,

—that He might purify them.

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

In this we may...

1 John 3

¹ Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

He saw me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me, not withstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate;

His loving-kindness, oh, how great!⁶⁹

The readiness of Jesus to touch the poor leper, and the speedy cure which followed, are designed to show to us His willingness to receive sinners, and His power to cleanse from all unrighteousness.

It was not necessary, however, that Jesus should actually put forth His hand and touch the diseased person, in order to heal him. The centurion whose servant was sick of the palsy, and who begged Jesus to heal him, understood this.

Matthew 8

⁵ And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him,

⁶ And saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

⁷ And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him.

⁸ The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

⁹ For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it.

¹⁰ When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

¹¹ And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

¹² But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹³ And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go your way; and as you have believed, so be it done unto you. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

⁶⁹ Samuel Medley, Hymn: *Awake, my soul, in joyful lays*, 1782.

So in the case under consideration, Jesus did not touch the lepers, but healed them with a word. From the case already cited, we know that this was not because He shrank from the contact. It must be to teach us the lesson that the centurion had already learned, that Jesus can speak the word, and heal at any distance. We cannot see Him; we cannot feel His physical presence; yet all power is given unto Him in heaven and earth, and from the height of His sanctuary, from heaven, His dwelling-place, He can heal as well as when He was present in person.

Acting in Faith

Luke 17

¹³ And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

¹⁴ And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

The command to go show themselves unto the priests was in accordance with the Mosaic law. See *Leviticus* 14:1-20. They were full of leprosy, yet they were commanded to go show themselves to the priests, as though they were cleansed.

¹⁴ And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

Their faith was shown in their acting as though they were cleansed before they had any outward evidence of it. Thus they demonstrated the two scriptures,

Hebrews 11

¹ Faith is the substance of things hoped for,

and,

Mark 11

²⁴ What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

Faith makes its own way.

The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The Rock beneath.⁷⁰

Fullness of Blessing

One of the ten turned back to glorify God and gave thanks.

Psalm 50

²³ Whoso offers praise, [says the Lord,] glorifies me.

Ten lepers were cleansed, but only one returned to give thanks. Very many blessings are lost to men through unthankfulness. The men who once knew God, yet glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, lost their knowledge of God, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Romans 1

²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

The nine lepers who returned not to give glory to God were cleansed, and God did not withdraw the healing because they did not appreciate it.

2 Timothy 2

¹³ If we believe not, yet He abides faithful; He cannot deny himself.

Matthew 5

⁴⁵ He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Yet they could not have failed to lose much that the thankful one received. Jesus said to him,

Luke 17

¹⁹ Arise, go your way; your faith has made you whole.

⁷⁰ John Greenleaf Whittier, Poem: *My Soul and I*, 1847.

This seems to imply wholeness in a special sense. It can mean nothing less than healing both of body and soul.

It is easy to see why there was this difference between him and the others. By their failure to give thanks, they showed that they were prompted only by a selfish desire for health. Having received health, they cared nothing for the beautiful Giver. Of course those who thought no more of the Lord than that, could not have received the fullness of divine blessing. And so we see right here what they lost by their failure to glorify God; they shut themselves away from His choicest blessing.

Doing Good to All

Another practical lesson may be learned from this affair. It is this, that Christ did not confine His good offices to those who had living, saving faith in Him, or who would be His disciples.

Acts 10

³⁸ [He] went about doing good,

—because that was His nature.

2 Corinthians 5

¹² God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

It is...

Romans 2

⁴ ...the goodness of God that leads men to repentance.

And so Christ, in the fullness of His love and goodness, went about a blessing to all. How often we read that:

Matthew 9 [14:14, 18:27; Mark 1:41, 6:34]

³⁶ ...He was moved with compassion.

He could not see suffering without wishing to alleviate it; and so He healed all who would allow Him to do anything for them. Some were drawn by His goodness to believe in Him to

the saving of their souls, while others forgot Him. Thus it is now.

But if we consider Jesus in this light, as doing good to all, and not simply to those who were or would be His disciples, and then remember that this was but a manifestation of the love of God, we shall have a higher appreciation of that love, and will the more readily incline to yield to such unselfish goodness.

52. The Ten Lepers Cleansed

Present Truth, November 8, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for November 18

Original title: The Benefit of Thankfulness. The Ten Lepers Cleansed

Timeline: VI-36 (The Ten Lepers)

Luke 17:11-19

Luke 17

¹¹ Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem with His disciples, and was passing through Samaria and Galilee;

¹² And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten man that were lepers, which stood afar off:

¹³ And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

¹⁴ And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

¹⁶ And fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

¹⁸ There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

¹⁹ And He said unto him, Arise, go your way; your faith has made you whole.

The Outcasts Brought Near

NOTE that the lepers stood “afar off.” This was in accordance with the law, recorded in:

Leviticus 13

⁴⁵ The leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.

⁴⁶ All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

Remembering that sin is uncleanness, and that the plague of leprosy is a representation of the plague of sin, let us see what we learn from this incident. In the first place, we remember that there is...

Zechariah 13

¹ ...a Fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness.

1 John 1

⁷ The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanses us from all sin.

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That cry, "Unclean!" which served to keep the leper separate from the rest of the people, is that which moves the heart of the compassionate Saviour, and brings Him near. In the case recorded in Luke 5:12-19 we read that:

Luke 5

¹³ [Jesus] put forth His hand, and touched him.

When others draw away for fear of defilement, Jesus comes close.

Moreover, our sin has separated us from God,⁷¹ so that in our sinful condition, we were...

Ephesians 2

¹² ...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

But,

Acts 2

³⁹ The promise is...to all that are afar off,

and,

⁷¹ **Isaiah 59** ² But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.

Ephesians 2

¹³ Now in Christ Jesus [we] who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Romans 5

¹⁰ We [are] saved by His life.

The life power of Christ brought those lepers near, not only to God, but to the commonwealth of Israel. They were no longer outcasts, but, being cleansed, they were restored once more to their rightful place among men. The cleansing of the lepers is recorded as a pledge and illustration to us of the fact that no matter how defiled we may be by sin, if we but acknowledge our lost condition, and call for help, God takes us to His bosom, and places us among the rulers of His people.

Isaiah 11

¹² He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel.

Jesus is Master

The lepers recognized the working of Jesus. They addressed Him by a double name, "Jesus, Master." The name "Jesus" means Saviour. The angel said to Joseph,

Matthew 1

²¹ You shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save us from our sins.

He is able to save, because He has the mastery over sin. Sin never had any dominion over Him.

Romans 8

³ [He was made] in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Yet not the slightest trace of sin could ever be found upon Him; He had absolute dominion over it. And since He had such absolute mastery over sin that He could drive the tempter away, He had also dominion over disease and death, which is the product of sin. The cleansing from sin and the

healing of disease are one and the same act. Peter said,

Acts 4

¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, even by Him does this man stand here before you whole.

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

We call Him Master and Lord, not simply because He has the right to rule over us, but to show that He has the power to deliver us from all evil. It is this that gives Him the right to rule in us. He saves by the power of His life; and since...

Hebrews 7

²⁵ ...He ever lives,...He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.

A Test of Faith

The command of Jesus to the lepers was a test of their faith in Him. He merely said,

Luke 17

¹⁴ Go show yourselves to the priests.

They well knew what that meant. Read *Leviticus* 13 and 14. The priests were the physicians of Israel, and with them rested the decision as to who had the leprosy, and when a leper was cleansed. Now these men had already been before the priests, and had been pronounced unclean. They well knew that they were lepers. It was therefore wholly unnecessary for them to go to the priests, to know if they had the disease; and the words of Christ could mean nothing else than that they were to present themselves to the priests, in order to get from them the official declaration that they were clean, and so fit to mingle in society again.

But they were not clean and they might very naturally have

raised objections to going on what would seem an unnecessary errand. They might have argued that the priests would drive them away; but they did as they were told, and in going they found cleansing. There is this to be set down to the credit of all the ten lepers, that they all believed the word of Jesus, and started to get the official declaration of healing while they were yet in their leprous condition.

The Testimony of Faith

Why did Jesus send them to the priests? Not alone because that was the just requirement of the law, which He recognized, but for the reason stated in:

Luke 5

¹⁴ Go, and show yourself to the priests, and offer for your cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

The priests would be obliged to certify that these lepers were now clean; moreover, they would naturally enquire as to the manner of their healing, and thus they would receive testimony to the power of Jesus to heal disease that, in its worst form, was held to be incurable. This would leave them without excuse.

Whom God Chooses as His Ministers

But this command to the lepers to go and bear this testimony has more for us. It shows us that:

1 Corinthians 1

²⁸ Base things of the world and things which are despised, has God chosen,

—to bear witness to Him.

Isaiah 49

⁷ Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and His Holy One, to him whom man despises, to him whom the nation abhors, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise,

princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose you.

⁸ Thus says the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard you and in a day of salvation have I helped you; and I will preserve you, and give you for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, and to cause to inhabit the desolate heritages.

God claims every man on earth as His lawful witness.

Acts 17

²⁵ ...He gives to all life and breath and all things,

—even pardon for sin, since Christ died for all and by himself made reconciliation for sin. Therefore the Lord says to the man who is even now defiled by sin,

Mark 5

¹⁹ Go, tell what great things God has done for you.

If every one would receive this message, and would start with it, they would find cleansing in the going. The end of the Gospel is not simply our salvation, but to take us from the mire of the pit and send us as saviours of others. Whosoever hears is commissioned to pass the message on.

Thanksgiving Wins Salvation

All the lepers had faith to be healed, but not all were thankful for the healing. One turned back as soon as he felt the healing power in his body, and gave thanks to God. He could not wait to go first to the priest, but turned back at once. He obeyed the command of Jesus, to go to the priest, but he could not delay thanksgiving.

And Jesus was not displeased; far from it. It was what He had reason to expect from all the others. Because of his giving thanks, this one received an assurance that was not given to them. To him the Lord said,

Luke 17

¹⁹ Your faith has made you whole.

Someone may ask,

“Were not the rest healed as well as he?”

They certainly were cleansed, for the Scripture says so; but there was a difference between this one and the other nine. They showed their faith, it is true, by starting off at once to show themselves to the priest; but he showed his faith in a still greater measure, by returning to give thanks; for thanksgiving is the only sign of faith. He who does not give thanks is in the way to lose whatever he already has. When men knew God, they lost their knowledge of Him, and thereby the knowledge of everything that is true, simply because:

Romans 1

²¹ They glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.

The Lord says:

Psalms 50 [RV]

²³ Whoso offers praise glorifies me, and prepares a way that I may show him the salvation of God.

From those texts it seems quite likely that the other lepers did not retain the blessing of cleansing that they received. One thing is certain, and that is, that unless they developed a greater degree of appreciation of the gifts of God than they had at that time, they did not know His full salvation, and therefore at the last it would be all the same with them if they had never been cleansed. For whoever loses his life at the last, might as well never have had it.

There are thousands upon thousands in the world, who receive “life and breath and all things” at the hand of God, yet very few of them give glory for these gifts. Very few are thankful. Many times are they healed of disease, yet no word of thankfulness ever comes from their lips.

The fact that they do not give thanks shows that they either are not conscious of having received anything special, or that they do not recognize God as the Giver. In either case it shows that they do not live in conscious connection with Him. They do not allow Him to be the ruling power in their lives, and so do not live righteously. They do not know the salvation of God; they are ignorant of the fullness of redemption that there is in Christ Jesus. So at the last day they will lose their souls; their lives will go out, and they will be the same as though they had never been.

Of what benefit, then, was all their healing to them? For all the real benefit that they had had from it they might as well have died before in some illness, because they did not use the life that was continued to them to any purpose.

But a constant recognition of God as the Giver of all good things, keeps us in a state of continual appropriation; therefore it is only by thanksgiving that we can keep the blessings of life and all things that God bestows. Therefore,

Philippians 4 [RV]

⁶ In nothing be anxious but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which passes all understand, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

53. Ten Lepers

Present Truth, May 24, 1894

Timeline: VI-36 (The Ten Lepers)

Luke 17:12-19

AT ONE time Jesus healed ten lepers, only one of whom had enough appreciation of the favor to return and give thanks.

Those nine lepers were not the only ungrateful ones whom Jesus healed. Yet we do not read that He took back what He had done, or that He expressed regret that He had bestowed charity upon people so unworthy.

He was the manifestation of the Father in heaven, who...

Matthew 5

⁴⁵ ...makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Yet many professed followers of God carefully weigh the fitness of everyone before they render assistance, and feel terribly chagrined if they have been led to bestow alms upon one who proves to be below their standard.

54. Christ's Resurrection the Sign of His Coming

Present Truth, March 27, 1902

Timeline: VI-37 (When and How the Kingdom Comes)

Luke 17:20-21

Luke 17

²⁰ And when He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God comes not with outward show;

²¹ Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Again when He was asked for a sign from heaven, He said:

Matthew 16

¹ When it is evening, you say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red.

² And in the morning, It will be foul weather today; for the sky is red and lowering.

³ O you hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky; but can you not discern the signs of the times?

⁴ A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.

The Sign of Jonah

What “the sign of the prophet Jonah” is, we are told in the following words:

Matthew 12

³⁹ An evil and adulteress generation seeks after a sign; and there shall be no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah;

⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

A period of three days and three nights covered Christ's betrayal, mock trial and humiliation, crucifixion, resurrection,

and ascension to heaven to receive from the Father and the heavenly host the acceptance of His sacrifice and the acclamation of King of glory; for from *John 20:17*⁷² we know that He did ascend to heaven and return again, before He allowed the disciples to approach Him.

2 Corinthians 13

⁴ [Christ was] crucified through weakness, but He lives by the power of God.

He said,

John 12

³² I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

³³ This He said signifying what death He should die.

His being “lifted up from the earth” was His crucifixion. Now put the statements of the two texts together. It is when He is lifted up—crucified—that He draws all to Him; and He was crucified through weakness. Never could man be more absolutely helpless than when hanging on a cross. So we see that Christ’s power to draw all to Him comes through His weakness. In His weakest condition He draws all to Him.

2 Corinthians 13

⁴ He lives by the power of God.

That is why He can draw all to Him in His weakness; for the strength of God is made perfect in weakness.

The Sign of Jesus

Romans 1

⁴ [He was] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

⁷² **John 20** ¹⁷ Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

The resurrection from the dead did not make Him the Son of God, but demonstrated that He was the Son of God. He was...

1 Peter 3

¹⁸ ...quickened by the Spirit,

Romans 1

⁴ ...the Spirit of holiness,

—by which He lived. Thus the resurrection was only a manifestation of the power by which He had lived a holy life during the thirty-three years that He lived among men. He was raised from the dead, because...

John 1

⁴ In Him was life.

He himself was, as He is now,

John 11

²⁵ ...the resurrection and the life.

The proof of this is seen in the fact that by His words, which were Spirit and life, He brought people from the dead. The life that was in Him, made others live. So the wonder of the resurrection from the dead was continually manifested before the eyes of those with whom Jesus lived and worked, and they did not recognize it. He himself was the sign, the proof, that the kingdom of God had come to them.

Christ was no weaker on the cross of Calvary than in the manger in Bethlehem; and as His weakness is His bearing of the cross for man, He was Christ crucified even while lying in the manger.

In fact, we cannot know Christ at all, except as crucified. He has never been revealed to mankind except as the crucified One. And as He is always Christ crucified, so He is always Christ risen from the dead. The power that raised Him from the dead worked in Him through all His life.

Lazarus was raised from the grave of corruption by the power of the holy life that was in Christ. It was the Spirit of holiness in Christ, that raised the dead, and that raised him from the dead. It took no less power than that which raised Lazarus, and brought Jesus from the dead, to keep Him day by day the perfect, sinless Man that He was.

Thus we see that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not a thing of a day, but of a lifetime; and therefore it cannot be celebrated by the observance of a day, but only by a whole lifetime.

The Sign of the Church

And here is where we come to the joy of the truth that Jesus has for ever identified himself with humanity. As proof that He is not ashamed to acknowledge His relationship to us, and to call us brethren, He says:

Hebrews 2

¹³ Behold I and the children whom You have given me.

But this is but a portion of *Isaiah* 8:18, where we read,

Isaiah 8

¹⁸ Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel, for the Lord of hosts which dwells in Zion.

Christ was a sign to the generation in which He lived,—the sign of the prophet Jonah. He was the resurrection and the life manifested among them through the weakness of human flesh; and...

1 John 4

¹⁷ ...as He is so are we in this world.

He associates us with himself as signs and wonders also. Is there not life in the very thought?

Not only can the resurrection not be celebrated by the observance of a set day, but the very setting apart of a day for

that purpose tends to obscure the reality of the resurrection. It fixes the mind upon a historical event, instead of calling attention to the all-pervading life which we are to allow free course within us.

The resurrection of the dead is not a thing that took place one day nearly nineteen hundred years ago, but it is the vital force by which the universe is kept in existence. The air is full of it, the heavens declare it, and the tiniest flower reveals it.

Romans 6

⁴ [Christ was] raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,

and

Psalms 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God;

yea,

Isaiah 6

³ The whole earth is full of His glory.

Therefore everywhere in all creation we have a continual celebration of the resurrection of Jesus; and even so it may and should be in our bodies.

1 Peter 2

⁹ [For] you are a chosen generation,...that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

And God says:

Isaiah 43

²¹ This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.

This we do when the Lord is risen upon us, and His glory is

seen upon us;⁷³ and He rises and is seen upon every one who fears His name and receives Him.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, He set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, as Lord and ruler over all; and the power by which He did this we experience whenever we truly believe.

Ephesians 1

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

²² And has put all things under His feet.

This, the power of Christ's resurrection, is also the power of His coming again in His kingdom; and thus the sign of Christ's second coming is the development of the kingdom of God in His followers. They, with Him are for signs and wonders from the Lord of hosts that dwells in Zion.

Let every professed follower of Christ, then, get a larger, a true view of His resurrection. Let the eyes be taken from a certain day, and fixed upon the one event of the eternal ages, the motive force of the universe. Look not backward to Joseph's tomb in the garden; but look up and all round, and see in every opening bud in the gardens and fields now, the evidence that...

⁷³ **Isaiah 60** ² For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you.

1 Corinthians 15

²⁰ Now is Christ risen.

And then know that the same power waits to manifest itself in you in all its glory. For,

Isaiah 61

¹¹ [Just] as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

For those who believe...

Isaiah 27

⁶ ...shall blossom, and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

And thus by the ever-present resurrection of Christ in those who believe will God's kingdom come, and His will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

55. As in Noah's Days

Present Truth, July 18, 1895

Timeline: VI-37 (When and How the Kingdom Comes)

Luke 17:26

Luke 17

²⁶ As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

How was it in the days of Noah? The record tells us that:

²⁷ They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

In other words, they were pursuing their accustomed rounds of business and pleasure, as though nothing unusual were coming. And all this time Noah was preaching the message of a coming flood, by which the world would be destroyed. He was proclaiming the word of the Lord; but they regarded it not.

Among those who perished in the flood were many wise men, after the worldly sort,—men of great intellectual power and high mental attainments. The giant strength and long life of the men of that age gave them the opportunity to attain great knowledge; and men trusted in their own knowledge, which laughed at the idea of a flood, rather than in the simple word of the Lord. In this respect, and others as well, the present age presents a parallel with that of Noah.

In the midst of their self-glorification,

Matthew 24

³⁹ ...the flood came, and took them all away.

In this respect, also, the present age will be parallel to that of Noah. When the Son of man comes, there will also come destruction upon the earth, and not a “temporal millennium.” God warned the antediluvian world by a special message; He

cannot send another destruction without a like warning. A special message must therefore precede the “days of the Son of man.”

But the world will go on in its accustomed way, planning for a continuation of this present state, justified in its course by worldly wisdom. And when men will be saying,

1 Thessalonians 5

³ Peace and safety,...sudden destruction will come upon them,...and they will not escape.

The all-important question, therefore, for every individual, is,

“What says the Word of the Lord?”

What men say,—even the most learned of them,—is not to be compared with this.

1 Corinthians 1

²¹ The world by wisdom knew not God,

—and still knows Him not. The wisdom of man cannot comprehend God, His purposes and His ways. If we trust to that wisdom, we shall surely be overtaken without shelter by the coming storm.

We may choose between that and the Word of God to the present world, which is giving them a special message of warning that the end of all things is at hand.

The Word of the Lord is plain and simple; do not be too wise to believe it.

56. Self-Righteousness

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

Timeline: VI-39 (The Pharisee and the Publican)

Luke 18:9

We read that Christ spoke a parable unto...

Luke 18

⁹ ...certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.

THIS always follows trusting in self: distrust of all that is not of self's ways. There is nothing so high that self cannot look down upon it with disdain.

When Lucifer turned his admiration upon self, upon his beauty and brightness⁷⁴, in that first thought of self was hid the iniquity of his final presumption in heaven, when he said,

Isaiah 14

¹³ I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...

¹⁴ ...I will be like the Most High.

⁷⁴ **Ezekiel 28** ¹⁷ Your heart was lifted up because of *your beauty*, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of *your brightness*: I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you.

57. Restoring What Has Been Lost

Present Truth, August 22, 1901

Timeline: VI-39 (The Pharisee and the Publican)

Luke 18:10

Luke 18

¹⁰ The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

HAVE you lost anything? If you have, then be assured that Jesus has set himself to seek it, and to restore it to you; for there is no limit; whatever has been lost, He has come to save.

What a blessed, comforting assurance that is! I am lost; therefore He has come to seek and to save me.

But that does not tell it all; He will not only save me, but He will find and restore all that I have lost,—lost opportunities, wasted talents, abilities lost through lack of use, or by being perverted;—all these Christ has come to seek.

He will pick up all we have scattered by the way, and will restore it all to us, so that if we accept Him and His work, we may be as though we had never sinned, but had always served Him.

Wonderful love! Marvelous manifestation of saving grace! What a wonderful Saviour!

58. Except You Become as Little Children

Present Truth, July 23, 1896

Timeline: VI-41 (Blessing the Children)

Mark 10:14-15

WHEN Jesus went away from Galilee into the borders of Judea, beyond Jordan, as related in the first verses of the 19th chapter of *Matthew*, a great multitude followed Him.

It is evident that they were influenced by greatly varying motives. Many came to be healed. They presented their infirmities, and were healed.

The Pharisees came tempting Him. They seemed fond of bringing before Him questions concerning the relationship of man and woman, and they drew from Him, this time, a clear, though far from flattering, explanation of the divorce regulations instituted by Moses, and an unequivocal statement of the original law of God on this subject. In this, as in every other similar instance, their mouths were stopped by His reply, and they had nothing more to say.

Then there were among those who followed Him loving parents who brought their little children to Him, and besought Him that He would lay His hands on them and pray for them and bless them. But a short time before the disciples had seen evidence of His tender love for the little ones, yet now they rebuked the parents for bringing their children, and would have sent them away only that Christ saw their action and was displeased and reproved them, saying,

Mark 10

¹⁴ Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

Then He took them in His arms and put His hands on them and blessed them,—and repeated, as Mark tells us, the warning counsel which He had given His disciples previously, when they sought to know who should be greatest in the

kingdom of heaven,

¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

Mark says not only that Christ was displeased that His disciples would have sent the little children away, but that He was...

Mark 10

¹⁴ ...much displeased.

The feeble and infirm, and helpless infancy, Christ accepted as His special charge. They could come to Him with their personal needs, and desire for loving care and protection or expression of affection and regard, and have their wants satisfied fully. But they who came tempting were thwarted and sent away humbled.

So, multitudes come to the Word of God; whether they go away filled with spiritual health and joy and blessing, or thwarted and shamed like the Pharisees, depends on whether they come in the spirit of the sick and the helpless and the little children, or in the spirit of the Pharisees.

59. The Rich Young Ruler

Signs of the Times, February 10, 1888

Notes on the International Lesson for February 26

Timeline: VI-42 (The Rich Young Ruler)

Matthew 19:16-25

Matthew 19

¹⁶ And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

FROM the parallel accounts in *Mark* 10:17-27 and *Luke* 18:18-27, we learn that it was a young man who asked this question, and kneeled down before the Saviour. This would indicate real earnestness on the part of the young man. He really wanted eternal life, but, as the sequel proved, he wanted it in his own way.

He thought that he could earn eternal life by his good works, and he wanted those good works to be such as should be agreeable. There are many thousands who will come short of eternal life, who would like to have it, and who would have it if they themselves could make the conditions.

But before Jesus paid any attention to the young man's question, He asked him one in turn. Jesus caught up the expression, "Good Master," and asked:

Matthew 9

¹⁷ Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is God.

He who sees in this any tendency on the part of Christ to depreciate himself, or to disclaim the possession of absolute goodness, comes far short of learning the lesson intended to be conveyed. Jesus was good. Peter says that:

1 Peter 2

²² [He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth;

—and that:

²³ When He was reviled, [He] reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not.

Isaiah's prophetic description of Him was that:

Isaiah 53

⁹ He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.

John says,

1 John 3

⁵ You know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.

Paul says that:

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ [God] made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

If there had been the least trace of sin in Him, he could not have been manifested to take away our sin, and we could not in Him attain to the perfect righteousness of God. The fact that we may "be made the righteousness of God in Him," shows that His righteousness was nothing less than the righteousness of God. To His disciples He declared that Satan had nothing in Him:

John 14

³⁰ ...the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me.

And to the curious, prying Pharisees, who did nothing else, but play the spy upon Him, that they might find something against Him, He asked,

John 8

⁴⁶ Which of you convinces me of sin?

It will *not* do to say that Jesus was one jot below divine perfection. It must be held as a settled fact, then, that Jesus was absolutely good; that He was the perfection of goodness.

Then since, according to his statement to the young ruler, “there is none good but one, that is, God,” it must be that Jesus is God, and that this was the fact that He wished to impress on the young man’s mind. And the Scriptures everywhere bear out this conclusion. Says John:

John 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And Isaiah, foretelling His birth, said:

Isaiah 9

⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Thus it is that His righteousness was the righteousness of God. The law of God was in His heart, because it was His own law, emanating from Him as well as from the Father.

Colossians 2

⁹ In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Christ’s object in asking the young man, “Why do you call me good?” and then making the statement that He did, was to see whether he called him “good” as a polite compliment, or because he recognized Him as God. Moreover, this question and statement showed that He spoke with authority, so that when the young man turned away, he knew that he was turning his back on the Son of God.

Matthew 19

¹⁷ But if you will enter into life, keep the commandments.

The man who does this is perfect, for:

Psalms 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

The commandments are “the righteousness of God,” which

we are to be made in Christ Jesus. Almost the last words of *Revelation* are:

Revelation 22

¹⁴ Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

To keep the commandments is the highest ideal that any man can set for himself, it is the divine ideal. God himself requires no more of any man, for we read:

Ecclesiastes 12

¹⁴ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

The young man was surprised at the answer which he received from Jesus.

Matthew 19

¹⁸ He said unto Him, Which?

He knew the commandments of God, and felt sure that he had always kept them perfectly; and so he doubtless thought that Jesus must have reference to some higher commandments. He could not imagine that anyone would tell so good a man as he was that he must keep the commandments. To his astonished inquiry, Jesus replied:

¹⁸ You shall do no murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,

¹⁹ Honor your father and your mother; and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

All of the commandments of the second table of the law were quoted by Jesus, except the tenth:

Exodus 20

¹⁷ You shall not covet,

—and that was included in the summary of the entire six,

Leviticus 19

¹⁸ You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Nothing was said of the first table of the law, which specifies our duties to God. This was not by any means because any one of those precepts is unnecessary, for these four commandments combined make the first and greatest commandment. But Jesus quoted the second table, because the keeping of that, or the failure to keep it, could be most readily seen. Jesus would try him on the lesser duties, and if he failed there, he would of course come short on the greater. Says John:

1 John 5

⁴ If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

To Christ's enumeration of the commandments, the young man replied:

Matthew 19

²⁰ All these have I kept from my youth up; what do I lack yet?

This was a great deal to say, yet the young man said it in all sincerity; and there is no doubt but that so far as any man could discern, his life had been above reproach. That there was something attractive about the man, is evident from Mark's statement that,

Mark 10

²¹ Jesus beholding him loved him.

Of course Jesus loved all men; but this specific statement implies that Jesus loved this young man in an especial manner. He loved him for what he was, and for the possibilities of usefulness that He saw in him; and therefore He wished him to take the one step lacking to make him perfect.

Matthew 19

²¹ Jesus said unto him, If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure

in Heaven; and come and follow me.

Mark records the thought a little more fully in these words:

Mark 10

²¹ One thing you lack; go your way, sell whatsoever you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven; and come, take up your cross, and follow me.

Here we have a refutation of the idea that Jesus taught that any man could gain Heaven simply by his own efforts to keep the commandments. The man who thinks that this can be done is at least in as bad condition as the young man was, and he may be a good deal worse off.

Yet the fact remains that he who keeps the commandments shall have eternal life. To keep them is the whole duty of man, and God requires nothing more. Then why was not the young man sure of eternal life? Because he had not kept the commandments perfectly. He thought that he had kept them, but he had not. He had kept them as perfectly as it is possible for any man to do by himself, and that was all.

The one thing needful to round out his life, and to make him a perfect commandment keeper, was to follow Jesus Christ, the sinless one, who was made to be sin for us,

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ ...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Romans 10

⁴ Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes.

Those who go about to establish their own righteousness will ever fall far short of attaining to the righteousness of God. We can be complete only in Christ. Our best efforts are far below perfection; but when we humbly follow Christ, divine grace comes down to meet our efforts, and thus, through faith, we out of weakness are made strong.

Hebrews 11

³³ Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, *out of weakness were made strong*, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Nothing is required of any man, but that he should keep the commandments; but no man can keep the commandments except by the help of Christ.

In the young man's question, "What do I lack yet?" we see evidence that he thought that eternal life could be purchased by good works. This is a sad mistake. Because of this mistaken idea, many men have gone on pilgrimages, have afflicted themselves, have done penance, and many other things all in vain.

The Catholic Church has taken advantage of the natural cry of the soul that is anxious for eternal life, "What must I do to be saved?" to turn the attention of men to certain works. Thus it exhibits the spirit of antichrist, because it turns men away from the Lamb of God, who alone can cleanse from sin and make men righteous.

Eternal life cannot be earned, it is too valuable. No man can give an equivalent for it. It cannot be obtained without good works, yet no amount of good works will buy it.

Romans 6

²³ The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

After we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants (*Luke 17:10*), and whatever we receive must be as the free gift of God.

Matthew 19

²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

This shows that he had not kept the commandments. He had not loved the Lord with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. His ideas of eternal life were altogether too low. He wanted eternal life with full possession of his earthly estate, not realizing that the riches of Heaven infinitely surpass the treasures of earth. And those riches are obtained only through self-denial. If anyone would share...

Ephesians 3

⁸ ...the unsearchable riches of Christ,

—he must be willing to become even as Christ, who...

2 Corinthians 8

⁹ ...though He was rich, yet for our sakes become poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.

In the parable in *Matthew 13*, we learn the only way that the kingdom may be obtained:

Matthew 13

⁴⁵ The kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls:

⁴⁶ Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

The young man had found the pearl of great price, but he was not willing to part with his present possessions, which were paltry in comparison, in order that he might gain it.

Matthew 19

²³ Then said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

²⁴ And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

This statement must be accepted as literally true. The supposition that Jesus referred to a gate in Jerusalem, called the needle's eye, through which a camel might with great diffi-

culty pass, is sheer nonsense. Jesus meant just what he said. A rich man cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. The apostle tells us whom God has chosen:

James 2

⁵ Hearken, my beloved brethren, Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him?

The man who can live in this world of sorrow and want, and still hoard up great possessions, cannot be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, who though he had not where to lay his head, went about doing good.

Yet it is not a sin to be rich. Abraham, the friend of God,

Genesis 13

² ...was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

Job, of whom God said,

Job 1

⁸ There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and eschews evil,

³ ...was the greatest of all the men of the East.

But these men did not trust in riches, which is the great sin.

Mark 10

²⁴ And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again, and said unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

They had wealth, yet they did not consider it as their own, but were simply stewards for God. Yet in spite of all their liberality their property increased. Bunyan quaintly puts it thus:

A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he gave away, the more he had.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, Part II.*

If God pours wealth upon such a person, he cannot be counted rich in the sense that the word is used in our Saviour's words. Such a man may enter Heaven, but not as a rich man. He enters it because he is poor in spirit, in nowise puffed up because of his possessions, but regarding them as only the Lord's. He will be his own executor, distributing his property in his life-time, and not "leaving it" when death forces him to leave it.

60. Entering the Kingdom

Signs of the Times, August 25, 1890

International Lesson Notes for August 31

Timeline: VI-42 (The Rich Young Ruler)

Luke 18:15-30

Luke 18

¹⁵ And they brought unto Him also infants, that He would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

¹⁶ But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

¹⁷ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

VERSES 15-17 relate the bringing of children to Jesus, the rebuke of the disciples, and His call for children to come to Him.

There is not in this, as is sometimes assumed, the slightest hint of infant baptism. Infants that have not come to an age where they can understand right and wrong for themselves, are special subjects of God's favor. By virtue of Christ's sacrifice they share in the universal redemption from the death which results from their being descendants of Adam.

They do not have to be baptized in order to be made alive from this death, for that is promised to the wicked as well as to the good. But being made alive from this death, they cannot suffer the death which is the penalty of sin, for they have never had personal guilt. Consequently they are saved by God's grace, the same as all who are saved, but without baptism, for it is impossible for them to comply with the conditions of baptism; they can neither believe nor disbelieve.

Since God is so merciful toward the infants, it naturally follows that He will gladly receive the children who come to

Him voluntarily, no matter how young they may be. When we say there is no authority for infant baptism, we do not say that sometimes very young children may not properly be baptized. As soon as a child is old enough to believe in Christ, it is old enough to be baptized. And that children are capable of understanding and accepting the gospel, yea, that they can understand and receive more readily than adults, is shown by:

¹⁷ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

He does not say that children are to receive the kingdom as old people, but that all are to receive it as children. This does not mean that people must become childish, but that they must have the simple, trusting faith of children. The belief of children is made the model. It is strange that, in the face of such a scripture as this, any should ever question the propriety of receiving into the church children who give evidence of a knowledge of Christ.

¹⁸ And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

¹⁹ And Jesus said unto him, Why do you call me good? None is good, save one, that is, God.

This was not a modest disclaimer on the part of Christ of the epithet “good.” He did not mean to imply that He was not good, for that would have been to deny himself. Says the psalmist,

Psalm 92

¹⁵ He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Peter says that:

1 Peter 2

²² [He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.

Paul says that:

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ [He] knew no sin.

John says,

1 John 3

⁵ And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.

He was absolute goodness personified, for it is in Him that we are to be made the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Then what must He have meant when He said to the young ruler,

Luke 18

¹⁹ Why do you call me good?

Simply this, that He himself was God.

John 1

¹ The Word was God,

and

¹⁴ The Word was made flesh.

At the very outset Jesus took advantage of the young man's form of expression to let him know that he was standing in the presence, not of a pious Jewish rabbi, but of divinity in the form of humanity. He took this striking way of intimating to the ruler that the one whom he was asking what he should do to inherit life, was the Author of life, the one who had it to bestow, and who could therefore answer his question with authority.

The narrative in *Matthew* is a little more complete than in *Luke*. We quote from the former. Jesus, having incidentally shown His high position and authority, as we have seen, an-

swered the young man's question thus:

Matthew 19

¹⁷ If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.

Passing by for the moment the answer of Jesus, we note the young man's reply.

¹⁸ He said unto Him. Which? Jesus said, You shall do no murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness.

¹⁹ Honor your father and your mother; and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

²⁰ The young man said unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up; what do I lack yet?

In view of the last statement made by the young man, the question, "Which?" was a most natural one. When Christ said,

¹⁷ If you will enter into life, keep the commandments,

—there was no doubt in the young man's mind as to what was meant. Every Jew was instructed in the law, and this young man was a ruler. But he was struck with astonishment that Christ should use such language to him, who prided himself on his obedience to the law. His question, "Which?" was almost equivalent to a challenge to Christ to tell him what he ought to do that he had not done. In reality, he thought that he lacked nothing.

¹⁷ If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.

They are the rule of life, and will be the standard in the judgment.

Ecclesiastes 12

¹³ Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

And since the commandments are to be the standard of

character in the judgment, it follows that everyone whose character is in harmony with them will have eternal life. So we read,

Revelation 22

¹⁴ Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

This was the condition of eternal life from the beginning.

Deuteronomy 11

²⁶ Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

²⁷ A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day:

Deuteronomy 30

¹⁵ See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil;

¹⁶ In that I command you this day to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply: and the Lord your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it.

¹⁷ But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

¹⁸ I denounce unto you this day, that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it.

¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.

But if this is the condition of eternal life, and the young man had kept all the commandments from his youth up, how could it be that he lacked anything to enable him to inherit eternal life? This is just the point; he hadn't kept them. Christ tested him on the last, which really underlies the whole. Said He,

Luke 18

²² Sell all that you have, and distribute unto the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.

This test the ruler could not endure. He loved wealth more than he loved God; he loved this world more than the next. He did not love his neighbor as himself, and he had other gods beside the one God. While rendering outward obedience to all the commandments, he had unconsciously been breaking them all in spirit.

The one thing lacking in his case was to follow Christ. Jesus did not mean that he should add following Him to obedience to the commandments, for, as we have seen, he had not kept the commandments. The one thing lacking to a perfect obedience to the commandments was to follow Christ, without whom nothing can be done. Eternal life can be had only on condition of keeping the commandments; but no one can keep the commandments without Christ. So Christ is the one thing needful. Having Him, we have everything.

The young man was one of the Jews who had...

Romans 9

³¹ ...followed after the law of righteousness, [but who had] not attained to the law of righteousness,

³² Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.

Hebrews 11

⁶ Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Romans 10

⁴ Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

This does not mean that He puts an end to the law, for He himself declares that the law is the test of fitness to enter heaven. But in Him the end of the law, which is righteousness

and peace,⁷⁶ is found; for:

Ephesians 2

¹⁴ He is our peace,

and,

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ We [are] made the righteousness of God in Him.

And so we have...

Revelation 14

¹² ...the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,

–inseparably joined together. Neither can exist without the other. There can be no keeping of the commandments outside of Christ.

John 15

⁵ ...for without me you can do nothing.

Hebrews 11

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

And whoever is united to Christ will keep the law, for Christ is the personification of the righteousness of God.

⁷⁶ **Isaiah 48** ¹⁸ O that you had hearkened to my commandments! then had your peace been as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea.

61. What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Present Truth, July 30, 1896

Timeline: VI-42 (The Rich Young Ruler)

Matthew 19:16-22 / Mark 10:17-22 / Luke 18:18-23

It is related that a young man came to the Master and said,

Matthew 19

¹⁶ Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

Mark says that the young man came...

Mark 10

¹⁷ ...running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

It is evident that the youth was a man of high world position, for *Luke* calls him...

Luke 18

¹⁸ ...a certain ruler.

The first words of Christ's reply to him are very striking. It was as if He would challenge him to acknowledge Him to be the Son of God:

Matthew 19

¹⁷ Why do you call me good? there is none good but One, that is, God.

But, seemingly, without waiting for a reply He reminded the young man that he knew the commandments of God, and that the observance of them was necessary to eternal life. Yet, apparently desiring to know if special stress should be laid upon any particular commandment, the youth asks, "Which?" Christ then enumerates to him some of the ten commandments. And he answers,

Matthew 19

²⁰ All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack yet?

Upon this, *Mark* says,

Mark 10

²¹ Then Jesus beholding him loved him.

It seems that he was a pure and noble character,—such a one as would, in these days, be considered a model Christian man. And it is true that for the beauty and purity of his life Christ loved him; yet he was not perfect. There was one thing still lacking,—that was sacrifice. This was the answer of Jesus to his question:

²¹ Go your way, sell whatsoever you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

This was His answer,—that loving invitation,—“Come, take up your cross, and follow me!” But the sacrifice which that entailed was too great, for the young man was very rich, and held high social position and authority; he was a ruler. These things he could not give up, and he turned away grieved, and very sad.

His question was,

Luke 18

¹⁸ What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Did Jesus answer his question? Did He point out to him the way to eternal life, for which he asked? and did the young man accept the reply, and walk in that way, or did he turn from it?

Christ is the way and the life. He is the heir, and with Him and through Him alone is the inheritance of eternal life.

62. The Performing of Impossibilities

Present Truth, November 22, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for December 2

Original title: The Performing of Impossibilities. The Rich Young Ruler

Timeline: VI-42 (The Rich Young Ruler)

Matthew 19:16-26

Matthew 19

¹⁶ And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?

¹⁷ And He said unto him, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is God; but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments.

¹⁸ He said unto Him, Which? Jesus said, You shall do no murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,

¹⁹ Honor your father and your mother: and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

²⁰ The young man said unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up; what do I lack yet?

²¹ Jesus said unto him, If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.

²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

²³ Then said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

²⁴ And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

²⁵ When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then, can be saved?

²⁶ But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

MANY lessons are taught in this one, and no one can say that one is more important than another, so we will simply open up each, that the Spirit of God may lead us unto

the fullness of all.

Christ is Divine

First of all, let us note that Jesus Christ is good, and His goodness marks His connection with the Godhead. Do not get the idea that His words,

¹⁷ Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is, God,

—were a protest against being called good. Far from it. He knew that He was good, for He declared:

John 14

³⁰ ...the prince of this world [Satan]...has nothing in me.

And He boldly challenged the Pharisees to convict Him of sin:

John 8

⁴⁶ Which of you convinces me of sin?

He declared,

John 15

¹⁰ I have kept my Father's commandments;

John 8

²⁹ I do always those things that please Him.

What then was the force of His words to the young man? Just this: He was testing him, to see whether it was understandingly, or merely as a complimentary expression, that he had called Him good. In the question and statement Christ declared His Divinity.

Matthew 19

¹⁷ There is none good but one, that is, God.

But Christ is good; therefore Christ is God. Nothing less than this Jesus claimed. It is idle, therefore, for anybody to deny the Divinity of Christ, and at the same time to say that

He was a good man. Good men do not make false claims. If Jesus were not Divine, He would have been an impostor.

But He was good, absolutely good, the embodiment of all goodness; and therefore He was just what He professed to be, the Son of God. If the young man had recognized this, he certainly could not have gone away.

Some will not fail to have noticed that the *Revised Version* has,

¹⁷ Why do you ask me concerning that which is good?

—instead of,

¹⁷ Why do you call me good?

But the difference is apparent rather than real. The careful student will note that in the accounts in *Mark* and *Luke* we have even in the *Revision*,

“Why call you me good? None is good save one, even God,”

And that this is also given in the margin of the record in *Matthew*; so that there is very good authority for the rendering in the old version. But if we take the reading,

¹⁷ Why do you ask me concerning that which is good?

—we find that the meaning is essentially the same. That is followed by,

¹⁷ ...One there is who is good,

—implying that only He who is good can properly be asked concerning that which is good.

Psalm 50

¹⁶ Unto the wicked God says, What have you to do to declare my statutes, or that you should take my covenant in your mouth?

But Christ came as the Teacher of that which is good. He began His ministry with the words,

Isaiah 61 [Luke 4:18]

¹ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.

So in any case we find that Christ, who was...

Matthew 11

²⁹ ...meek and lowly in heart,

—could without any inconsistency or lack of modesty, declare himself to be absolutely good, and so Divine.

The Way of Life

The keeping of the commandments is the way of life.

Revelation 22

¹⁴ Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city.

It is not that heaven is offered as a reward for commandment-keeping; not by any means. Heaven cannot be bought with money or any amount of work. Nor is it that eternal life is given as a reward for keeping the commandments. Life is too costly to be earned by any human efforts.

Romans 6

²³ The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But the commandments are themselves life. They are not dead rules of life, but living principle—the Spirit of life in Christ.

Romans 8

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

They were Christ's life, and we get life in the keeping of them, even as we get the law in His life.

Proverbs 6

²³ The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and re-proofs of instruction are the way of life.

Psalms 19

¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.

The reward is not something to be gained by doing them, and to be bestowed after one has demonstrated his loyalty to them, but it comes in the keeping of them. God puts them into our hearts by His Spirit, and our part is to keep them,—to keep that which He has committed to our trust,—to keep the faith.

Which?

There are not several sets of commandments for us to choose from, so that it would be difficult for anybody to know which he ought to keep. The young man's question did not imply that he had any such idea. But so fully persuaded was he that he had kept all the commandments, that when Jesus told him to keep them, he asked in surprise, "Which?" As much as to say,

"What commandments can there possibly be that I have not kept?"

Jesus did not repeat all the commandments, but that does not signify that those that He did not mention are unimportant. He quoted a few, and summarized the whole in the general commandment,

Matthew 19

¹⁹ You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

He did not say anything about loving God, because that was unnecessary;

1 John 4

²⁰ For he that loves not his brother, whom he has seen, how

can he love God whom he has not seen?

Jesus tested the young man on that which lay nearest at hand.

Galatians 5

¹⁴ All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Romans 12

⁸ Love is the fulfilling of the law,

so that

¹⁰ He that loves another has fulfilled the law.

This is true because:

1 John 4

⁷ Love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.

Jesus tested the young man sufficiently to show that He had not perfect love for man, and that therefore the love of God was not in him. His duty was to keep all the commandments, but he had kept none of them.

Righteousness by Faith

In saying,

Matthew 19

¹⁷ If you will enter into life, keep the commandments,

—and in naming some of them, did Jesus teach salvation by works? Not by any means, for that would have been to contradict himself. He said,

John 6

²⁹ This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.

He was showing the young man, and us also, the impossibility of salvation by our own works. The young man was not

a vain boaster. He had kept the commandments as perfectly as it is possible for any man to keep them. His life had been outwardly perfect, and his conscience convicted him of no sin. But the demand that Jesus made showed that he had not known the vital principle of the commandments. He did not know the commandment which embraces them all:

Matthew 19 [Leviticus 19:18]

¹⁹ You shall love your neighbor as yourself,

—although he thought he did. Jesus showed him that only by following Him could he have the fullness of life which the law imparts. In Him alone is “the perfect law of liberty”⁷⁷ found.

But let no one hastily conclude that Jesus discounted the commandments in any degree, or that He thought that there is any duty beyond the keeping of them. The conclusion of the whole matter stands clearly expressed in God’s Book:

Ecclesiastes 12

¹³ Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

Good works are not disparaged in the Bible.

Titus 2

¹⁴ [Christ] gave himself for us, [for no other purpose than to] purify unto himself a people zealous of good works.

We are...

Ephesians 2

¹⁰ We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

But they are the good works which God himself has prepared:

¹⁰ ...which God has before ordained that we should walk in

⁷⁷ *James* 1:25.

them.

So it is that our salvation is the gift of God through our faith in His grace. We are justified, made righteous,—made doers of the law,—by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 2

¹⁶ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Temporal Treasures Preferred to Eternal

It seemed a hard requirement for the young man to sell all that he had, and give it to the poor, before he could follow Jesus. Yet if he had been spiritual enough to discern it, he would have seen that there was a most wonderful promise connected with it, which assured to him infinitely more than he would give up.

Matthew 19

²¹ You shall have treasure in heaven.

Riches are at the best uncertain.

Proverbs 23

⁵ Labor not to be rich; cease from your own wisdom. Will you set your eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

In heaven, on the contrary, we have...

Hebrews 10

³⁴ ...an enduring substance.

How foolish then, to seek for, or strive to hold, that which may go at any moment, and neglect the...

Ephesians 3

⁸ ...unsearchable riches of Christ,

–which last to eternity. Moreover, no man ever gives up anything for the Lord, without finding superabundant recompense even in this life. Christ says:

Matthew 19

²⁹ Every one that has forsaken houses,...or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.

So in asking the young man to give up all his wealth in order to have eternal life, Jesus was really promising a hundred times as much as he already had, with eternal life in addition. It is on the principle that:

Matthew 16

²⁵ Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

²⁶ For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

If men could see that giving up their living would ensure them a hundredfold return in this life, they would at once enter into it as a grand speculation. But that would defeat their object for their so-called “giving up” would in reality be a grasping.

So because “we can’t see how it can be,” men cling to the temporal and the fleeting, and lose the eternal, together with that which they think they have. Self-denial always carries its own recompense with it.

Earthly Riches Opposed to the Kingdom of Heaven

More foolish than ever does this desire and love for wealth appear, when we read the Saviour’s words that:

Matthew 19

²⁴ It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Mind that there is here no arbitrary shutting of rich men out of heaven. Christ does not say that they will not be permitted to enter heaven, in the future, but that they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, which is here and now. The mind that is set on earthly wealth is utterly incapable of comprehending spiritual things.

And we see that this has a larger application than merely to those who actually possess great wealth. The disciples asked in astonishment,

Mark 10

²⁶ Who then can be saved?

—indicating that they thought that what Christ had said would cut everybody off from salvation; yet they well knew that only comparatively few have great possessions. A poor man may be farther away from the kingdom of heaven than a rich man; it all depends upon where his heart is. The rich man's heart may not be set on his riches as they increase; while the poor man may continually be longing for that which he has not.

Luke 12

¹⁵ Beware of covetousness.

God Does Impossibilities

What gracious comfort this scripture contains for us! Nothing on earth can be more impossible than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

There has been much attempt to minimize Christ's words, and so the theory has been evolved that He referred to a gate in Jerusalem, called "The Needle's Eye," which was so small that a camel could not get through it without being unloaded. Of course the supposition makes nonsense of the text, and nothing more is needed for its refutation than the statement of the fact that there never was any such gate in Jerusalem.

Jesus did not qualify His words, and we must take them as meaning what they say, and accept the comfort of them. It is impossible for us to do this good thing, or to break off that evil habit. It is impossible for us to be other than we are.

But whatever our disabilities, we certainly have no task set before us as the condition of entering the kingdom of heaven, that is more impossible than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. But,

Matthew 19

²⁶ ...with God all things are possible.

The thing that is absolutely impossible for men is easy for Him. So He can take us, and make us new, and will make us know that there are possibilities for the spiritual man that are absolutely inconceivable to the natural man. Therefore,

Ephesians 3

²⁰ Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

²¹ Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

63. A Valuable Investment

Present Truth, July 30, 1896

Timeline: VI-42 (The Rich Young Ruler)

Matthew 19:29

Matthew 19

²⁹ And every one that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

CHRIST has said that whatever of the things of this world anyone shall forsake, for His name's sake, shall be returned to him a hundredfold, with the addition of an eternity of possession and enjoyment of that which he has received.

The value of property is always enhanced in proportion to the length of time the title has to run. A freehold is more valuable than a lease for a term of years. But in this case the promised return for the investment is not only to be one hundredfold, with a title which shall run for eternity, but also this has joined with it a clause which states that everlasting life in which to personally enjoy the use of this increased estate is to go with it as an inseparable adjunct.

This is indeed much. From this point of view the increase in value upon the original investment becomes not one hundredfold merely, but infinite. This is qualified, however, by the surprising statement, to a worldly mind, that many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

Then in the chapter immediately following (*Matthew 20*), the explanation of this is given in the parable of the householder, who went out from time to time during the day and hired laborers for his vineyard, paying them all at the close of the day the same wages, irrespective of whether they had labored one hour or the entire day. And when those whom he had engaged first, and who had worked the full day, mur-

mured, he answered,

Matthew 20

¹⁵ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is your eye evil, because I am good?

¹⁶ So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.

What does the penny a day represent? The wages of sin is death. The wages in the service of God is eternal life. Is the penny, then, eternal life? If it be so, then would it not be just that those who murmured that others received the same wages should be last, and that the last who went gladly, trusting only that they would receive that which was just, and ready to be satisfied with whatever was given them, should be first?

64. For the Sake of Jesus

Present Truth, October 17, 1901

Timeline: VI-42 (The Rich Young Ruler)

Matthew 19:29

Jesus said:

Matthew 19

²⁹ Every one that has forsaken houses or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

HOW many who read these words look upon it as a call to make a sacrifice to please the Lord. They regard it as though He had said:

“I know it is hard; I am asking a great deal of you; it is a great sacrifice that you are called on to make; but do it for my sake—just to please me.”

And with this understanding some give up all their possessions, and subject themselves to many privations, finding their only solace in the thought that God must surely be pleased with what they have offered, and that so great sacrifices and labors ought surely to get a good rest and reward by and by.

Not all look at the matter in this way. There have always been and are still many who understand what it means to yield up something, yea; everything, for the sake of Jesus. They know that it means for the sake of getting Him. They do not think to buy the Lord's favor; but they give up emptiness for the sake of getting fullness. They know that God takes pleasure in the prosperity of His people, and therefore does not ask them to give up something that they delight in, merely to please His fancy.

Psalm 84

¹¹ No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

He never takes a good thing away from anybody; but He would have us accept all good things only at His hands—finding in Him the sum of all good.

There is power in the name of Jesus,—the power of salvation. His name is what He is—Saviour. “His name, through faith in His name”⁷⁸ made a man walk and leap, who had never walked a step in his lifetime of more than forty years. He himself has all power in heaven and earth;⁷⁹ all things consist in Him.⁸⁰ Therefore in giving up something, yea, ourselves and all that we have, for His sake, we are simply letting go of that which is least for that which is greatest.

God said to Abraham,

Genesis 15

¹ I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward.

Each one of God’s people may say:

Psalm 16

⁵ The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup;
You maintain my lot.

⁶ The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yes, I have a
goodly heritage.

The only reward we need or can have, here or hereafter, is the Lord himself, so the Psalmist said,

Psalm 73

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none on

⁷⁸ **Acts 3** ¹⁶ And His name through faith in His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

⁷⁹ **Matthew 28** ¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

⁸⁰ **Colossians 1** ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

earth that I desire beside You.

Or, as the Norwegian Bible has it,

“When I have You, I have no desire for anything on the earth.”

Can you say this? If not, make haste to get acquainted with God. Having found Him, you will for very joy part with all that you have, if need be, that you may but have His abiding presence and fullness.

65. Laborers in the Vineyard

Signs of the Times, January 27, 1887

Timeline: VI-43 (Laborers in the Vineyard)

Matthew 20:1-16

A FRIEND asks us to give an explanation of the parable of *Matthew* 20:1-16. It is the parable of the vineyard, in which the householder went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard, agreeing with them for a penny a day. Afterward he went out at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh, each time finding some unemployed persons whom he set to work, agreeing to give them what was right.

When the evening came he told his steward to give the laborers their hire, beginning with the last and ending with the first. To the last he gave a penny each. The others who had worked the entire day, seeing this, supposed that they should receive more, but they received just what they had been promised,—a penny each. When they murmured at this, the householder said to one of them:

Matthew 20

¹³ Friend, I do you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a penny?

¹⁴ Take what is yours, and go your way; I will give unto this last, even as unto you.

¹⁵ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?

In explaining this parable all difficulty will be removed if we remember that those who were hired at the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh hour came as soon as they were called. When the householder found men standing idle at the eleventh hour, and asked them,

⁶ Why do you stand here all the day idle?

—they answered,

⁷ Because no man has hired us.

The parable, therefore, gives no countenance to the idea that men may delay the acceptance of the gospel until the last hour of their lives, and then fare as well as those who have served the Lord all of their lives. It has no reference whatever to men who have had a knowledge of the gospel but who have put off accepting it.

It refers to those who have not received the light of truth until late, but who accept it as soon as they receive it. As Jesus spoke the parable, it no doubt had its specific application to the Gentiles, who had not enjoyed equal advantages with the Jews.

Now as to the payment. The householder made a fair bargain with those whom he had hired first, giving them good pay, as wages went then; therefore when they received a penny apiece they received all that was their due, and had no reason to complain.

If the master wished to give others the same amount for half an hour's labor, he had a right to do so. Indeed, if he had wished to give money to those who had not labored at all, it would have been doing no injustice to those who had received all that they had been promised.

Applying the parable to those who are called to labor for the Lord, we learn that it is not so much the amount of labor that men do as it is the readiness with which they labor, that is taken into account.

God promises eternal life to all the faithful, and those who labor faithfully from the time they are called, even though they are not called until the eleventh hour, will receive the same reward as those who have labored a longer time, but with no more faithfulness.

66. Believing and Knowing

Present Truth, March 19, 1896

Timeline: VI-44 (Jesus Foretells His Death)

Mark 8:31; Mark 9:31-32; Mark 10:32-34

WHEN Jesus was betrayed into the hands of men, knowing that His hour was come, it is written of His disciples that they forsook Him and fled.

And the crucifixion and death of Christ came as such an overwhelming surprise to His most intimate followers that their hopes were buried with Him, and the world was dark and deep.

There is a very common misapprehension of the evidence which the disciples had to help them through this hour of darkness. One writer says:

“Jesus made many allusions to His death, but so vaguely that they were not understood, and His disciples were wholly unprepared for the event.”

This misapprehension robs one of the important and helpful lesson that is taught in the story of this disappointment. The fact is, that the disciples need not have been plunged into a hopeless sorrow even for those few hours, had they but believed the words of the Lord, as plainly appears from a few texts.

Christ made many allusions to His approaching death, and on three occasions, recorded by *Mark* in consecutive order, He distinctly told His disciples exactly what was to occur. First, when they were in Caesarea Philippi:

Mark 8

³¹ And He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Next, as they had come into Galilee, He said to the disciples,

Mark 9

³¹ The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day.

And again, as they were going up to Jerusalem to the cross,

Mark 10

³² He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him,

³³ Saying, Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles;

³⁴ And they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him, and the third day He shall rise again.

Now, reading the statements, it must be acknowledged that language could not more plainly state the facts. Three times over the Lord told them, and yet it is written,

Mark 9

³² But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

Why did they not understand? Not because it was not said plainly, assuredly, but because they did not believe what was said.

And just here comes the lesson for us. They did not listen, nor believe the plain declarations of the Lord. Their minds were so full of their own ideas of how it was all coming out that when the Lord spoke His thoughts they even rebuked Him for saying such a thing as that He should suffer and die. They did not see how these things could be, and they could not see how simply because they did not believe His words. And so they were wholly unprepared to go through the trial without wavering.

Just so today many read over the plainest declarations of the Word with minds so full of their own thoughts and conceptions that they do not understand what the Lord says. They seek the written words or hear the sound of them, but they only suggest the thoughts that have possession of their mind.

God's thoughts are not as our thoughts⁸¹, and the way to learn His thoughts is to listen to what He says and believe it exactly as He says it. The disciples did not understand Christ's words, but if they had believed the words they would have understood. When we believe the words of the Lord we begin to understand them, but no one can understand so long as he puts the words away without listening to them and believing that God means what He says.

We need to learn this lesson now, and for our instruction it is recorded. The disciples needed the lesson to keep them in the hour of the power of darkness.⁸² Before us is another hour of the power of darkness that will try men's souls. Of that coming hour the promise is given:

Revelation 3

¹⁰ Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

To keep it is to receive it, to believe it. Let us, then, be warned by the lesson of the disciples' failure, that we may not fail to understand the words which the Holy Spirit speaks by Scripture to prepare men to stand in the hour of final trial.

⁸¹ **Isaiah 55** ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

⁸² **Luke 22** ⁵³ When I was daily with you in the temple, you stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

67. Which is Your Reasonable Service

Present Truth, July 30, 1896

Timeline: VI-44 (Jesus Foretells His Death)

Matthew 20:18-19

THAT was a solemn moment when Christ said to His disciples,

Matthew 20

¹⁸ Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death,

¹⁹ And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again.

The twelve were all there together. Christ had even taken them apart by the wayside, that they might be alone by themselves while He first clearly stated to them in definite words the treachery which He was to meet, and the painful and ignominious death He was to die.

Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of His statement, and the impressive list of the circumstances under which it was given them, they seemed to fail utterly to comprehend it, or to appreciate in any degree its tragic and solemn import. For immediately after this, apparently, the two brothers, one of whom was the affectionate and noble disciple whom Jesus loved, with their mother, came to ask for personal preferment and power. The reply of Jesus,

²² You know not what you ask,

—was apt and expressive. Yet, notwithstanding their error in making such a request, and the fact that it could scarcely have been more ill-timed, He did not reprove them sharply. He only used the incident to illustrate to them all the difference between the administration of heavenly and of worldly affairs.

By the use of this sad misconception and the jealous anger

of their fellow-disciples, He would show them, in such a manner as to impress it vividly upon their minds, that it should not be among them as in the world,

²⁶ But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

Then, striving to recall to their minds the solemn words which He had previously spoken, in warning as to what was about to befall himself, He illustrated what their service should be by what His own had been and was to be to them:

²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

68. On the Way to Jerusalem

Present Truth, August 6, 1896

Timeline: VI-44 (Jesus Foretells His Death)

Matthew 20:18-19

JUST as the Lord was about to start on His last journey up to Jerusalem, to the Passover, himself to be the Lamb led to the slaughter, He called His disciples aside, where He might speak to them alone, and told them plainly what was about to come to pass. His language could not well be more clear than when He said:

Matthew 20

¹⁸ Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priest and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death,

¹⁹ And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again.

They must all have heard it. He took them apart by the way, so that there could be no reason why their attention should be distracted and they fail to comprehend the reality of the facts which He was about to relate to them, or to feel their importance. Then He told them these things in words capable of no double interpretation. One by one, in regular sequence, He named the different scenes in the tragedy that was about to be enacted:

- A. First was the going up to Jerusalem,
- B. Then the trial,
- C. The condemnation to death,
- D. The delivery to the Gentiles,
- E. The mocking and scourging, the crucifixion,
- F. And, lastly, the resurrection on the third day.

How strange it seems that so remarkable a prediction as this, couched in such plain terms, did not immediately and

completely absorb their whole attention, occupy their whole thought, and become the entire subject of their conversation. But there is no evidence that they even gave His words a second thought. Seemingly, they were no more to them than the blowing wind,—they did not even make so much impression as they might have done had they entered one ear to pass out at the other. Indeed *Luke* says,

Luke 18

³⁴ And they understood none of these things.

It seems now incomprehensible that they should, by any possibility, have failed to understand. One would have thought that as they went up to Jerusalem they would have been saying to each other on the way,

“The Master said we should go up to Jerusalem, and now here we are on the way; when we get there, so He told us, He is to be betrayed to the chief priests.”

Then when the trial took place, one would have thought that they would have looked in each other’s faces, not needing to speak, for each would know what was in the other’s mind,—that the next step was the condemnation to death. And then when the decree of death was granted they would have known that the delivery to the Roman authorities, the mocking, scourging, and then crucifixion was to follow.

But then, when all these different steps, one by one, in their specified order, had been fulfilled, their hope and faith, would have become a certainty, assured,

Matthew 20

¹⁹ ...and the third day He shall rise again.

But instead of this, they understood none of these things, having scarcely listened while He told them all this alone, apart by the way.

It is evident why two of them, at least, did not understand.

The very next verses, recounting the request which they and their mother made to the Lord, show that the reason why they did not hear and understand was that they were absorbed in thoughts of self.

Mark 10

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto Him, saying, Master, we would that You should do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

³⁶ And He said unto them, What would you that I should do for you?

³⁷ They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on your right hand, and the other on your left hand, in your glory.

In those days, and in the presence of those men, the words of the Lord were fulfilled, and they were ignorant of that which had been opened as clear as the daylight before their eyes, and so missed the blessing.

In these days, and in our presence, the words of the Lord are being fulfilled no less than then. It behooves us to be purged of that darkness of self, and be filled with His life which is the light of men, that we may hear, see, and understand the history which God is making in the world, and know that it is the fulfillment of His prophecy, step by step, as surely as that from the road to Jerusalem to the cross and the resurrection. Of the attitude of wakeful believers, the apostle says,

1 Thessalonians 5

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

69. Christ's Last Journey to Jerusalem

Signs of the Times, February 17, 1888

Notes on the International Lesson, March 4

Timeline: VI-44 (Jesus Foretells His Death); VI-45 (The Ambition of James and John)

Matthew 20:17-29

THE other accounts of the events recorded in this lesson are found in *Mark* 10:32-45 and *Luke* 18:31-34. Luke does not record the request for the two sons of Zebedee.

As they were going up to Jerusalem, where Jesus was to be offered as a sacrifice for sinners, He tried to prepare the minds of His disciples for the terrible trial before them; but they could not comprehend His words.

Jesus told them everything that should take place,—that He should be betrayed into the hands of the chief priests and scribes who would condemn Him to death, and then deliver Him to the Gentiles, who in turn would mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit upon Him, and finally put Him to death by crucifying Him, and that on the third day He should rise again.

But although He told them only what had been written by the prophets,

Luke 18

³⁴ They understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither did they know the things which were spoken.

It was not until all these things had been accomplished, and Christ had...

Luke 24

²⁷ ...expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself,

—that they could understand. So difficult is it for preconceived opinions to give way for truth.

Matthew 20

¹⁰ ...and the third day He shall rise again.

More needless controversies have been waged over the length of time that Christ lay in the grave, than over almost any other Scripture event. In answer to the request of the scribes and Pharisees for a sign, Jesus had said that no sign should be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonah:

Matthew 12

⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Taking their stand on this text, some will claim that it wasn't fulfilled, because from Friday, when Jesus was crucified, till Sunday morning when he rose again, was not three days and three nights; while others claim that he must have been in the grave seventy-two hours, and that therefore he must have been crucified earlier in the week than Friday. Neither position is correct.

The simple fact of the matter is that Christ was crucified on Friday, the preparation day, the day before the Sabbath, and that he rose very early in the morning of the first day of the week, and still he was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, in the sense in which Christ spoke those words.

Christ said that he should be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights; he also said that he should be crucified, and "the third day should rise again." Therefore we must conclude that these two expressions mean the same thing.

When the two disciples on the way to Emmaus recounted the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ, they said:

Luke 24

²¹ Today is the third day since these things were done.

That the expressions three days and three nights, and the

third day, were used interchangeably with reference to the same period of time, is proved by a passage in the book of *Esther*. When Esther had decided to go in before the king, she sent to Mordecai, saying:

Esther 4

¹⁶ Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

And the record says that:

Esther 5

¹ Now it came to pass *on the third day*, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house.

The blindness of the disciples, and their slowness to believe that Christ did not intend to establish an earthly monarchy at that time, are shown by the fact that immediately after Christ had told them of his soon-coming sufferings, the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus, saying,

Matthew 20

²¹ Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, in your kingdom.

Mark says that James and John made this request (*Mark* 10:35-37); but from Matthew's account we are to understand that they made the request through their mother.

In this request we have an exhibition of pride and ambition for position. It was this same spirit that caused the fall of Satan in Heaven. *Isaiah* 14:12-14. The same ambition instilled by him into the heart of Eve, resulted in the fall of our first parents. When Satan said to Eve,

Genesis 3

⁵ In the day that you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be

opened, and you shall be like God,

—she took of the fruit. It is evident, therefore, that such a spirit must be entirely banished from the hearts of those who will share the kingdom of Heaven. If places in that kingdom were distributed as they are in earthly kingdoms, confusion and ruin would ensue.

Jesus did not say whether James and John should or should not occupy the places which they desired; but He showed them what they must pass through.

Matthew 20

²² Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They said unto Him, We are able.

Bold language this. They were bold because they were ignorant. They had no idea of what Christ was about to endure. If they had realized it, they would probably have been less confident; for we find that when they were brought face to face with the sufferings of Christ they forsook Him and fled.

Yet afterwards they did drink of the same cup, and were made partakers of his sufferings, even as Christ foretold. What made this change? Simply this: They had learned of Christ. They had learned that Christ's kingdom was not temporal, but eternal, and that the way to it lay through tribulation.

In *Matthew 20:23* the translators have made an unnecessary insertion. They have supplied the words, "it shall be given to them," in the sentence:

²³ But to sit on my right hand, and on my left is not mine to give, but [it shall be given to them] for whom it is prepared of my Father.

It seems that a plain translation of the Greek, without supplying anything, would be much better. Then it would read thus:

²³ To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it's prepared of my Father.

That is, He could give it to none, except to those for whom it was prepared, and that meant those who were prepared for it, through self-denial and suffering. When the ten heard the request that James and John had made,

²⁴ ...they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

This would indicate that they had the same spirit that the two brethren had. They wanted to occupy as high places as there were, and they were indignant to think that these two had been trying to get ahead of them. James and John would have made admirable politicians, with the same spirit that they then had; they would not lose any opportunity to advance their own interests.

²⁵ But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

²⁶ But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant;

²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Here we have the road to true honor and greatness laid out before us. Paul taught the same thing when he said:

Romans 12

¹⁰ Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.

And again when he wrote:

Philippians 2

³ Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

The wisdom of this world would call that foolishness; but the wisdom of this world would therein exhibit its own foolishness.

Actually, the plan laid down by Jesus and Paul would, if carried out, result in the greatest possible good for all men. As it is now, each man looks out for himself, and for nobody but himself. In order for a man to build himself up, it is often necessary for him to pull somebody else down; and thus the whole world is peopled with Ishmaelites. Now in such a case it is evident that a man can get no more than his own strength or wisdom will bring him, and often not so much as that, since others may prevail against him.

But where the divine rule is followed, everybody gets far more than he could if each one were looking out simply for himself. If there are a hundred men in a community, and each one esteems every other one better than himself, and seeks the honor of others, each man will have the strength of a hundred put forth in his behalf. Each one forgetting himself, would find his interests advanced far more than they could be if he had devoted his entire attention to himself.

So it appears that the manner of life necessary to fit one for Heaven, is really the best for men's temporal welfare, if they would but follow it. For,

1 Timothy 1

⁸ Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

70. Before Honor is Humility

Present Truth, March 31, 1898

Timeline: VI-45 (The Ambition of James and John)

Mark 10:35-45

Mark 10

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto Him, saying, Master, we would that You should do for us whatsoever we desire.

³⁶ And He said unto them, What would you that I should do for you?

³⁷ They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on your right hand, and the other on your left, in your glory.

⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

⁴² But Jesus called them to Him, and said unto them, You know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

⁴³ But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister;

⁴⁴ And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

⁴⁵ For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

WHAT a natural and familiar request James and John made:

“Give us the best places in the Government.”

“Let us have the offices of greatest honor and authority.”

That is human nature. In the world their request would then as well as today be considered a mark of energetic forethought. They were enterprising young men. Alas, such an enterprise is too often considered perfectly in place even in the church.

The ten were very naturally indignant. Why should these

two seek a monopoly of the good positions?

“Selfish fellows! we want some of the good places ourselves.”

The easiest kind of humility is that which consists in declaiming against the pretensions of others. But the kingdom of God is in every respect the opposite of earthly kingdoms. The lowest place is the highest place.

Luke 14

¹¹ He that abases himself shall be exalted.

Yes, the exaltation is in the humiliation. It is utterly impossible to explain this, for it is so contrary to the natural understanding. No matter how much experience we have had in the Christian life, when we depend on our reason we cannot possibly see how we are going to get forward by keeping in the background, and pushing somebody else ahead.

Lowly service is the mark of greatness in the kingdom of God. Christ is greatest, because He has done the greatest service. He has the highest position, because He is the most lowly in heart.

The great things in the kingdom of God are not the things that are talked about, and published in the newspapers, and applauded in reports of religious work. Ah, it is so easy to do great service when everybody looks on and appreciates. But to do humble service, that is not noticed, or if regarded is only despised, that is not so attractive.

We cannot possibly bring ourselves to this kind of service. We begin to efface ourselves because we know that this is the way to exaltation; but since we have exaltation in view, we inevitably and unconsciously collide into what seems to be the most direct and natural way to exaltation, that is, self-advancement.

No; the only way it can be done is by being filled with and

controlled by the Spirit of Christ. He is pre-eminently “The Servant.” When He serves in us, the service will be perfect, because worldly methods will be entirely obliterated.

Jeremiah 45

⁵ Do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not.

71. Ruler and Servant

Present Truth, March 15, 1900

Timeline: VI-45 (The Ambition of James and John)

Mark 10:35-45

Mark 10

⁴⁵ For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.⁸³

IN ORDER to get the full force of these words, we should read the account of the circumstance which called them forth. It was this:

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto Him, saying, Master, we would that You should do for us whatsoever we desire.

³⁶ And He said unto them, What would you that I should do for you?

³⁷ They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on your right hand, and the other on your left hand, in your glory.

⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

⁴² But Jesus called them to Him, and said unto them, You know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

⁴³ But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister;

⁴⁴ And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

⁴⁵ For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

James and John were politicians, looking after the main chance. They supposed the kingdom of Christ to be like all other governments of earth, in which he who wishes a place

⁸³ This is the "Golden Text" of the International Sunday-School Lesson, for March 25, which is a Review.

must scheme for it, and whoever gains any position of honor or responsibility must do so at the expense of somebody else's failure.

They learned better after they had been with Jesus longer, and especially after the Holy Ghost had illuminated their minds; but there are many readers of the Bible who have not yet grasped the basis of preferment in the kingdom of Christ. The words of Christ, here quoted, make the principles of Christ's government very plain.

Christ's Kingdom is Real and Tangible

In the first place, however, we must guard against the idea that some might gather from the statement that Christ's kingdom is different from other governments, that it is something vague or visionary, intangible or unreal.

That the kingdom of Christ is as real as any kingdom that has ever existed on this earth, is shown by the prophecy in the 2nd chapter of *Daniel*, which has recently been set forth in these columns.⁸⁴ Four universal kingdoms are there presented in succession, and then another kingdom appears which utterly destroys all these kingdoms, and takes their place, enduring for ever. That kingdom...

Daniel 2

⁴⁴ ...shall not be left to other people;

—but it will be a real kingdom, composed of real people, and occupying, not a part, but the whole of this earth. The kingdom over which Christ is to reign on this earth is “the first dominion,”⁸⁵ which was given to man in the beginning.

⁸⁴ Editor's note: Waggoner is here referring to the articles by W. W. Prescott entitled, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Studies in the Book of Daniel*, which appeared in the *Present Truth* as weekly articles from January 25 to June 21, 1900. These studies should also be available in book format on our website soon (www.practicaprophetica.com).

⁸⁵ **Micah 4** ⁸ And you, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto you shall it come, even *the first dominion*; the kingdom shall

Some have thought that Christ's kingdom is merely "spiritual," meaning by that not literal or real, and that it exists only in the hearts and minds of believers, but has no territory. It is indeed spiritual, but only in the sense that its subjects are led by the Spirit of God, which is the case with all true believers now; for we read:

Romans 8

⁹ You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

Christ does not at present rule over any territory on this earth, although the earth is to be His kingdom; but He is now engaged in preparing subjects for it, determining, by the offer of the Gospel, who are willing that He should rule over them. The capital of the kingdom is the New Jerusalem, in heaven, and when probation is over, and every person has definitely decided for or against Him, the city will descend to this earth, which will be made new and cleansed from every trace of the curse, and then will the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Hebrews 12

²² But you are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

²³ To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

²⁴ And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Revelation 21

¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

¹¹ Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

¹² And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

²² And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

²³ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

²⁴ And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.

²⁵ And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.

²⁷ And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The nature of this kingdom, which is to take the place of all other kingdoms on this earth, and which is to be so much better than they that it must have the earth made new on purpose for it, is set forth in the words of Christ already quoted.

Every Man Both King and Subject

After God had finished the creation of the heavens and the earth, and everything in them, He said:

Genesis 1

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

Take notice that God made man male and female.

Genesis 5

¹ In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God He made him;

² Male and female He created them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, [that is, Man].

It was to man collectively, to the whole human race, and not to any one individual, that God gave dominion over the whole earth. Every individual in the kingdom of God is a king. Christ is to be a King of kings. In His kingdom there will be no rank lower than that of king, and there can be nothing higher.

Who then will be the subjects? the answer is, the whole earth, including every creature in it. Every man is to be a king, and also a subject. Each one will be subject, not merely to God, but to the divine, royal nature in every other human being. Here is the law:

1 Peter 5

⁵ All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resists the proud, and gives grace unto the humble.

The harmony of God's kingdom was link broken when Lucifer thought to be like God by exalting himself. But this is the very way to become unlike God, for He is...

Matthew 11

²⁹ ...meek and lowly in heart.

In the Gospel God shows men what is good, and calls upon them to humble themselves to walk with Him:

Micah 6 [margin]

⁸ What does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to humble yourself to walk with your God?

In taking upon himself the form of a servant, Christ was making manifest to men the real character of His kingdom. He had the mind to serve before He came to this earth in the form of a servant.

Philippians 2

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the *form of a servant*, and was made in the likeness of men.

In washing His disciples' feet (*John* 13:1-17), Jesus showed that His royal subjects are to engage in real service, of a kind that men are accustomed to call "menial;" and He also tells us that when the kingdom is fully restored in all its glory, He will himself perform such service as waiting at table.

Luke 12

³⁷ Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He comes shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Those who are truly Christ's, will not regard any necessary work as menial, and will not despise any who do such service, nor will they shrink from doing any kind of work that may

fall in their way, no matter how lowly. No one will lord it over another. This is the lesson that Christ has taught us.

He does not mean that there shall be no division of labor, each one being occupied regularly with that to which he is best adapted; but what He means is that no one, however well he may be fitted for what men call the highest position, should feel above doing the smallest and most despised service, if occasion demands.

And He means also, that the one to whose lot it falls to scrub floors or to run errands, if he does his work faithfully, is just as honorable as the man to whose lot it falls to sit in a palace and direct affairs of State. If the latter person is unfaithful in his service, then he is not so honorable as the other.

It is not what a person does, but the spirit in which he does it, that determines his standing in the kingdom of Christ. Every servant who in the fear of God is master of his work, is a king.

A Practical, Every-Day Lesson

This is a practical lesson for everyday use. From it we are to learn that “Divine service” does not consist merely in going to meeting and singing hymns and hearing sermons. To be a “servant of Christ” means to do everything as well as it can possibly be done.

Christ worked at the carpenter’s trade at least four times as many years as He preached, when He was here in the flesh; but He was all the time the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind; and since in His teaching He was Master and Lord, we may be sure that He was also a master carpenter when He worked with the saw and plane. The Spirit that inspired the words,

Ecclesiastes 9

¹⁰ Whatsoever your hands find to do, do it with your might,

—dwelt in Him in all fullness. Whatever work a person has to do therefore, Christ will make him master of it, if he learns of Him. If he is not master of his work, he is not a true servant of the Lord Jesus.

There is much more to be learned from the words of Jesus concerning His kingdom; but whoever has fully learned this one will have no trouble with anything else.

72. Church Authority

Present Truth, August 31, 1893

Timeline: VI-45 (The Ambition of James and John)

Matthew 20:25-28

THE words of Christ must ever be our guide. They cannot be too often repeated. Again we quote:

Matthew 20

²⁵ You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

²⁶ But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

It should be understood that the word “minister,” in the above text, does not necessarily mean “preacher.” A minister is a servant, one who ministers or serves. In the text just quoted, the word “servant” indicates a more complete and humble servitude than the word “minister.”

The difference is shown in the margin of the *Revised Version*, where we have “servant” given as the equivalent of “minister,” and “bondservant” as the equivalent of “servant.” The word rendered “minister” is the ordinary word for servant, while that rendered “servant” is the usual word for slave.

Now note the gradation in which they are used by the Lord. He who will be great in the church, must be a servant; but he who will be chief, must be a bondservant. That is, the degree of greatness depends upon the completeness of the service and the giving up of self to Christ.

So we learn from the words of the Saviour, that there is to be no such thing in the church of Christ as the exercise of au-

thority such as is known in civil government. The church is on an entirely different plane from the State. There is no likeness whatever between them. The kingdom of Christ is a thing entirely different from human ideas of government. He said,

John 18

³⁶ My kingdom is not of this world.

They who think to understand the working of Christ's kingdom by studying earthly models, are proceeding in the wrong way, and are working in the dark.

We have read in *1 Corinthians* 12:28 that "governments" are among the gifts that God has bestowed upon the church; but we shall come more closely to God's idea of government if we note that the *Revised Version* gives the alternative reading, "wise counsels."

One of the titles of Christ, as the one upon whose shoulder the government is laid, is "Counselor":

Isaiah 9

⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

He is "wonderful in counsel":

Isaiah 28

²⁹ This also comes forth from the Lord of hosts, which is *wonderful in counsel*, and excellent in working.

And so He provides wise counsels for the government of His church, said counsel to be derived solely from Him, who alone is the source of wisdom. He governs by love. His counsel is "the counsel of peace":

Zechariah 6

¹³ Even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall

bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

Recall again the words of:

1 Peter 5

³ Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

The elders or bishops he exhorts not to be "lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." There can therefore be in the true church of Christ no such thing as a "Lord Bishop." That is one of the fruits of the unlawful connection of the church with the world.

Christ is the only Lord; but here again we shall grievously err if we think of Him as occupying the "lordly" position of earthly lords.

Matthew 11

²⁹ [He is] meek and lowly in heart.

And all men have to learn humility from Him who is...

Romans 10

¹² ...Lord over all.

He calls upon them to humble themselves to walk with Him.

Micah 6 [margin]

⁸ He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to humble yourself to walk with your God?

The church of Christ, as directed by the Lord himself, is the only place on earth where "liberty, equality, and fraternity" can be fully realized. The apostle Peter proceeds,

1 Peter 5

⁵ Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.

Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with

humility; for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.

The trouble with earthly associations formed for the purpose of promoting liberty and equality on earth, is that they are only human organizations, directed only by human wisdom and human power, and among men self is bound to predominate. Only the Spirit of Christ is unselfish.

“Rank,” as known among men, is unknown to the church of Christ. There is no such thing as one setting himself up above another, or allowing himself to be so placed or considered. That pertains to the princes of this world, but the words of Christ are,

Matthew 20

²⁶ It shall not be so among you.

Christ “emptied himself,” and therefore self has no place in His body, the church. To the Jews He said,

John 5

⁴⁴ How can you believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that comes from God?

Through the apostle Paul He said,

Romans 12

¹⁰ Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.

Again,

Philippians 2

³ Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.

1 Corinthians 13

⁵ Love seeks not her own.

Matthew 23

⁸ Do not be called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ;

and all you are brethren.

Members One of Another

The Lord has, however, actually guarded against any such thing as disorder or anarchy. We are not to understand, because there is no such thing as rank in the church, that each one is independent of every other one, and that no one is to concern himself with the conduct of any other. Let the Scriptures themselves give us the relation that all the members of the church of Christ sustain to one another:

1 Corinthians 12

⁶ There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all.

¹² For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many.

¹⁵ If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

¹⁶ And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

¹⁸ But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased Him.

¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where were the body?

²⁰ But now are they many members, yet one body.

²¹ And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

²² Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.

²⁴ ...God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked:

²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

We see from this, that although there are different offices and gifts in the church, no one member is any more necessary

than another. Neither are there to be any to have no responsibility. One may be in a position to do seemingly twice as much work as another, yet he is no more necessary to the work than one who occupies a humbler place. If the one in the lowest place is doing the work which God has given him there to do, then his place is just as important as that of the one in the highest place.

There is no place in God's plan for arrogance on the one hand, nor for fawning servility or fear on the other.

Matthew 23

⁸ One is your Master, even Christ; and all you are brethren.

1 Corinthians 11

³ The head of every man is Christ.

Therefore there are no such things in the true church as "superior officers." Christ is the only Superior. The command,

Philippians 2

³ Let each esteem others better than themselves,

—applies to those who have great gifts, as well as to those of less ability. Each member sees in every other one the representative of Christ, and esteems him accordingly. This mutual esteem is not brought about, however, by vote, nor by resolution, nor by the signing of any articles, but by the same Spirit of God dwelling in each.

In the human body every member is as much concerned to protect every other member, as to protect itself. Each different member and organ has a different work to do, there is perfect order and harmony. This is because they all receive orders from one common center.

The hand is joined to the arm, yet it acts in obedience to orders from the head. The last joint of the finger is connected with the one just above it, yet it is not directed by it, but by the head. Every part has direct communication with the head.

So in the church, different members have different offices, each one having a work, yet while no one controls another, all agree.

Indeed, it is only when some begin to exercise authority over others, that disagreement begins. The Spirit of Christ in every member makes all act in unison, just as do the nerves the organs in the body. Christ may use some members to convey His will to others, yet the message is to be received only as from Christ, and not as from a man.

Thus there is equality, while there is the greatest diversity. No one can despise another, or look with contempt upon his inferior gifts.

1 Corinthians 4

⁷ For who makes you to differ from another? and what have you that you did not receive? now if you received it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?

Christ is the only Head of the Church, and all the life of the church must be that which is received from Him. The church is useful only as each member...

Colossians 2

¹⁹ ...holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God.

There is perfect independence, because the members of the church are built upon Christ, and not on one another; and there is also perfect unity, and subjection one to another, because all are filled by one Spirit and one mind,—the Spirit and mind of Christ.

Men will greatly admire the work of the mighty fly wheel in a great engine, and think nothing of the band; yet without the band the wheel would be useless, so that they are of equal importance; neither could do its work without the other.

The smallest bolts in a well-constructed piece of machinery

is as important as the largest beam, since without the bolt the larger part will be useless. So in the church of Christ no one member, no matter what his office, can despise the humblest member.

1 Corinthians 12

²² Much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.

There was a time when seventy elders were chosen, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, so that they prophesied. But there were two young men in the camp, upon whom the Spirit of prophecy also rested; and Joshua said,

Numbers 11

²⁸ My lord, Moses, forbid them.

But Moses replied,

²⁹ Do you envy for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!

That wish of Moses indicates something of what the true church of Christ will be when it really becomes...

Ephesians 1

²³ ...the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

It is what is set forth in:

Ephesians 4

⁷ Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12

⁷ The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Christ has given...

Mark 13

³⁴ ...to every man his work.

The work of many may be only that of helping in a very humble capacity, yet it is as necessary as any other.

That which Moses wished is, indeed, actually promised in the Scriptures:

Acts 2

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

¹⁸ And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

73. Sight for the Blind

Present Truth, October 20, 1892

Timeline: VI-46 (Blind Bartimaeus)

Luke 18:35-43

WE HAVE learned that the miracles of Jesus are recorded that we may believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, we may have life through His name.⁸⁶

Among the many that He did, a very common one was that of giving sight to the blind. One of the most striking instances is the following, which we quote, that all the details may be fresh in the mind of every reader:

Luke 18

³⁵ And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging;

³⁶ And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

³⁷ And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passes by.

³⁸ And he cried, saying, Jesus, you Son of David, have mercy on me.

³⁹ And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, You Son of David, have mercy on me.

⁴⁰ And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him; and when he was come near, He asked him,

⁴¹ Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

⁴² And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee.

⁸⁶ Editor's note: Waggoner is referring to two previous articles: "The Miracles of Jesus," from *Present Truth*, August 25, 1892, and "The Cleansing Touch and Word," from *Present Truth*, September 22, 1892. These are included (as well as others that carry the same thought,) in the publication, *The Miracles of Jesus*. The second article, "The Cleansing Touch..." is also included in Volume 1 of *All About Jesus*, in the Section *Early Galilean Ministry*, Article 10.

⁴³ And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

This is a marvelous illustration of the power of faith. It was utterly impossible that the man should do anything for himself. But he most earnestly desired to see. Jesus had the power to make him see, and he believed in Him. This was all. Jesus said unto him,

Mark 10

⁵² Your faith has made you whole.

There was an actual work done, and faith did it. The man was not only blind, but he was poor. He was a beggar. His poverty would naturally result from his blindness. The restoration of his sight would be to supply all his wants, for with sight he could earn a living without any difficulty.

Another point to be noted is that the people tried to keep him away from Jesus. They were very careful of the Saviour. They did not want Him to be troubled. Doubtless they did as too many do now, namely, judged Jesus by themselves. They thought that He would not care to be bothered by a poor, blind beggar.

They did not know that He who made the worlds, and who upholds them by the word of His power, attends also to the smallest details, and is not bothered. Not only is He able to attend to the smallest details, but His delight is to help the poor and needy. Jesus came to this earth for the sole purpose of doing good, and in that He was showing forth the character of the Father.

Note also that the blind man made no delay when word was brought to him that Jesus had called him. Mark says:

Mark 10

⁵⁰ And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

Instead of looking for a better suit of clothes in which to appear before the Saviour, he left even the garment that he had. It was doubtless ragged and worthless, anyway. Jesus was going to give him his sight, and that meant the gift of everything.

There could not be any better assurance than this miracle, of the willingness and the power of Jesus to do that which He promises in the 3rd chapter of *Revelation*. He first describes the people as saying,

Revelation 3

¹⁷ I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;

—and not knowing that they are...

¹⁷ ...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked.

This was exactly the condition of Bartimaeus, except that he was conscious of his condition. Christ calls to people to realize their condition, and when they do they are in the place that the poor blind man was who called for mercy. To such ones, Jesus says:

Revelation 3

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve that you may see.

With what are we to buy these things? Evidently not with anything that we have, for we are poor. These things are to be sold to us...

Isaiah 55

¹ ...without money and without price.

We are:

1 Peter 1

¹⁸ ...not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and

gold,...

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ.

Christ came into the world to give sight to the blind. In His first recorded discourse He said:

Luke 4

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind.

The blindness from which Jesus came to set us free is the blindness of sin. The apostle Peter enumerates the Christian graces as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. These make up the complete Christian.

2 Peter 1

⁹ But *he that lacks these things is blind*, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

It was from the lack of these things, therefore, that Jesus came to deliver us. That is, as He came to give sight to the blind, and those who lack these things are blind, He came to give them to us. Take notice, also, that sight comes with the forgiveness of sins:

⁹ He that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that *he was purged from his old sins*.

This speaks of one who has known the forgiveness of sins, but who has departed from the faith. Such a one is blind, and so is the one who has never known forgiveness of sins. But with the forgiveness of sins, all these things come, and also sight.

How are these graces to be obtained? Solely by the life of Christ. It is separation from His life that constitutes blindness. Thus we read of the Gentiles:

Ephesians 4

¹⁸ Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

This the more evident when we remember that Christ's life is the light of men.

John 1

⁴ In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

It is through the reception of the life of Christ that we get forgiveness of sins:

Colossians 1

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

The blood is the life, and therefore it is that the blood makes atonement for the soul.

Leviticus 17

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul.

When Christ shed His blood He gave His life. But He gives His life to us if we accept Him, for we are crucified with Him, and raised up together with Him, that we may live in Him and He in us. His life takes the place of the old life of sin, and thus we are purged from our old sins. Thus also we receive all the Christian graces, for they are all in His life.

We have thus briefly traced the natural condition of men as blind, and seen what sight is, and where it is to be found, in order that we may realize the importance of the lesson taught us in the healing of the blind Bartimaeus.

Remember that these miracles are recorded in order that we may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, we may have life through His name. So Jesus gave

Bartimaeus sight, not alone for His sake, but for all our sakes also.

Romans 15

⁴ For whatsoever things were written aforetime [whether in the Old Testament or in the New,] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Jesus gave Bartimaeus the sight of his natural eyes, in order that we might know how we may get spiritual sight, namely virtue, patience, temperance, godliness, charity, etc. What gave Bartimaeus his sight? Jesus said unto him,

Mark 10

⁵² Your faith has made you whole.

In the same way are we to obtain all the excellencies of Christ. Not by a mere sentiment, nor by feeling, but by living faith. What that is, we shall see in another article.⁸⁷

The one lesson that we wish to learn in this, is that in just the same way that the blind man got his sight, we may have the cleansing from all sin.

⁸⁷ See article 78 in this section, "Coming to the Master" (Present Truth, October 20, 1892).

74. He Calls You

Present Truth, November 2, 1893

Timeline: VI-46 (Blind Bartimaeus)

Mark 10:47-52

BY THE wayside, near Jericho, as Jesus passed along, sat blind Bartimaeus, begging.

Mark 10

⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, You son of David, have mercy on me.

⁴⁸ And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more a great deal, You son of David, have mercy on me.

⁴⁹ And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you.

The result is well known. As soon as Bartimaeus said,

⁵¹ Lord, that I might receive my sight,

Jesus replied,

⁵² Your faith has made you whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

All men are blinded by nature, for “all have sinned,” and sin is blindness.

Titus 3

¹¹ For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

With a word Jesus gave to blind Bartimaeus his sight. That was written for our sakes, that we might know His power to open our sin-blinded eyes. Said He,

John 8

¹² I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not

walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

His word is light and life, and the same word that gave sight to Bartimaeus, can remove the blindness of sin.

1 John 2

¹ If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

In another article we have seen that Jesus as our Advocate, is our Comforter.⁸⁸ It would have been better if the translators had put “Comforter” in the text, instead of “Advocate,” since the latter word is associated in so many minds with the idea of a lawyer before a judge; but if we take the word “advocate” according to its derivation, we shall find the same comfort.

If we consult a dictionary we shall find that the word “advocate” is made up from two Latin words, meaning “to call to.” Thus an advocate is one who calls to another. In law it has come to mean one who speaks for another; but we will adhere to its original use.

Now let us read the first with this definition of “advocate.” If any man sin we have with the Father One who calls to us. God does not turn away from us, but calls to us in Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father. So we read,

1 Corinthians 1

⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1 [RV]

⁶ I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you in the grace of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

Jesus said,

⁸⁸ This article is titled, “Advocate—Comforter,” and is included in Volume 8 of the Fragments series, *The Holy Spirit*.

John 14

²⁴ The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

Therefore it is God who calls to us,

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

If any man sin, we have One with the Father who calls to us. And what does He say?

Psalms 85

⁸ I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace unto His people.

He says,

Isaiah 57

¹⁹ Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near.

Also He speaks righteousness:

Isaiah 45

¹⁹ I the Lord speak righteousness.

God has set Christ forth...

Romans 3

²⁵ ...to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed.

When Christ speaks righteousness to a sinful soul, then there is righteousness there, just the same as there was light when He said,

Genesis 1

³ Let there be light.

And so again we find that Christ as Advocate is a Comforter. The voice that calls out to us, "Peace," comes from God himself, for our Advocate is "with the Father."

John 1

¹ The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The righteousness which it speaks is the righteousness of God. And He is calling to all; all may have the comfort, if they will hear His voice.

Isaiah 55

³ Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.

What greater comfort could there be than to know that a voice from God is calling to us to come to Him? Whosoever reads this,

Acts 13

²⁶ To you is the word of this salvation sent.

Are you weary with groping in the darkness of sin?

Mark 10

⁴⁹ Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you.

75. Sight and Riches for Blind Beggars

Present Truth, November 29, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for December 9

Timeline: VI-46 (Blind Bartimaeus)

Mark 10:46-52

Mark 10 [RV]

⁴⁶ And they came to Jericho: and as He went out from Jericho, with His disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timmus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the wayside.

⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, You Son of David, have mercy on me.

⁴⁸ And many rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried out the more a great deal, You Son of David, have mercy on me.

⁴⁹ And Jesus stood still, and said, Call him. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good cheer; rise, He calls you.

⁵⁰ And he, casting away his garment, sprang up, and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ And Jesus answered him, and said, What will you that I should do unto you? And the blind man said unto Him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.

⁵² And Jesus said unto him: Go your way; your faith has made you whole. And straightway he received his sight, and followed Him in the way.

All Blind Beggars

All the miracles that Jesus did are written:

John 20

³¹ That you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.

Every one of them illustrates some feature or features of the great work of salvation from sin and death. This miracle is one of the most striking, since the blind beggar so aptly repre-

sents all unconverted persons, in the church as well as out. It is to the church that Christ says:

Revelation 3

¹⁷ Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see.

All who are not in Christ are but blind beggars, wretched and miserable, and at the best clothed only in filthy rags.

Isaiah 64

⁶ But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

From this miracle we are to learn that the acts of kindness and mercy that Jesus exhibited for the poor, blind beggar, He is ready and anxious to perform for all. God has chosen the poor of this world, and there are more promises specially to the poor than to any other class.

Consciousness of Need

The first thing to note is, that the blind beggar was conscious of his condition. Most people like to think that they are well off, even if they are not. They will not listen to correction or reproof, for their pride resents it. They may even pray for the Holy Spirit, but when He comes as a convincer of sin, as He always does at first, He is rejected. So they go on blindly in the way that seems right to them, and the end thereof is death.

To be keenly conscious of one's lost condition is one of the greatest blessings. One is never nearer salvation than when confessing sin.

1 John 1

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Perseverance in Spite of Discouragements

But the one who seeks salvation will often find many who try to discourage him. Even professed Christians often hinder sinners from coming to Jesus. The people near Bartimaeus rebuked him, telling him not to make so much noise. What would the great Teacher, who had thousands following Him, and hanging on every word, care for a poor, insignificant, blind beggar? So many a poor soul is told:

“You have committed the unpardonable sin;”

or,

“You are not one of the called; you are not of the elect;”

or,

“The Lord cannot be bothered with so unimportant a person as you.”

Many such doubts will be suggested by the devil personally, or by some of his agents; for be it known that every soul who utters a single word of doubt or discouragement to any other soul is doing the devil’s work.

This poor man, however, was not to be discouraged. The more the people tried to keep him from Jesus, the more determined he was to attract His attention.

Mark 10

⁴⁸ He cried out the more a great deal.

He had of course never seen Jesus, and had never known personally of any of His wonderful works; but he had heard of Him, and he recognized His opportunity now that Jesus was passing by. He believed in the power of Jesus, and hoped in

His mercy. Let him be your example in perseverance, and let rebuffs and discouragements only strengthen your courage.

Called by the Lord

Jesus stood still at the call of Bartimaeus. Everything in heaven waits on the faintest cry for help. He who listens when the ravens cry, and who opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing, will never ignore the cry of suffering humanity.

Psalm 103

¹³ Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.

Psalm 111

⁴ The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

⁵ ...He will ever be mindful of His covenant.

No matter what the Lord is doing, He will always stop...

Psalm 102

²⁰ To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.

Mark 10 [RV]

⁴⁹ And He said, Call him.

The word which Jesus speaks by other men is just as valid as the word that sounded from His own lips from the mountain top, in tones that shook the earth.

Isaiah 44

²⁶ [He] confirms the word of His servant.

To us God has committed the ministry of reconciliation, and He has put the word of reconciliation into us. Therefore the word which God speaks by the mouth of any of His servants is as sure and as steadfast as though He used no human agent. We have not, therefore, to distinguish between the writers of the Bible, and to say,

“This is from Moses, and this from Isaiah, and this from Paul.”

No; all is from God.

The Assurance of the Call

They that were sent said to the blind man,

Mark 10 [RV]

⁴⁹ Be of good cheer, rise, He calls you.

How many doubt that they have been called.

“If I only knew for certain that I was one of the called, I should be happy,”

—is a statement that we often hear. We assure such a one that the Lord has called him, but he repeats,

“O, if I only could know it.”

Well, how did blind Bartimaeus know that the Lord had called him? The Lord did not lift up His voice, and He had not directed a single word to him. All the assurance he had was the statement of those who did hear Him. Suppose Bartimaeus had not believed them? Well, perhaps Jesus might have come to him, and called him personally, for He is wondrously kind and long-suffering; but such a manifestation of doubt would have been to tempt the Lord. Then,

Hebrews 2

³ How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?

Has God really called us? Yes;

Ephesians 1

⁴ He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

And,

Acts 2

³⁹ The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

That is, the Lord has called “all that are afar off.” This means everybody.

John 3

¹⁶ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God sent the word of salvation unto His people,

Acts 10

³⁶ ...preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (He is Lord of all).

Note the statement “He is Lord of all,” in connection with the fact that God was preaching peace by Jesus Christ; it indicates that He preaches peace to all. So we read:

Isaiah 57

¹⁹ I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, says the Lord; and I will heal him.

All, both near and far, are called.

Isaiah 14

²² Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.

When one comes to another with these words of the Lord, and that other refuses to believe that he has been called, he is as unreasonable as Bartimaeus would have been if he had demanded that Jesus come to him in person, instead of sending messengers.

Be of Good Cheer

Mark 10 [RV]

⁴⁹ Be of good cheer, rise, He calls you.

That is reason enough to be of good cheer. Everybody on earth ought to rejoice, because God has called all. “Be of good cheer;” when? Now, no matter what your condition or circumstances.

John 16

³³ In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

In the midst of tribulation, our joy may be full, from the mere knowledge that we are the chosen of God. “He loves me, and has chosen me,” sings the heart of the maid, as she thinks of the lover, who to her is best of all. Even so our hearts should sing for joy, as we remember that:

Galatians 2

²⁰ [He] loved me, and gave himself for me.

He has given the highest possible proof of His love to us and all mankind.

As showing the call to be “joyful in tribulation,”⁸⁹ note the fact that Bartimaeus was still a blind beggar when he was told to be of good cheer. He was not told to be cheerful because he had been healed, or had received a legacy, but simply because Jesus had called him. That was enough. Some of the sweetest songs and the most joyful testimonies have come from poor, blind cripples whose hearts were aglow with the thought of God’s unbounded and impartial love.

Leave All You Have

Bartimaeus cast away his garment, and “sprang up” to go to Jesus. He was a beggar, and lacked clothing, but that did not make him keep what he had, when Jesus called him. He was going to an audience with the King, and the more needy he was, the more he could expect to receive.

⁸⁹ **2 Corinthians 7** ⁴ Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

Isaiah 64

⁶ We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

Yet how many gather their rags about them, and cling to them, trying to make them appear to be clean garments. This is when we try to minimize our faults, or even to make out that they are virtues. Better far to acknowledge them, and cast them away, that Jesus may give us an entire new suit of white raiment. Yes, even though some of our clothing were not so bad, it is better to give all up, for:

Psalm 84

¹¹ ...no good thing will He withhold from them that walk up-rightly.

And if we get back anything from His hands we are sure that it is right.

There was no delay, no hesitation. The blind beggar “sprang up, and came to Jesus.” Why should he not do so? He had called to Jesus; why should he not make haste to come as soon as the word of the Lord came to him? If he had not, he would have shown that there was no real sincerity in his call.

Many bemoan their condition, separate from the Lord, and make many requests to Him, and then timidly shrink back when they get the assurance that they are called. Thus they cast doubt upon their sincerity in calling. If they did not believe that Jesus would give them what they needed, why did they call on Him? and if they did believe when they called, why do they not accept as soon as He speaks?

Saved by Faith

Jesus asked what Bartimaeus wished Him to do. Not that He did not know, but a thing that is worth having is worth asking for. God knows that we have need of food before we ask Him, yet He tells us to pray.

Matthew 6

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

Asking for a specific thing fixes our attention on it, and thus causes us to recognize God's gift in response. The request was simple and direct:

Mark 10

⁵¹ Lord, that I might receive my sight.

And the answer came,

⁵² Go your way; your faith has made you whole [or, "saved you." RV, margin]

He was told to go away while he was still blind, just as the ten lepers were told, while still leprous, to go and show themselves to the priest. And immediately he received his sight.

Mark 11

²⁴ Whatsoever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

Do you believe this story about Bartimaeus? If you do, you know how to receive forgiveness and perfect righteousness from God. These miracles were recorded,

John 20

³¹ ...that believing, you might have life through His name.

Romans 10

¹⁰ With the heart man believes unto righteousness.

The blind beggar's faith brought him sight, yes, and full salvation, too; for Jesus said,

Mark 10 [RV, margin]

⁵² Your faith has saved you.

In the gift of sight, Bartimaeus got everything he needed. So:

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;

Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Charlotte Elliott, Hymn: *Just As I Am*, 1834.

76. The Hope of His Calling

Present Truth, November 29, 1900

Timeline: VI-46 (Blind Bartimaeus)

Mark 10:46-52

Mark 10

⁴⁶ And they came to Jericho: and as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, you Son of David, have mercy on me.

⁴⁸ And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, You Son of David, have mercy on me.

⁴⁹ And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you.

⁵⁰ And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ And Jesus answered and said unto him, What will you that I should do unto you? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

⁵² And Jesus said unto him, Go your way; your faith has made you whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

IN THE story of blind Bartimaeus we have a good illustration of the fulfillment of the Apostle Paul's prayer for us, that God would give us the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened; that we...

Ephesians 1

¹⁸ ...may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

When they said to him,

Mark 10 [RV]

⁴⁹ Be of good cheer; rise, He calls you,

–hope sprang up in his breast, and he was glad. In the call he perceived, and in faith grasped, all the blessings that the Master designed to bestow when He called him.

The God of all grace has...

1 Peter 5

¹⁰ ...called us into His eternal glory,

–and therefore when we accept the call, we may at once...

Romans 12

¹² Be joyful in hope.

He does not call us to deceive us;

2 Timothy 2

¹³ He cannot deny himself;

–so that the call itself makes the eternal glory sure to us.

77. A Guest with Sinners

Present Truth, December 6, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for December 16

Timeline: VI-47 (Zacchaeus)

Luke 19:1-10

Luke 19

¹ Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

² And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

³ And he sought to see Jesus who He was; and he could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

⁴ And he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him; for He was to pass that way.

⁵ And when Jesus came to the place He looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at your house.

⁶ And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully.

⁷ And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that was a sinner.

⁸ And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

⁹ And Jesus said, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

¹⁰ For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

AS JESUS was about to enter Jericho He met and healed a blind beggar; as He came out, he restored a rich publican. Both received that which they needed, and both were lifted up to the same level in Christ's kingdom.

From that which followed, we may be sure that it was something more than mere curiosity that led Zacchaeus to run before the crowd and climb into a tree to see Jesus. And yet it is evident that he had no idea of the honor that was to

be bestowed upon him, or of the rich blessing that he would receive. God does for us more than we can ask or think.

In this incident we have a grand illustration of the text,

Revelation 3

²⁰ 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.

Note that He will come in to “any man” who will open the door. He is not merely willing to come in, but is anxiously knocking.

He goes in to be “guest with a man that is a sinner.” He did not tell Zacchaeus that if he would repent of his evil deeds, and would put away all his sins, He would come to his house. He came to him while he was yet a sinner, and the result of His entering the house was that Zacchaeus was converted. We are not to cleanse our hearts so that the Lord can come in, but to let Him in, so that the heart may be cleansed.

Jesus said to Zacchaeus:

Luke 19

⁵ I must abide at your house.

It was necessary for Him to lodge with him. The case was urgent. Even so it is in every case. He does not wait to be invited; He invites himself, and will come in to abide with all, unless He is repulsed. Necessary as it was for Him to abide at the house of Zacchaeus, He would not have entered his house if he had been unwilling. How anybody can read the parable of the prodigal son, the account of the healing of the lepers, the giving of sight to the blind beggar, and the story of Zacchaeus, and doubt Christ’s willingness and earnest desire to be one with the very worst sinners, is a mystery.

Zacchaeus did not imagine that he could atone for fraud by bestowing gifts upon the poor. He at once devoted the half of

his goods to feed the poor, but he at the same time took from the remainder to restore fourfold to anybody whom he had wronged. Many seem to think that if they are only “charitable,” meaning if they give a great deal to poor people, they can keep all their wrongly-acquired wealth. But,

1 Corinthians 13

³ Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,...and have not love, it profits me nothing.

Romans 13

¹⁰ Love is the fulfilling of the law,

—one commandment of which is,

Exodus 20

¹⁵ You shall not steal.

If one has stolen, it is idle for him to say that he repents, if he does not restore that which he has unlawfully taken. If he gives it away, it is just the same as though he kept it himself; for since one can rightly give away only his own, he says, by giving it away, that it is his own, that is, that he has not stolen it. The only way that he can truly confess and forsake the sin is to restore to the one defrauded. And the Bible calls for restoration not merely of the amount stolen, but fourfold⁹¹; and this Zacchaeus did. He completely separated himself from his sin.

1 John 1

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Zacchaeus had no sooner finished his confession than Jesus

⁹¹ **1 Samuel 12** ⁶ He shall restore the lamb fourfold. “This was the extreme penalty the law imposed. In some cases double the amount was to be restored (*Exodus* 22:4, 7); in others, a fifth of its value was added to the thing restored (*Leviticus* 6:5); still again, an amount equal to that taken was to be restored (*1 Samuel* 12:3).” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

said,

Luke 19

⁹ This day is salvation come to this house.

One is never nearer the Lord than when confessing sin.
With the confession comes salvation.

⁹ ...he also is a son of Abraham.

To the Pharisees and Sadducees John the Baptist said,

Matthew 3

⁹ Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.

And Jesus told the unbelieving and criticizing Jews that they were children of the devil, and not of Abraham, although all of them could doubtless trace their genealogy direct back through some one of the tribes to Abraham.

The sinful publican Zacchaeus, however, despised by the Jews as a renegade, was declared to be a son of Abraham. He was saved because he was a son of Abraham.

Luke 19

¹⁰ For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

The fact that men are lost does not prove that they are not Christ's (for to be a son of Abraham is the same as to be Christ's⁹²), for there are many lost, wandering sons. All who are willing to receive the Lord, all who hear His voice, are His children, His flock. Willingness to acknowledge sin and to accept salvation, marks one as a true child of Abraham, and an heir, according to the promise.

In this we can understand the following:

⁹² **Galatians 3** ²⁹ And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 4

¹ The heir, so long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he is lord of all;

² But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

⁴ But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

A son is an heir, but in his minority he has no control of his property. He is a son, and a prospective heir. That represents our relation to the promise of God while we are yet in sin. The promise is to us, yet we get no benefit from it until we accept it, and confess our sins. Then we are sons indeed, and heirs. We then take our true place as sons.

So it is not a question of whether or not a man is a sinner, but whether he accepts the Lord, that determines if he is a child of Abraham, and an heir of God through Christ.

Luke 15

² This man receives sinners.

How many sinners will receive Him?

Sing it o'er and o'er again,
Christ receiveth sinful men!
Make the message clear and plain,
Christ receiveth sinful men!⁹³

⁹³ Erdmann Neumeister (1718), translated by Frances Bevan (1899); Hymn: *Christ Receiveth Sinful Men*.

78. Coming to the Master

Present Truth, October 20, 1892

Timeline: VI-49 (Simon's Feast)

Luke 7:36-50

WHEN the blind man came to Jesus to receive his sight, Jesus said to him,

Luke 18

⁴² Your faith has saved you.

In another article⁹⁴ we have seen that this was done to show how we may receive the forgiveness of sins. This will be seen the more clearly if we compare it with the case of the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus.

The case is recorded in *Luke* 7:36-50. Jesus was eating in the house of a Pharisee. A woman in the city, who was a sinner, came behind Jesus as He reclined at the table, and, weeping, washed His feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with precious ointment. The Pharisee with whom Jesus was dining was indignant at this, and said to himself,

Luke 7

³⁹ This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches Him; for she is a sinner.

Jesus rebuked the Pharisee for his unkind thought both of this woman and of Him, and then said to the woman,

⁴⁸ Your sins are forgiven.

Then those who sat at the table began to murmur because Jesus had said that, thinking that He had no right and power to forgive sins.

⁹⁴ See article 73 in this Section, "[Sight for the Blind](#)" *Present Truth*, October 20, 1892.

⁵⁰ And He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

This is the same language that Jesus used to the blind man when He gave him his sight. Just as he received his sight by faith, so she received the forgiveness of sins by faith. The one case was intended as an illustration of the other. We can grasp the fact of a man being blind and receiving his sight, for that is within the range of our senses. So it is given as an object lesson, to help us to comprehend those things that are not within reach of our physical senses.

Notice that in both these cases there was an effort to keep them away from the Saviour. In the case of the blind man, the more they tried to make him keep still, the more he cried out. So with the woman; she would not be driven from the side of the Saviour by the harsh looks of the Pharisee. This also was recorded for our learning.

Whenever any one feels the need of the Saviour, the devil is ready with his discouragements. He will even attempt to use Scripture, to keep people away from the Lord. He will remind the sinner that:

Habakkuk 1

¹³ God is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity,

—and that evil cannot dwell with Him⁹⁵. He whispers:

“You are altogether too sinful to come to the Lord; He will not have anything to do with you.”

How often the convicted one hears the whisper from the devil, and does not know that it is from him, but thinks that it is only a proper sense of his own unworthiness. He is sure that he ought to get himself better before he presents himself to the Lord, and as he cannot find any way to do it, it often

⁹⁵ **Psalm 5** ⁴ For You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with You.

happens that he is kept away altogether.

Now let us learn a lesson from the blind man and the sinful woman. The more they were discouraged from coming to the Lord, the more they persisted in coming to Him. And in this they both found their salvation. The Pharisee thought that a sinner ought not to come near Jesus. But it was in coming nearer to the Saviour that the woman found pardon.

So when the devil thinks to frighten us away from the Lord, by quoting the Scripture, and telling us that evil cannot dwell with the Lord, we will rejoice thereat, and come the more readily; for if evil cannot dwell with the Lord, and we come to Him, then the evil will be driven away, and that is just what we want.

So then let every sin-sick soul come to the Lord, knowing that He is calling for him, and that He has said,

John 6

³⁷ Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.

79. Jesus at the Pharisee's House

Present Truth, May 3, 1900

Original title: The Secret of Love. Jesus at the Pharisee's House

International Sunday-school Lesson for May 13

Timeline: VI-49 (Simon's Feast)

Luke 7:36-50

1 John 4 [RV]

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us.

THIS may well be taken as the subject of the lesson. It is not natural for the unregenerate human heart to love.

Titus 3

³ For we also were aforetime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

1 John 4

⁷ Love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.

Just to the extent that any person has real, true love in his heart, does he know the Lord, even though he be a heathen who has not heard the name of the Lord; for there are many who are susceptible to the working of the Holy Spirit, who do not yet know the Lord personally.

There is a great deal of counterfeit love in the world; but the genuine article has no selfishness in it. Every unselfish act performed by an unconverted person is evidence of the all pervading grace of God.

God has given His life, which is love, because He is love, to every person in the world, and if all would accept it as from Him, and yield unreservedly to it, love would be universal. That glorious condition will be only when the final decision has been made for and against the Lord, and the curse has been removed from the earth.

It is by the life of Christ, who lives by the Father, that we are saved.

Romans 5

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

It is the receiving of His life in faith and humility, that makes us free from sin.

Deuteronomy 12

²³ ...for the blood is the life,

1 John 1

⁷ ...and [it is] the blood of Jesus Christ...[that] cleanses us from all sin.

God has given His life to all mankind, and that is evidence of His love for all, a proof that He holds no grudge against any, but that forgiveness is theirs. If any are not forgiven, it is only because they have thrust forgiveness from them.

Only those who have a sense of the heinousness of sin, will appreciate and accept forgiveness; and whoever accepts it has kindled in his heart such love as he never before had any conception of.

These truths cover the whole of the lesson in the Scripture narrative before us. Jesus was at dinner in the house of Simon the Pharisee, when a woman who was known in the city as a sinner came behind Him as He reclined on the couch, and as her tears of love and gratitude fall on His feet, she wiped them away with her hair, and anointed His feet with precious ointment.

Jesus had brought to her the message of pardon, and her love overflowed in tears, which are often the manifestation of a deeper joy than can be expressed in smiles. That she had already received the announcement of the pardon of her sins, is

evident from the words of Christ, which followed, namely, that the one who is forgiven much will love much.

The same love that bore the sins of the woman, had also appeared to Simon, but he did not appreciate it. The reason why was that he did not feel himself to be a sinner. That he did not feel himself to be a sinner, is seen from the fact that he despised the woman, because she was a sinner; and no one who knows himself to be a sinner can despise another one. He who has a right view of his own nature, can never think of another person in the world as being as bad as he knows himself to be.

And that Simon was a sinner, although perhaps outwardly correct in his deportment, is evident also from the fact that he despised the poor, sinful woman; for only sinners despise sinners. Righteous people—and the only righteous people in the world are those who have received the righteousness of God through faith, as the cover for their sins—never despise a sinner. Although forgiven, they know themselves to be the chief of sinners, and they have sympathy for the fallen.

Simon did not appreciate the forgiving love of God, because he did not feel himself to be a sinner, at least not a common sinner like the poor woman, and therefore his heart was not drawn out in love for the Master, as hers was. Whoever loves the Lord; will love his brother also; and:

1 John 3

¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.

He who is forgiven most will love most, and this shows that the highest love for God, and the deepest sense of His goodness, is always coupled with the greatest sense of sinfulness and unworthiness. When we feel ourselves to be the most sinful, than are we nearest to the Lord.

What a meager acquaintance Simon had with the Lord! He judged the Lord by himself. He thought that if Jesus were re-

ally a prophet He would know that the woman was a sinner, and so of course would not allow her to touch Him. Jesus did indeed know that she was a sinner, and that was just the reason why He took pleasure in her presence, for He came to call sinners to repentance, and to seek and to save the lost. He calls the weary and heavy laden with sin to come to Him and find rest:

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

How sad it is that so many still have so little knowledge of the Lord that they fear to come to Him in their sin, lest He turn them away in scorn. And sadder still is it that so many professed followers of the Lord have given ignorant sinners cause to fear the Lord, by their misrepresentation of Him.

In dealing harshly with the erring, they have conveyed to them the idea that the Lord deals with sinners in the same way, and thus they have borne false witness against Him, taking His name in vain. He says,

John 6

³⁷ Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.

A hard, bitter spirit is the surest evidence of ignorance of the Lord.

Forgiveness is not an arbitrary thing imparted by the Lord, but it is the natural consequence of a certain condition. That condition is simply faith in the goodness and kindness of the Lord, who has given himself for the sins of the whole world.

So when those who sat at table with the Lord, murmured because He said to the woman,

Luke 7

⁴⁸ Your sins are forgiven,

—and said within themselves,

⁴⁹ Who is this that even forgives sins?

Jesus said again to the woman,

⁵⁰ Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

The life of love that forgives has been freely poured out, so that it envelopes the whole world, and every sinner has his destiny in his own hands.

- If he believes in the free gift, and accepts it, he is saved: his faith saves him.
- If he does not believe, or does not appreciate the gift, because he does not feel that he stands in need of it, his sin necessarily remains upon him, and God is clear of all responsibility for the destruction which must inevitably follow.

Note that Jesus said to the woman who was a sinner, but who had no bodily ailment, exactly what He said to the poor woman who was at the point of death, and who also came in contact with Him.

Luke 8 [RV, margin]

⁴⁸ Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

The process was just the same in the one case as in the other. In both cases it was the life of the Lord that saved. The same life that forgives iniquities also heals diseases, so that the more we come to know the power and fullness of the forgiveness which God bestows in Christ, the more will our health be renewed.

And this is but the natural result of a specific cause, namely, recognition of the life of Christ, and the coming more and more into harmony with it.

God has sent Jesus, who is our peace, to proclaim peace to all men, to those who are far off as well as to those who are near:

Isaiah 57

¹⁹ I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, says the Lord; and I will heal him.

Receive this peace, which is but the justification by faith, and the Spirit of God will shed abroad in your heart the love of God⁹⁶, which will reveal itself in tenderness toward the poor and sinful. This love, which brightens the way of others, makes its possessor a sharer of...

Ephesians 3

⁸ ...the unsearchable riches of Christ,

—and of the everlasting joy of the Lord.

People whose stock of knowledge consists of somebody else's sayings, which they repeat without any thought of whether there is any meaning in them or not, will always say, with a wise shake of the head, whenever there is an evil report about somebody,

“There cannot be so much smoke without some fire.”

But if they would only think, instead of acting the part of parrots, they would remember that where there is the most smoke there is the least fire. Remember that a man is not necessarily a sinner because he is suspected or even charged with committing sin.

⁹⁶ **Romans 5** ⁵ Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

80. At the Feet of Jesus

Present Truth, June 25, 1903

Timeline: VI-49 (Simon's Feast)

John 11:2-5; Luke 7:37-47

WHAT a sweet, peaceful picture is brought before the mind's eye, as we read the words,

John 11

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

We see a quiet home in the little town of Bethany, the "house of dates," where Jesus was a welcome guest, and where with the brother and two sisters He could find rest from the things that daily beset Him. Love reigned in that household, and there Jesus had always a home.

From various glimpses in the New Testament we are able to see Lazarus at his work, Martha "cumbered with much serving," and Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, and looking intently up into His face as He talked, that she might not lose a single word.

So great was Christ's affection for these three congenial souls, that when Lazarus fell ill, Martha did not think it necessary to ask Jesus to come to see him, but merely sent the message,

John 11

³ He whom You love is sick.

One who had only a superficial acquaintance with Jesus would suppose that the members of this family must have been peculiarly good, since Jesus loved so much to be in their company. Such a thought shows forgetfulness of the fact that Jesus came...

Luke 19

¹⁰ ...to seek that which was lost,

Luke 5

³² ...to call, not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

He went willingly to be the guest of sinners, and often sat at the tables of those whom “the better class” of Jewish society, the leaders in the church, looked down upon with scorn, and from whom they would shrink back in disgust.

Moreover, we are plainly told what had been the character of one member of this family. The second verse of *John* 11 tells us that:

John 11

² It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

This incident is recorded in *John* 12:1-8; *Matthew* 26:6-7; *Mark* 14:3-4; and *Luke* 7:36-50. The scripture last referred to tells us that she was...

Luke 7

³⁷ ...a woman in the city, which was a sinner.

She was well known by reputation to the Pharisee in whose house the feast was held, and the fact that Jesus would allow her to touch Him, raised a doubt in his mind as to the standing of Jesus. To himself he said:

³⁹ This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches Him; for she is a sinner.

She was the sort of woman that Christian philanthropists in this generation will approach near enough to “rescue,” and for whom they will provide a “home,” otherwise an asylum; but whom they would by no means visit or receive into their own homes as guests on equal terms with others. Even though they were personally willing to do so, they could seldom endure the social ostracism that such a course would involve.

But Jesus had a character of His own, so marked that He was not obliged to consider what people said or thought of His actions. However, though He associated with the outcasts as freely as with those highest in the social scale, none of the poor unfortunates ever thought that His character was in any wise like theirs. They loved Him, and felt at home with Him, because He did not upbraid them, did not assume to be above them, and yet brought to them the purity of heaven, and opened to them the door into the highest and holiest.

To the Pharisee's unspoken thought that Jesus was not what He professed to be, Jesus responded by a little story which revealed the cause of Mary's love. Her sins, which were many, were forgiven. She loved much, because she had been forgiven much.

Luke 7

⁴⁷ Wherefore I say unto you, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.

But it was not because of her changed life that Jesus loved her.

1 John 4

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us.

He had loved her in her fallen state, when she would not have dared to think of coming into His presence. Why did He love her? For two reasons. First, because she was "guilty, lost and helpless," and second, because He could see that she had a heart that could respond to love. This very capacity for loving had been the cause of her downfall, and by it she was lifted up again.

Psalms 51

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

This was what made David a man after God's own heart. It

was not because he was sinless, but because he was loving (the name of David signifies love), and because he did not seek to justify himself but was willing to be forgiven.

So Mary, the sinful one, whose heart was nevertheless tender, and longing for that which could indeed satisfy, was drawn by the love of Jesus to His feet, where she found that love covers the multitude of sins. And then, having come to the feet of Jesus, sinful, yet a weeping penitent, she remained there, a cleansed and joyful learner.

We may be sure that she was an apt pupil; for love is not blind; on the contrary it has keen vision and quick perception. Things that are deep, and involved and obscure to the cold reason of the man of science, unfold themselves, and reveal their treasures to the love of the simple-hearted child.

The love of Jesus draws sinners to Him, and the love which His love begets is the best teacher of the deep and secret things of God.

Jesus, I will trust Thee,
Trust Thee with my soul;
Guilty, lost, and helpless,
Thou canst make me whole.
There is none in heaven
Nor on earth like Thee;
Thou hast died for sinners,
Therefore, Lord, for me.

Jesus, I do trust Thee,
Trust Thy written Word,
Since Thy voice of mercy
I have often heard;
When Thy Spirit teaches,
To my taste how sweet;
Only would I hearken,
Sitting at Thy feet.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Mary Jane Deck Walker, Hymn: *Jesus, I Will Trust Thee*, 1864.

81. The Privileges of Love

Present Truth, November 2, 1893

Timeline: VI-49 (Simon's Feast)

Matthew 26:6-9

IT IS LOVE that finds the highest and best privileges in the Christian life.

Probably no one mentioned in Scripture had a more ardent love for the Saviour than did Mary Magdalene. Christ had cast out of her seven devils, and she was one that...

Luke 7

⁴⁷ ...loved much because she had been much forgiven.

And her love brought her greater privileges than were realized by any other of the associates of her Master.

It was Mary's love for the Saviour that brought her precious lessons from His lips while her sister Martha was busy with household cares. But a greater privilege than this fell to her lot,—the privilege of anointing the Saviour of the world for His burial. The event is thus recorded by *Matthew*:

Matthew 26

⁶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

⁷ There came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as He sat at meat.

⁸ But when His disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

⁹ For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

It is possible that Mary did not understand the full significance of what she had done; but she did that which her love prompted her to do, and God in His own wisdom ordained her reward.

But what a contrast was presented in the mean and selfish

spirit of His disciples! That which had been bestowed upon Jesus they characterized as a “waste”! As we are told elsewhere, it was the traitor Judas who first whispered the idea among the disciples, not on account of his love for the poor, but because the money would have been put in the bag which he carried⁹⁸; but the suggestion met with prompt sympathy from the rest. They had been constantly with Jesus, which Mary had not. They had been chosen to the highest positions; they were the foremost in point of privileges and honor; but Mary was foremost of anointing Christ for His burial and they lost it.

Mary sought not for honor and renown, but she gained it; for the Saviour said,

Matthew 26

¹³ Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her.

And with it is also told the story of the meanness and ingratitude of the disciples. Her love brought her a privilege that might well have been coveted by angels; their selfishness brought them what was just the reverse.

Yet another instance is recorded of what Mary gained through her love for her Saviour. The record in *Mark* tells us that:

Mark 16

⁹ When Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

Mary, as we learn from the narrative, was more anxious to find Jesus than were the others, and she was the first to be-

⁹⁸ **John 12** ⁴ Then said one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him, ⁵ Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bore what was put therein.

hold Him. She was the first to have visible evidence that she had a risen Saviour. At this time, also, as we are told in the 20th chapter of *John*, Christ had not ascended to His Father. He had waited in order that He might appear unto her! Her love for Him held Him to the earth until He had filled her longing heart with joy and comfort.

Love gains the privileges now, as well as it did then. We may not have the talents or occupy the high position of others whom we know; but if our hearts are filled with the love of Christ, we may rest assured that our privileges will be as great as theirs. If we do that which our fervent love for Him prompts us, though we may not see the result now, we shall see by-and-by the privilege and the blessing that we gained, and the nearness which our love will have brought us to our Redeemer in the life to come.

82. Love's Offering

Present Truth, December 27, 1900

International Sunday-school Lesson for January 6

Timeline: VI-49 (Simon's Feast)

Matthew 26:6-16

Matthew 26

⁶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

⁷ There came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as He sat at meat.

⁸ But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

⁹ For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

¹⁰ When Jesus understood it, He said unto them, Why do you trouble the woman? for she has wrought a good work upon me.

¹¹ For you have the poor always with you; but me you have not always.

¹² For in that she has poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

¹³ Verily I say unto you, whosoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her.

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

¹⁵ And said unto them, What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

¹⁶ And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

NOTHING in the entire Gospel history more fully shows the quiet calmness of the life of Jesus, and His perfect mastery of every situation, and His constant readiness for every event, than this feast at the house of Simon.

Jesus was exactly what the ordinary man is. Although no-

body else knew what was coming, Jesus well knew that within two or three days He was to be betrayed and crucified; nevertheless He accepted an invitation to a supper that was made specially for Him.

John 12

² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him.

The ordinary man, not merely the man of the world, but the professed Christian, would under such circumstances think that He ought to be “preparing for death;” but Jesus was always prepared for everything. There was no necessity for Him to change His manner of life in view of any event whatever.

This contains a lesson for us. Even though we are not expecting death, but the coming of the Lord, we ought to be living day by day so that if it were announced as a certainty that the Lord would come tomorrow, it would make no difference in our arrangements. The exhortation of Jesus is:

Matthew 24

⁴⁴ Be also ready; for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes.

We have no time given us except “today.” Therefore every day ought to be spent as though it were to be our last, and yet not our last, but our entire time of preparation for eternity.

By reference to *John* 12:2-3; 11:1-2, we learn that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who anointed Jesus at this feast.

John 11

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

And it is very evident that Mary had great love for Jesus; and this is proof that she had been forgiven much, for the one who is forgiven much, loves much.

Luke 7

⁴¹ There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

⁴² And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

⁴⁷ Wherefore I say unto you, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.

This reminds us again that the love of Jesus for men does not depend on their sinlessness.

Luke 15

² This man receives sinners.

If He did not love sinners, He could never love anybody on this earth; and:

1 John 4

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us.

Note the value of the gift that Mary bestowed on Jesus. The disciples said that:

Matthew 26

⁹ This ointment might have been sold for much.

And in *John* 12:4-5 we learn that Judas, who was a business man, valued it at “three hundred pence.” This, however, does not convey to the casual reader an idea of its value as compared with present prices. We do not need to know the value of a penny in the time of Christ, as compared with our money; but when we remember that a penny was considered a fair day’s wages (*Matthew* 20:2), we see that the ointment represented a laboring man’s wages for an entire year. It was no small gift that was poured out upon the Master. It was a royal gift, and was bestowed by Mary in recognition of the fact that Jesus was her Lord.

Matthew 26

⁸ To what purpose is this waste?

This was what the disciples said, evidently following the lead of Judas. Do not judge them harshly; we should no doubt say the same under similar circumstances. Remember that they did not know at the time what we know from the history. They did not fully appreciate who Jesus was, and they did not know, although they had been told, that He was about to die, and be taken from them.

And the act seemed so unnecessary and improvident.

“If she had only given Him something that He could keep, and that would have been of real use to Him!”

—we would have exclaimed,

“But this ointment is of no practical value to Him even now, and its odor and effect will soon be gone. It is simply a woman’s thoughtless lavishness. With the money that this would bring, much food and clothing could have been purchased.”

Thus reasons cold, calculating selfishness; but love can sometimes teach reason. The odor of that ointment has not yet passed away. The Lord does not estimate gifts at their money value in the world market. The poor widow who gave “two mites, which make a farthing” (*Mark 12:42*), gave more than all the rich men who gave of their abundance; and on the other hand Jesus who was poor, and was used to saving all the fragments of food, so that nothing should be wasted, did not think that this princely gift was anything to be astonished at, or that it was wasted.

Did you never stop to think how much property that was dedicated to the Lord in ancient times was by His order deliberately burned up. When Noah came out of the ark, he built an altar,

Genesis 8

²⁰ ...and took of every clean east and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

²¹ And the Lord smelled a sweet savor.

“What a waste!” the critic would exclaim. Not by any means; it was an offering of love and trust. All the sacrifices of old were an expression of the truth that all things belong to God, and that since all things are in Him, we have everything even though we give Him everything, and it is poured out at His feet or consumed into smoke.

The gifts of love, like love itself, can never be wasted. Love’s labor is never lost; it is its own reward.

Isaiah 53

¹² [Christ] poured out His soul unto death,

—but the gift was not wasted.

¹¹ He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

He does not regret the gift, even though it is rejected. As we learn its worth, we shall learn how to give, and shall estimate the value of gifts in heaven’s coin, and not in that of this world.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Isaac Watts, Hymn: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, 1707.

83. God's Poor-Law

Present Truth, September 24, 1896

Timeline: VI-49 (Simon's Feast)

Matthew 26:11

Christ said,

Matthew 26

¹¹ The poor you have always with you.

IN SAYING this He repeated the thought expressed in the 11th verse of the 15th chapter of *Deuteronomy*,—the chapter which contains God's poor-law given to the Israelites. This verse says,

Deuteronomy 15

¹¹ For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command you, saying, You shall open your hand wide unto your brother, to the poor, and to the needy, in your land.

Where such regulations as this existed, and were lived up to, would it be possible that there should be antagonism between the "classes and the masses"? Where every rich man's hand was open to satisfy the needs of his employees, and of the poor about him,—and no debt or obligation but what was outlawed every seventh year,—in that community there would be no deaths from hunger and cold, and no bread riots.

The poor we have always with us, indeed they are with us still after all the centuries. But why are all of our poor-laws and multitudinous charities so inefficient in stemming the tide of poverty and holding its increase in check?

Why is it that the old farmer's grim philosophy is so true and it remains a sad and still sadder fact that "the poor in a lump are bad"? It is true because there is no release for them. They are bound in their poverty, and the misery and degradation which it causes, forever. Not only for life, but for generation after generation.

Those who are born to the inheritance of poverty are likely to increase their inheritance, and leave to their offspring a legacy of still deeper and more hopeless indigence, with the sunshine of a possible hope obscured by clouds of yet darker ignorance.

The first section of this poor-law reads:

Deuteronomy 15

¹ At the end of every seven years you shall make a release.

² And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lends aught unto his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother; because it is called the Lord's release.

This means that with the end of every seventh year all accounts should be closed and all books balanced. Whatever the amounts might be then remaining unsettled they must be charged up to profit and loss, and new accounts opened with no "amount transferred" to begin the page. No keeping alive of old obligations, no debtor's prison, no distraint, no bankruptcy procedure.

What affect would it have on commercial affairs to adopt such a business rule today? It certainly would simplify matters amazingly, although it might not be thought, at first, that such would be the case. How businessmen would smile at such an idea!

"The plan of a financial crank,—repudiation, and universal bankruptcy every seven years," they would say.

By no means! Universal solvency every seven years,—with an assured and healthy business thereafter, on a sound basis of ever increasing reliability.

God's financing of the world cannot be bettered, and it is because men have not been content to follow the methods He has suggested, but have undertaken, as they thought, to improve upon them, for their own selfish individual benefit, that

money and lands are now gathering into a few hands,—so that the few have more than they can use or utilize and the many have nothing. This condition is rapidly turning to the injury of those who thought to benefit by it, and will eventually be their destruction.

The day is surely coming when all these hoards will be found to be as unfortunate a possession as was the talent which the unprofitable servant wrapped in a napkin and hid in the ground. What a multitude, in the day of the second death, will realize the reality of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus!

Is it to be wondered at, that, after the incident of the rich young man who turned from following Him because he had great possessions, Christ, looking down the centuries to come, and seeing the history which they were to make, said, so sadly,

Matthew 19

²³ Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And this because of failure to obey God's poor-law.

Closing Ministry of Jesus at Jerusalem

Here we come to the last week of our Lord's ministry.

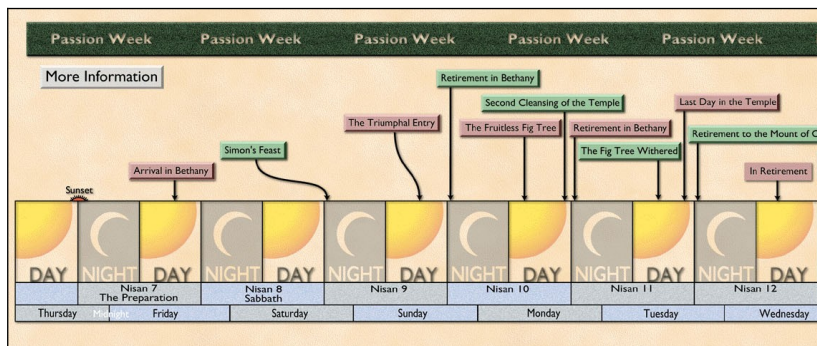
*It is the spring of 31 AD.
Jesus has finally arrived at Jerusalem,
a week before the Passover,
to face the cross.*

*The Gospel writers devote more space
to this last week than any other period
leading up to it.*

*This section covers the first few days,
from Sunday mid-day to Tuesday afternoon.*

*These two days are filled with activity,
starting with the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem,
the second cleansing of the Temple,
various parables, the question of tribute to Caesar,
the Widow's two mites, the visit of some Greeks,
and the woes upon the Pharisees.*

		Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	DA	Ch.
VII	1	Fourth Passover:	...	...	...	...
VII	2	The Triumphal Entry	21:1-11	11:1-11	19:29-44	12:12-19	569-579
VII	3	The Fruitless Fig Tree	21:18-22	11:12-14,20-26	...	580-588	64
VII	4	Second Cleansing of the Temple	21:12-17	11:15-19	19:45-48	...	589-600
VII	5	The Leaders Challenge Jesus' Authority	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8	...	...
VII	6	The Two Sons	21:28-32	...	...	...	...
VII	7	The Wicked Husbandmen	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19	...	...
VII	8	The Man Without a Wedding Garment	22:1-14	...	...	...	...
VII	9	Paying Tribute to Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26	...	601-602
VII	10	Marriage and the Resurrection	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-38	...	603-606
VII	11	The Great Commandment	22:34-40	12:28-34	20:39, 40	...	607-608
VII	12	Jesus Silences His Critics	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44	...	608-609
VII	13	Woes Upon Scribe and Pharisee	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47	...	610-613
VII	14	The Widow's Mites	...	12:41-44	21:1-4	...	614-616
VII	15	Interview With Certain Greeks	...	...	12:20-36	621-626	68
VII	16	Final Rejection by the Jewish Leaders	...	...	12:36-50	...	



1. Christ Entering Jerusalem

Signs of the Times, February 24, 1888

Notes on the International Lesson, March 11

Timeline: VII-2 (The Triumphal Entry) / VII-4 (Second Cleansing of the Temple)

Matthew 21:1-16

THIS event is recorded by all four of the evangelists. The other accounts are found in *Mark* 11:1-11, 15-18; *Luke* 19:20-46; *John* 12:12-19, and all should be studied together. It is an account of a wonderful fulfillment of prophecy.

The Saviour was going up to attend the last Passover, when He sent two of His disciples ahead to bring an ass's colt to Him. He told them where the colt would be found, and told them that the owner would willingly send it, if they said, in answer to his inquiries,

Luke 19

³¹ The Lord has need of him.

All took place as He said, and the disciples spread their clothes upon the unbroken colt, and placed Jesus thereon. Thus Jesus proceeded to Jerusalem, while palm branches were strewed along the road.

As they proceeded, the multitude was continually increased by those who had heard of the coming of Jesus and hastened to join the procession. Spectators were constantly mingling with the throng, and asking, Who is this? What does all this commotion signify? They had all heard of Jesus, and expected Him to go to Jerusalem; but they knew that He had heretofore discouraged all effort to place Him on the throne, and they were greatly astonished to learn that this was He. They wondered what could have wrought this change in Him who had declared that His kingdom was not of this world.

While they are wondering and questioning, the eager crowd silence their queries with a shout of triumph that is repeated again and again, and is echoed from the surrounding

hills and valleys. And now the joyful procession is joined by crowds from Jerusalem, that have heard of the grand demonstration, and hasten to meet the Saviour and conduct Him to Jerusalem. From the great gathering of the Hebrews to attend the Passover, thousands go forth to welcome Jesus to the city. They greet Him with the waving of palm branches and a burst of sacred song. The priests at the temple sound the trumpet for evening service, but there are few to respond, and the rulers say to each other in alarm, "The world has gone after Him."

The Saviour during His earthly life had hitherto refused to receive kingly honor, and had resolutely discouraged all attempts to elevate Him to an earthly throne; but this occasion was intended by Jesus to call public attention to Him as the world's Redeemer. He was nearing the period when His life was to be offered a ransom for guilty man. Although He was soon to be betrayed and to be hanged upon the cross like a malefactor, yet He would enter Jerusalem, the scene of His approaching sacrifice, attended by demonstrations of joy and the honor belonging to royalty, to faintly prefigure the glory of His future coming to the world as Zion's King.¹⁰⁰

This was in its peculiar features the most remarkable day in the earthly experience of our Saviour. To His disciples it was the great day of their lives. What emotions of triumph, what anticipations of glory, as in their imaginations they saw only a very short distance between them and the establishment of Jesus' kingdom, with themselves at the right hand of power. But as with many earthly experiences it was the sunny, joyous day before a night of gloom and tempest.

"A very great multitude" (*Matthew 21:8*) attended His way, and spread it with their garments in sign of their submission to royalty, and cutting branches from trees, these were used to decorate the path, and as a mark of respect and honor to the new-found King.

¹⁰⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume Two, p. 384-386.

At the time of the Passover Jerusalem was full to overflowing. In Nero's time a census showed the number to be 2,700,000. These were attracted by the excitement; they knew of the fame of Jesus and readily caught the enthusiasm. From one end of the vast procession to the other arose loud shouts of Hosanna!

Matthew 21

⁹ Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord;

—showing the intense feelings by which they were moved. All Jews were longing for the coming of the Messiah. In Him they looked for salvation from earthly tyranny. It is not strange, then, that they should be so moved, and forget for a moment the voice of discretion, and that in the city, throughout the day, while they witnessed His healing power, even the children should partake of the enthusiasm, and join their “Hosanna to the Son of David” to the acclamations of the throng. And He was the children's friend.

The jealousy and vindictive wrath of the Pharisees were deeply stirred as they witnessed this demonstration. They protested in the name of order. Their sense of propriety was shocked. What will the Romans say? Jesus replied,

Luke 19

⁴⁰ I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

Because, long ago this entry into Jerusalem had been foretold and described.

Zechariah 9

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, your King comes unto you: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Isaiah 62

¹¹ Behold, the Lord has proclaimed unto the end of the world,
Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes;
behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.

Psalms 118

²⁶ Blessed be He that comes in the name of the Lord: we have
blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

And God's word cannot fail in one jot or tittle. *Matthew* 5:18. This was one of the reasons for which the Saviour brought these circumstances about,

Matthew 21

⁴ All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.

Another purpose before the Saviour's mind is well expressed as follows:

It was the purpose of Jesus to draw attention to the crowning sacrifice that was to end His mission to a fallen world. They were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, while He, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set himself apart as an oblation. Jesus understood that it was needful in all future ages that the church should make His death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt. It was necessary, then, that the eyes of all people should be directed to Him, that the demonstrations which preceded His great sacrifice should be such as to call the attention of all to the sacrifice itself. After such an exhibition as that attending His entry into Jerusalem, all eyes would follow His rapid progress to the final end.¹⁰¹

But with all the marks of popular homage which were bestowed upon the Saviour this day, there was His ever-present meekness and lowliness. The show of real earthly pomp and kingly power did not attend this strange triumphal proces-

¹⁰¹ *Idem*, p. 386.

sion. He had, as yet, no kingdom to share with His disciples; but He brought them that which was of infinitely greater value: salvation.

- Not freedom from the Roman yoke, but from Satan's bondage.
- Not release from taxes and tribute, but from sin and death.

Cleansing the Temple

Another significant action of the Saviour in this connection was the cleansing of the temple. This was, according to Mark, the next day. Jesus looked about the temple until "eventide" and saw much that caused him sadness as He witnessed the trafficking and bartering, and listened to the clink of money and the voice of greed within the sacred inclosure.

He retired to Bethany to spend the night, and the ardor of the throng quickly subsided. Returning on the morrow He directed His way at once to the temple and drove therefrom all those who were making merchandise of God's service. These traders occupied booths and stalls in the court of the Gentiles or outer inclosure, and seem to have been introduced as a matter of convenience, where people coming to offer could exchange their foreign coin for sanctuary money, and where those who wished animals for sacrifice could buy them. But the spirit of covetousness prevailed, and dishonesty and extortion were so prevalent that the Lord exclaimed,

Matthew 21

¹³ You have made it [His Father's house] a den of thieves.

Upon another occasion He had, in the early part of His ministry, found a similar state of things, and performed a similar work, when these voracious money-makers fled in confusion, apparently before a whip of small cords (*John 2:13-16*); but in reality it was the craven fear of conscious guilt in the presence of a righteous rebuke.

It is as sinful today as in the days of Christ to make merchandise of sacred things and sacred places. Doubtless these men quieted all conviction by the thought that while they defiled the sacred with the profane, and added oppression and dishonesty to their unholy traffic, they were thus “supporting the cause.”

2. Kingly Authority

Present Truth, January 3, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for January 13

Timeline: VII-2 (The Triumphal Entry) / VII-4 (Second Cleansing of the Temple)

Matthew 21:1-17

Matthew 21

¹ And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

² Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them and bring them unto me.

³ And if any man say ought unto you, you shall say, The Lord has need of them; and straightway he will send them.

⁴ All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

⁵ Tell you the daughter of Sion, Behold, your King comes unto you, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.

⁶ And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them.

⁷ And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon.

⁸ And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

⁹ And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

WHO would think of selecting an unbroken colt, on which no man had ever sat, for a king to ride on when making a grand entry into the capital? It is not that the beast would not be worthy, but that it could not be expected to conduct itself in a crowd as would be fitting, and the king would not be able to preserve the necessary dignity for such a grand occasion. All his attention would be occupied in attempting to

manage the animal, if indeed he would be able to keep his seat at all.

But this unbroken colt took Jesus through the shouting multitudes as quietly as the most mature saddle horse, unmindful of the waving palm branches and the fluttering garments. How was this? and what significance has it?

This indicated that Jesus was indeed King, possessed of the dominion originally given to man. The beasts, as well as the winds and the waves and the multitudes, were obedient to Him, because all recognized in Him a Master. Even the devils, rebellious as they were, obeyed His commands. He came in that humble manner, to show that with the meek there is salvation, and that the highest things of God come from the lowest things of earth.

The Cross a Royal Throne

It was a royal procession, yet Jesus alone knew what it all meant. The people were fulfilling prophecy, yet not one of them thought that they were using the words foretold by the prophet hundreds of years before.

Nor did they know to what sort of throne Christ was going; if they had, they would not have cheered Him. It was but a few days afterward that many of this same multitude, swayed by the chief priests, were crying out,

Luke 23

²¹ Crucify Him! crucify Him!

The throne to which Jesus was going was the cross of Calvary. If the people had known this at first, they would not have hailed Him as king, for they would have considered that as the end of His career; so small was their spiritual perception. Yet that cross was indeed a throne. Yea, it was...

Isaiah 6

¹ ...a throne high and lifted up,

–for by it He was...

John 12

³² ...lifted up from the earth,

–even to...

Mark 16

¹⁹ ...the right hand of God,

Ephesians 1

³ ...in heavenly places,

Ephesians 1

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,

²² ...[with] all things under His feet.

A grand and mighty throne is the cross of Christ, and every one who is crucified with Him, is sure to live and reign with Him, sharing His authority.

Romans 6

⁸ Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

Romans 5

¹⁷ For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

How sad it is that people will applaud the outward show of power, even though it be but the tinsel that covers a sham, and despise the greatness that hides itself in humble garb.

Praise is Power

Another manifestation of the character of Christ's royal authority was seen when Jesus arrived at the temple. The children took up the shout, and whoever has felt the tears rush to his eyes when he has heard the innocent, tender voices of

children, lifted up in songs of praise to God, will be able to realize something of how grateful to Jesus was this token of loyalty. But when the chief priests and scribes heard...

Matthew 21

¹⁵ ...the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,

¹⁶ And said unto Him, Do you hear what these say? And Jesus said unto them, Yea; have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings You have perfected *praise*?

Compare this with *Psalms* 8:2, from which it is quoted, and you will see that the original reads,

Psalm 8

² Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You ordained *strength* because of your enemies, that You might still the enemy and the avenger.

Thus we see that praise is power, and that in order to still the enemy God puts the strength of praise into the mouths of little children.

How many mistakes the leaders in the church have made! When enemies have raged against the truth, they have thought it necessary to deliver learned sermons and write deep, theological treatises against them. Yea, they have often thought it necessary to appeal to law, and to use force, to compel blasphemers to keep silence; but God has told us that songs and shouts of triumphant praise even in the mouths of little children, are that which is to “still the enemy and the avenger.” Why do not the leaders and all the adult members of the church employ the same weapon against the adversary?

Cleansing Power

Matthew 21

¹² And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that

sold doves,

¹³ And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.

There was the power of the royal priest, and that was an illustration of what Jesus still does when He makes His triumphal entry through the power of the cross. The Lord says:

Malachi 3

¹ I will send my Messenger, and He shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom you delight in; behold He shall come, says the Lord of hosts.

³ And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Our bodies are the temple of God.

1 Corinthians 3

¹⁶ Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

1 Corinthians 6

¹⁹ What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?

The Lord is surely coming to His temple;

Malachi 3

² But who may abide the day of His coming?

The Jews would not accept His cleansing of the ancient temple, and so, instead of standing for ever, it had to be destroyed; for:

1 Corinthians 3

¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God de-

stroy.

God would cleanse us by the coming of His messenger; but if we refuse to be cleansed, then will His coming destroy us. But the power and glory of His coming to destroy, is the power of His coming to save. The fire that burns up the finally impenitent is the fire that consumes the sins of those who have allowed themselves to be cleansed.

In cleansing us He heals. As soon as the temple was cleansed,

Matthew 21

¹⁴ The blind and the lame came to Him in the temple; and He healed them.

There was authority exhibited in the cleansing of the temple—power which caused the traders that defiled it to flee in terror; yet that was the power that healed the lame and the blind.

Take notice that all the power of the Lord, even when it appears in awful majesty, striking terror to the hearts of the wicked and working destruction, is simply cleansing power, and is always working only to cleanse. The fire that will burn up the wicked at the last, will be the fire sent to cleanse the earth from the curse.

Shall we experience the blessedness of that cleansing power? or shall we resist it and so be destroyed by it? We have our choice. If we yield, we feel the cleansing power; if we resist, we feel only the destruction, and the cleansing process leaves us as though we had not been. Then let us say,

Every day, every hour,
Let me feel Thy cleansing power.¹⁰²

Psalm 32

¹ Blessed is he who transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

¹⁰² Frances J. Crosby, Hymn: *Saviour, More than Life to Me*, 1875.

3. The Triumphal Entry

Present Truth, April 21, 1898¹⁰³

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons

Timeline: VII-2 (The Triumphal Entry) / VII-4 (Second Cleansing of the Temple)

Matthew 21:6-16

EVERY incident in the life of Jesus while here upon earth is of far-reaching significance. Even in the apparently common-place experiences of His daily life there is a depth of meaning, each one having its place in revealing the great scheme of redemption for fallen man. Much more then, we may expect that such an event as His entry into Jerusalem, described in the lesson for this week, will be full of meaning.

Fulfilling the Scripture

The public ministry of our Lord was now drawing to its close, and with His disciples He was on the way to Jerusalem to the last Passover. The prophecies concerning the Messiah, marking out the course of His life with great definiteness, had found their fulfillment in Him. He was the Word made flesh, and naturally we read:

Matthew 21

⁴ ...that it might be fulfilled,

and:

John 12

¹⁴ ...as it was written,

—as the key notes to all His experiences. So it is in this case. Jesus had so carefully studied...

Luke 24

²⁷ ...in all the scriptures the things concerning himself,

—and had found His own mission and work so plainly set

¹⁰³ The *Pioneer Writings* incorrectly dates this as April 21, 1897.

forth in them, that His every act was guided by them. So He sent His disciples for the ass and the colt, and:

Matthew 21

⁴ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

⁵ Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King comes unto you, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

A Royal Procession

So it was as “King” that He entered Jerusalem. His disciples and those who had witnessed His works had long desired that He should take the throne, and on one occasion,

John 6

¹⁵ Jesus...perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king,

–but He had hitherto firmly restrained any such tendency. Now however the hopes of the disciples were raised to the highest pitch, for He had allowed them to put their own garments under Him,¹⁰⁴

Matthew 21

⁸ And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

Moreover they see that Jesus does not attempt to quiet the multitude as they shout with one accord,

⁹ Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

¹⁰⁴ **2 Kings 9** ¹¹ Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to you? And he said unto them, You know the man, and his communication. ¹² And they said, It is false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spoke he to me, saying, Thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king over Israel. ¹³ Then they hastened, and *took every man his garment, and put it under him* on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

Surely, thought they, the time of deliverance has come, and He is about to set up the throne. And this was true, but not as they were anticipating. It was an infinitely greater deliverance than from the Roman yoke that He was about to make sure for them, even...

Colossians 1

¹³ ...from the power of darkness.

And while the Scripture was now to be fulfilled,

Luke 1

³² And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David,

—yet that throne was in the New Jerusalem above, and not in old Jerusalem below. And they did not understand that the way to the throne was by the cross of Calvary. And so the procession moved on. And,

John 12

¹² ...much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him.

And they also joined in the cry,

¹³ Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 21

¹⁰ And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

So great was the stir that when the priest blew the trumpets to call the people to the temple at the time of the evening sacrifice, there was not one to answer to their call to worship, and they, stirred to envy, said,

John 12

¹⁹ Do you perceive how you prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him.

The Trophies of Victory

But let us take a closer look at the procession which attends Jesus in His triumphal march into the city. Who are these who are thus raising their voices in honor of “the Son of David”? And what is the significance of their presence in His train?

The record speaks of...

Matthew 21

⁸ ...a very great multitude,

—and of...

⁹ ...the multitudes that went before, and that followed.

But who are they? The closing part of the 20th chapter will indicate the answer to this question. There were...

Matthew 20

³⁰ ...two blind men sitting by the way,

—and they cried,

³³ Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

And when their request was granted,

³⁴ ...they followed Him.

And so it was that His followers were largely those whom He had relieved from disease, or affliction of some kind. And among the rest was Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, for some had come...

John 12

⁹ ...not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead.

In the days of Rome, when some leader had been especially successful in conquest, it was customary for the Senate to grant him a triumph, and in the triumphal procession there would often be led some captives brought from the conquered province as evidences of the victory gained. Now it was the

mission of Jesus to this world...

Isaiah 61

¹ ...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,

—and to wrest this world from the hands of the enemy by His death on the cross. And as evidence of His Messiahship, Jesus told His inquiring disciples,

Matthew 11

⁴ Go and show John again those things which you do hear and see:

⁵ The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

Thus Jesus, in proof of the success of His mission, was attended in His triumphal entry by those whom He had released from the power of His and their enemy.

- There was Lazarus, who had been rescued “from the power of the grave,” leading on the way;
- There were those who had been dumb, now using their tongues to shout His praise;
- There were those who had been deaf, who now hear their own voices calling the chorus of shouts;
- There were those who had been blind, looking with gratitude upon their benefactor;
- There were those who had been lame, now conspicuous among those “that went before.”

This is a triumphal procession indeed, and the evidences of victory are abundant. No such triumphs as this had ever been accorded to any Roman consul, since no such victory could be gained by force of arms. Infinite love had gained the victory and it was Love’s triumph.

But after all, this triumphal entry into old Jerusalem is but typical of that triumphal entry into the New Jerusalem which

was then so near. It was when He ascended up on high, after His resurrection, that:

Ephesians 4 [margin]

⁸ [He] led a multitude of captives,

—who had been raised from the dead at His crucifixion and resurrection:

Matthew 27

⁵² And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

⁵³ And came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

And then as He neared the gates of the heavenly city, the cry was raised,

Psalms 24

⁸ Who is this King of glory?

And the answer was given,

⁸ The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

This was the same Jesus who rode into Jerusalem,

Matthew 21

⁵ ...meek, and sitting upon an ass.

His meekness was a genuine meekness of true greatness.

Cleansing the Temple

At the beginning of His ministry Jesus had cleansed the temple (*John 2:13-16*) and had said,

John 2

¹⁶ Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

But the same practices had continued, and had grown worse in the face of His divinely attested rebuke, and so He now declares,

Matthew 21 [RV]

¹³ It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you make [or, are making] it a den of robbers.

The profits in the sales in the temple precincts were very large, and the priests permitted the traffic to go on because they were given a share of the profits. If Jesus should visit the modern church bazaar, what would He say? Would He approve of such a method of bringing money into the Lord's (?) treasury? Is there any need for one to appear now who shall say, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise?" The principles which Jesus taught are for all time.

The Argument of Praise

In speaking of His relation to the Father, Jesus could say,

John 8

²⁹ I do always those things that please Him.

But this did not make His course acceptable even to those who claimed to be the religious leaders of His time, for:

Matthew 21

¹⁵ When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased.

Evidently that which "displeased" them was that more attention was being directed to Jesus than to themselves. In His reply to their objection Jesus uses those words which they have heard before,

¹⁶ Have you never read?

And then He quotes the scripture which was being fulfilled in the happy shouts of the children:

Psalms 8 [RV]

² Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You established strength [perfected praise], because of your adver-

saries, that You might still the enemy and the avenger.

And so on that day the children glorified God with their shouts of hosanna, while those who have enjoyed much light and many privileges grew only the more determined in their purpose to destroy Him who came to bring them life.

Matthew 6

²³ If therefore the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness.

A More Magnificent Triumph

The final triumph is near,

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Are we prepared to join the “great multitude” who shall raise their voices in that grand chorus,

Revelation 19

⁶ Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns?

4. The Power of Truth

Present Truth, September 27, 1900

Timeline: VII-2 (The Triumphal Entry)

Matthew 21:9 / Luke 19:38-40 / John 12:13

IT WAS the last week of Christ's earthly ministry, and in a few days He was to be offered as a sacrifice for the world; yet none on earth except himself knew it.

He was on His way to Jerusalem, to which place thousands knew not that the true Passover was to be offered at that time, and that He was the offering.

Previous to this time, when He had wrought mighty miracles He had refused the applause of the people, and had sought obscurity; but now that He was going to His humiliation, He deliberately placed himself in a position to attract the attention of the multitudes.

At His bidding two of His disciples went into a village near Jerusalem, and brought to Him a young ass, and having placed their garments on it, and seated Jesus, they led Him in triumph into Jerusalem. A very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way;

Matthew 21

⁹ And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest,

And many that were already in the city, when they heard that He was coming,

John 12

¹³ Took branches of palm trees, and went forth so meet Him, and cried, Hosanna; Blessed is the King of Israel, that comes in the name of the Lord.

Luke 19

³⁸ Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

It was a right royal greeting, and He who hitherto had refused to be called King, and had hid himself from the people, now accepted the homage of the throngs as His right. But there were some envious ones in the crowd:

Luke 19

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Jesus, Master, rebuke your disciples.

Jesus replied,

⁴⁰ I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.

Why would this be? Because all that was the truth, although the most of those who cried were doubtless as unconscious of the full meaning of the words that they uttered as the stones would have been if they had been forced to cry out.

This shows the power of the truth. It is not possible that God, who is the truth, should leave himself without witness. He is, and that which is, must make itself manifest. Everything that God has made contains His everlasting power and Divinity, and therefore reveals it; but man was made for God in a special manner, because man is the highest creature, made to be lord of the earth, and capable of greater attainments than any other creature; and God is glorified in proportion as the creature is exalted.

Now,

Romans 3

²³ All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

And the most of mankind refuse to give God the glory; that is, they choose to live far below the high position that God has created them for. Nevertheless God must receive the glory that can be given only by man,—His masterwork. And there-

fore John the Baptist, in reproving the Pharisees for their sinful pride and arrogance, said,

Matthew 3

⁹ Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

The children of Abraham are they who glorify God by keeping His commandments; and rather than acknowledge the unbelieving Jews as children, God would make new men out of stones.

Even so on the occasion before us. The time had come for a truth to be proclaimed; God had spoken years before of this very time, and His Word could not be broken. Therefore if the people did not fulfill the Word, the stones would perform the duty which they had neglected.

There is in this incident and statement a great deal more than a mere historical fact. There is a personal lesson for each one of us. Like all the truths of God, it is comforting and encouraging. The seed sown in the earth must germinate; the fire kindled in secret will burn its way out of sight. God's Word is like a fire, and it is the good seed. If therefore we receive this Word into our hearts, it cannot but manifest itself in our lives, and find expression by our tongues.

1 John 3

⁹ Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God;

—and such a one will say,

Acts 4

²⁰ We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

If we will simply refrain from using against God the free will that He has given us, if we will cease holding Christ

down, the truth of God will find its perfect expression in us. And do you not see how we are anticipated in our oft-repeated objection, "I am so weak"? The stones would give expression to God's truth, although they are lifeless; surely He who can cause the stones to speak, can speak through man. Nothing is impossible with God, not even the salvation of the weakest soul.

Here is something more for us to think about. Christ was going up to Jerusalem to be crucified. Just before He suffered His greatest humiliation, He received the highest homage that He ever received on this earth. And there was nothing incongruous in this, for Christ's humiliation—the cross—is His highest glory. He was hailed as the King of Israel, the Saviour in the highest, and such He was. When Christ hung on the cross He was as much a King as He will be when He comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The power of His coming is the power of the cross.

The word "Hosanna" means, "save now;" and the royal entry of Christ into Jerusalem was for the purpose of accomplishing the salvation of men. Even so when He comes the second time, amid shouts of victory, He will come for the salvation of His people. But the power by which He will then save them, changing their bodies from mortality to immortality, will be none other than that by which He now saves all who come unto God by Him.

How easy it is to experience salvation, when we know that the offering of praise prepares the way for God to show us His salvation, and that He can make stones, and even the wrath of man, to praise Him.

5. Reaching the Masses

Present Truth, December 15, 1892

Timeline: VII-2 (The Triumphal Entry) / VII-15 (Interview With Certain Greeks)

John 12:19, 21, 32

OF CHRIST it is written that the common people heard Him gladly. His enemies, the priests, said,

John 12

¹⁹ You see how that the whole world is gone after Him.

Even when He retired to the desert for a little rest, the people flocked after Him by the thousands.

Yet He did not ask for any law to compel the people to rest, so that He might have a chance to preach to them. He did not make use of any of the schemes ever used in these days to “draw” the crowds. The “gracious words that He spoke” (*Luke* 4:22) were all-sufficient to draw the people. Even the officers who were sent to apprehend Him, forgot their errand in the charm of His wonderful words of life.

Those same words are handed down to us in the Bible. They are living words, and therefore have all the power and charm that they had when they fell from His lips.

And so we cannot help thinking that when those words are spoken to the people, in the Spirit of Christ, by one in whom Christ dwells, so that they will in reality come from Him, they will have as much drawing power as when they were first spoken.

John 12

³² I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

There are many now as of old, who are saying, or feeling,

²¹ Sir, we would see Jesus.

Let Christ be lifted up before the people, and there need be no worry about the hearers.

6. True Faith

Present Truth, August 24, 1893

Timeline: VII-3 (The Fruitless Fig Tree)

Mark 11:22

Mark 11

²² And Jesus answering said unto them, Have faith in God.

THESE are words that apply as well to us as to the disciples, to whom they were first spoken.

Hebrews 11

⁶ Without faith it is impossible to please God,

and

1 John 5

⁴ This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

Yet though faith is so important to the Christian life, few people really have it.

There is a great deal that passes for faith among religious people, that is not faith at all. True faith is simple belief of God's word. True faith does not mystify the word; it does not explain away the miraculous; it does not "account for" this or that statement of Scripture. It feels no need of accounting for anything that the Bible says. It does not bring human suppositions and explanations into the matter at all.

This is why most men will not exercise true faith. It is too simple a thing for them. They want to make some display of their own wisdom; they want to understand Scripture in some way that will reflect credit on themselves,—on their ability to reason, discover, and conjecture. And so we see the word of God twisted and perverted and "explained" until its meaning is all but lost, and opposers of the truth scoffingly assert that:

"Anything can be proved from the Bible!"

This all comes from a lack of faith. Faith never questions; it

believes implicitly. It is satisfied with the simple fact that God has said so, and if the statement that He makes is unexplainable to human reason, it makes no difference. Faith simply asks,

“What has God said?”

And when it finds what God has said, it says,

“That is so! God has said it, and that settles it.”

Here is the simplicity of true faith. It does not have to bother with human theories and explanations, but simply accepts a thing just because God has declared it.

To believe implicitly and unquestioningly whatever God says is very much easier than to try to believe in it with some human wisdom worked in. It is so easy that anyone, high or low, learned or simple, who will still believe, can do it.

7. Have Faith in God

Present Truth, March 8, 1894

Timeline: VII-3 (The Fruitless Fig Tree)

Mark 11:22

Mark 11

²² And Jesus answering said unto them, Have faith in God.

THESE words were spoken by our Saviour to His disciples when they had expressed their surprise at the sudden withering of the barren fig tree.

They are no less applicable to each one of us today than they were to the little companies who followed Jesus in His walks about Judea. They are the words of eternal life to the sinner sitting in the darkness and shadow of death. They are the sum of all that God, by the various ways in which He communicates with man, speaks to the human soul.

- Have you faith in God?
- Do you know that you have it?
- Are you certain that you know what faith is?

The disciples thought they had faith, but in the time of test and trial they were found wanting. Faith stands every test; but that which is not faith, does not endure the test. If you have faith, you will abide unshaken the storms and temptations of this mortal life; but if that which you think is faith is only a counterfeit of faith, when the storm beats hard your house will be overthrown. It is all-important to know now whether your house is built upon the sand, or on the solid rock.

The solid rock is the word of God; and there is no such thing as faith without this word. The rock is Christ, and Christ is the Word.

John 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

That word may not seem to you to be solid; nevertheless it is. We are not accustomed to think of words as being substantial like rocks, but this is true of the word of the Lord. That word is as substantial as God himself. And while the earth and earthly things shall pass away and be no more, the word of the Lord will abide as firm as the eternal throne. By that word they came into existence, and by that word will they be dissolved and vanish away.

Faith is composed of two elements,—belief, and the word of God. Counterfeit faith has only one of these elements; it always lacks the word. It rests upon something else,—some feeling, or impression, or hope, or desire, or process of reasoning, or upon the word of some man.

Faith accepts the word of God, no matter how it reads, without questioning. Pretended faith is often obliged to explain the word away.

Genuine faith “works by love.” *Galatians* 5:6. Pretended faith either works not at all, or by some motive which has its root in self. What love is, we are told in the 13th chapter of *1 Corinthians*.

With these facts in mind, it becomes an easy thing to determine whether you have faith in God or not.

The Saviour said that he who had faith should ask whatsoever he would of God, and it should be given him.

Luke 17

⁵ And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

⁶ And the Lord said, If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say unto this sycamine tree, Be plucked up by the root, and be planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Matthew 21

²² And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.

John 14

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

¹³ And whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

¹⁴ If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

He who has faith, will ask according to God's will, and God will always hear such a petition and answer it; for faith always rests upon God's word, which is the expression of His will.

1 John 5

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us:

¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

And he who asks in faith, will believe that he receives the things he asked for, basing his belief upon the promise of God. He not only believes that he has them, but he does have them, really and literally.

So it makes all the difference in the world with an individual, in the truest sense, whether or not he has faith. It is only the blindness and perverseness of the natural mind which makes a person who admits and knows the substantial benefits that come from faith in man, think there is nothing substantial to be derived from faith in God.

8. Faith That Moves Mountains

Present Truth, July 20, 1893

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VII-3 (The Fruitless Fig Tree)

Mark 11:22-23

Mark 11

²² Jesus answering said unto them, Have faith in God.

²³ For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be removed, and be cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he says.

MANY people do not believe that statement, because they have wanted some things very much, and have not obtained them. Others have attempted such seemingly impossible things as removing mountains, and have failed. And yet the word is true.

The only trouble is that people do not observe the conditions. They forget that the promise is not that a man shall have the thing simply because he thinks he wants it, nor simply to amuse him or gratify his vanity. He is to have it only in response to his faith.

“Well,” says one, “I tried as hard as I could to have faith, but it didn’t do any good; I didn’t get what I asked for.”

Of course not; the fact that you tried to have faith shows that you didn’t have any. Faith is not credulity, nor is it the imagination. It is not an effort to make yourself believe something that may or may not be so. It is the simple acceptance of a fact, and the acting upon it as a fact, although it is unseen.

Faith deals only in facts. There is nothing uncertain about it. It simply enables a person to grasp unseen things, and to know things of which he would otherwise be ignorant.

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Where there is no word of God, there can be no faith. His promise is what faith is built upon. So when the Lord says that if we shall say to a mountain,

“Be removed, and be cast into the sea,”

–and shall have perfect faith, with no doubt in the heart, it shall be done, He does not mean that our action is to be based on a freak of fancy, but on a word from the Lord.

He can speak to us by His word concerning the things that personally concern us, as well as He could to Enoch, Abraham, or David. Knowing that His word cannot fail, we do not make an effort to believe in it, but believe without trying. Nobody has to make an effort to believe what he knows to be true. And when God has not spoken a thing, we ought not to want to believe.

He who acts upon this principle will find that faith always brings its object.

9. He That Asks, Receives

Present Truth, January 2, 1902

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VII-3 (The Fruitless Fig Tree)

Mark 11:24

Mark 11

²⁴ What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

BUT the Lord does not wish us to believe what is not so; He does not tell us to believe that we have a thing, when we do not have it; for that would be to believe a lie.

Therefore He means that when we pray we receive the things that we ask for, while we are asking.

Matthew 7

⁸ He that asks, receives.

But of course we must ask in faith, that is, according to God's will and Word. The man who does not ask in faith, need not expect to receive anything.

But whoever asks for the things that God has promised to give us, should know that he gets them in the asking.

10. The Authority of Power

Present Truth, April 18, 1901

Timeline: VII-5 (The Leaders Challenge Jesus' Authority)

Matthew 21:23

ONE day as Jesus was teaching in the temple, after performing mighty miracles, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him, and said,

Matthew 21

²³ By what authority do you do these things? and who gave you this authority?

Jesus did not answer their questions, and it was not necessary. The questions showed that they recognized that He had authority, and it did not make any difference where He got it, or who gave it to Him, as long as He had it.

And what was His authority to teach the people and to heal the sick? It was the ability to do it. The ability to do a thing, and to do it well, is all the authority anybody needs; it is, in fact, all the real authority anybody can have.

When Jesus had ended His talk on the mountain,

Matthew 7

²⁸ ...the people were astonished at His doctrine:

²⁹ For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

The scribes had “authority” to teach. If they did not happen to have it in their pockets, they could take one to their homes, and exhibit their piece of paper or parchment, certifying the fact that they had studied through the prescribed course, and were authorized to teach the law.

Christ had no “authority” from men, but He had something that the people needed, and which they appreciated, and they never asked to see His credentials. His words and deeds were His credentials. He was...

Acts 2

²² ...a man approved of God...by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him.

Thus it was with the apostles. Peter and John were the agents of a mighty miracle of healing, for which they were arrested and brought before the Jewish Council. They were irregular, unlicensed practitioners, and they were questioned as to their right to do such things. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, told them that the power of the name of Jesus had done the work; and the rulers,

Acts 4

¹⁴ ...beholding the man which was healed standing with them...could say nothing against it.

The name of Jesus, in which they stood, was their authority for making the helpless to stand.

No man was ever subjected to closer scrutiny, or met with greater opposition, than the Apostle Paul. His right to be called an apostle was denied; but this gave him no anxiety. He wrote:

2 Corinthians 3

¹ Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

² You are our epistle written, in our hearts, known and read of all men.

Even so Christ said:

John 5

³⁴ I receive not testimony from man.

³⁶ The works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me.

God himself gives the same credentials to every one whom He sends forth.

John 3

³⁴ He whom God has sent speaks the words of God.

And God's words are authoritative. He makes us able to be ministers of the new covenant, even of the Spirit that gives life. Whoever steadily and constantly holds forth the Word of life will never be embarrassed by any sudden challenge of his authority, or call for his credentials. The power to do gives the right to do; and whoever has not the power can never have the authority.

This authority everybody may have, for it comes with the reception of the Holy Spirit, who is given freely to all without measure.

11. The Parable of the Vineyard

Signs of the Times, September 29, 1890

International Lesson Notes, October 5, 1890

Timeline: VII-7 (The Wicked Husbandmen)

Luke 20:9-19

Luke 20

⁹ Then He began to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

¹⁰ And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

¹¹ And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

¹² And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

¹³ Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

¹⁴ But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

¹⁵ So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

¹⁶ He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

¹⁷ And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

¹⁸ Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

¹⁹ And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on Him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them.

The Connection

THE speaking of this parable (see also *Matthew* 21:3-46; *Mark* 12:1-12) came the next day after the events recorded in the last regular lesson. It was the last great day of our Saviour's teaching in the temple. On Sunday He had ridden into Jerusalem as a conqueror. On Monday He had driven out of the temple the extortionate and covetous who were defiling with their unholy traffic the temple of God.

Other events, such as the cursing of the fig-tree, the lesson of the prayer of faith, the crafty scheme of the scribes and Pharisees to entrap Jesus with artful questions, and the parable of the two sons, preceded the parable of the vineyard, and can be studied with profit.

This one fact is nearly always prominent in the Lord's parables: He uses as His illustrations things with which the people were familiar. In this parable, our Lord simply uses that which His Spirit had inspired some hundred years before.

Isaiah 5

¹ Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching His vineyard. My well-beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

² And He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?

⁵ And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

⁶ And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor dug; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant: and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

The vineyard represents Israel; the tower, the temple at Jerusalem; the place of resort, the strength and center of their worship, the place from which the whole vineyard could be overseen. The wine-press evidently includes all those means which God gave Israel by which the riches of their vineyard could be developed and used to God's glory.

This vineyard was "hedged about," separated from other fields. Israel was a separated people. That which separated them was God's truth—His law, His statutes, His promises to the fathers:

Leviticus 20

²² You shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them; that the land, where I bring you to dwell therein, spew you not out.

²³ And you shall not walk in the manners of the nations, which I cast out before you; for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.

²⁴ But I have said unto you, You shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that flows with milk and honey; I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people.

The one who planted the vineyard is the Lord; the husbandmen were those in responsible places in the Jewish nation. And truly what great things God had done for His people! From the time of His first call to them in Egypt till they were cast off forever, the way was strewn with the mercies of God. Truly the Lord could say:

Isaiah 5

⁴ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?

The householder sent his servants to the husbandmen; the Lord sent His prophets to Israel. It was Samuel, and Elijah, and Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, and many others. But as the husbandmen beat the servants of the owner of the vineyard, so Israel abused the prophets of God. The record is very explicit on this point:

2 Chronicles 36

¹⁵ And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place;

¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

God left them without excuse. He sent “betimes” to them, or, as the margin reads,

“...rising up continually and carefully and sending.”

He could not let them go. The language of God’s heart was:

Hosea 11

⁸ How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver you, Israel? How shall I make you as Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

These are the pleadings of Infinite Love to rebellious and fallen man. He will not yet reject Israel. He has one more evidence of His love; He will bestow that; surely they will yield Him His due then.

Then the Lord of the vineyard sends His only begotten Son for the love which He bore to the world.

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Titus 2

¹⁴ [Christ] gave himself.

Heaven or the universe could bestow no more; it bestowed its Maker. He who with the Father created all things, laid aside His glory and came to earth, and endured what man must endure, was tempted, tried, and suffered for man's sake.

John 1

¹¹ He came unto His own.

But, sad to say,

¹¹ ...His own received Him not.

The Jewish nation had closed their hearts against Him. They continually read the prophecies which foretold His coming; they continually offered those sacrifices which typified His death; but the antitype they knew not. Their heart was not in harmony with the message of meekness and humility and heart-righteousness; therefore they could not receive Him.

But they said,

Luke 20

¹⁴ This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours.

And this is just what the Jews did. Strange madness, that such should be the case, and yet it was, after three and one-half years of teaching such as the world never heard. No charge could be brought against it, neither could they bring aught against His life. He could say without boasting,

John 8

⁴⁶ Which of you convinces me of sin?

He met in himself all the specifications of the prophecy. He went beyond this. The mighty power of God was manifested by Him wherever He went. The crowning miracle, of raising to life him who had been dead four days, had but recently been wrought. Lazarus was known to the priests and many about Jerusalem. This miracle, in connection with all the evidences of Christ's divinity which preceded, had led a multitude to believe in Him. In fact, no evidences were wanting. The priests had confessed,

John 12

¹⁹ Behold, the world is gone after Him.

But notwithstanding all this, the Jews cast Him out and crucified Him, after a heathen governor had repeatedly declared,

John 19 [see also 18:38, 19:4]

⁶ I find no fault in Him.

In rejecting Christ, the Jews filled up the cup of their iniquity. This is the lesson of the parable, from which, according to the account by Matthew, the Jews themselves drew the lesson:

Matthew 21

⁴¹ He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Then our Lord forced home the lesson of the parable by a reference to a well-known scripture:

⁴² The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.

When the temple of Solomon was built, the stones were all prepared in the quarry, so that no sound of tool was heard in the building. It is said that one stone was for a long time rejected by the builders as of no use; but it was finally ascertained that it was the chief corner-stone. This stone typified

Christ. Rejected of men, but chosen of God and precious, He was the tried upon whom if anyone believed he would not be ashamed or confounded.

Isaiah 8

¹³ Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.

¹⁴ And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 45

¹⁶ They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.

¹⁷ But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: you shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

Romans 9

³³ As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offense: and whosoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.

Matthew 21

⁴⁴ Whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken.

Whosoever comes before God with...

Psalms 51

¹⁷ ...a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart,

—falling unreservedly upon His mercy, will be received. The brokenness is the brokenness of heart which is so pleasing to God. He dwells with the humble:

Isaiah 57

¹⁵ For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

God looks with favor upon the contrite of heart:

Isaiah 66

² ...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

But whosoever rejects the mercies of God, will, like the Jews, be rejected of God. If they will not receive Christ as a Redeemer, they must meet Him as Judge, when He dispenses judgment without mercy.

The lesson for the Jews is a lesson for us all. Let us heed the lesson.

12. Parable, History, and Prophecy

Present Truth, September 10, 1896

Timeline: VII-8 (The Man Without a Wedding Garment)

Matthew 22:1-10

IN A PARABLE, in the 22nd chapter of *Matthew*, Christ compared the kingdom of heaven to a certain king who made a marriage feast upon the occasion of his son's wedding, and invited guests to the regal festivities which he had prepared.

But those who had been invited did not come, and so a second time he sent out his servants to remind them that all was ready and waiting their attendance. This time it became clearly evident that they had no intention whatever of accepting the invitation, for they made light of it and went every man his own way, to his business, his farm, his counting-house. Each man thought it of more importance to attend to his own affairs than to do honor to his king, and rejoice with him at the wedding of his son.

But there were those, even, who took the servants who had been sent out to bear the king's message of love and courteous invitation, and abused them and put some of them to death. What could have been the expectation of these murderers?

- Did they not suppose that they would arouse the king's righteous anger?
- Did they think that they could thus ill-treat and slaughter innocent men without themselves receiving sooner or later the just reward of their deeds?
- Was it a supposable thing that they could not only insolently scorn the king's gracious invitation but also kill his messengers, and go free and unpunished?
- Could such unparalleled deeds of insolent wickedness go unnoticed?

Impossible! Impossible! Yet how many have excused them-

selves, with laughter and jeering, from listening to the invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb, which the Lord sends out to all the world. How many of His prophets and messengers and servants have been ill-treated, even murdered! Will not their Lord avenge them? In the parable it is said,

Matthew 22

⁷ He sent forth His armies, and destroyed these murderers, and burned up their city.

Is it not revealed in *Revelation* that this is what will be done at the time of the second death? And yet guests will not be wanting at the marriage supper. They will be gathered in from the highways and hedges, from among every tongue and kindred and nation and people, and clothed in spotless robes of righteousness, as wedding garments, will be present at the feast, and dwell thereafter in that holy city which John saw,

Revelation 21

² ...coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

13. The Marriage Feast

Present Truth, April 28, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, May 8

Timeline: VII-8 (The Man Without a Wedding Garment)

Matthew 22:1-14

HOW many times Jesus, in His teaching, said, “The kingdom of heaven is like,”¹⁰⁵ and then spoke a parable through which spiritual instruction was imparted to His hearers by a comparison with the well-known facts or experiences of life. By following this method His teaching was also universal in its character, equally well adapted to the needs of all peoples of all times.

So it is with the lesson of this week. Although first spoken to those who “sought to lay hands on Him” (*Matthew* 21:46), and who did soon afterward take and by wicked hands crucify and slay Him, yet it is equally applicable to us now, and it is in its personal application that we shall consider it.

And first there is:

The Repeated Invitation

Matthew 22

³ [He] sent forth his servants to call them which were bidden to the wedding.

And again he urges them,

⁴ ...all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

Then there is the refusal:

³ ...they would not come.

⁵ They made light of it.

But afterwards the call is sent “into the highways” (verse 9) and “the wedding is furnished with guests” (verse 10), and

¹⁰⁵ This occurs eight times in the book of *Matthew*: 13:31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52; 20:1; 22:2.

among them is found...

¹¹ ...a man which had not on the wedding garment.

There being no excuse for his presence at the marriage in that condition, the order is given to...

¹³ ...cast him into outer darkness.

Let us study each one of these steps in the parable in its application to personal experience.

The Whole Bible Says “Come”

Throughout the whole Bible the invitation is being constantly given to us, “Come.” When the world was threatened with destruction by the flood,

Genesis 7

¹ The Lord said unto Noah, Come you and all your house into the ark.

This was an invitation to salvation, and was put on record for our benefit. Under various forms this invitation is repeated through the Scripture until it is given the threefold form in the last chapter of the Book:

Revelation 22

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come.

Through the prophet Isaiah it is said:

Isaiah 55

¹ Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

³ Incline your ear, and come unto me.

This Gospel invitation is repeated by the Saviour in the flesh, saying,

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

We are urged,

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁷ Come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord,...and I will receive you,

¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you.

And in view of a time of trouble, now near at hand, the Lord has said unto us,

Isaiah 26

²⁰ Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors about you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

²¹ For, behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity.

Then there is the final call:

Matthew 25

³⁴ Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Although the invitation has been often rejected, yet...

Psalms 78

³⁸ ...being full of compassion,

—He continues the call, so that it is written,

Romans 10

²¹ But to Israel He said, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

That heart must be hard indeed which will not yield to all these gracious invitations.

Hosea 6

¹ Come, and let us return unto the Lord.

Come, every soul by sin oppressed,
There's mercy with the Lord;
And He will surely give you rest,
By trusting in His Word.¹⁰⁶

How the Invitation is Refused

What an emphasis it puts upon the deceitfulness of sin that it can be said,

Matthew 22

³ ...and they would not come.

⁵ But they made light of it.

Invited by a King, but refusing the invitation! And for what?

⁵ ...one to his farm, another to his merchandise.

To make light of the invitation is not necessarily to ridicule it in words. It is rather to esteem it lightly in comparison with others things, to place small value upon it, to neglect it. As compared with the value of “farm” and “merchandise” these men did not regard the king’s invitation as worthy of their serious attention. Now the “farm” and the “merchandise” are all right enough in their place, but theirs is not the first place.

Matthew 6

³³ Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Eternal interests should receive the first attention.

Hebrews 2

¹ Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard...

³ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

Moses placed a true estimate upon the worth of the Lord’s call to him, for we read that:

¹⁰⁶ John H. Stockton, Hymn: *Come, every soul by sin oppressed*, 1874.

Hebrews 11

²⁴ [He] refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

Those who accept the invitation to the marriage are more than mere spectators, for they share the inheritance with the King's Son.

Romans 8

¹⁷ ...heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

1 Corinthians 3

²¹ For all things are yours.

He therefore shows true wisdom who does not regard "his farm" and "his merchandise,"

2 Corinthians 4

¹⁸ ...the things which are seen [which] are temporal,

—as more worthy of his attention than the things of the kingdom,

¹⁸ ...the things which are not seen [which] are eternal.

Our highest good, here and hereafter, will be found in listening attentively and obediently to the word of the Lord to us.

Isaiah 55

³ Hear and your soul shall live.

The Wedding Garment

But there were those who responded to the King's invitation,

Matthew 22

¹⁰ ...and the wedding was furnished with guests.

Yet there was one among them who thought his own garments good enough in which to appear before the King, and

so he did not trouble to put on the “wedding garment,” which at an eastern marriage is furnished without charge to all the guests. Of course he was conspicuous among the rest and naturally the King inquired,

¹² Friend, how did you come in here, not having a wedding garment?

Inasmuch as the King supplied this garment and all that was required of a guest was simply to put it on, there was no excuse for appearing there in his own soiled garments, just as he came in from “the highways,”

¹² ...And he was speechless.

The lesson is a personal one to us and its meaning need not be misunderstood. It is plainly set forth to us in the typical experience of Joshua the high priest:

Zechariah 3

³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

⁴ And he answered and spoke unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with change of raiment.

⁵ So they...clothed him with garments.

Isaiah 64

⁶ We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,

but:

Isaiah 61

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness.

This is “the best robe” which the Father provides for every wandering son who returns to Him. This is:

Romans 3

²² The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.

The Apostle Paul knew the value of this gift as compared with any righteousness of his own, and it was in view of this that he said:

Philippians 3

⁸ Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

⁹ And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Inasmuch as this righteousness is a free gift, those who do not possess it are “without excuse.”

The Lord's Counsel

In this time, when...

Matthew 24

³³ [He] is near, even at the doors,

—and when it will so soon be said,

John 19

⁷ The marriage of the Lamb is come,

—the experience of the man “which had not on a wedding garment” should appeal to all with special force. Just now, when the tendency is so strong to trust in one's self and in our own righteousness in some form, there comes the word of the Lord,

Revelation 3

¹⁷ Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy of me...white raiment that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear.

Revelation 16

¹⁵ Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

It is evident that:

Matthew 22

¹¹ The King came in to see the guests,

before the marriage feast actually took place, so that only...

Matthew 25

¹⁰ ...they that were ready [should go] in with Him to the marriage.

This means a period of investigation preparatory to the coming of the Lord, and this work is actually going on now. Soon will the word go forth,

Revelation 22

¹¹ He which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still:

¹² And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Matthew 24

⁴⁴ Therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Edward Mote, Hymn: *My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*, 1834.

14. But They Made Light of It

Present Truth, October 22, 1896

Timeline: VII-8 (The Man Without a Wedding Garment)

Matthew 22:5

IN ONE of His parable's Christ likens the kingdom of heaven to a king who had bidden guests to the wedding feast in honor of the marriage of his son, and when all was prepared, those whom he had invited failed to come. The description of their action is most characteristic and life-like. It is applicable to all peoples in every age.

Matthew 22

⁵ But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

Today, under our very eyes, we continually see this re-enacted, in that they to whom the message of the Gospel is sent go their own ways to their farms and merchandise, regardless of the earnest invitation which the Lord of heaven himself so graciously extends to them,—and not only do they go their own ways but they do, today, even make light of the invitation, criticize, doubt, misinterpret, and disbelieve, its language and its purpose; yes, go so far as to deny its authority, and yet farther, ridicule the idea of the existence of the Great King himself.

Although they do not fall under the immediate observation of many of us, yet there are still today, as there always have been, that remnant, also, who spitefully use the servants of the King, and slay them.

They are, however, by far in the majority who make light of the message and the invitation. The refusal of by far the greater number is in the form, simply, of thoughtless, careless neglect.

Perhaps the most, when taxed with their neglect, would re-

ply in mild astonishment that they had never received any invitation. They forget that every copy of the myriads of Bibles distributed throughout all the world contains a record of the invitation which has been directed to them personally, and that thus it is possible for all the world to testify to the fact of the gracious bidding, and that he who declares himself unbidden only convicts himself of insolently thoughtless neglect. He has received the gracious written word of his King, but has laid it aside unread; or, if he has opened it, his eyes have glanced through it so cursorily as to have utterly failed in comprehending its purport and in perceiving its personal character.

Whom, then, can they blame if when the appointed hour is past they find that they have lost a golden opportunity? Surely none but themselves.

In the hour of the realization of his great, irremediable, and eternal loss, no human soul will be able to lay the responsibility for the position in which he finds himself upon another being,—much less upon his God.

Matthew 22

¹⁴ Many are called, but few are chosen.

And those who find themselves in outer darkness will only be able to accuse themselves of failing or refusing to accept the invitation of the Father, and the accompanying wedding robes of righteousness which the Son proffers to all.

15. They Did Not Accept

Present Truth, September 10, 1896

Timeline: VII-8 (The Man Without a Wedding Garment)

Matthew 22:15

HOW plainly the parable and the 22nd chapter of *Matthew*, wherein Christ likens the kingdom of heaven to a certain king who made a marriage for his son, connects itself with the many passages in the Bible wherein Christ is figured as a Bridegroom, and those who love Him, and so live for ever, as the one to whom He is eternally united.

The continuity of this figure speech of Biblical thought is enough in itself to suggest that its different utterances were prompted by the inspiration of one loving heart,—the heart of Him who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

But the Pharisees, when they had heard this exposition of God's loving invitation to all, did not accept,—they...

Matthew 22

¹⁵ ...took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk.

16. To God? Or to Caesar?

Present Truth, July 25, 1895

Timeline VII-9 (Paying Tribute to Caesar)

Matthew 22:20-21

WHEN the Jews sought to entrap Jesus into committing himself to opposition to the civil government, by asking Him if it was lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, He asked them to show Him the tribute money, and they brought Him a penny.

Matthew 22

²⁰ And He said unto them, whose is this image and superscription?

²¹ They said unto Him, Caesar's. Then He said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

The completeness of this answer was recognized even by the enemies of Jesus; for when they had heard it,

²² ...they marveled, and left Him, and went their way.

It settled the question as to what belongs to Caesar, or human governments, and what to God. Everything that belongs to Caesar is to be given to him, and that which belongs to God is to be held as sacred to Him. That is but simple justice; no one can gainsay the statement that every one should have what belongs to him.

From this distinction, what may we learn as to ourselves and our service? The Scriptures furnish the answer, by telling us to whom we belong. The Apostle Paul but repeated the statement of Christ, when he said,

Romans 13

⁷ Render therefore to all their dues; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Yet he did not include himself and his service as belonging

to Caesar, and to be rendered to him; for when he was in the hands of Caesar's soldiers, on the way to Rome, he said,

Acts 27

²³ There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve.

Writing to the church at Corinth, and to us all, as well, he said:

1 Corinthians 6

¹⁹ What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?

²⁰ For you are bought with a price.

If we are not our own, whose are we? Why, we belong to Him who has bought us. But that was not Caesar nor any other earthly name. No;

Romans 14

⁸ For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

We are the Lord's because He bought us with a price, and that price was His life. For,

1 Peter 1

¹⁸ [We] were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,...

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Titus 2

¹⁴ [He] gave himself for us.

Jesus gave His life for us. He gave himself for us in death, and He ever lives to make intercession for us. Therefore since He died and lives for us, it necessarily follows that:

Romans 14

⁸ Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

The service of our lives belongs to Him, and if we die, it is to be only to His glory, and not to that of any man or any society of men. All is to be to the glory of God, whose we are.

The Christian, therefore, may, at the demand of the State, give it his money, for that bears the image and superscription of the State. But he cannot give himself to the State, for he bears the image of God. He belongs to God, who has bought him, and he must render unto God that which is God's. To give himself to the State would be to rob God.

It is true of all men that they belong to God; but it is true of Christians in a special sense, since in their case the purchase has been acknowledged and sealed. Not being their own, they are not at liberty to dispose of themselves. God has the sole right to direct their time and their actions.

No Christian, therefore, can enter into any service which will put him, as in the case of a soldier, absolutely under the control of some "superior." To say that the giving of oneself to the State, for it to have absolute control of one, is service to God, is to make the State synonymous with God, which is Paganism.

Let no one imagine that this means rebellion or any manner of opposition whatever to earthly governments. Far from it. The God whom we serve is...

1 Thessalonians 5

²³ The very God of peace,

—and therefore we can serve Him only by living quiet and peaceful lives. Earthly governments may make demands upon us that are obviously unjust, but we are not to judge, nor are we sent to reform government; we must submit even to unjust demands, and not do or say anything to the prejudice of the government or its officers.

But when it demands ourselves; when it claims supreme authority as to time and service, then we are to remember whose we are. We cannot give ourselves to the State; not because such a demand interferes with our rights or convenience, but because we are not our own to give.

He who best serves God, best serves man. It is becoming more and more common to reverse this order, and to make the service of God consist solely in a service to man. But it is wrong. God is first, and He alone can tell us how we can serve our fellow-men the best. He who puts man first, will fail to serve either men or God.

The correct answer to the question, "Whose are you?" Will enlighten us as to our duty in many difficult situations.

17. The Question of the Sadducees

Signs of the Times, July 17, 1887

Timeline: VII-10 (Marriage and the Resurrection)

Matthew 22:23-33

Matthew 22

²³ The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked Him,

²⁴ Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

²⁵ Now there were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother;

²⁶ Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

²⁷ And last of all the woman died also.

²⁸ Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

²⁹ Jesus answered and said unto them, You do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

³¹ But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

³² I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

³³ And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine.

WELL might the multitude be astonished at the wonderful readiness with which the Master put to silence the cavilings of the infidel Sadducees. The reply of Jesus was simple, as was all of our Lord's teaching,—so very simple that people who are looking for a great display often misunderstand it.

First of all, it must be premised that Jesus exactly and completely answered the objection which the Sadducees raised.

They denied the resurrection, and brought a hypothetical case to show, as they supposed, that the doctrine of the resurrection could not be reconciled with the teachings of Moses. Thus they hoped to put Jesus to confusion before the multitude, who revered Moses as a prophet of God.

The first thing that Jesus said to the Sadducees was,

Matthew 22

²⁹ You do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

This was said in view of their denial of the resurrection. The same may with propriety be said to all who deny the resurrection, or who, while professedly believing in the resurrection, hold theories which are virtually denials of it. They who know the Scriptures, know that the dead will be raised, for the Scriptures are full of this doctrine; scores of texts which do not speak directly of the resurrection, prove that doctrine most conclusively, when, like the one with which our Saviour silenced the Sadducees, they are correctly interpreted. And they who know the power of God will never cavil at anything which His word declares shall be done.

Since the Sadducees denied the resurrection, and asked their question in order to prove that there could be no such thing, we must conclude that the reply of Jesus was positive proof that there will be a resurrection. Let us read his proof again:

³¹ As touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

³² I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

From the expression, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," many have supposed that Jesus taught that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then living, and that Jesus met the caviling of the Sadducees by proving to them the immortality

of the soul. But if that were the case, their objection would not have been answered. They were denying the resurrection of the dead.

Now if Jesus had given them a discourse on the immortality of the soul, and had claimed that the essential part of man, the man himself, can never die, he would not have touched their objection, nor proved anything about the resurrection of the dead. On the contrary, if He had proved that the patriarchs and all others never really died, He would have denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead as much as the Sadducees did. If there be no death, there can be no resurrection.

Therefore we must conclude that since Jesus effectually silenced the Sadducees in their denial of the resurrection, He did not assume that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had never really died, and were then living.

To make this more evident, we quote Christ's words as recorded by Mark. Jesus said:

Mark 12

²⁵ For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

²⁶ And as touching the dead, that they rise; have you not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spoke unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

Here it is evident that Christ based His argument on the fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead; for He says that the words of God at the bush (see *Exodus* 3:1-6) are proof that the dead rise. Such an argument could not have been made if the patriarchs were the alive in some part of the universe.

Christ's answer to the Pharisees proves that the dead are not in existence, as fully as it proves that there will be a resurrection of the dead; for He could not prove the resurrection of the dead if there were no dead. Those, therefore, who say that

Jesus here taught that the soul of man never dies, not only occupy the Sadducean ground that there can be no resurrection, but they do so in the face of Christ's positive argument showing that the dead shall rise.

If we turn to Luke's account we shall find still more light on this matter:

Luke 20

³⁴ And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

³⁵ But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

³⁶ Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

³⁷ Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush.

Here we learn that Jesus was speaking of those who are dead, as were the Sadducees themselves. The resurrection is spoken of as something future, for "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," cannot "die any more."

It seems impossible that anyone should carefully read what Jesus said to the Sadducees, as recorded by the three evangelists, and still claim that he held to the idea of the conscious existence of those who are called dead. Such an idea is not reconcilable with His words, for:

- He speaks of the dead, which He could not do if there were no dead; and
- He says that the dead shall rise, which He could not say if they had already risen, not from the dead, but from this life to a higher one; and
- He says they who are accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead, cannot die any more, which

would be nonsense if nobody had ever died.

If Jesus had held the theory that “there is no death,” as professed theologians of this day often claim, He could only have said,

“Moses showed that there are no dead, but that those whom you call dead are living.”

But in that case He would not have touched their anti-resurrection theory, neither would He have shown the folly of their supposed case of the woman and the seven brothers.

What He did show was that those who are dead have not perished beyond the hope of recovery; God does not call himself the God of creatures which exist for a brief space and then become as extinct as the crumbling leaf. But he is God “both of the dead and living,” for the dead are having only a temporary sleep; God’s thoughtful care for them does not cease when they die; but He marks the place where they lie, and at the last day,

Matthew 24

³¹ He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect,

—and the dead in Christ shall come forth from their graves.

John 5

²⁸ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

²⁹ And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:

and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

They rise to immortal life, and the little time they have unconsciously slept is as though it were no break in their lives.

It will be worthwhile to notice more particularly how completely the objection of the Sadducees was met and answered. Jesus said that they erred because they did not know the Scriptures; and then He showed wherein, by stating that in the resurrection there would be no marrying nor giving in marriage, because, being children of the resurrection, they could not die any more.

The arrangement to which the Pharisees referred (see *Deuteronomy* 25:5-19; *Ruth* 3:11-13; 4:1-6) was made so that a man's inheritance in the land of Canaan might not pass out of his family. If a man died without an heir, his property would pass into other hands; but if his brother should marry his widow, the first-born was to be counted as the heir of the one who died, and thus the homestead would be retained.

But all this will be unnecessary for those who "shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," for the Scripture says that:

Isaiah 65

²¹ They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

²² They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and my elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

They cannot die any more, therefore there is no need of any arrangement for keeping the inheritance in the family. The new earth, the inheritance promised to Abraham, will after the resurrection and its restoration be portioned out to all who are Christ's and consequently Abraham's seed.

Galatians 3

²⁹ And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The whole earth will be thus divided, and then each man's inheritance will remain unimpaired throughout eternity.

Thanks be to God, who has devised means...

2 Samuel 14

¹⁴ ...that His banished be not expelled from Him,

—and who, though the dead are...

¹⁴ ...as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again,¹⁰⁸

—can call himself their God, through His power to quicken the dead, and...

Romans 4

¹⁷ ...call those things which be not as though they were.

¹⁰⁸ **Job 14** ¹⁰ But man dies, and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he? ¹¹ As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up: ¹² So man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

18. Why Men Err

Present Truth, April 25, 1895

Timeline: VII-10 (Marriage and the Resurrection)

Matthew 22:29

THE reason why there is so much religious error in the world was stated by our Saviour when He answered the objection of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection.

Matthew 22

²⁹ You do err, [He said,] not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.

In *Mark* it is recorded that He told them they did...

Mark 12

²⁷ ...greatly err.

The Bible was not given to supplement the knowledge and wisdom of man. Man has no wisdom, except in his own eyes. All the wisdom of man is foolishness with God.

1 Corinthians 1

²⁰ Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

To them that perish, the preaching of the cross of Christ is foolishness. The mind of man, therefore, can do nothing else but err in its relation to spiritual truth. The person who thinks the wisdom of God was given to supplement his own, will as surely err as did the Sadducees; and the error, like theirs, will be great.

The objection which the Sadducees raised against the resurrection is a fair illustration of those objections which the wisdom of man raises against the truthfulness of God's Word.

The Word is rejected because in its light the far-fetched suppositions and speculations of man's mind will not appear beautiful and consistent.

But all such efforts of the human mind are useless, because it does not know the power of God; and man does not know the power of God until he knows the Scriptures, for God's power is the power of His Word, and the Scriptures are His Word.

What man is prepared to say that the Bible does not mean just what it says—that certain statements made in that Word concerning what is to be, cannot be true? Only the man who knows that God's power is not sufficient for its accomplishments; and this no man can know, for it is not true.

To know God's power we must know the Scriptures, and we do not know the Scriptures unless they are to us the revelation of the power and wisdom of God.

The further men turn aside from the Word, the deeper must they plunge into error.

19. Holiness of Angels

Signs of the Times, February 10, 1887

Timeline: VII-10 (Marriage and the Resurrection)

Luke 20:36

WHEN Christ spoke of the condition of the righteous after the resurrection He said:

Luke 20

³⁶ Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels.

Thus the angels in Heaven are immortal. But there is another feature in which the saints will resemble the angels, and that is in their holiness. This quality is a characteristic of the angels. This is so well known that an angel is almost a symbol of purity. When they are mentioned in the Bible the adjective “holy” is often applied to them.

The servants of Cornelius told Peter that their master had been...

Acts 10

²² ...warned from God by a holy angel.

In *Matthew 25* Christ himself applied the term to all the angels of Heaven. He said:

Matthew 25

³¹ When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.

Without these direct statements as to their character, we would know that they are holy, for Christ says of these...

Hebrews 1

¹⁴ ...ministering spirits,

Matthew 18

¹⁰ [they] do always behold the face of my Father which is in

Heaven.

And only the pure and holy in heart can see God.

Matthew 5

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Hebrews 12

¹⁴ Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

In what does the holiness of the angels consist? What is it that makes them holy? It must be in that they do the will of God. That the will of God is done in Heaven, is evident from:

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

And since there are none in Heaven except the angels who do the will of God, it is a necessary consequence that they are the ones to whom Christ refers. God is holy, and the doing of His will would make one like Him, holy.

Romans 2

¹⁷ Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God,

¹⁸ And know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.

Here we learn that God's law is His will; and that this is the will which the angels perform, and which constitutes their holiness. This is plainly stated in:

Psalms 103

²⁰ Bless the Lord, you His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word.

The perfection of the angels, then, is due to the fact that they keep the perfect law of God. Christ taught His disciples to pray,

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.

This shows that a time will come when the commandments of God will be kept on earth even as the angels now keep them in Heaven. This will be in the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell.

2 Peter 3

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

But although the change of the earth from old to new will be quickly effected, and although man's change from mortal to immortal will be brought about in the twinkling of an eye, the change to holiness is a gradual work.

"Heaven is not reached at a single bound."¹⁰⁹

The work of sanctification is a progressive work. Therefore the fact that the commandments of God will some day be kept by men on earth even as they now are by the angels in Heaven, shows that they who hope to be among the equals of the angels must now be keeping the commandments of God.

Evil Angels

We read in:

2 Peter 2

⁴ God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

This shows conclusively that the angels were once on probation as Adam was in the garden of Eden, and that those who are now called the holy angels have had their characters tested, so that they are now placed beyond the reach of temptation.

¹⁰⁹ Josiah Gilbert Holland, Poem: *Gradatim*, 1872.

It shows also that the angels who sinned can have no hope of a restoration to the favor of God. Peter says that God “delivered them into chains of darkness.” We can understand what this means by comparing a few texts. From the following texts we learn that sin is bondage:

2 Peter 2

¹⁹ ...of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Galatians 3

²² But the scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

²³ But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Romans 7

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

The person who is in the darkness of error is in a state of bondage. Moreover, we learn from the next verses that those who persist in rejecting light will finally be given up to believe a lie:

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The same thing is taught in:

Romans 1

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowl-

edge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

That is, those who persistently sin in the face of great light, will finally be left in the bondage of sin without hope of escape. This is what is doubtless meant by the angels that sinned being delivered into chains of darkness.

They had light and knowledge greater than man had, as they were a higher order of creatures than he was. In the face of this light, and in defiance of the love and mercy of God, they deliberately chose the way of darkness. Having once chosen the bondage of sin, their choice was irrevocable. They were in “chains of darkness” that could not be broken.

And so until the Judgment day ends their miserable careers, they are in darkness. They are darkness itself. Darkness and error are inseparable from them. Wherever they are, their presence contaminates; and their sole aim is to perpetrate lying wonders which shall lure men away from the truth into the same chains of darkness with themselves. Let us never forget to pray,

Matthew 6

¹³ Deliver us from evil.

Care of Good Angels for Men

But if...

Ephesians 6

¹² ...the rulers of the darkness of this world,

–are actively engaged in trying to overthrow us, and drag us down to eternal ruin, we have the assurance that...

Psalms 103

²⁰ ...angels that excel in strength...

Hebrews 1

¹⁴ ...[are] ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

Every “little one,” every child of God, has one for his especial guardian.¹¹⁰

Matthew 18

¹⁰ Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Not only so, but all the heavenly host are intensely interested in the whole human race, and anxious for the conversion of each sinner. Says Christ:

Luke 15

¹⁰ I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, there was joy in Heaven. It was not sufficient to send a single angel to announce His birth, but a multitude of the heavenly host must accompany Him to sing their joy at the good tidings which should be to all people.

So great was the joy among the angels over the fact that fallen man’s Redeemer had actually come, that it would seem that they could not remain quiet in Heaven. They must flock to witness the joy of the humble shepherds, and to proclaim their own. Seeing then that:

John 3

¹⁶ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;

–that:

¹¹⁰ **Acts 12** ¹³ And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. ¹⁴ And when she knew Peter’s voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. ¹⁵ And they said unto her, You are mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, *It is his angel*.

Romans 5

⁸ God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;

–that:

Romans 8

³⁴ Christ...is at the right hand of God making intercession for us;

–and that all the holy and mighty angels of God are interested and loving messengers of light and strength to those who are striving against sin, we may, even in the face of Satan’s hosts, say:

³⁷ In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

20. The Great Commandment

Present Truth, January 17, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for January 27

Timeline: VII-11 (The Great Commandment)

Matthew 22:36-40

IT HAD been a hard day for the Teacher. He had faithfully interested the people by means of parables, which were full of meaning to those who wished to learn, yet so carefully guarded that the most critical adversary could pick no flaw.

But however guarded one's language may be when teaching directly, it is much more difficult to avoid some objectionable sentiment or phrase when replying to some suddenly-proposed yet well-studied question. So the Pharisees...

Matthew 22

¹⁵ ...took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk.

Having failed to entrap Him into saying something for which they could report Him to the Roman Government, they next tried, through the Sadducees, to pick some point of difference between Him and Moses, so that they could accuse Him to the people. But this was also easily disposed of in such a way as to reveal their ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God.

Then the Pharisees, hearing that He had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered once more to the attack, and put forward as their spokesman a learned doctor of the law, who could most certainly puzzle this unschooled Galilean. This one, calling Him Master, as though He would learn from Him, asked:

Matthew 22

³⁶ Which is the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.
[from *Deuteronomy* 6:5]

This was the complete answer to the question, but Jesus

went still further, and said:

³⁹ And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [from *Leviticus* 19:18]

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The Hebrew Scriptures are divided into three portions, namely, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms; but the Psalms are largely prophetic, and they are also called the law; therefore the answer of Jesus was the same as saying that the two great commandments,

³⁷ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,

and,

³⁹ You shall love your neighbor as yourself,

—sum up the whole of the Scriptures. That is the whole duty of man, and nothing more can possibly be required.

Loving is Giving

This is self-evident, when we give a thought to the commandment itself. It requires us to love God with all our being. Now love means giving, as we learn from the following:

John 3

¹⁶ God so *loved* the world, that He *gave* His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Galatians 2

²⁰ I live by the faith of the Son of God, who *loved* me, and *gave* himself for me.

Ephesians 5

² Christ also has *loved* us, and has *given* himself for us.

²⁵ Christ also *loved* the church, and *gave* himself for it.

1 John 4

¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He *loved* us, and *sent* His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 3 [RV]

¹⁶ Hereby we know *love*, because He *laid down* His life for us.

There is no loving without giving. Love is the absolute opposite of selfishness.

Human love, or that which most commonly passes for love among mankind, is more concerned with self-gratification than with the happiness of the one supposed to be loved; Divine love suffers itself to be crucified, in order that it may confer blessings on the ones loved.

Human love, so-called, is expended upon those who are specially attentive to the one who fancies himself a lover; Divine love is poured out upon the hateful and unthankful.

John 15

¹³ Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Romans 5

⁸ But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

There is no true love but the love of God, for:

1 John 4

⁸ God is love.

It is only with His love that we can really love one another, as we learn from the exhortation:

1 John 4

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.

Romans 5

⁵ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy

Ghost which is given unto us.

Giving God His Own

Therefore when we love God with all our being, it is only because...

Acts 17

²⁸ In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

We are able to give ourselves to Him just because He first gave himself to us, giving us life, and keeping us in existence. However much we give to Him, we are but giving back to Him His own. Sacrifice is not to be talked of by men, for no man ever yet made one, or ever can make one. The most that anybody can do is to offer the sacrifice which the love of God has already provided.

It is plain, that when one is so moved by the love of God to him, that he gives himself wholly to God, he gives himself to serve Him unquestioningly in everything. With the Apostle Paul he will speak of God as the one...

Acts 27

²³ ...whose I am, and whom I serve.

So there can be no commandment in the Bible which such a one will try to evade. He will delight to do the law of God.

With most people, love is a mere sentiment, an emotion. But love must have expression if it exists. So God, who is love, and who alone knows what love is, and how it may be expressed, has drawn out the great commandment into many details, in order that every one who loves Him may know how to reveal his love.

1 John 5

³ This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.

We are to worship Him only; to make no professed image of

Him, which can only be a caricature of Him, and become really another god; to reverence His holy name; and to keep holy His Sabbath day. This surely is not a grievous thing, for it means simply to rest in Him. Whoever is not willing to do that, thereby shows that he regards himself independent of God, and able to do without Him; and that is to set oneself above God.

Doing God's Will

Thousands daily repeat the words,

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

How is the will of God done in heaven? Here is the answer:

Psalms 103

²⁰ [The] angels, that excel in strength,...do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word.

A little girl was once asked how the angels do the will of God, and she replied,

“They do it without asking any questions.”

That is the obedience of love. It makes no objections, and seeks for no excuse to enable it to evade any service.

But how many there are who vehemently protest that they love God supremely, who will nevertheless not only make all sorts of excuses to evade keeping the commandments, but who will even speak of them with contempt. To such Jesus says,

Luke 6

⁴⁶ Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

The second is like unto the first, and grows out of it; for since God's love to man is the only love that man can have, it necessarily follows that when that love is in the heart it will

reveal itself in love to man, and so we have man's whole duty summed up in two sentences.

Surely it is not a difficult thing to learn the will of God; and as for doing it, that is all accomplished in the yielding.

Romans 6

¹³ Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God,

—and you will learn that:

Philippians 2

¹³ It is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

21. The Pharisees Silenced

Present Truth, September 17, 1896

Timeline: VII-5 (The Leaders Challenge Jesus' Authority) / VII-7 (The Wicked Husbandmen) / VII-8 (The Man Without a Wedding Garment) / VII-9 (Paying Tribute to Caesar) / VII-10 (Marriage and the Resurrection) / VII-11 (The Great Commandment) / VII-12 (Jesus Silences His Critics)

Matthew 22:1-46

THERE seems, from His earliest years, to have been something about the personality of Christ which aroused attention, and excited inquiry. It seems to have been the general impulse either to ask questions about Him, or to question Him directly, wherever He was seen. When a youth of twelve, among the doctors in the temple, questioning and questioned,

Luke 2

⁴⁷ All that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

The culmination of this inclination of His enemies to question and cross-question Christ, in the hope of drawing some reply from Him which they could use for their own purposes, is narrated in the 22nd chapter of *Matthew*. Indeed the beginning of this final series of questions which resulted in their complete discomfiture, is told in the preceding chapter, where they asked Him,

Matthew 21

²³ By what authority do you these things? and who gave you this authority?

To this question He replied by asking them another, to which they felt compelled, after consultation among themselves, to make the hypocritical answer,

²⁷ We cannot tell.

Upon which He refused to give a direct reply to the question they had put to Him. But nevertheless He did answer

them, immediately, in parables, in which the language in figures used referred so unmistakably to himself, as spoken of in their ancient Scriptures, that they could scarcely fail to understand its application. But that they might have no excuse, He said to them further,

⁴² Did you never read in the Scriptures?

And then He quoted to them, verbatim, prophetic references to himself in *Isaiah*. In this...

⁴⁵ ...they perceived that He spoke of them.

Still He continued with yet another parable, also based upon scriptural symbolism, in which its application to himself, and its force as a reply to the question which they had asked, was but thinly concealed. As they had understood that in the previous parables He had spoken of them, so also in this they must have seen themselves, in those who:

- asked to be excused from attending the wedding of the king's son, or
- ridiculed the invitation, or
- persecuted and slew the king's servants.

Then they took counsel together systematically,

Matthew 22

¹⁵ ...how they might entangle Him in His talk.

For the accomplishment of this they sent to Him their own disciples with the Herodians, that they might, after flattering speeches, ask Him concerning a matter of civil government, a religio-political question,

¹⁷ Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

His reply was such that they could take no exception to it. They could only marvel and go away. But more than that it set up the limits and fixed the boundaries beyond which the authority of man cannot go. Render unto God the things that are

God's, and unto man, and his government, the things which are man's.

²¹ Then said He unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Then came the Sadducees to Him and put to Him a puerile question which they thought made utterly ridiculous the doctrine of the resurrection. But then He silenced, and at the same time proved to them from the Scriptures the necessity of the resurrection of the dead, that God might be the God of the living. For they were not prepared to accept the logical conclusion of their own position and declare Jehovah to be so futile a being as to be God alone of the dead, and His kingdom to be only the realm of silence and death.

Matthew 22

²³ The same day came to Him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked Him,

²⁴ Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

²⁵ Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:

²⁶ Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

²⁷ And last of all the woman died also.

²⁸ Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

²⁹ Jesus answered and said unto them, You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

³¹ But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

³² I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

³³ And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine.

When the Sadducees had been discounted, the Pharisees came again to the attack, and a lawyer among them questioned him as to the commandments,—which was the greatest. In His reply Jesus epitomized the commandments in two short sentences.

Matthew 22

³⁴ But when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

³⁵ Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying,

³⁶ Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

To this they could take no exception, and when they had nothing more to say, He questioned them again in reference to the Scriptures as regard himself. When He asked them whose son Christ is, and they said David's, He quoted to them the words of David himself, and asked,

⁴⁵ If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?

⁴⁶ And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither dared any man from that day forth to ask Him any more questions.

22. The Miraculous Birth

Present Truth, December 20, 1900

Timeline: VII-12 (Jesus Silences His Critics)

Matthew 22:42-45

Matthew 22

⁴² What do you think of Christ? whose Son is He?

THE reply was, “The Son of David,” and this was correct; for when Gabriel foretold to Mary the birth of Jesus, he said:

Luke 1

³² He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.

But here comes a puzzling question, which silenced the unbelieving Jews, who had admitted that Christ is the Son of David:

Matthew 22

⁴³ How then does David in Spirit call Him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool?

⁴⁵ If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?

How? Because it is a fact that the Son of David is Lord of all; David could not do otherwise than call Him Lord. But if it be asked,

“How can it be that Jesus is both David’s Son and his Lord?”

—the answer must remain with God, who alone knows the mysteries of miracles. The wonder is not exhausted, however, for just as David’s Son is David’s Lord, so our Lord is our Son:

Isaiah 9

⁶ For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the Government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall

be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of His Government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

But not even yet has the depth of the mystery been set forth. Christ is David's Son and David's Lord, and our Lord also, and our Son; but He is at the same time the Son of God and the Son of man.

Galatians 4

⁴ [He was] born of a woman, born under the law,

—yet He was the Son of God sent forth into the world. When Mary asked by what means she, a virgin, should bring forth a Son, the angel replied:

Luke 1

³⁵ The Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also that Holy Thing that shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.

In *Luke* the genealogy of Christ is traced back through David, the son of Jesse, Jacob, Abraham, to:

Luke 3

³⁸ ...Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

Adam, the first man, in whom were all the human beings that have since lived on this earth, was “the son of God,” so that it is not merely from the fact that Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Son of God, but also because He is the Son of Adam, that is, “the Son of man.” The truth contained in this simple statement has power to lift every man born of a woman...

Romans 8

²¹ ...into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Still again: In the garden of Eden, just after the first pair had sinned, God said to the serpent:

Genesis 3

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head.

The Seed of the woman is not merely to be delivered from Satan's power, but is to crush his head—to destroy him. But who is the Seed of the woman? It is Christ, you say. Undoubtedly; but the term is unlimited, and therefore it applies to every child born of a woman, whose faith grasps it. The seed of the woman is the seed of Abraham; and,

Galatians 3

²⁹ If you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

So it is given to every son of man to crush Satan? Yes; have you never read this?

Romans 16

²⁰ The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly?

Christ had to become flesh and blood, like the children of men, in order...

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ ...that...He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

John 5

²⁷ [He has] authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man,

and,

Psalm 149

⁹ ...this honor have all His saints.

The Firstborn

For,

Romans 8

²⁹ [He is] the firstborn among many brethren.

He is in all things like them, only as firstborn He has in all things the pre-eminence. But, you say,

“His birth was supernatural, for He was born of the Spirit.”

Ah, how little we know that what we call the natural is supernatural; we are so familiar with the phenomena of birth, that we forget that nobody understands the mystery of it. Christ was born of the Spirit, but even in this...

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ [He was] like unto His brethren,

—for Elihu says:

Job 33

⁴ The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

Ever since the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters, and brought order out of chaos, there has not been any manifestation of life that has not been that of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God in every man's nostrils¹¹¹ has kept him in life, and given him power even to wage rebellion against his Maker if he would.

Remember that miracles are God's ordinary work. He never goes out of His way to do anything. When God fed the Israelites in the desert with bread from heaven, it was only that they and we might ever remember that the bread which we

¹¹¹ **Job 27** ³ All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.

make from corn is also rained down from heaven.

Psalm 65

⁹ You visit the earth, and water it: You greatly enrich it with the river of God, which is full of water: You prepare them corn, when you have so provided for it.

¹⁰ You water the ridges thereof abundantly: You settle the furrows thereof: You make it soft with showers: You bless the springing thereof.

¹¹ You crown the year with your goodness; and your paths drop fatness.

Isaiah 4

¹⁰ ...the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.

When Christ turned the water into wine, at the wedding in Cana, He merely shortened the ordinary process, omitting some of the intermediate agencies, to let us know that He is the True Vine. The grape vine takes up water by its roots, and in the course of months of sunshine it becomes wine. Christ had the life which supplies light to the sun, so He did in a moment the work that He commonly does in months. In miracles God is not doing something extraordinary, for the purpose of astonishing us, but by leaving out the usual agencies, is letting us see that He is the power that is working and accomplishing the result, even when the ordinary time and agencies are employed.

So in the miraculous birth of Christ, by dispensing with the ordinary agency in the birth, God would demonstrate to us that the human agent is but the channel of the Divine creative life. He shows us how completely the Spirit ought to control

in every birth. In the case of John the Baptist¹¹² and Isaac¹¹³ we see this exemplified when the ordinary agencies were present.

The world was lost. Millions of human beings were serving in cruel bondage, toiling in the most abject, degrading slavery, sold for nothing, with only death offered as the reward of their labor. The Son of God, in His Father's house in heaven, looked down in pity on them, and said,

Hebrews 2

¹¹ I will declare your name unto my brethren.

He was not ashamed to call them brethren. They had lost the knowledge of God, and so were going to destruction, because just as to know Him is life eternal, so not to know Him is everlasting death; they did not know that God is the Father of all, and Christ came to make known to them their birthright. The "Son of the Highest" (*Luke 1:32*) came as the child of the lowest; the Son of God was born of a woman, and thus henceforth was not ashamed to hold his original title by virtue of the fact that He was the Son of man.

The Law of Heredity

Do you think it was nothing that He was sinless? You who talk of "heredity," and who sink down in indifference or despair because you had sinful men for your ancestors, give your thought to Him,

Romans 1

³ Who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.

He was descended from Adam, as we all are, and all that

¹¹² **Luke 1** ¹⁵ For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

¹¹³ **Galatians 4** ²³ But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. ²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. ²⁹ But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

was evil in human nature seemed to be concentrated in His ancestry. That ancestry included:

- Pharez, who was the child of prostitution and incest;
- it takes in the harlot Rahab;
- David is most prominent in it, and the woman with whom he committed adultery was the mother of the line that reached from him to Christ.

Farther down in that line we find:

- Jehoram, the fratricide, who, by reason of his excessive wickedness, died a loathsome death, despised by his people;
- Ahaziah, whose “mother was his counselor to do wickedly” (*2 Chronicles* 22:3), and who “did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab” (*2 Chronicles* 22:4), of whom it was said, “there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord” (*1 Kings* 21:25);
- Ahaz, who did “according to the abomination of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel” (*2 Chronicles* 28:3), and
- Manasseh who “seduced Israel” to do “more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel” (*2 Kings* 21:9), and who “shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.” *2 Kings* 21:16.

If you knew of such wickedness among your forefathers you would try to conceal it, and would say that you could not possibly be expected to be sinless with such an inheritance; yet Christ of His own free will had all the weakness and wickedness of His ancestry set forth for all generations to read; and,

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ [He] knew no sin.

How could He be spotless with such a godless ancestry? It was all due to His miraculous birth. Yes; and He who knew no sin was...

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ ...made to be sin for us,...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

John 1

¹² As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

That is, He restores to all who will have it, their birthright. Yet more: He opens up to us the way of life, showing us not only how we may take our rightful place as sons of God, as pure as though we had never sinned, inheriting our nature direct from God, instead of from sinful flesh; but by His birth He shows what ought to be and may be the privilege of every child born of godly parents.

Do you doubt it? you will not, when you have meditated long upon what it means to live in the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit; to have only the mind and will of God, and to yield the body as the holy temple of the Spirit of God, so that all the members are only instruments of His righteousness. When parents are in that state, then it must be that their children will be...

John 1

¹³ ...born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord will be like training the flowers of Eden. It will be the same miracle that would have been manifest in every birth, if sin had not brought the curse; but:

Galatians 3

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being

made a curse for us,
–so that the life of Jesus may be perfectly manifested even
in mortal flesh. He frees us from...

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...the corruption that is in the world through lust,

–and makes us...

⁴ ...partakers of the Divine nature.

23. The Denunciation of the Pharisees

Present Truth, November 5, 1896

Timeline: VII-13 (Woes Upon Scribe and Pharisee)

Matthew 23:2-39

THROUGHOUT all His ministry on earth, Christ was so mild and gentle in His dealings with the people, that the terrible outburst of denunciations, recorded in the 23rd chapter of *Matthew*, is more markedly intense and striking from the contrast.

Yet, notwithstanding the character of that which He was about to say, He began with a plea for the respect and submission due to the scribes and Pharisees, as rulers, and a statement of the honorable position which they held, and to which all were to render fit respect.

Matthew 23

² The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

³ All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.

But He warned the people against copying their proud and vainglorious ways, against assuming the vice-regency, which was His, and against acknowledging the supreme authority of any man in the place of the Father:

⁸ But be you not called Rabbi, for One is your Master, even Christ; and all you are brethren.

⁹ And call no man your father upon the earth; for One is your Father, which is in heaven.

¹⁰ Neither be you called masters; for One is your Master, even Christ.

So important is this thought that He enforces it upon them in the virtual repetition of the last sentence, and then comments further in the two following verses.

¹¹ But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

¹² And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he

that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Then opens that awful denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees,—the “Woe unto you,” eight times repeated, with gathering force and intensity at each repetition.

Matthew 23

¹³ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

¹⁶ Woe unto you, you blind guides!

The list of their crimes, and the awful indictment culminates with the words which should have been startling indeed to them,

³⁶ Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

And He stretched out His arms and broke forth into that tender, heartbreaking expostulation,

³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets, and stone them that are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not!

And then the forecast of the fate of the city:

³⁸ Behold your house is left unto you desolate.

³⁹ For I say unto you, You shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

This chapter is an epitome of the dark tragedy of human weakness and sin, and of Divine wrath and tenderness.

24. Words and Work

Present Truth, June 1, 1893

Timeline: VII-13 (Woes Upon Scribe and Pharisee)

Matthew 23:3

IT IS a common saying that “words are cheap,” and that is much easier to say than to do. And this is true, as concerns men. The Saviour said of the scribes and Pharisees,

Matthew 23

³ They say, and do not.

The difference between saying and doing is also forcibly shown by the Apostle James, thus:

James 2

¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit?

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone.

Words are of no more value than the one who utters them. If a man is a pauper, his promise to pay money is worthless. So if a man has no goodness in him, all his promises of goodness are but empty wind. And since...

Romans 3

¹² ...there is none that does good, no, not one,

—it follows that there is none whose promises to do right are of any worth. The Scripture says,

Psalms 39

⁵ Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

Therefore the best promises of men are mundane things. Well is it for man that God does not ask him to make promises, but simply to accept the promises of God.

On the principle that a word is worth only what the one who utters it is worth, the word of God is worth everything. His word is a real thing; it is not simply sound, but it is substance. While it is an easy thing for man to say and not do, it is a far different thing with God. With Him saying and doing are the same. His word is itself work.

Romans 4

¹⁷ [He] calls those things that be not as though they were,

—because when He speaks they come into being. Two utterances of the Saviour set this thing forth in a very forcible manner. When Philip asked to be shown the Father, Jesus told him that whoever had seen Him had seen the Father; and then He continued,

John 14

¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the works.

¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

At first thought it would seem that in the above statement the Saviour made an abrupt change. He began to speak about words, and ended up with works. As proof that He represented the Father, He said,

¹⁰ The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the works.

We should naturally expect that the antithesis of the statement:

“The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself,”

would be,

“But the Father that dwells in me, He speaks them.”

This would have been the exact truth, as we shall see

presently; and it was in reality what Jesus said, because God's words are works. In *John* 8:28 we have the same thing stated in opposite terms:

John 8

²⁸ Then said Jesus unto them, When you have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things.

Here He started out with a statement about works, and ended up with words. As in the previous text we are taught that the words of God are works, so here we are taught that the works of God are all in His word. With God a word and a work are the same thing. With Him to say is to do.

Christ, as the only representative of Divinity to man, spoke the words of God. To Moses it had long before been said,

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

Therefore Christ, as God, has the power described in:

Romans 4

¹⁷ [He] quickens the dead, and calls those things which be not as though they were.

The words which Christ spoke brought the dead to life. When the nobleman came to Jesus, entreating Him to come down and heal his son, who was at the point of death, Jesus did not go, but said to the father,

John 4

⁵⁰ Go your way; your son lives.

—and the son was healed that instant. Even so,

Psalms 107

²⁰ He sent His word, and healed them.

Among all the works of the Lord, the heavens stand forth the most prominent.

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.

Hebrews 1

¹⁰ You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands.

But now read,

Psalm 33

⁶ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

⁹ For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.

Genesis 2

² And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which God created and made.

Here we learn that God's words are His works. He works by speaking. As soon as He had finished speaking, the work was all done. Therefore we see that it is impossible for God to speak and not do. This is the reason that:

2 Corinthians 1

²⁰ All the promises of God in Him [Christ] are yes, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

But we have an explicit statement that the word of the Lord works. The Apostle Paul wrote,

1 Thessalonians 2

¹³ For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.

What a solid basis this gives for faith! With what confidence

we may make our requests to God! We may rest upon His word, knowing that as it upholds the universe, it is able also to hold us up.

When we are in need, and lift up our hearts to God, the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance some of the words of the Lord. When those words are thus brought to our minds, we are to accept them as the answer to our prayers. We are not merely to think of them as promising something that will be done in the future, but as actually doing all that they say.

1 John 5

¹⁴ If we ask anything according to His will, we know that He hears us;

¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

Christ as the Prince of Peace, came preaching peace.

Ephesians 2

¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Psalms 85

⁸ I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for He will speak peace unto His people.

Therefore when the Lord speaks peace to us, we have His peace. He speaks righteousness; and since His word is life itself, and works, if we take His word, just as He speaks it, without any human modification, we have His righteousness. And the righteousness which comes by the word is active righteousness, because the word of the Lord works actively in all that believe.

This one thing must not be lost sight of, however, and that is that it is only the word of the Lord that is work. Everything else is vanity. Only life can produce life. That which is dead, can produce only death. Therefore we must be sure to take only the word of the Lord, and must not modify it or add to it.

Everything else will fail, but the word of the Lord abides forever. Therefore,

Acts 20

³² [we] commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

25. Whited Sepulchers

Present Truth, July 6, 1899

Timeline: VII-13 (Woes Upon Scribe and Pharisee)

Matthew 23:3

Matthew 23

³ All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not.

WHEN Christ was here on earth, He had a good deal to say about people who “say and do not.” These He likened to a whited sepulcher, filled with dead men’s bones.

This at first thought seems like an extreme comparison, but it is not altogether a figure of speech. How often it is that people make a profession of religion, unite with the church, and to outward appearance pass as God’s children, while at the same time sin reigns within the heart.

Then when God looks upon such an individual, professing to be what he is not, He sees beyond the exterior, and takes cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart. There He sees sin; but sin is death. So instead of the body of that person being the temple of the Holy Ghost, it is really a sepulcher, filled with dead men’s bones.

God does not desire that we should be sepulchers filled with death, but living temples filled with His Spirit. So instead of drawing over our iniquity a covering that will make us appear outwardly to be righteous, God would have us to be covered with the covering of His Spirit, that will cleanse from all iniquity and sin.

26. The Measure of Greatness

Present Truth, August 2, 1894

Timeline: VII-13 (Woes Upon Scribe and Pharisee)

Matthew 23:11

GOD in Christ came down to earth, making himself on a level with men. He took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Humble and lowly in heart, He associated with men as with equals.

Yet He was far above them all. None of the disciples, with whom He associated so freely, ever presumed to take undue liberties with Him. They all recognized Him as Master and Lord.

Nor did they any less recognize Him as such when He was washing their feet at the last supper. In that humility was true greatness. Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

Matthew 23

¹¹ He that will be greatest, let him be your servant.

Greatness in the kingdom of God, therefore, will be in accordance with the measure of service. Who then will be the greatest, and always recognized as the greatest? The Lord himself; because He has done the most service. He humbled himself...

Isaiah 52

¹⁴ ...more than any man.

He came to earth and associated with men as an equal, in order that men might associate with Him in heaven as equals; yet He will always be the greatest; always recognized as greatest, but with every barrier broken down. He has broken down in himself the barriers, so that there is freedom such as never entered into the heart of man; and such as the world never has known nor ever can know save as they find it in Jesus Christ.

God is so great and has such power that He has broken down every barrier, and His subjects can freely come before Him and talk with Him, and can associate with Him in perfect freedom. Even now the Lord gives us the same access.

Romans 5

¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Ephesians 2

¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

So that now, not simply in the world to come when we shall see Him with our eyes, but just now, we have access to the secret of His presence, and may abide in the holiest, even in the secret place of God.

Psalms 91

¹ He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Is not such liberty as this worth letting all the bonds go? He has loosed the bonds, and has opened the door of the prison, and no man can shut it. He has humbled himself, and by His humiliation secured the keys of death and sin. Therefore there is not a power in earth or hell that can bind a single soul that is willing to be free.

Whoever is in bondage is simply a willing prisoner. Whoever is in prison is there because he would rather be a slave than be free.

27. Heart-Obedience

Present Truth, November 5, 1896

Timeline: VII-13 (Woes Upon Scribe and Pharisee)

Matthew 23:27-28

THE Pharisees were very scrupulous observers of the law. That is, they professed to be. But their observance of it was only outward. They did nothing that men could see that was wrong; but they did not hesitate to do any evil, provided nobody could find it out. The Saviour said of them,

Matthew 23

²⁷ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Therefore when Christ said,

Matthew 5

²⁰ Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven,

—He meant that the righteousness which is only on the outside is worthless. They that do the commandments of God will have right to the tree of life, and shall enter into the gates into the city of God, the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 22

¹⁴ Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

But they who only outwardly appear to be righteous, cannot in any case enter there. This shows that the keeping of the commandments is an affair of the heart and the life, and not one of mere form.

28. Dying and Living

Present Truth, January 25, 1894

Timeline: VII-15 (Interview with Certain Greeks)

John 12:20-24

John 12

²⁰ And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

²¹ The same came therefore to Philip,...and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

²² Philip came and told Andrew; and again Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

²³ And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

BY THE reading of these words we are reminded of a similar statement made by the Apostle Paul, in reply to a foolish question about the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15

³⁵ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?

³⁶ You fool, that which you sow is not quickened, except it die.

It is said that:

John 12

²⁴ Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abides alone, but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

Is that true? Here is a principle of natural history that is not found in pagan philosophy. It can be found only in the Bible: for it is contrary to the natural supposition. We have been apt, in reading it, to put a sort of mental interpretation upon it. We have thought,

“Of course, it does not really die; for if it should actually die that would be the end of it.”

Thus our carnal understanding takes the heart out of the Scriptures, by explaining them away. But the word says that if the corn of wheat die, it brings forth fruit.

1 Corinthians 15

³⁶ That which you sow is not quickened, except it die.

We know that there is no power in any creature to perpetuate its own existence. Whence then must the life of everything come? We read in *Job* 12:10 that in God's hand is the life, or soul, of every living thing.

Now we have seen it demonstrated that a corn of wheat put in the ground will bring forth much fruit. We have seen hundreds of grains, from one single corn of wheat. This is a fact that all know. Taking the Scriptures as the guide in natural philosophy, we know that death must have preceded the fruit bearing. Did the grain die and then bring itself to life again?

Life is there plainly enough, as shown by the green blade and the ripening ear. And we demonstrate that there is life in it by taking it and eating it. When we are so weak with hunger that we are half dead, and cannot work, we eat of the grain, and our spirits are revived.

There is life there; but that grain had to die before the life came. Where did that life come from? The whole thing is involved in this question. Does the grain come to life? No; because:

1 Corinthians 15

³⁷ That which you sow, you sow not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain;

³⁸ But God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.

The apostle is here speaking of the resurrection. We read

that sometime all that are in the graves will stand on the earth again. They had actually died, and they could not bring themselves to life. What brings them to life? The word of God. They hear the voice of the Son of God.

John 5

²⁸ For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.

The life that will be manifested in those who are now turned to dust is not anything that is in that dust. The life comes from God. The whole process is stated in the 37th chapter of *Ezekiel*, where the Lord speaks, and bone comes to bone, and again He speaks, and flesh and sinews come, and then at His command breath comes into the bodies, and they live.

The resurrection of the body is illustrated by the grain, in the verses read from *1 Corinthians*. This means that the man who dies has no life in him, and no power in him to bring himself to life again. Life will be manifested there, because God puts it into him, just as He puts life into the seed that dies.

In the 1st chapter of *Genesis* we read that God said,

Genesis 1

¹¹ Let the earth bring forth grass,...

Here we see that all life comes directly from God. In His word is life and He has given to every seed a body as it has pleased Him. It has troubled many minds to see how God had to do with every little thing in the world, that He was personally concerned with all things; but the joy of life is the recognition of the fact that God is concerned with every little thing, and that His life pervades all things.

Christ said,

Mark 4

²⁶ The kingdom of God is as if a man should cast seed into

the ground;

²⁷ ...and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how.

²⁸ For the earth brings forth fruit of herself,

—or automatically, as “of herself” signifies. The word of God being in it implies growth, and the growth of the kingdom,—of the Gospel,—is just like the growth of a plant. But the plant growth, we have seen, illustrates the resurrection.

Our Life

Is there any difference between the final resurrection life, and the life of Christ in men now? Not a particle; for in order to live with Christ we are to know the power of His resurrection:

Philippians 3

¹⁰ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection...

We are to pass from death unto life:

1 John 3

¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death.

Every man out of Christ is dead in trespasses and sins. But not every man recognizes this. Before man can partake of the life of Christ, therefore, he must reckon himself dead. And he who will reckon himself dead will live.

2 Timothy 2

¹¹ If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.

It is the same life that is given, and as in plant life death must precede the giving of it.

The Glory of God

In the *Psalms* we read:

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.

² Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge.

³ There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

⁴ Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

⁵ In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun...

⁶ His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

⁸ The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The immediate source of all the heat and light, and so of all the life, to this earth is the sun.

⁶ There is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The shaded soil, shut away from the light and heat of the sun is barren. Christ says of himself,

John 8

¹² I am the Light of the world.

The glory of God is actual, the visible light. Men who have seen that glory in abundant measure, as Paul in the road to Damascus, have been blinded by it. When the Lord comes at the second advent the wicked are destroyed with the brightness of His glory.

2 Thessalonians 2

⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

So we read of the New Jerusalem that it has no need of the

sun to shine in it:

Revelation 21

²³ For the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

God says of himself:

Psalm 84

¹¹ For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield,

and Christ is...

Malachi 4

² ...the Sun of Righteousness.

Christ the Light

Going back to the beginning we find that in Christ all things were created, and in Him all things consist:

Colossians 1 [RV]

¹⁶ For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him;

¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

When He made the sun He made it a light-bearer and clothed it with light. But the sun did not originate light. The light came from God before the sun was created. He said,

Genesis 1

³ Let there be light.

And it came from himself by His word. Then all the light that shines upon the earth comes directly from God. Not simply that He owns the light, but it is of and from himself. He puts His own light in the sun. There is, of course, only a portion of His glory there—as much as the world can endure.

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God.

In the 60th of *Isaiah* the Lord says,

Isaiah 60

¹ Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

The chapter begins in the present condition of the earth, and ends in the new earth. In the beginning darkness covers the earth, and in the end light covers all. The light which He says, “is come” is the same as that in which the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the New Jerusalem; for,

Revelation 21

²³ ...the glory of God did lighten it.

And the word here in *Isaiah* is, “the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.” His glory is the light that has come. If we will receive it now, it is the same light. But the light of God has always been shining, for:

John 1

⁹ [God] lights every man that comes into the world.

And His light is His life.

⁴ In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

The terms light and life are interchangeable. Light is life. Therefore we get light from the Scriptures only when we get His life.

The Light of Law

In the 19th *Psalms*, which we have quoted, the Psalmist goes right on from talking of the light of the sun and of the firmament to the perfection in the law. But there is no break in the thought.

Proverbs 6

²³ The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.

Psalms 119

¹³⁰ Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my

path.

Now we have not taken this to mean a real light. We have thought of it as some sort of an effect upon the intellect. But the Bible says:

Proverbs 6

²³ The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.

Now if we believe and know that the law of God is the light of God, then we must know that the law of God is an actual light, such as the eye can appreciate. The light of the Lord is simply the manifestation of His life; and His life is the law; for in the life of Christ we find the law of God.

Proverbs 4

²³ Out of the heart are the issues of life.

Christ says,

Psalms 40

⁸ Your law is within my heart.

So the life of Christ was the law, and His life was the light of men. Christ lived the law before men, and it was said,

Matthew 4

¹⁶ The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

Says Christ,

John 7

¹² I am the light of the world, he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The commandment is light, and the Word is a light to our path.

Gospel Light

Of the heavens the Psalmist says,

Psalm 19

³ There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

The speech or words come from the heavens. Whose words? The words of God, assuredly. In the 10th of *Romans* Paul quotes this verse, and says that the heavens are proclaiming the Gospel. And the proclaiming of the Gospel is the proclaiming of the glory of God.

Revelation 14

⁶ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

⁷ Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

When the angels came to announce the Gospel to the shepherds, they proclaimed,

Luke 2

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest.

He who receives the Gospel is receiving the glory of God, that God may be glorified.

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God,

—and Paul says that their words have gone out to all, preaching the Gospel:

Romans 10

¹⁸ But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Is there any difference between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the law in Christ? No; for the Gospel proclaims life in

Christ, and in Him was the law dwelling in all its fullness. Therefore the proclamation of the Gospel is the proclamation of:

Romans 8

² The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,

—making free from death. The heavens, then, are preaching the Gospel. The Gospel is God's glory; His glory is His righteousness.

Righteousness is shown by the law. The law of God is indeed His righteousness. Then the heavens declare His righteousness, His law. So the Lord has put His law and His Gospel, His light, in the heavens. And he who will recognize the glory of the heavens as the living light of the living God, with gratitude and thankfulness, to him it will be righteousness.

The man who is constantly—momentarily—thanking God for the light of the sun, and His glory in the heavens and the things that He has made, will not be sinning. The recognition of the fact induces thankfulness. Only when men were not thankful they fell into sin.

Romans 1

²¹ Because that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful...their foolish heart was darkened.

We can glorify God by recognizing that the glory of the sun is the glory of God, and so of all His works. So if we continually recognize the light as coming from God, and thank Him for it, and the same with the air we breathe and the food we eat, every conscious moment recognizing that He is our life, and that He gives us life in the sunshine, and air, and food, our life will be to the glory of God, the law of God will be manifested in our life.

Changed by the Glory

Thus we see how the Psalmist can go on from the glory of the firmament to the law of God.

Psalm 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

In the sunlight we recognize God's glory, and in that is the law of God. While we are beholding the glory of God, we are "changed into the same image":

2 Corinthians 3

¹⁸ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

As we have seen, it is only a portion of the glory that we see in the heavens and the works of God. Christ was the brightness of the Father's glory. If He had appeared on earth in all the brightness of that glory it would have destroyed all. Therefore He veiled His glory in the flesh, and yet He was constantly manifesting forth the glory in His works. Of His first miracle it is said,

John 2

¹¹ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory.

His works were works of graciousness and helpfulness. God's glory is to help and to save.

And when we recognize God's glory in the heavens,—all is placed there that the eyes can endure,—and are thankful to God in that recognition, and take it as His life, yielding ourselves to Him that He may do His will in us, He will live in us the same life that He lives in himself. This must be so or else He would deny himself.

As we are yielding to Him, looking at His glory, that glory is working in us. This is the law of Christian growth. Really is

there any difference between natural law and moral law? The law of plant growth is the life of God. This makes it grow. The law of our life is the life of God. It is the law for every created thing. The same law works in everything the purposes of God for that thing. It is the same life in all creation working God's purposes for that created thing.

Psalm 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

How God has put himself on all creation! and when we recognize His life it works peace and joy. The plant is the offspring of the life of God. God works in every plant just what He will. He gives to every seed his own body.

The fruit tree, for example, bears beautiful flowers, but the flower is not the ultimate end of the plant. The fruit is to be produced. God could have made the plant bear fruit without a sign of a flower. What is the flower? It is the beauty of the plant. God delights in beauty, in the variety of form and diversity and blending of color. And since the life of the plant is the life of the Lord, the beauty of the flower is "the beauty of the Lord." It is some of the beauty of the Lord's life revealed to us in the plant. The Psalmist prays,

Psalm 90

¹⁷ Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish the work of our hands upon us.

The beauty of the Lord is shown in what He works in the believer.

Psalm 149

⁴ He will beautify the meek with salvation.

It is not simply joy, theoretically, that we get in this, but there is life in it. There are hard things for some of us to meet. We have burdens to bear, and crosses to endure. Our whole flesh is opposed to God:

Galatians 5

¹⁷ The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.

We are coming close to the end, face to face with the coming of the Lord, and eternity. The flesh cannot go there, and we will not go there either if we cling to the flesh. We cannot take it with us.

Before the Lord comes, when we will be delivered from this earthly tabernacle, and be clothed upon with the house from heaven, we must have crucified the flesh. That is a practical, everyday work. Paul doesn't say, "I was crucified with Christ," but:

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ.

There was a constant crucifixion, and constantly a springing up of life.

John 4

¹⁴ The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Paul sought that He might...

Philippians 3

¹⁰ ...know Him, and the power of His resurrection.

We must make this a practical thing now.

Living the Life

We know this, that as we breathe we are taking in the life of God. As our eyes greet the sunlight, it is the light of His life. As we eat the food He gives, it is His life in it that gives the strength. So all the life we live, we live by God. Said Paul,

Acts 17

²⁸ In Him we live and move and have our being.

The life is the light, and the light lightens every man that

comes into the world. So the life of Christ is the life of every living soul. Someone may say,

“How can I get the life of God? How can the connection be made?”

How often have we wished that we might get hold of that life in some way. Now the news comes that we have that life, only hitherto we have refused to recognize it. We have perverted it, and have used it to think and speak and do what God would not do.

Isaiah 53

⁶ We have turned every one to his own way.

We have used God’s life in doing it. Now we must say continually,

Psalms 27

¹ The Lord is my light.

He is my life, recognizing Him in everything.

Proverbs 3

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

This life is already here. All we have to do is to acknowledge it. With this we can understand what the Psalmist meant when he said that the Lord had brought him out of the miry clay, and set his feet upon a rock and put a new song in his mouth:

Psalms 40

¹ I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

² He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

³ And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.

A temptation comes to us.

“Whose life have we?”

God’s life. We will simply say,

“The life is yours, Lord, live it in your own way.”

It is not the old life that is meeting the sin, but God’s. Can-not God work victory in us? He can if He can live in us. But this He does all the time, He gives us life, breath, food; and in the air, and sunlight, and food, and all His works, God has meant to teach all creation how He is able to live in men. If we submit to Him He will work in us the perfection of His life, and actually as He is, so will we be in this world.

1 John 4

¹⁷ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.

This solves the question of the evangelization of the world.

Isaiah 60

¹ Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

What is the glory? His life, His law. What is the light that is come? The life of Christ. What will be the next thing?

³ And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

The life is here, for the light is come. Take it. Rejoice in it; and while we are recognizing it, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, and we thus become the light of the world. The world will see it and recognize the light of the Lord, just as the scribes and rulers recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus.

Do not let one soul dare to lift up the voice to proclaim the truth until he knows he has the life of God. And then when

He says “Go,” what will be carried? The life and the light.

Men were convinced by Christ because there was power in His words, and if we go thus, the words we speak will be like the oracles of God, and with the power of God’s life. So that we, wicked and sinful as we are, may speak with the same authority, the same convincing power that Christ spoke.

Then life will be carried to men. Men may reject it, but they will be forced to acknowledge, as the Jews did, that there is power there.

This is the power of the Gospel Message. The light has come to enlighten the world. The power from on high is ours and we can speak the life and shed the very light of God to the world if we will but yield to it.

29. A Glorious Death

Present Truth, January 10, 1901

Timeline: VII-15 (Interview with Certain Greeks)

John 12:20-33

JESUS had driven the traders from the temple, after His lowly yet triumphant royal entry into Jerusalem, and was engaged in teaching and healing the people.

John 12

²⁰ Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast;

²¹ These therefore came to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

²² Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew came, and Philip, and they told Jesus.

²³ And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abides by itself alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit.

²⁵ He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

²⁶ If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.

²⁷ Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause I came unto this hour.

²⁸ Father, glorify your name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

²⁹ The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered; others said, An angel has spoken to Him.

³⁰ Jesus answered, and said, This voice has not come for my sake, but for your sakes.

³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

³² And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men

unto myself.

³³ But this He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die.

This was Christ's preparation of the Greeks, and of others who heard Him, as well, for that which was to follow in a few days, when Jesus should be "lifted up" on the cross, and exposed to the derision of the mob. The lesson is none the less needed by us; for the true glory of dying is much misunderstood. Men talk of "glory" on the field of battle, where the world will look on and applaud their valor; but the only really glorious death—the death that glorifies—is the silent death of anguish, the death that in the eyes of the world is shame and disgrace.

It is true that death is the way to glory, yet not true in the sense that most people regard it. The death of the body does not usher the soul into glory and immortality; that comes only at the coming of the Lord. But Christ's life and experience is the pattern for all; His way to glory is the only way, for He is the way; and the only way that He could get to glory, when He was once in this world, was by the cross. The Holy Spirit testified in all the prophets of...

1 Peter 1

¹¹ ...the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

He said,

John 12

²⁶ If any man serve me, let him follow me.

1 Peter 5

¹⁰ The God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

And,

Romans 8

¹⁸ The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be

compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Christ is the Seed, the source of all life. The fruit that He brings forth is the sons that He brings to glory; and this could be done only through suffering:

Hebrews 2

¹⁰ For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

John 12

²⁴ Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

The glory of the seed is the green leaf and the ripened fruit; but in order for this to come, it must die. The seed sown is seen no more, but its life is reproduced in many others; so the only begotten Son of God, being in the form of God, would not hold His equality with God, but...

Philippians 2 [RV]

⁷ ...emptied himself,

—never again to be seen in that form; His life passes into those whom He redeems from the power of death, and henceforth He is known only as one of them, and one with them. Even so no soul of man can be glorified except through the death of the cross; not the death of some one apart from himself, but his crucifixion with Christ.

Crucifixion is not pleasant, but the reverse. Christ did not deceive himself with false hopes. There was never any glamour about the cross, which was before Him from the beginning of His ministry. He knew what it meant and said,

John 12

²⁷ Now is my soul troubled.

So terribly heavy was the cross, that later on He cried out in agony,

Matthew 26

³⁹ If it is possible, let this cup pass from me.

Yet He would not ask unconditionally for it to be removed.

John 12

²⁷ Shall I say, [He asked,] Father, save me from this hour?

How could He, when it was for the sufferings of that hour that He came into the world? So He asks instead,

²⁸ Father, glorify your name.

That solves every difficulty, when spoken from the heart, with a full understanding that the way of glory, even to the name of God, is through suffering, and suffering to us as well as to Him.

God puts His name upon the Gentiles¹¹⁴ as well as upon Christ; therefore when God glorifies His name it must result in the glorification of all who do not reject the name. He says:

Isaiah 43

²¹ This people whom I have formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.

What is the glory that follows the cross? or rather, the glory which is in the cross? It is the glory of the only-begotten of the Father; it is the glory of the heavens; for the cross lifts the sufferer up from the earth, to a seat in the heavenly places, even at the right hand of the throne of God. Then what shall we say?

Psalms 115

¹ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto your name give glory, for your mercy, and for your truth's sake.

¹¹⁴ **Acts 15** ¹⁷ That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who does all these things.

30. Respected by the Ungodly

Signs of the Times, January 20, 1888

Timeline: VII-15 (Interview with Certain Greeks)

John 12:26

John 12

²⁶ If any man serve me, him will my Father honor.

WHO is the man that is really the most respected, even by the ungodly? Is it not that man who affords the strongest evidence of the sincerity of his heart and the fidelity of his life as a humble follower of Jesus Christ?

Ungodly men may affect to despise him while they are in health, but let them be laid upon a bed of sickness and death, and then they will manifest their appreciation of his character by seeking the benefit of his counsels and his prayers.

Whatever men may say, or profess to believe, in the depths of their hearts they revere a truly pious and consistent Christian. The declaration of the wise man is still true, that

Proverbs 12

²⁶ The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor.

God will honor them that serve Him in this life, and He will honor them forever in the life that is to come.

31. Light and Darkness

Present Truth, August 24, 1899

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VII-15 (Interview with Certain Greeks)

John 12:28-29

AT ONE time when Jesus stood by the multitude, He lifted up His voice and said,

John 12

²⁸ Father, glorify your name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.

²⁹ The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said it thundered.

That was the voice of God, and was perfectly intelligible to Jesus, but to the others it sounded like thunder. Why? Simply because they did not understand the voice of God; they were not sufficiently acquainted with Him to recognize His voice, and so to them it was only a loud noise.

The Lord is now speaking in the ears of the people a message of salvation.

Ezekiel 33

¹¹ Turn from your evil ways—why will you die?

It is the personal word of God himself to every waiting soul,

2 Corinthians 6

² Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.

Plain and definite as that message is, and easy to be understood, yet if it is refused today, it becomes as thunder tomorrow, and so is meaningless.

As with the hearing, so with the sight. There is no need that anyone walk in darkness, for:

John 1

⁴ [Jesus is] the light of men,

⁹ The true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.

But the reason why so much darkness exists is because when that light is not received, the eyes become blinded to it, and the power to see is lost. So Jesus says:

John 12

³⁵ Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you.

And

Matthew 6

²³ If therefore the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!

32. God's Name Glorified

Present Truth, January 22, 1903

Timeline: VII-15 (Interview with Certain Greeks)

John 12:28

WHEN Jesus, standing in the shadow of Gethsemane and the cross, would not say,

John 12

²⁷ Father, save me from this hour,

—but would offer only the petition,

²⁸ Father, glorify your name,

—there came immediately a voice from heaven, saying,

²⁸ I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again.

Here we have an illustration of the truth that whoever will lose his life for the Lord's sake shall find it. Christ would not ask that His life be spared, but only that God's name might be glorified, which was at once assured. But God's name is glorified in salvation.

Isaiah 44

²³ The Lord has redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

He gives to the mourners...

Isaiah 61

³ ...beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.

They are made righteous, and have an everlasting inheritance, that He may be glorified.

Isaiah 60

³¹ Your people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit

the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

He gives grace...

Ephesians 3

¹⁶ ...according to the riches of His glory,

–and it is by forgiving those who confess their iniquity, that He saves the throne of His glory from disgrace.

Jeremiah 14

²⁰ We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against You.

²¹ Do not abhor us, for your name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of your glory: remember, break not your covenant with us.

So our confidence in approaching the throne of grace and glory, for salvation and help, is that God has more at stake than we have.

Isaiah 43

²⁵ I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for my own sake.

33. Easy to Give

Present Truth, September 14, 1899

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VII-15 (Interview with Certain Greeks)

John 12:32

GOD has shown His unselfishness by freely giving for the benefit of others, every atom of His universe, from the kernel of wheat the life of which is given for ours, to that of His Son, who died that we might live.

The more we become like God, the easier it will be to give all we have for the benefit of others. We are not to give that we may become more like God, but to be transformed that it may be easy to give.

Every day we live, we are more and more convinced that it is not creed, or dogma, or any set form of worship, or worldly eloquence that wins men to Christ, but rather His life revealed in His followers.

God could not reveal himself to the world except through the life of Christ, and Christ can be made known to the world only through His disciples.

John 12

³² And I, if I be lifted up...will draw all unto me.

The drawing power is in His life, nowhere else.

34. While You Have the Light

Present Truth, February 25, 1897

Timeline: VII-15 (Interview with Certain Greeks)

John 12:34-36

WHEN, as told in the 12th chapter of *John*, Christ foretold His crucifixion, He, being so lifted up in the sight of all men, would draw them unto Him,

John 12

³⁴ The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abides for ever: and how say you, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

Then Christ replied,—making no direct answer to their question, but assuming that it was already answered:

³⁵ Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walks in darkness knows not where he goes.

³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light.

And when He had said this,

³⁶ [He] departed, and hid himself from them.

The people profess a knowledge of the law, but because their knowledge of it is only in accordance with their own interpretation, it is so superficial as to become ignorance, yes, even more dangerous than complete ignorance. This is so because they know it only by their own fallacious interpretation.

Because they were thus standing in their own shadow, and obscuring the light from themselves, and Christ warned them that although they had the Light of the world then personally present with them, it was not for long, and exhorted them while they had the light to walk in it, and believe in it and become the children of light. But for all this, and...

³⁷ Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.

And so Jesus went away, and hid himself from them.

How different are men now from what they were then? They depend now upon their own interpretation of the Word and the law, as they did then. They disregard today the daily miracle of their own existence, and the wonders which God does continually before their eyes, as did the people then with the many miracles which Jesus did before them.

All existing things testify of God, and of His Son by the Word of whose mouth they came into being. They testify of Him without ceasing, and by day and by night the heavens and the earth show forth His handiwork, and yet men still either ignore, or refuse to accept, this plain testimony, than which nothing more overwhelming could possibly be.

The Light of the world as it shines from the multitudinous miracles of created nature, and from His Word, as preached by the voices of His servants throughout, now, nearly the whole earth, is still with the people.

But it is certain, by the sure word of prophecy, that the day will soon come in which this light also will be hidden from men, and then indeed complete darkness will come upon them and they will walk in this darkness, which they have chosen and made for themselves, being without God and without hope in the world.

Thus, having rejected the light of the Word, it is this which will judge them at the last. And all men and angels, even they themselves, will acknowledge the righteousness of that judgment.

Then why not acknowledge it now, and thus escape this penalty? Why not accept the freely offered light and grace which is still before the world?

35. Light for the Blind

Present Truth, October 1, 1903

Timeline: VII-16 (Final Rejection by the Jewish Leaders)

John 12:36-50

JESUS had finished His public preaching. His last message was:

John 12

³⁶ While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light.

After this He departed,

³⁶ ...and hid himself from them.

The few hours that remained to Him were spent in instructing His disciples.

³⁷ But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.

The words of Isaiah were now His own:

Isaiah 53

¹ Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

The Problem with Israel

What was the matter with Israel? They had seen the glory of God as it had never been revealed before.

- Sickness and death and evil spirits had recognized the Lord of all and obeyed His voice, but His own children received Him not.
- He had spoken as never man spoke, but His words fell on ears that did not hear.
- His life had revealed the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, but Israel saw no beauty that they should desire Him.

- His words and deeds of love should have appealed to their hearts, but their hearts were gross and they understood Him not.

The light had shone, and the night came on apace, but still His people were not healed. Some believed on Him, but their very belief made their case more hopeless, for there was no life in their faith:

John 12

⁴² Among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

⁴³ For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

One glimpse of Him as He was would have set them free, but they only saw through selfish eyes. The murmur of human praise and blame was sounding in their ears, and it deadened the call of their Saviour. Their hearts were full of pride and ambition, and these kept out the influence of the meek and lowly One.

Even if Israel had received the Lord, and acknowledged Him, they were in no condition to appreciate His work. They had been willing to receive Him at first, and tried by force to make Him a king, but as it began to dawn upon them that His kingdom was not of this world, they drew back. They hated the light, and would not come to it because it laid open their sinful hearts. As they rejected light, they went farther into the darkness.

One Last Attempt

There was only one way to save Israel and God took that way. He blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so that they could not believe. Their confidence had been in the arm of flesh, and God handed them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of

the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 5

⁵ Deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

They were led captive by Satan at his will, and, under his control, they crucified the Lord of life, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them. It was the hour of the power of darkness.

Luke 22

⁵³ When I was daily with you in the temple, you stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Satan was entering into men.

John 13

³⁷ Peter said unto Him, Lord, why can't I follow You now? I will lay down my life for your sake.

Under Satanic influence men became demons and thirsted for the blood of the Holy One. They heaped upon Him every insult and inflicted on Him every species of torture, until they killed Him.

Then they could see what spirit they were of. They were convicted of their sin on the day of Pentecost, and the hearts that had been gross and heavy were pricked with an intolerable sense of guilty shame. They cried out in agony for forgiveness, and, humbled to the dust, crept for shelter to the cross their sin had uplifted.

Not by Human Power

When Israel lost all confidence in themselves, God's Spirit gave them sight and hearing that they never could have had with their own eyes and ears. These had deceived them, and every man who, like them, judges Christ and His work by his

human eyes and ears and heart will be deceived as they were, and, like them, will crucify the Lord of glory.

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

Most people apply these words to the future world, but they are just as true in this life. Paul says that this is why the princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory, and declares that even now, although human senses are powerless to apprehend divine things,

¹⁰ God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.

¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

In order that men may not place a mistaken confidence in human power to make known God, He has not chosen the wise after the flesh, the mighty and the noble, for His messengers, but He has chosen the foolish things of the world, the base, and the things which are despised among men, that there might be no room for any glorying in flesh.

1 Corinthians 1

²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to

bring to nought things that are:

²⁹ That no flesh should glory in His presence.

The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. It was when Christ was rejected and slain that He triumphed. As long as men were following Him, applauding His sayings, and His mighty works, desiring Him for their king, He seemed powerless to help them. They misunderstood all His teaching. When they had murdered Him, He had a new hold on them. He showed them at once both the greatness of His unconquerable love and the blackness of their own hearts. They saw with new eyes. At last they understood Him and they understood themselves.

It has been the same in the history of the church. What Christians have not been able to do by their toil and effort, they have accomplished by laying down their lives. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. By the cross Christ overcame, and the carnal indifference of men can only be conquered by spiritual lives, revealing afresh the dying of the Lord Jesus. It is natural to crave for the outward tokens of success in Christian work, but God works in ways that are despised by men. The cross, which is the power of God to faith, is foolishness and a stumblingblock to the wise of this world.

The Sin of Israel Repeated

We need not be deceived as Israel was. If we set Jesus Christ continually before us and seek for spiritual anointing, our eyes will be opened. While we receive His Word as a quickening power, our ears will not be heavy. But God's servant must be blind and deaf toward earth if his eyes and ears are to be open toward heaven. He must either be of the earth,—earthy, or of heaven,—heavenly.

God is still seeding forth His Word, His commandment, which is life everlasting, but it is falling again upon deaf men

and blinded eyes. Many see that God's Word rebukes their lives, that they are not keeping His spiritual Sabbath which teaches them to trust only in God, but honoring the works of the flesh in obeying rather the commandment of men. Many believe the Word in their hearts, but their eyes are on the synagogue out of which they will be thrust if they venture to differ from others, on the situation they fear to lose if they do not work on the seventh day. They have heard the commandment of God, but they are listening rather to the myriad human voices, the traditions of the elders, the theories of ministers, the counsels of worldly wisdom. They are treading again the path that Israel trod. Their feet are wandering from the way of life and drawing near the darkness where Satan has control of men.

John 12

³⁵ Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walks in darkness knows not where he goes.

³⁶ While you have the light believe in the light, that you may be the children of light.

John 6

⁶³ The flesh profits nothing.

Jesus said,

John 12

⁴⁴ He that believes on me, believes not on me, but on Him that sent me.

⁴⁵ And He that sees me, sees Him that sent me.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Christ knew the Father, and His one ambition was to be God's messenger, to give to others the word which God commanded Him to speak. That word was His own life, for He lived by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God, and He gave it to others, as life everlasting.

The Word would save everyone who received it, and those

who rejected it must answer to it at the last day. Christ was sent with the Word to save, not to judge, only to give light that men should not abide in the darkness. The man who rejects light has condemned himself to be in darkness.

When the rejecters of God's Word come to the judgment of the great day, it is the Word they have heard and despised that condemns them. They have forfeited eternal life, and when they long for it exceedingly, they see that it was they who cut themselves off from it by not receiving the Word that brought it to them as a free gift.

The service of Christ, the joy of the redeemed, a home in heaven, the companionship of the angels, all appeal to them as they never thought they could, but all these they deliberately rejected when they turned from the Word of Christ. Now their portion is in the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

36. He Has Blinded Their Eyes

Present Truth, June 10, 1897

Timeline: VII-16 (Final Rejection by the Jewish Leaders)

John 12:39-40

John 12

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again,

⁴⁰ He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

MANY people are more inclined to find doubt and despair in the Bible, than to find hope and comfort, although the Bible contains none of the former, and is full of the latter; so when they read the words of the prophet Isaiah, they at once begin to complain against God, and to say that He is unjust and partial, and they will feel sure that they cannot believe, because God has made it impossible.

Now the Bible claims to be the Word of God. It exists for the sole purpose of revealing God to men, that they may see in Him the One altogether worthy of worship and affection. Everybody knows that this is the object of the Bible, whether they believe what it says or not.

That being the case, how can it be supposed that anything can be found in the Bible that would tend to depreciate God in the estimation of men? Considered from a human standpoint, and as a merely human production, no one would be so foolish as to write things derogatory to his hero, in a book published for the sole purpose of honoring him.

We may therefore be sure that none of the men who had to do with the production of the Bible saw in such statements as the one first quoted anything except such goodness and mercy as is consistent with the character of an all-merciful God, a God who not only loves, but who is love.

That there is comfort in even such texts as that quoted from *Isaiah*, and that they were written for the sole purpose of producing hope and comfort, is proved by:

Romans 15

⁴ For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

And that the words of the prophet *Isaiah* do not teach that there are some who cannot be saved even though they wish to, is shown by the inspired words of Peter, concerning Christ:

Acts 10

⁴³ To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.

When we read that God has hardened the heart of any person, then we should read the story of Pharaoh. God hardened his heart; but every one who reads the account carefully, will see that it was only by the manifestation of kindness and mercy that He did it.

When God sent judgments upon Pharaoh and his land, he humbled himself, and confessed his sin, promising repentance; but as soon as God showed him favor and prosperity came again, then his heart was hardened. It was because Pharaoh hated truth and righteousness that as soon as special mercy was manifested toward him he took advantage of it to sin yet more.

Isaiah 26

¹⁰ Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

Read the verses in connection with *John* 12:39-40, together with the 11th chapter, and you will see that the way the Lord blinded the eyes of the people was by sending great light to

them, which was not according to their previous experience. Jesus declared himself to be the Light, and His mighty works had showed how great was the light. But the greater the work that He did, the more the people hated Him and His teaching.

Everybody knows the effect that great light has upon the eyes of those who are not accustomed to it; it blinds them, or causes them to close their eyes. The more they have accustomed themselves to live in the darkness, the more does the light blind them.

The Jews, like all the rest of the world, sat in darkness; but their blindness was even greater than that of the rest of mankind, because they had been given great light; and everybody knows that the darkness is much more intense to one who goes out of the light into it, than to one who as always been in the dark.

But while others came to the light that shone in the darkness when Jesus came, the Pharisees and the principal part of the Jews rejected Him.

John 1

¹¹ He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

John 3

²⁰ For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

²¹ But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The Jews had loved darkness, and persisted in walking in darkness so long that the light was much more blinding to them than the darkness itself.

The very same statement by the prophet Isaiah we find thus quoted in:

Matthew 13

¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables; because seeing they see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they under-

stand.

¹⁴ And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive;

¹⁵ For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

The same spirit of truth prompted Matthew to make this quotation from *Isaiah*, that moved Isaiah to write the words in the first place; therefore we know that what we read in *Matthew* is the exact meaning of what we read in *Isaiah*. God blinded the eyes of men, only by sending them wonderful light.

Is it therefore God's fault that they cannot see? Not by any means. How can it be? If men complain because God shows mercy, what would they say if He manifested wrath? If they reject the love and mercy of God, what can He do for them?

Shall we complain of God for sending light that caused men to close their eyes? Shall we say that if He had not sent light, they would not have closed their eyes? Well, what then? Is it better to have one's eyes open in the pitchy darkness, where there is not a ray of light, than to have them shut in the sunshine?

The last condition of the man is just the same as the first, and his possibilities are infinitely greater; for nobody can possibly see in the darkness, but all can see in the light if they will accustom their eyes to it. Let us open our eyes, and praise the Lord for bringing us...

1 Peter 2

⁹ ...out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The Olivet Discourse

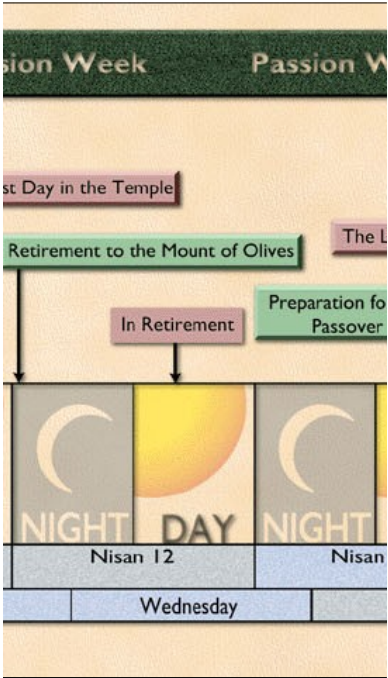
*On Tuesday evening Jesus withdrew
to the Mount of Olives.*

*During the daytime of Wednesday,
He gave the disciples a brief outline
of the prophetic events that would take place
from their day, until His second advent.
He also spoke His last three parables.*

*While Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the prophetic discourse,
only Matthew chapter 25 contains the record of
the three prophetic parables.*

VII	17	Retirement to the Mount of Olives
VII	18	Signs of Christ's Return
VII	19	The Ten Virgins
VII	20	The Talents
VII	21	The Sheep and the Goats

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	DA	Ch.
24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-38	...	627-636	69
24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-38	...	627-636	69
25:1-13	...	...	...	...	...
25:14-30	...	...	...	...	...
25:31-46	...	...	...	637-641	70



1. To Every Man His Work

Present Truth, February 20, 1902

Timeline: VII-17 (Retirement to the Mount of Olives)

Mark 13:34

When the Lord Jesus went to the Father,

Luke 19

¹² ...to receive for himself a kingdom and to return,

Mark 13

³⁴ [He] gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.

THIS of course does not mean man as distinct from woman, but every individual. The word “man” includes woman, since God made man male and female; but in this case there is no word indicating “man” in the Greek text; the word that is used is accurately rendered in the *Revision*, “each one.” To each one, whether male or female, old or young, the Lord has given a work.

A Specific Work for Each

The work which the Lord has given to each one is for that one alone, and for no other. To each one is given all that he can do well, or all that the Lord wishes him to do. Therefore if anybody neglects his share of the work, an extra burden is thrown upon somebody else. If each one did his own work, it would be impossible for anybody to be overburdened. Each one receives his work from God, and must look to Him for instruction as to how to do it.

Furthermore, since each one has his own specific work, it follows that if anyone copies another’s manner of working he will be sure to do his work wrong, although that other one does his work well; and the more closely he follows that other one’s way, the more sure he is to mar his own work. The One who make us know what our work is, will also make us know

how to do it.

How May We Know Our Work?

It does not follow from the foregoing that we are never to listen to counsel from fellow-workers. We are enjoined to be...

1 Peter 5

⁵ ...subject one to another,

James 1

¹⁹ ...swift to hear, slow to speak.

God often uses men as agents to make known, as well as to execute, His will. But it must be God speaking through the person. Through whomsoever the information comes, the voice of God must be known and recognized so clearly that the human element will be entirely lost sight of.

God has various ways of communicating with His servants. We cannot here enumerate them, and even if we should attempt to, we should not succeed; for if we should name all that are known to man, He would surprise us by speaking to us in some new way, for He is not limited in His resources.

But in the absence of any direct revelation or sign, we may always be sure of this; that our work is that which lies next to us.

Ecclesiastes 9

¹⁰ Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.

If we go out of our way to find our task, we cannot be sure that it is the right one for us, and so cannot feel the confidence that we ought; but when we go right on doing what comes to us, even though it be apparently insignificant, we may be sure that God has given it to us to do, and that He will direct and sustain us in it.

God knows what we can do, and He gives to each...

Matthew 25

¹⁵ ...according to his several ability.

Therefore if our duties are small we must be content with His estimate of our ability. To do a little thing well is much more workmanlike and praiseworthy than to do a great work in a bungling manner.

2. Patience Triumphs

Present Truth, November 6, 1902

Timeline: VII-17 (Retirement to the Mount of Olives)

Luke 21:19

WHEN Christ was forewarning His disciples of all the persecutions they must suffer His sake, He said:

Luke 21

¹⁹ In your patience possess your souls.

This is usually taken to be an exhortation to hold their souls back from impatience; but it is much more than this; it is a promise. The *Revision* makes this clear. That reads,

Luke 21 [RV]

¹⁹ In your patience you shall win your souls.

That is, patience will always ensure your safety. Since this is true of the great “time of trouble” (*Daniel* 12:1), it must much more be our deliverance in these days. If when we are delivered up to death, and are hated of all men for His name’s sake, our patience delivers us, how much more must it give us victory in all lesser trials?

Many things tend to vex and irritate us; injustice may be done us; but though men rage and storm at us, and oppress us, patience will disarm them, and make us their masters. The man who can rule his own spirit, and can suffer and wait in patience, is the rock against which all the weapons of the fierce and ungodly shall be broken to pieces.

Exodus 15

² He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation.

This passage which occurs in the song of Moses, is rendered in the *Revised Version*:

Exodus 15 [RV]

² He is my God, and I will praise Him.

In *Psalms* 22 we have a link that connects these two translations, which at first sight seems to have no affinity:

Psalms 22

³ Oh You that inhabits the praises of Israel.

From this it is evident that by praising God we prepare Him a habitation. The gates of the New Jerusalem are named “Praise” (*Isaiah* 60:18), therefore wherever there is praise, there God dwells. Praise is the way into the city,

Hebrews 11

¹⁰ ...whose builder and maker is God.

Therefore,

Isaiah 51

¹¹ The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion.

3. War and Murder

Present Truth, January 23, 1896

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:6-7

Matthew 24

⁶ And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

WARS and rumors of wars are among the signs of the last days. In the last days perilous times shall come, because...

2 Timothy 3

² ...men shall be lovers of their own selves,...

³ [and will be] fierce.

Matthew 24

⁷ Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

These things have always been, yet they are to increase as the end approaches; and the last great event of this world's history is to be the gathering of the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to...

Revelation 16

¹⁴ ...the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

The end of that last great battle is thus described by the prophets:

Isaiah 9 [RV]

⁵ All the armor of the armed men in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall even be for burning and, for fuel of fire.

When...

Revelation 19

¹⁹ ...the kings of the earth, and their armies, [are] gathered together,

for that last battle, it will be for their complete destruction, so that the fowls of the air will be filled with...

¹⁸ ...the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

Yet the men who march to that battle will do so with the same high spirits that they have had in previous fights, fired by “patriotic” feelings, and dreaming of victory and glory, without a thought that it is to end in the final utter destruction of all concerned in it.

It is very evident that not one of God’s people will have any part in that battle. When the last fight is waged, not a Christian will be found in the ranks of any army on earth; although it is safe to say that there will be thousands who will imagine themselves to be good Christians, and who will think, as many do today, that their assurance of heavenly bliss will only be made the more sure if they fall with their face to the foe.

It is also evident that no professed Christian believes in murder. True, many of them think that it is quite right to take human life, but only in what is called “honorable warfare.” They must not murder, and they must not be in the last battle. An important question, therefore, is, Where shall the line be drawn, so that Christians may be free from condemnation in anything that involves the taking of life? This question, like all others, is plainly answered by the Bible.

The Origin of War

The question is asked by the Apostle James,

James 4

¹ From whence come wars and fightings among you?

And the answer immediately follows:

¹ ...come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

² You lust, and have not; you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; you fight and war, yet you receive not, because you ask not.

³ You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.

From the next verse we learn that these desires whence come wars and fightings, are worldly lusts, for the question is asked,

⁴ Know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Turn now to *1 John* 2, and we shall find a classification of these worldly lusts that lead to war:

1 John 2

¹⁵ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

¹⁷ And the world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

Take a single instance of the working of this desire to have. Two men own adjoining fields, but there is a dispute as to the boundary line. The land is valuable, and that portion through which the dividing fence runs is the most valuable of all. "A"

claims that there was a mistake in the survey, and that the fence ought to be moved ten yards in order to give him the land that belongs to him. But “B” insists that he has no more land than belongs to him, but that, on the contrary, a portion of what “A” claims really belongs to him, at any rate he will not yield an inch. Each is determined to have his “rights.”

Besides the lust of the flesh, the pride of life comes in, and each man feels that it would be wholly inconsistent with his dignity to yield to the other. Moreover threats and insulting words have been used, such as “no man of proper spirit could be expected to stand.” Each feels himself not only wronged, but abused, and each demands from the other an apology and reparation. But each one feels that his “honor” as well as his property is at stake, and is determined not to yield.

So the feud grows. From hard words the men come to blows. Finally each deliberately resolves to take the other’s life. Then the disputed boundary will not only be settled, but the survivor can take as much more of the other’s property as he wishes.

Accordingly they arm themselves with knives or guns, and meet and begin stabbing or shooting, until one of them is dead. Then what follows: Why, the man who kills the other is called a murderer, and is hanged, denounced by all the neighborhood.

But suppose now that instead of two farms we have two countries; instead of a few roods of land we have some thousands of square miles; and instead of two men involved, we have hundreds of thousands. There is a dispute as to the boundary line. Each nation feels that its rights are threatened; and, besides, undiplomatic language has been used, which must be resented. The “national honor” will not allow any concessions on either side.

So armed bodies of men meet and shoot at each other. Instead of one man, thousands are killed. The conquerors take

the disputed territory, and as much more as they wish, and the victorious army marches home. How are they regarded? Are they called murderers? Oh, no; they are greeted with shouts and songs, and are lauded as patriots.

Where is the difference in the two cases? It is only in the greater number of men killed in the second case. Therefore we must conclude that the sole difference between war and murder is in the extent of the interests and the number of people involved.

- If only one man is killed, it is murder.
- If one man kills four or five men, that is an aggravated case of murder.
- But if thousands fight, and hundreds are killed, that is “glorious war,” although precisely the same passions lead to each result.

The question is,

“Does God regard it as less sinful to kill a thousand men than to kill one?”

His Word answers:

Proverbs 11

²¹ Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.

Christians and Self-Defense

Now we know why there will be no Christians in the army at the time of the last great battle. It will be because they will have learned that:

2 Timothy 2

²⁴ The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men.

Of course such a man has no place in an army organized to fight and kill. Christ’s followers are not allowed to fight even

in defense of Him and His kingdom.

John 18

³⁶ Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Much less, then, can they fight in self-defense. It would be more proper to say that they cannot fight in defense of His kingdom, because it is a kingdom of peace, and to fight with earthly weapons would be to fight against it, instead of in its defense.

2 Corinthians 10

⁴ The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

If there were not in any person the passions which if cherished naturally lead to murder, there would never be any war on earth. Both come from the same source, so that war is nothing but wholesale murder.

It is commonly accepted that it is perfectly consistent with Christianity for both individuals and nations to fight in self-defense. Yet the words of Christ are very plain:

Matthew 5

³⁹ I say unto you that you resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

We make all sorts of excuses, and find all manner of difficulties in the way of obeying this commandment, just as we may with any commandment which we are not willing to obey. The only way to know how a commandment may be obeyed, is to accept it without question. It is by faith, not by unbelief, that we understand.

Hebrews 11

³ Through faith we understand.

It is true that the different nations cannot retain their sepa-

rate existence without armies and war. But this need not cause the Christian any uneasiness. His daily prayer to God is to be:

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

When that kingdom comes,

Zechariah 14

⁹ The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one.

His kingdom is a kingdom of peace. How then can men pray: “Your kingdom come,” and at the same time fight to maintain a condition of things contrary to that kingdom?

Suppose we give a little attention to this matter of self-defense. A man assaults another, and demands his money. Whether the man thus accosted has little money or much makes no difference; his first impulse is to defend himself, and save what he has.

We will suppose that he has ten pounds in his possession. The thief is persistent in his demands, and he resists. The robber is determined, and uses violence, and the man is equally determined not to part with his money. The struggle is sharp, and the robber is killed. The man has acted only in self-defense, and public sentiment acquits him.

But suppose the robber succeeds in killing his victim, and takes the ten pounds. Then public sentiment condemns him. He has truly committed a wicked deed. He has murdered a man for the paltry sum of ten pounds.

Yes; but why is it so much worse for the robber to kill a man for ten pounds than it would be for the man to kill the robber for the same amount? Since the man could have avoided all difficulty by giving up his money, is it not evident that he has killed his antagonist solely for the money?

Take a case where only life is involved. Suppose a man has a grudge against me, thinking that I stand in the way of the accomplishment of his ends. Or, perhaps he is actuated by pure hatred, and he seeks my life. Now if when he attacks me, I kill him to save my own life, how much better am I than he would have been if he had succeeded in killing me? Oh, I have saved my life! True, but at the loss of his; and what right have I to assume that my life is more valuable than his? It is only because it is mine.

And so we see that self-defense, as the word implies, is nothing but selfishness. And this is the sole principle that moves either nations or men to fight.

“But it is natural to defend oneself. ‘Self-preservation is the first law of nature.’”

True; but it is spiritual to refrain from all violence, and self-sacrifice is the first and only law of grace. If self were dead, there would be no impulse to self-defense. If we can say,

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me,

—we shall have no occasion to defend ourselves; but it is not I who am attacked, but Christ; and Christ does not ask us to fight in His defense.

The verse just quoted gives us the solution of the whole question. It is natural to fight to defend ourselves; but the cross of Christ delivers us from ourselves, and gives us the Divine nature. The natural man, the carnal mind, is enmity. *Romans* 8:7. But Christ is our peace, and He makes peace through the blood of His cross.

Ephesians 2

¹⁴ For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

¹⁵ Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of

commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

¹⁶ And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Colossians 1

²⁰ And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

After nearly nineteen centuries of professed Christianity in the world, the cross of Christ is preached less than anything else.

1 Corinthians 2

² Christ, and Him crucified,

—is that which the professed Church of Christ stands most in need of today. If all professed Christians gloried only in the cross of Christ, not one of them would be found apologizing for war of any kind, under any circumstances; for war and fightings come only from...

Galatians 1

⁴ ...this present evil world,

—from which the cross of Christ delivers us.

Let men of this world glory in this world; but let men of the world to come, whom God has...

Colossians 1

¹³ ...translated into the kingdom of His dear Son,

—evermore say,

Galatians 6

¹⁴ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

4. Subject to God's Law

Present Truth, July 15, 1897

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:12

IT IS becoming very common to hear religious teachers boldly proclaiming that they do not hold themselves subject to the law of God.

Even some whose church creed affirms the everlasting perpetuity of the Ten Commandments—and nearly all church creeds do so—take refuge in the no-law position when loyalty to God's law in Sabbath-keeping is preached by the Gospel.

It is but a fulfillment of the Lord's words concerning the last days:

Matthew 24

¹² Because iniquity [literally: *lawlessness*] shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

This claim of not being subject to God's law is a true but sad confession:

Romans 8

⁷ The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Only the one who will let God save Him from sin can be subject. The Lord Jesus died that He might destroy the carnal, fleshly mind, and our salvation is in letting Him do so.

5. Churchly Iniquity

Signs of the Times, January 20, 1887

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:12

Matthew 24

¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

THESE words were spoken by our Lord concerning a time just before, and reaching to, His second coming. It should serve as a complete refutation of the idea that the world will be converted, and that there will be a millennium of Christian joy and peace before the coming of the Lord.

This verse not only teaches that iniquity will abound, but, with the next verse, shows that the iniquity will continue even until the end.

¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

¹³ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Whoever is saved when the end comes, will have “endured” something; his path will not have been one of ease, but he will have...

Revelation 7

¹⁴ ...come out of great tribulation.

The same thing is taught by the apostle in:

2 Timothy 3

¹ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boast-ers, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

This shows that the reason why those who shall be saved when the Lord comes, will have been called upon to “endure,” is because they will have passed through perilous times; and the reason why the times will be “perilous,” is...

Matthew 24

¹² Because iniquity shall abound.

It also shows that this abounding iniquity will be in the professed church, for it is committed by those who have...

2 Timothy 3

⁵ ...a form of godliness.

Now, if we read carefully *Matthew 24:12*, we shall see that the iniquity there referred to is iniquity practiced under the garb of religion.

Matthew 24

¹² Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

The iniquity is committed by those who have love, and causes that love to decline. Surely, then, we shall have just the opposite of Christian joy and love in the world before the Lord comes; for not only is iniquity to abound, and perilous times to exist as a consequence, but this state of things is to be right in the church.

But how can it be that such crimes as those mentioned in *2 Timothy 3:1-5* can exist in the church, when they are the very ones that now characterize men of the world? Easily enough, for the church and the world will be one. All the world will belong to the church.

This will not be brought about in the good old way known to Paul and Luther and the Wesleys, namely, by conversion,

but by Constitutional Amendment, a plan very similar to that adopted by Constantine and Charlemagne, who brought people into “the church” by thousands. Citizenship and church membership will be one and the same thing; and this will result in bringing into “the church” all the political hacks, ward politicians, “Boodle ringers,” and whoever has an itching pain for Government coin and influence, and his name is legion.

The “love of many” will necessarily “wax cold” before they can lower the standard sufficiently to receive such ones into church fellowship; and contact with the same class will by no means tend to restore that which they have lost.

But before this state of things can be fully brought about, men must reject the truth of God, especially that which relates to the Sabbath. And because of their rejection of the truth, strong delusion will be sent upon them that they should believe a lie.

2 Thessalonians 2

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

This blindness will cause them to call evil good and darkness light, so that although iniquity will be abounding, they will say that all is well, the world is converted, and the temporal millennium has come. Then, as prophesied by Isaiah, they will say,

Isaiah 2

⁴ Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

And then,

1 Thessalonians 5

³ When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them,...and they shall not escape.

Then the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth, and those who have exalted themselves shall be humbled,

Isaiah 2

¹⁹ And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty.

May the Lord grant us grace to humble ourselves now, that in that day we may be exalted to a place at His right hand.

6. Christ Soon to Return

Signs of the Times, April 7, 1887

Original title: Question and Answer

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:21-29

You would be conferring a great favor on me and many that I know, by explaining how Adventists can believe Christ is soon to return, when none of the signs mentioned in *Matthew* 24:29; *Luke* 21:11-12, 25, and other passages, have to come to pass.

OUR questioner makes a very broad assumption. It is possible that he is unaware of the fulfillment of any of the signs referred to, but he is not warranted in saying that they have never come to pass, simply because he has not heard of them.

For his benefit, and that of others who are in the same condition, we will briefly note the fulfillment of these signs. This we are always glad to do. *Matthew* 24:29 reads thus:

Matthew 24

²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

Verse 30 continues:

³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The “days” referred to in the first part of verse 29, are the days of tribulation referred to in verses 21 and 22:

²¹ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

We do not think it necessary to take space here to prove that “the elect” have never suffered tribulation greater than that suffered by them in the dark ages of Papal persecution. This one period ended with the captivity of the Pope, in 1798 AD, a few years after the violence of the persecution ceased, and serves as a guide in our search for the signs; for the first of these signs was to take place...

²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days,

—or, as *Mark* still more definitely records,

Mark 13

²⁴ In those days, after that tribulation...

The Dark Day

Concerning the first sign, the darkening of the sun, we need to do more than quote what is said in *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, in the explanatory and pronouncing vocabulary of noted names of fiction, events, etc.:

DARK DAY, THE, May 19, 1780: so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day, extending over all New England. In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. For several days previous the wind had been variable but chiefly from the southwest and the northeast. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known.

It would not make a particle of difference if the true cause of the phenomenon were known. Its value as a sign consists

in the fact that it was just what our Saviour said should take place, and that it occurred in the exact time specified,—just before the close of the period of Papal supremacy, and just after the great tribulation. There is one sign fulfilled.

The Falling of the Stars

The next sign is the falling of the stars. On this it will be sufficient to quote the following statement by Professor Olmstead, of Yale College:

Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of Nov. 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals covered by the pages of history.

Those who witnessed this remarkable event, say that it was a literal fulfillment of:

Revelation 6

¹³ And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

The stars appeared as if violently hurled in every direction, just as would be the case with unripe fruit, if it were forced from the limbs by a strong wind. And it was not simply a few shooting stars, but the flying meteors could be likened only to flakes of snow in a furious snowstorm. So much for the fulfillment of the second sign.

Distress of Nations

Luke 21

²⁵ And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity.

This is the next thing recorded by Luke. He who says that this is not even now fulfilled and fulfilling, must have studiously refrained from reading any of the newspapers. Organized bands of Socialists and Anarchists are not only caused

by poverty and oppression, but are themselves, in turn, causes of still greater distress and perplexity.

The nations of Europe are spending all their capital and credit in arming themselves against possible attacks from one another, yet, as in the case of Russia, are so fearful of the enemy within their own borders, that they often contemplate even the dreaded war with foreign powers, as a possible means of uniting their subjects, and averting the still more dreaded disruption.

These things literally cause men's hearts to fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

Shaking of the Powers of the Heavens

Only one of the signs which our Saviour mentioned yet remains to be fulfilled, and that is the shaking of the powers of the heavens. But this takes place immediately in connection with the coming of the Lord, so that when it is seen, it will be too late to warn people to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

The shaking of the powers of the heavens accomplished by the voice of God¹¹⁵, when He shall...

Joel 3

¹⁶ ...roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem;

–when...

Revelation 6

¹⁴ The heavens shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places;

–when...

¹⁵ The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich

¹¹⁵ **Hebrews 12** ²⁶ Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man [shall hide] themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains,

¹⁶ And [shall say] to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Let no one, then, comfort himself with the thought that the Lord's coming is not near, because the powers of the heavens have not been shaken. Rather let him discern the signs of the times, and make haste to be ready to greet our soon-coming Lord with the words,

Isaiah 25

⁹ Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

7. I Have Told You Before

Present Truth, December 24, 1896

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:25

WHEN Jesus warned His disciples against the false Christs and false prophets who should arise in the later times, and should deceive many, He said:

Matthew 24

²⁵ Behold I have told you before.

The continued reiteration of counsel, advice, warning, injunction and exhortation, is a most marked feature of Christ's conversations with His disciples, as narrated in the Gospels. If this is so true of the few words of His there set down, how very much more true must it have been if one but considered all the daily conversation and teaching of those years together.

All the plan of salvation He laid before them again and again. The strange, tragic mystery of His crucifixion, death and burial, and resurrection, He foretold to them over and over again, and then promised them that after His resurrection He would go before them into the Galilee.

Yet, although they had seen Him call Lazarus from the grave after he had lain there more than three days, they apparently did not comprehend that He would himself rise from the dead, as He had repeatedly said to them.

When He had told them that He would go before them into Galilee (*Matthew 26:32*), why did they not all, of one accord, go down into Galilee to meet Him? Because they had forgotten that He had said such a thing until the message from the Lord afterwards recalled it to their minds.

Just so they forgot the oft-repeated words of the Master regarding the matter of His death and time of His resurrection.

Still, though they were such dull students,—learned so slowly the lessons of truth and life and salvation,—even forgot and neglected again and again the simplest details of facts which He presented to them,—still, for all that, Christ loved them and did not turn from them. He scarcely ever reproved them for their slowness of mind and dullness of heart,—He waited for their conversion. He looked forward to the time when they should be converted, as is shown by His words to Peter,

Luke 22

³² ...when you are converted.

What a lesson of patience all this is to those who strive to present the truths of religion to the world which is so slow to hear, and slower still to accept and act.

And yet much more than that, it may be a comfort, unspeakable, to all, to realize how tenderly, with patient long-suffering, Christ bore with the errors, failures, ignorance, seemingly hopeless inability to comprehend spiritual things, which so often characterized those whom He had called to His personal discipleship.

In our Bibles we have His words,—in all the wide world about us we have the material evidence of the expression of His word of creative power. The reiteration of God's teachings are even more numerous in our ears and eyes than their repetition to the disciples themselves.

8. A Fulfilling Parable

Signs of the Times, January 6, 1887

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:32-34

Matthew 24

³² Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh;

³³ So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

³⁴ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

THIS parable occurs in the midst of one of the last discourses given by our Lord. As indicated in the heading of this note, the parable relates to the present time, and therefore claims our earnest attention. In order to appreciate its force, we must briefly glance at the preceding part of the chapter.

The 23rd chapter of *Matthew* records the woes which Christ pronounced against the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, and His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, because of her rejection of all that was good. When He went out of the temple, His disciples called His attention to the wonderful buildings of the temple, the pride of the Jewish nation.

Matthew 24

² And Jesus said unto them, See you not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

³ And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?

Here we have two distinct questions. The first, "When shall these things be?" That is, When shall the temple be overthrown? The second, "What shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?" It is possible, and from the close

connection of the questions seems quite probable, that the disciples supposed that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple would be at the coming of Christ and the end of the world. But whether they thought so or not is immaterial. In His answer, Christ most plainly indicated that the two events were to be widely separate.

It is worthy of notice that the disciples did not question as to whether or not Christ would come again. They well knew that He was to come at the end of the world, when the resurrection would take place.

John 11

²⁴ Martha said unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Their question had reference only to the time of His coming, and the signs which should indicate its nearness. So in the answer, to which the entire chapter is devoted, Christ does not proceed to teach them that He will come, but, considering that as well understood, He proceeds to tell how it may be known when His coming is near. But first He utters a caution:

⁴ Take heed that no man deceive you.

⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

In verses 23-24 He repeats this warning.

²³ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

On this point we can do no more at present than to call attention to the fact that Christ did not reprove His disciples for asking, "What shall be the sign of your coming?" On the contrary, He gave a very full answer. Then surely it must be right to think about the time of Christ's coming.

The Saviour then presents a brief view of the world between the two advents, and mentions a few facts relative to the condition of the world in the time immediately preceding His second coming. Thus in verses 15-16 He answers the first question of the disciples, telling them when to expect the destruction of Jerusalem.

¹⁵ When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand:)

¹⁶ Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.

Compare this with:

Luke 21

²⁰ And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

After that,

Matthew 24

²¹ Then, [said He,] shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

This can refer to nothing else than the great persecution which the “elect,” the people of God, suffered during the Dark Ages. Under Pagan Rome the saints suffered severely, but the persecution by the heathen was trifling compared with that practiced by professed Christians, after an apostate Christianity had been lifted to the throne of the world.

The persecution of true Christians by professed Christians took place within the 1260 years of Papal rule, from 538 to 1798 AD. At times the persecution was lighter than at other times, but all the time the saints were being *worn out*, until the Reformation had taken sufficient hold of the people to

cause it to cease. This took place in the eighteenth century, some years before the expiration of the 1260 years of Papal supremacy. As the Papacy had not arrived at its full strength when it was exalted, so its power gradually waned until it was debased. And thus, those days of persecution were “shortened.”

Right in the little season between the cessation of the great persecution and the close of the 1260 years in 1798, occurred one of the notable signs of the second coming of Christ—the darkening of the sun and moon. Matthew records this as coming...

Matthew 24

²⁹ ...immediately after the tribulation of those days;

—but Mark is more definite, and says that it should take place...

Mark 13

²⁴ ...in those days, after that tribulation.

This was fulfilled in that supernatural darkening of the sun which caused May 19, 1780, to be known in history as “*The Dark Day*.”

Following this, we have the next sign, the falling of the stars, which took place November 13, 1833. True, there have been many light meteoric showers, but this was one the like of which has never been seen, either before or since, and can be fitly described only in the language of the prophet:

Revelation 6

¹³ And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

It was to these things that our Saviour referred in the text quoted at the beginning of these notes. When the fig-tree,

Luke 21

²⁹ ...and all the trees,

—puts forth leaves,

³⁰ ...you see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

No one needs to consult an almanac when he sees such signs; everyone knows that they are sure precursors of spring.

³¹ So likewise you, when you see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Matthew records it:

Matthew 24

³³ ...know that it is near, even at the doors.

We are not to guess, nor to imagine, but to know. We are commanded to be just as sure of it as we are that summer is near when the buds begin to swell. Who then can say that it is fanaticism to say that we know that the Lord is soon coming? To doubt that His coming is near would be to make Christ a liar. Let us not be found so doing.

³³ ...even at the doors.

This is given as an incentive to watchfulness and right living. Says James, using the same figure:

James 5

⁹ Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest you be condemned; behold, the judge stands before the door.

Who dare indulge in bickering and strife? The Judge stands before the door, and if He should open it and find us engaged in contention, or nursing selfishness and malice and envy, how deplorable would be our condition! Of such a one Christ says:

Matthew 24

⁵⁰ The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks

not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

⁵¹ And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁴² Watch therefore; for you know not what hour your Lord does come.

9. The Time and the Preparation

Present Truth, April 25, 1901

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:36

WHEN the disciples of Jesus had, according to previous appointment, come together to Him after His resurrection, they said to Him,

Acts 1

⁶ Lord, will You at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

⁷ And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power.

⁸ But you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto me.

The kingdom shall be restored to Israel, for God has raised up Christ to sit on the throne of David.

Acts 2

³⁰ Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.

Luke 1

³² He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David:

³³ And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Matthew 24

³⁶ But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven; but my Father only.

The Father has put this matter, with many others, in His own power; and whoever presumes to be able to predict the date of the second coming of Christ, claims to be equal to

God. One thing we may know, and that is that whatever time may be set for the coming of Christ, that will be the time when He will not come;

Luke 12

³⁹ For the Son of man comes at an hour when you think not.

There is a preparation for it, however, and that preparation is the surest sign of the end. The receiving of the power of the Spirit makes one capable of being a witness to Christ, that is, it puts the testimony of Jesus into one. The one who has the Spirit's full power will give the very same testimony that Jesus gave, both by his words and his life. People of that class will preach the Gospel of the kingdom in all the world as a witness to all nations; and when that is done the end will come.

So the surest sign of the nearness of the second coming of Christ will be the presence of a people in the world, filled with the Spirit of God, and revealing the perfect life of Christ.

Luke 17

²⁰ The kingdom of God comes not with observation;

²¹ Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

The revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven will be but the culmination of His revelation in the lives of His disciples. The kingdom of God must be fully established on earth, in the hearts and lives of its faithful subjects, before the visible kingdom can appear.

Therefore when we pray,

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come,

—we mean that God's will is to be done in the sinful, mortal bodies of man, even as it is done in the sinless, immortal bodies of the angels, or as it will be in the bodies of the redeemed.

Then, when the glory of God shall be seen in and upon His church, it will soon be seen covering the heavens and filling the earth.

10. Evil Servants

Present Truth, November 29, 1894

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:38

The “evil servant” of the Lord began to say in his heart,

Matthew 24

³⁸ My Lord delays his coming.

This was the starting point of a course of backsliding which ended in appointing him a portion with the hypocrites. The same indicated that he had lost his love for his Lord.

It is not necessary to limit the application of these words to some particular time in the world's history. Those who love the Lord have always been looking for and desiring His appearing.

Titus 2

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

“The grace of God that brings salvation” teaches men to look for the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ. How many men? “All men”; for it has appeared unto all, and therefore every man who receives this grace will be looking for that glorious appearing.

These words penned by Paul were addressed to all who should live after the time of their utterance. There is something wrong with the person who is not today looking for that appearing. If he is professedly a servant of the Lord, let him beware lest he be reckoned with the evil servants, and meet the fate of the hypocrites.

11. Watchfulness

Present Truth, May 5, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, May 15

Timeline: VII-18 (Signs of Christ's Return)

Matthew 24:42-51

REPLYING to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of your coming and of the end of the world?" Jesus briefly mentioned some of the events which would mark the progress of the world's history from that time until His second coming, speaking with special definiteness of the signs which would appear in the last generation. And then, in view of the fact that the exact time of His coming is not revealed, He gives the exhortation to watchfulness which furnishes the basis of our study this week.

Christ's Coming the Consummation

In the coming of the Lord is found the consummation of the hope of every believer in Christ. Then will be...

Acts 3

²¹ ...the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

The promise to Abraham was...

Romans 4

¹³ ...that he should be the heir of the world,

—but,

Hebrews 11

⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise,

Acts 7

⁵ And [God] gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on.

Hebrews 11

¹³ These [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

¹⁴ For they that say such things declared plainly that they seek a country.

¹⁶ But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.

Galatians 3

²⁹ And if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Philippians 3 [RV]

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, wherefore a Saviour also we are ardently awaiting, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Restoration of All Things

Christ's work for us includes the restoration of all that was lost through sin. Man will be...

Colossians 3

¹⁰ ...renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,

—and the earth will be freed from the curse and its effects,

Isaiah 51

³ For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He shall make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

But this work will not be completed until He returns to this earth for His people. His promise is:

John 14

² I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be

also.

Revelation 22

¹² Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

So it is in the coming of the Lord that the hope of the waiting church has centered during all the centuries. We are instructed concerning those who...

1 Corinthians 15

¹⁸ ...are fallen asleep in Christ:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

So at the coming of the Lord the dead are raised, the living will be changed, and the reward will be given to God's servants, the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear His name, small and great.

The Time Not Revealed, But Near

Now the exact time of the Lord's coming has not been revealed.

Matthew 24

³⁶ But of that day and hour and knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

And some seem to regard this as a sufficient reason for not knowing anything about the event, but many prophecies point out when it is near, and after giving a series of signs connected with His second coming, the Saviour said:

³² Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh:

³³ So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Those who will believe the Word will know of the time.

1 Thessalonians 5

¹ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

The Necessity For Watchfulness

Those who may know that He is near, even at the doors, are urged to watchfulness:

Matthew 24

⁴² Watch therefore; for you know not when your Lord does come.

The thief chooses the night for his work, and his efforts are successful when he can find “the master of the house” resting in fancied security, with the idea that no thief is likely to visit his premises. But even if careful watch should be maintained for a part of the night, and then relaxed because no thief had been seen, then would be just the time for a successful robbery.

2 Peter 3

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.

Matthew 24

⁴⁴ Therefore be also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes.

No Idle Watchers

But watching also includes working. We are not to sit idly by, merely waiting for the time to pass, but:

2 Peter 3

¹¹ What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy con-

versation and godliness,

¹² Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.

These are they who are diligent in making known that their Lord's coming is near, and...

2 Corinthians 5

¹¹ Knowing the terror of the Lord, [they] persuade men.

Matthew 24

⁴⁵ Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord has made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season?

⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He comes shall find so doing.

It is the duty of the servant...

Acts 20

²⁸ ...to feed the church of God,

—by teaching them the Word of God, and he who has been set as a watchman on the walls of Zion should be the first to give warning of any approaching event. What a neglect of duty it is when he is the very one who...

Matthew 24

⁴⁸ ...shall say in his heart, My Lord delays His coming!

But there will be those who will ridicule the idea, and this is in itself one of the signs of the times.

2 Peter 3

³ There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

⁴ And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

It may seem at times as though His coming was being deferred longer than we had hoped, and yet:

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men

count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The Day Fast Approaching

Just now the exhortation to watchfulness should be earnestly heeded.

Hebrews 10

³⁷ For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

We are living in the last generation. The last signs are being fulfilled. We now see...

Luke 21

²⁵ ...upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

²⁶ Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

What means this war spirit which is now taking such a hold upon men in all parts of the world? What means this arming of the nations? It is simply the preparation for...

Revelation 16

¹⁴ ...the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

How soon the storm will burst we know not, but we know that...

Zephaniah 1

¹⁴ The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hastes greatly.

Now let every one who has received light be faithful to his trust by giving the light to others.

Luke 12

³⁵ Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

³⁶ And you yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He comes

and knocks, they may open unto Him immediately.

³⁷ Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He comes shall find watching...

³⁸ And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants.

12. The Light of Life

Present Truth, January 24, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for February 3

Timeline: VII-19 (The Ten Virgins)

Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 25

¹ Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

² And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

³ They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

⁴ But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

⁵ While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶ And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes, go out to meet him.

⁷ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

⁸ And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

⁹ But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes.

The Time When the Parable Applies

The time when this parable of the kingdom of heaven applies is clearly indicated. The word with which the chapter begins, “Then,” refers unmistakably to that which immediately precedes; for the 24th and 25th chapters of *Matthew* are one

connected discourse, the whole being in answer to the question of the disciples:

Matthew 24

³ What shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?

In the 24th chapter we are brought down to Christ's second coming, and the signs that precede it are set forth, the chapter closing with warnings against allowing the coming of the Lord to take us unawares.

³⁶ Of that day and hour knows no man.

The Lord has purposely kept the knowledge of it to himself, for He would have His people always ready for Him. He does not wish them to live carelessly until just the time of His coming, and then make a hasty preparation to meet Him; but He would have every one clothed with the robe of righteousness and the garments of salvation, and then kept blameless until His coming.

So ever since the fall of Adam, the coming of the Lord has been kept before the church as the one object of hope, that they may keep it before the world.

A Time of Waiting

The last part of the 24th chapter of *Matthew* plainly indicates a period of tarrying after men have been led to expect the coming of the Lord. Verses 48-51 tell of the fate that will overtake those who become weary in well-doing while the Saviour's coming is delayed, and who engage in strife and drunkenness; and the fifth verse in our present lesson plainly states that "the bridegroom tarried," and that in that waiting time "they all slumbered and slept."

The virgins plainly represent the entire church. Paul, writing to the church, says:

2 Corinthians 11

² I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Moreover, the term “kingdom of heaven” is frequently applied to the church on this earth. Thus,

Matthew 13

⁴⁷ The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

⁴⁸ Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

⁴⁹ So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.

Until the coming of the Lord there will be in the professed church of Christ both good and bad—both wise and foolish.

Prophetic Time Ended

In 1844 the longest and last period of time mentioned in prophecy expired. It was the two thousand and three hundred days of *Daniel* 8 and 9. For some years previous to that date there was a general awakening in the church, over the subject of the second coming of Christ; and many people, who saw from the study of the prophecy that the two thousand and three hundred days—literal years—would end in 1844, and who forgot some other plain statements of Scripture, notably this:

Matthew 25

¹³ You know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes,

—concluded that Christ would come in that year. Of course He did not, for any real student of the Bible can be sure that whatever date anybody may set for the Lord to come, will be the time when He certainly will not come. Nevertheless the general movement was of the Lord, for He would have all His people always ready, and looking for Him.

The Enchanted Ground

At the time spoken of, Christians throughout the world were as a class looking for the soon coming of the Lord, but of late years there has been an increasing indifference to it, and a tendency to regard it as a thing indefinitely postponed. Indeed, many deny that it is to be expected at all.

This is emphatically the stage of the journey to the Celestial City, described by Bunyan as the “Enchanted Ground,” where drowsiness seizes everybody, and the professed Church of Christ as a whole has “slumbered and slept.” There is a special warning against having our...

Luke 21

³⁴ ...hearts overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, [which produce sleepiness,] and cares of this life,

—so that the coming of the Lord should be to us as unexpected as the coming of a thief. The parable applies most emphatically to the present time, and from now until the Lord comes to take His waiting ones in with Him to the marriage.

Revelation 19

⁹ Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The Holy Spirit is the Oil Needed

This is plainly shown in the Scriptures. The following texts indicate it:

Isaiah 61

¹ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.

Acts 10

³⁸ God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.

Here we learn that the Holy Spirit is the anointing oil. But it is the illuminating oil as well;

Ephesians 5

¹³ For all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for that which makes manifest is light.

And the Holy Spirit is the reprover of sin.

John 16

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

⁸ And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Still further: In the first chapter of *Revelation* Christ is represented as standing,

Revelation 1

¹³ In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,

Revelation 1

²⁰ ...which...are the seven churches.

But it is by the Spirit that Christ dwells in His people. Read also the following:

Zechariah 4

¹ The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

² And said unto me, What do you see? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

³ And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

⁴ So I answered and spoke to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord?

⁶ Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

Connect also with the statement that those seven...

¹⁰ ...are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth,

–the one in *Revelation* 5, that the seven eyes...

Revelation 5

⁶ ...are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth,

–and we have the evidence complete.

The Spirit the Light of Life

Christians are not merely to carry lights, as represented in this parable, but they themselves are to...

Philippians 2

¹⁵ ...shine as lights in the world.

The churches are the lamps.

Matthew 5

¹⁴ You are the light of the world.

But the light with which Christians are to shine is the light of life, for Christ says:

John 8

¹² I am the Light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

They are to “shine as lights in the world,” by...

Philippians 2

¹⁶ ...holding forth the Word of Life.

And the life of the Word is the light of men:

John 1

⁴ In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Romans 8

¹⁰ The Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Christ’s life in us is the presence of the Spirit, and that alone can make us lights to the world.

2 Corinthians 4

⁶ God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God* in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

This “light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” which is produced by God shining in our hearts, is to be given to others; for a lamp never gives light for his own benefit. Moreover the lamp is not conscious of its own light, even as...

Exodus 34

²⁹ Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone,

—when he came down from the mount, where he had been talking with God. He was full of the Spirit, and the light shone forth.

It is the Spirit that Witnesses

A light is for warning and guidance. The church is set for the light of the world, and it is...

1 Timothy 3

¹⁵ ...the pillar and stay of the truth.

Now the light and the truth are sent out for the purpose of leading and guiding men to God’s holy hill and to His tabernacle.

Psalms 43

³ O send out your light and your truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto your holy hill, and to your tabernacles.

So it matters not how correct the church is as to form, or to forms of doctrine; if it—and of course this means the individual members of it—has not the burning light, it is practically useless. It is not enough to have lamps, nor even to have oil in them, nor yet to have the lamps trimmed; but they must be burning.

Luke 12

³⁵ Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

³⁶ And you yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He comes and knocks they may open unto Him immediately.

Now it is the Spirit alone in men, that can make them lights in the world, and faithful witnesses for Christ, to tell the power of His life, and the glory of His coming; and the Spirit must not merely be present, but must be recognized, and yielded to, so that He can shine forth. Christ said,

Matthew 24

¹⁴ This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

He also said:

Acts 1

⁸ You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto me.

But,

1 John 5

⁶ It is the Spirit that bears witness; because the Spirit is truth.

So it is not enough that somebody has preached the Gospel in every country on earth, not even though the whole “Gospel of the kingdom” be preached; the preaching must be the utterance of the Spirit of life in the men who bear the message.

Since the time expired in 1844, the only thing of which the coming of the Lord is delayed, is that the church may perform its mission of warning the world. As soon as this is done, Christ will surely come. But the preaching must be by the life, so that the world could see it, even though the messenger were dumb.

The church is the body of Christ, and before He appears in glory His life must be recognized in that body, in all parts of the world, even as it was in Jesus in Galilee and Judea. That time will surely come, soon. How soon will it be? and who will help to form that glorious body?

13. One Talent

Present Truth, September 13, 1894

Timeline: VII-20 (The Talents)

Matthew 25:14-30

BECAUSE in the parable of the talents the man who did nothing was the man with one talent, many people who have, or who think they have, only one talent, seem to think that it is decreed that they shall never accomplish anything, and that it is useless to try.

Thus they fall into the error of the man in the parable. His fault was not in having but one talent, but in doing nothing with that one.

If the man with two and five talents had done as he did, they would have received the same sentence; and if he had done as they did, he would have received the same commendation. The same use which doubles two or five talents, will double one, and then the two may be increased in like manner.

Since both the talents and the increase are the gifts of God, He who is faithful in that which is little is precisely on a level with the one who is faithful in a great deal.

14. Talented People

Present Truth, January 31, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for February 10

Timeline: VII-20 (The Talents)

Matthew 25:14-30

TO SAY that one is “talented” is generally understood to mean that he is specially distinguished from ordinary people. It is commonly supposed that the number of talented people is comparatively limited, but this idea is not at all in accord with the Scripture. Christ tells us that God’s dealing with us is as when a man...

Matthew 25 [RV]

¹⁴ ...going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

¹⁵ And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability.

There is not a soul on this earth, whom the Lord has not made talented; each individual has received the Divine endowment. The only question for each one is,

“How shall the gifts be used?”

It is useless to try to enumerate the various talents. They are often unrecognized, for the distribution of the talents is universal, and from their very commonness they are overlooked. It is sufficient to know that everybody has talents according to his ability to do any kind of good whatever.

It has been said that “he who does his best does well.” He does better than that; he does the best. And yet, after all, there are no degrees of comparison in real goodness. There is no goodness but the goodness of God, and that cannot be bettered to the slightest degree. Accordingly the highest encomium bestowed by the Master is:

Matthew 25 [also vs. 23]

²¹ Well done!

Each one who has used the talents, or the single talent, entrusted to him, receives the same commendation:

²¹ Well done, good and faithful servant.

In order to understand this parable of the talents, we must consider the ending of it. The man who had received five talents and had gained five more, was rewarded with the words,

²¹ Well done, good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your lord.

Exactly the same thing was said to the man who had received two talents, and who had traded with them and gained two more:

²³ Well done, good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your lord.

But when the one who had received the one talent brought it back, excusing himself for not having added to it, by charging the master with being a hard man, reaping the fruits of others' labors, the reply was that if that were so, he ought to have put the money to the bankers, so that the master could have received his own with interest; and then the sentence was pronounced:

²⁸ Take away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that has the ten talents.

²⁹ For unto every one that has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that has not, even that which he has shall be taken away.

³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

That Which We Seem To Have

Someone will doubtless say, what many think, that there is a contradiction in the words:

Luke 19

²⁶ From him that has not, even that which he has shall be taken away,

—but there is not. The thing is made plain in *Luke 8*, where we have it,

Luke 8

¹⁸ Whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinks he has,

—or “seems to have.” The truth taught in this story is that:

1 Corinthians 6

¹⁹ You are not your own.

And therefore nothing that we possess is our own. This does not mean money or property merely, but mental endowments as well. Boasting is excluded, since nobody has anything of his own. This is most literally true, for:

Acts 17

²⁸ In God we live, and move, and have our being,

—so that our mental and physical strength is not simply something lent to us by God, but it is the result of God’s own working in us. If we do any good thing, it is He who does the work. This should serve as a check to our pride, and keep us from doing anything through strife or vainglory.

1 Corinthians 4

⁷ Who makes you to differ from another? and what have you that you did not receive? now if you received it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?

Labor is Profitable

The Proverb says,

Proverbs 14

²³ In all labor there is profit.

In the parable the man with the one talent would not trade with it, because he thought that the increase would not be his. It would not have been so, as we see from what was said to the others; but it ought not to have made any difference if it had been so.

There is a lesson here for those who are always calculating how much they are to receive for any labor, and who will not work from mere love of labor, but only when they think they will receive good wages. There are few people who will work without regard to the promised pay, and who will do as well if they have no sure prospect of receiving anything, as they would if they had good wages offered them.

The greatest blessing that God has given mankind is the privilege of laboring. In promising a blessing to Abraham, God said,

Genesis 12

² You shall be a blessing.

No other man can possibly get so high a reward as he who labors because labor itself is good. No matter if somebody else gets the pay for our labor; we should work just the same, since our living is given us freely by the Lord. Nobody can take from us the real reward of our labor, which is the experience that comes through it. The real pay for labor is the ability which one gains to do more.

Matthew 25

²¹ You have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things,

—is what the Lord says. He who knows this will never be troubled for fear somebody else will learn the secret of his trade, and get his work away from him; nor will he be concerned lest somebody else should receive credit or profit for

what he has done.

The Reward Not Arbitrary

The man who had gained two talents received the same commendation that the one did who had gained five. This was just, because he had done equally well. He had doubled his talents, just as the other one had. The reward was proportionate to the work done, as we see by the similar parable in *Luke* 19:12-27.

And since the talents entrusted are according to each one's ability, we learn that as each one has here all that he can do, so each one in the kingdom will enjoy all that he is capable of enjoying. Each one will have...

Psalms 16

¹¹ ...fullness of joy.

He who does with his might what his hand finds to do, is doing just as much as another one who may accomplish ten times as much; and if that other one is capable of doing twenty times as much as the first, and accomplishes only ten times as much, then he really does only half as much as the one who works with all his might.

In this latter case the one who seems to have done but one-tenth as much as the other, will receive a higher reward than that other, although men would award the other one ten times as much. The reason is, that the reward comes from the work itself, and not in the form of wages arbitrarily fixed.

He who is idle is degenerating, and is suffering loss, even though he receive wages for full work. That one is burying his lord's talent, and is really squandering that which is not his own, since he is justly chargeable with that which he might have gained if he had been diligent.

Taking Away What One Seems To Have

If a man does not improve the talent entrusted to him, there

is no reason why he should be allowed to retain it. The Judgment will show that many who are supposed to be richly endowed are bankrupt. Who does not know people of really brilliant talents, who have not only ceased to progress, but who seem really to be degenerating? Such ones have less than nothing, for they had nothing of their own to begin with, and they are wasting that which was loaned to them.

And this is really the case with every one who is not developing every ability that God has given him,—his physical and mental powers. He who buries his talent, squanders it. How sad it is to see a man and his life with less than he began,—in debt to eternity, and so eternally a debtor.

But the God who does not impute men's trespasses to them, but takes them all on himself, is correspondingly generous with the talents that men gain by His grace: He counts them as their own, in addition to those originally bestowed. So even though we have wasted our talent, if we repent while yet there is time, before the Lord returns, it may be made up to us. For,

2 Corinthians 9

⁸ God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

15. Who is Worthy?

Signs of the Times, September 9, 1886

Timeline: VII-21 (The Sheep and the Goats)

Matthew 25:31

When will *Matthew* 25:31-46 be fulfilled? Are “my brethren” (verse 40) a third class distinct from the sheep and the goats? It seems as if those who have heard the gospel would not be so surprised at the words of Christ.

A READING of the text itself should suffice to answer the question:

Matthew 25

³¹ When the Son of man shall, in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him.

This can be nothing but the glorious second advent of Christ, when...

Matthew 24

³¹ He shall send His angels with a great sound of the trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

When...

Matthew 16

²⁷ He shall reward every man according to his works.

At that time, as now, there will be but two classes,—the righteous and the wicked. A reading of the passage will show, that those on the right hand are the righteous, and that those on the left, the goats, are of the wicked. There is not now, nor will there ever be, any class between these two; if a man is not good, he is bad: there can be no middle ground. Says Christ:

Matthew 12

³⁰ He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scatters abroad.

Now as to the question of surprise which the righteous ask:

Matthew 25

³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink?

³⁸ When did we see you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you?

³⁹ Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and came unto you?

We see nothing in it to indicate that those who ask it have never heard the gospel. Humility is the characteristic of the Christian. If they have learned of Jesus, who is...

Matthew 11

²⁹ ...meek and lowly in heart,

—they will be very unconscious of their own worthiness. There will be no spirit of boasting. If they should say,

“Yes, Lord, we know that we have done all these things; we have served You faithfully,”

—that would be an indication that they had heard the gospel in vain.

Matthew 7

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.

But no such spirit will exist among those who are really Christ's. No one will think of proclaiming his own worthiness, because, as a matter of fact, no one will have any worthiness of his own, but will be...

Colossians 2

¹⁰ ...complete in Him, who is the head of all principality in power.

And so instead of thinking of themselves, or claiming anything because of their own merit, the redeemed will with one accord unite in saying,

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is a Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

16. The Day of Judgment

Present Truth, May 12, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, May 22

Timeline: VII-21 (The Sheep and the Goats)

Matthew 25:31-46

THIS lesson brings before us the work of the judgment, the basis upon which its decisions rest, and the result of those decisions. It is the closing part of that talk with His disciples, a portion of which was studied last week.¹¹⁶

The Standard of Judgment

There are only two classes to be dealt with in the judgment, and the work of the judgment consists simply in separating these two classes. No arbitrary decisions are rendered.

Revelation 20

¹³ They were judged every man according to their works.

The standard in the judgment will be God's own character, His righteousness, as described in His law and revealed in the life of Christ. When Jesus came to this earth as "the Son of Man," as our representative, He took it upon himself to meet this standard in our behalf. His work is thus prophesied of:

Psalms 40

⁷ Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book is written of me,

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God; yea, your law is within my heart.

And His whole life experience is summed up in these words:

John 15

¹⁰ I have kept my Father's commandments.

But this He did in our behalf, not as an excuse for our con-

¹¹⁶ See the article, "Watchfulness," number 11 in this section.

tinuing in sin, but that He might...

Matthew 1

²¹ ...save His people from their sins.

Romans 8

³ For what the law could not do, in that was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

A righteous character is required of everyone who shall be admitted to the heavenly kingdom:

Isaiah 60

²¹ Your people also shall be all righteous,

–but this righteousness is provided for us in the gift of Jesus to be:

Jeremiah 33

¹⁶ The Lord our righteousness.

Ephesians 1

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places [or things] in Christ.

While He was here upon the earth the Father's voice was heard saying,

Matthew 3

¹⁷ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,

–and,

Ephesians 1

⁶ He has made us accepted in the beloved.

By the course of our daily lives we are deciding whether we shall “be found in Him” in the judgment day.

Philippians 3

⁹ And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

The Separation

The separation which the Son of man will make in the judgment is simply the fixing for all eternity of the choice which each one has made for himself during his period of probation. The Lord urges us:

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁷ Come out from among them, and be separate,

—but this is a separation of character and not a mere bodily separation. We are in the world, yet we are not to be of the world, just as Jesus associated with sinners in order to save them and yet He was...

Hebrews 7

²⁶ ...separate from sinners.

All the efforts of men to separate themselves, by shutting themselves up in cells or caves, have resulted in failure, since “the world” from which they are to be separated is in their own hearts, and so goes with them even into the most secret places. The work can only be accomplished by the power of that...

Hebrews 4

¹² Word of God [which] is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Results of Separation

But there are certain and definite results of separation from

the world and abiding in Christ.

1 John 2

⁵ Hereby know we that we are in Him:

⁶ He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.

Now when Jesus was upon the earth,

Acts 10

³⁸ [He] went about doing good.

Luke 22

²⁷ I am among you as He that serves.

Matthew 20

²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

And He has given to us the true test of character:

Matthew 7

²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them.

²¹ Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.

So in the judgment day the decisions turn upon the way in which we have treated the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and those in prison; not because we can earn salvation by doing deeds of mercy to those who are in distress, but because a life of devotion to the need of others is a sure evidence of the indwelling of Him who came...

Luke 19

¹⁰ ...to seek to save that which was lost.

When His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which He has given us, then that love will flow out in service to others, as is shown in His own life; and thus are we...

Philippians 1

¹¹ ...filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, and to the glory and praise of God.

1 John 4

¹⁷ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.

The Gospel in Deeds

The lack of a disposition to relieve the distress of others is evidence that we are not abiding in Him whose heart responded to every cry of need. It is not always the amount given or the greatness of the service rendered.

2 Corinthians 8

¹² For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man has, and not according to that he has not.

The services spoken of in the lesson, as having been rendered by some and withheld by the others, are not those which require the possession of great wealth. It is to share our food with the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to share our home with the stranger, or clothing with the naked, and to visit those who are sick or who are in prison. This is simply to preach the Gospel by deeds as well as by words, and to reveal the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who,

2 Corinthians 8

⁹ ...though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.

And that which renders the service acceptable to God is that it is done for His sake,

Titus 2

¹⁴ Who gave himself for us.

Mark 9

⁴¹ For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my

name, because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Christ Identified With Humanity

In this lesson Jesus fully identifies himself with suffering humanity. He says:

Matthew 25

³⁵ I was hungry,...

³⁵ I was thirsty,...

³⁵ I was a stranger,...

³⁶ I was sick,...

³⁶ I was in prison,...

⁴⁰ Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.

So completely is it that...

John 1 [RV]

¹⁴ ...the Word became flesh.

Furthermore it is “the Son of Man,” before whom...

Matthew 25

³² ...shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another.

And,

John 5

²⁶ The Father...

²⁷ ...[has given] Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.

Thus the case of every member of the human family is committed to Him who was in all things...

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ ...made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

How wonderfully are the love and mercy of God revealed in His dealings with His erring children!

"Come!" "Depart!"

To those whose lives have revealed that they have received Christ as their Saviour from sin, the word is,

Matthew 25

³⁴ Come!

To those who have refused the gift of His love, the word is,

⁴¹ Depart!

The one class have chosen the fellowship of Jesus by His indwelling Spirit, and to them it is granted to enjoy that fellowship to all eternity in the earth made new and fully relieved from the curse and all its effects.

Revelation 22

⁴ They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.

Revelation 21

³ Behold the tabernacle God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

The other class have said by their actions,

Luke 19

¹⁴ We will not have this Man to reign over us.

Instead of separation from the world they have chosen separation from God, and now this choice is for ever confirmed and they...

2 Thessalonians 1

⁹ ...shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

In the judgment, that fellowship with God, which is life, is

granted throughout eternity to those who have opened their hearts to the indwelling of God's presence in Jesus Christ, but eternal separation from God is the lot of those who have refused His presence here. But separation from God is death,

Acts 17

²⁸ For in Him we live and move and have our being.

And so the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous will be of equal duration. Sustained by His own life, the righteous will live as long as God lives, but being eternally separated from that life by their own choice, the wicked shall...

Psalms 69

²⁸ ...be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

Psalms 37

¹⁰ For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be.

No Act of Trifling Importance

How evident it thus is that the ordinary experiences of our lives are weighted with eternal consequences. It is not in some great crisis merely that we decide our eternal destiny, but every decision which we make is giving its mould to the character and is determined beforehand what the final decision will be.

Proverbs 8

³⁴ Blessed is the man that hears me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

³⁵ For whoso finds me finds life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord.

³⁶ But he that sins against [or misses] me wrongs his own soul. All they that hate me love death.

A little study will show that the lesson of this week is simply the direct application to the life of the principles found in the 1st Psalm. "Blessed is the man!"

The Lord's Supper and Gethsemane

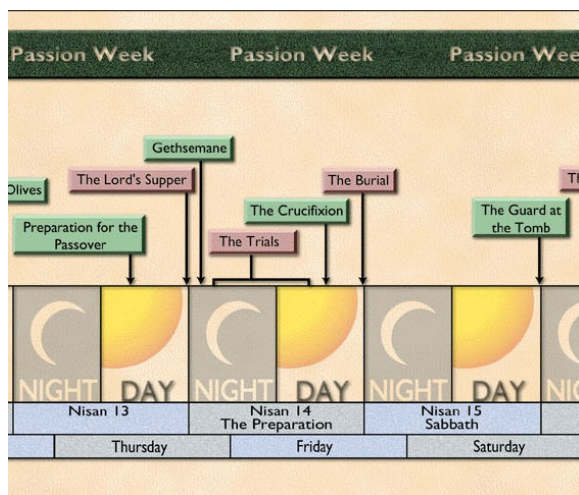
*On Thursday preparations were
made for the Passover.
The evening meal was ordained
as the Lord's Supper.*

*Although Christ was now just 24 hours
away from the grave,
He poured out parting counsels
to His followers.*

*While every gospel writer records the final scenes,
only John wrote out the final counsels given
just before the agony in Gethsemane.
These counsels cover 4 chapters (John 14-18).*

VII	22	Preparation for the Passover
VII	23	Celebration for the Passover
VII	24	Washing the Disciples' Feet
VII	25	The Lord's Supper
VII	26	The Betrayer Revealed
VII	27	Parting Counsel
VII	28	Retirement to Gethsemane
VII	29	A Warning to Peter and the Ten
VII	30	The True Vine
VII	31	A Warning of Persecution
VII	32	The Coming of the Comforter
VII	33	Jesus' Intercessory Prayer
VII	34	Gethsemane

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	DA	Ch.
26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13	...	642-645	71
26:20	14:17, 18	22:14-16	...	644-651	71
...	...	22:24-30	13:1-20	644-646	71
26:26-29	14:22-25	22:17-20	...	652-661	72
26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30	645-655	72
...	...	...	13:31-14:31	662-680	73
26:30	14:26	22:39	...	674	73
26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:36-38	673-674	73
...	...	...	15:1-17	674-680	73
...	...	...	15:18-16:4	...	...
...	...	...	16:5-33	669-672	73
...	...	...	17:1-26	...	...
26:36-56	14:32-52	22:40-53	18:1-12	685-697	74



1. Coming Because He Loves

Present Truth, April 16, 1896

Timeline: VII-24 (Washing the Disciples' Feet)

John 13:1

John 13

¹ Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.

THE same chapter recounts how He showed His love by washing the disciples' feet, and a few hours later He showed it by His death on the cross.

When one loves others so much that it is a joy to serve them and to die for them, one would desire above all things to be with those beloved. And so it is with our Lord. He said to these simple men whom He had just served,

John 14

² I go and prepare a place for you,

³ ...I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

And He says it to...

2 Timothy 4

⁸ ...all them also that love His appearing.

He wants us to be with Him, and He is hastening the time of His coming. How this wonderful love should purify and lead to the obedience of faith!

1 John 3

¹ Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

³ And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

⁴ Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

⁵ And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.

2. Going Home

Present Truth, July 22, 1897

Timeline: VII-24 (Washing the Disciples' Feet)

John 13:1-17

John 13

¹ Jesus knew that His hour was come, that He should depart out of this world unto the Father.

No Selfishness

BUT there was no selfishness in His thought. He told His disciples,

John 16

⁷ It is expedient for you that I go away.

He was soon to leave this sinful world for the Father's house, but His heart was with His children here.

John 13

¹ Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.

Not the agony of the garden nor the horror of great darkness upon the cross could dim the flame of love which makes His life the light of men; it was for this love that He bore and endured the awful weight of sin. We are in the world now, and we are all His, for:

Galatians 1

⁴ [He] gave himself for us.

All are His by purchase. And He loves His own in this world. Weak, sinful, surrounded by evil, He knows all about it, and here, in this world, where we need the help and comfort, He tells us that He loves us, and He loves us unto the end.

Matthew 28

²⁰ And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

An Object Lesson

John 13

³ Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God,

—knowing that all power in heaven and earth was His, He did not exact recognition of His superiority after the manner of the great and powerful of earth—but...

⁴ ...took a towel, and girded himself.

⁵ After that He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.

How that object lesson must have appealed to the disciples after the Lord's ascension. He who sat on the throne of the Father, at the right hand of power, was "this same Jesus" (*Acts* 1:11) whom they had seen kneeling at their feet.

His whole life taught that the highest exercise of power is in service, but in this ordinance, which appealed to their senses, Jesus showed that, with full knowledge of His power and superiority, He did not hold himself above those whom He loved. And,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ.

The Creator was kneeling at the feet of the simple fishermen, performing the service to show His love and fellowship with His children, and to set them and the church forever an example in humility. Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. The rule of His kingdom is self-sacrifice and service.

John 13

¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet.

¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

¹⁶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

¹⁷ If you know these things happy are you if you do them.

Not the duty of service, but the happiness of service is here enjoined. The forced service, the affectation of humility, is not a following of the Lord's example, but the service prompted by the love of Christ in the heart is the means of grace and joy.

The Danger of Self-Exaltation

Self-exaltation has been the cause of all the trouble since Lucifer said in heaven,

Isaiah 14

¹³ I will exalt my throne.

He exalted himself and fell. Then he persuaded man to join him in his religion of self-conceit and rebellion. To save man, Jesus humbled himself more than any man.

Philippians 2

⁹ Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him.

Not lifting up oneself but humbling oneself is the way of honor; not that it is possible for one to humble himself in order to win exaltation, but that God gives grace to the one who seeks nothing for himself but that he may serve. Jesus says:

Matthew 11

²⁹ Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.

Vain man, in his petty pride, must learn humility of his Creator and Saviour. There had been a controversy among the disciples as to which should be the greater. On this His last night with them before the crucifixion He taught them what He meant by that saying,

Matthew 20

²⁵ You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise domin-

ion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

²⁶ But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

The Lord introduced this ordinance the same night that He instituted the Lord's Supper. Had its lesson been kept in mind there never could have arisen in the church that strife for the supremacy which led up to the Papacy.

And the lesson is not more for a lordly clergy, who assume authority over God's heritage, and whose movements are attended by stately pomp and ceremony, than for all the Lord's people. It is love of self that causes all the alienation and trouble among brethren.

The Spirit of Service

Jesus at the feet of His brethren (even of the traitor Judas, by that service making His last loving appeal to win him from his sin), is the example for the follower of the Lord. In such an attitude of mind no offense, even when intended, can cause resentment and bitter feelings. In the church of Christ self is dead, and Christ lives within the hearts of His children. He is...

Hebrews 13

⁸ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

Now his joy is to serve his brethren. Now he who has Christ within will be ambitious only to serve. This spirit is not something that can be put on. It is put into the life when...

Romans 5

⁵ ...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

Ephesians 4

³⁰ And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are

sealed unto the day of redemption.

³² And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

1 Peter 5

¹⁵ Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.

3. Our Lord's Last Passover

November 15, 22 and 29, 1883¹¹⁷

VII-24 (Washing the Disciples' Feet) / VII-26 (The Betrayer Revealed)

John 13:2-30

THERE is nothing in the life of our Lord that is unimportant; no act that should not be studied most carefully and reverently.

But of all the recorded events of His earthly ministry, those immediately connected with His death are the most important. Everything centers around this point; it is that upon which all our hope depends.

The Order of Events

It is not strange, therefore, that the order of the events connected with the Last Supper should be (as has been the case) the subject of much careful study. It is true that some deprecate any special effort to locate different events in our Lord's life, thinking that it tends to divert the mind from the moral truths intended to be conveyed; but to us it seems highly proper. Indeed, each study appears to be very necessary if we would realize the full import of all that He did.

It will be admitted that Christ was very careful in regard to the fitness of things. We cannot conceive of His doing anything out of place. Many scenes in His life that appear abrupt, and for which no reason can be given when considered by themselves, are fully explained when we consider the circumstances under which they took place.

Of course there are many incidents in the life of Christ which cannot be assigned to any particular time or place; they are complete in themselves. But we think that those events in the life of our Lord which stand closely related to any other event, may be properly located by a careful study of the differ-

¹¹⁷ This article is also included in Volume 7 of the Fragments series, "The Church."

ent accounts given by the four evangelists.

And as such study makes the narrative seem more real to us, and brings us to a clearer understanding of our Lord's life, the important truths which He taught must thereby certainly make a deeper impression upon us.

It is not because there has not been much discussion on the subject that it is taken up here. The various conflicting theories have been treated at length; so great that the average reader often becomes confused before he arrives at the author's conclusion. And in the books on this subject we find, as we think, a mixture of truth and error. We shall endeavor as much as possible to simplify the evidence in the account, and so present it that all may take their Bibles and trace the matter for themselves.

Matthew and *Mark* give almost precisely the same account of the events of the Passover night. They note the sitting down to supper, the designation of the one who would betray Jesus, and the Lord's Supper. Both follow the same order.

It is quite certain, that while they have omitted many things, they have given those events in their proper order. *Luke* does not follow the same order, but he mentions one point which the others omit—the strife among the disciples.

John says nothing about the Lord's Supper, but he gives a minute account, which is not mentioned by any of the others. A comparison of the four accounts will show that John's is the most complete in its detail, and we shall therefore use that as a basis. Separating it into its parts we have the following table:

1. The supper.	John 13:2
2. Jesus rises and washes their feet.	John 13:4-11
3. He takes His garments again.	John 13:12
4. He explains His act and bids them	John 13:12-17

follow His example.	
5. He says that one sitting at the table with Him would betray Him.	John 13:18
6. He tells how the traitor may be known.	John 13:23-26
7. He gives the sop to Judas.	John 13:26
8. Judas immediately goes out.	John 13:30

Before going further we must harmonize an apparent discrepancy in John's narrative. In verses 2 and 4 we read:

John 13

² And supper being ended...

⁴ He rose from supper...

And then follows the account of the feet washing. Thus the idea generally obtains that the Passover supper was entirely finished before the feet washing was performed. But in verses 12, 23-30, we again find them at supper. The question now arises,

"What relation, in point of time, does the feet washing sustain to the Passover supper?"

We reply, It took place at the beginning of the supper, and offer the following proof: The original for,

"And supper being ended,"

is, *kai deipnon genomenon*, which may be translated,

"And supper being ready."

The *Revised Version* renders it,

"And during supper."

Greenfield's *Lexicon* has it,

"During supper."

Robinson's *Lexicon*, on the verb alone, says:

“f) of any location, e.g. a repast, to be prepared, made ready, *John 13:2*.”

The Emphatic Diaglott:

“While supper was preparing.”

Speaker’s Commentary:

“During supper.”

Clarke’s Commentary:

“While supper was preparing.”

Campbell:

“While they were at supper.”

Barnes says on this text:

“This translation expresses too much. The original means, while they were at supper; and that this is the meaning is clear from the fact that we find them still eating after this. The Arabic and Persic translations give it this meaning.”

Other good authorities give this meaning also. It may then be considered as settled that John’s account is consistent with itself, and that the feet washing took place during, or near the beginning of the meal. If supper was ready, and they were already sitting down when this event occurred, it would be perfectly consistent to say that it happened during supper.

We will now consider a circumstance mentioned only by Luke—the strife among the disciples. It is recorded in *Luke 22:24*, after the account of the supper and the pointing out of the traitor.

But there is very strong evidence to show that Luke’s account is not chronological. And here we would remark that although Luke’s account is very minute in his description of many things, he seems to have in general made no attempt to

follow the order of events. His account of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness is a case in point.

We first notice that the language of *Luke 22:27* is similar to that of *John 13:16*. Christ's reproof and instruction in *Luke 22:25-27*, are evidently the same as His remarks in connection with the ordinance of feet washing. It is most natural to conclude that this humiliating ordinance was given immediately in connection with the strife of the disciples as to who should be accounted the greatest.

It is impossible to think for a moment that any such strife could have taken place after that lesson on humility. But we have seen that the feet washing took place at the beginning of the supper. Then the strife (*Luke 22:24*) must have preceded the supper, and is recorded by Luke out of its proper place.

Again, concerning what would the disciples be most likely to contend at that time? We answer: They would naturally contend as to who should have the precedence at table. Among the ancients the distinctions in age or rank were clearly defined, and at table the oldest or most honorable had certain seats assigned them. An instance of this is found in:

Genesis 43

³³ And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marveled one at another.

Among all people, even at the present time, there is a difference, in point of precedence, in the seats at the table, and table etiquette is very clearly defined and strictly observed. The same point is brought out in:

Matthew 23

⁶ And [the scribes and Pharisees] love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues.

Mark 12

³⁸ And He said unto them in His doctrine, Beware of the

scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,

³⁹ And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts.

Luke 14

⁷ And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

⁸ When you are bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than you be bidden of him;

⁹ And he that bade you and him come and say to you, Give this man place; and you begin with shame to take the lowest room.

¹⁰ But when you are bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade you comes, he may say unto you, Friend, go up higher: then shall you have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with you.

¹¹ For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.

Here Christ reproved those who chose the chief places. There is certainly nothing else concerning which they could strive for the precedence on this occasion. And this strife furnished an occasion for Christ to give them the most impressive lesson on humility. But this again shows that the ordinance of the washing took place at the beginning of the meal.

Some may object, and say that their strife was as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and that it did not refer to their place at the table. But the disciples still looked for a temporal kingdom, which they thought Christ was soon to set up; and they would naturally expect that their rank in the kingdom would be determined by the position they occupied previous to its being set up. With this view their place at table was to them a matter of great importance.

That we may keep the subject clear in our minds, we will

now state in their order the events that occurred up to the present point of the investigation.

1. Supper being ready, Jesus sat down. He was the host, and of course took the first place.
2. A strife arose among the disciples as to who should have the place of honor, that being, doubtless, the one nearest to Jesus.
3. To rebuke this unseemly strife, He rose from supper and proceeded to wash their feet, teaching them by precept and example that humility was the only ground of preferment in His kingdom.
4. Having completed this ceremony, He resumed His garments and sat down again to supper.

We have now to consider the remaining events of the Passover supper, and the institution of the Lord's Supper. Although in *Exodus* 12, where the directions for the Passover are recorded, there is no mention made of wine, we learn from the Rabbinical writings that four cups were drank during the meal.

Matthew and *Mark* speak only of the cup which Christ blessed as the emblem of His blood. *Luke* speaks of two cups:

Luke 22

¹⁷ And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

²⁰ Likewise also [He took] the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

The first one mentioned is one of those drank during the Passover supper; the second, verse 20, is plainly said to be the emblem of Christ's blood. And this verse furnishes proof that the Lord's Supper was instituted at the close of the Passover supper; for *Luke* says:

Luke 22

²⁰ Likewise also [He took] the cup *after supper*, saying, This

cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

There is no disagreement between *Luke 22:29*, and *Matthew 26:26*: The first says:

Luke 22

²⁹ Likewise also [He took] the cup after supper.

The latter says:

Matthew 26

²⁶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

²⁷ And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it.

The unleavened bread was on the table as part of the Passover meal. While they were at table, and some of them still eating, Jesus took of this bread, and did as is recorded. This act, and the solemn manner of Christ marked the close of the Passover meal, so that when He took the cup it was indeed after supper.

Was Judas a Partaker?

We have now sufficient data from which to ascertain whether or not Judas partook of the Lord's Supper. All of the evangelists state that it was while they were at supper that he was pointed out.

Matthew 26

²¹ And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

²² And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

²³ And He answered and said, He that dips his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

²⁴ The Son of man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

²⁵ Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said.

Mark 14

¹⁸ And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eats with me shall betray me.

¹⁹ And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?

²⁰ And He answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dips with me in the dish.

²¹ The Son of man indeed goes, as it is written of Him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

Luke 22

²¹ But, behold, the hand of him that betrays me is with me on the table.

²² And truly the Son of man goes, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed!

²³ And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

John 13

¹⁸ I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.

²¹ When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

²² Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spoke.

²³ Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

²⁴ Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spoke.

²⁵ He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it?

²⁶ Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

Thus the prophecy in Psalm 41 was fulfilled:

Psalm 41

⁹ Yea, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

John tells us (*John* 13:26) that the traitor was designated by Jesus giving him a sop when he had dipped it in the dish. But this shows that they were then partaking of the Passover, which as we have seen, was after the feet-washing, and before the Lord's Supper. John further tells us that when Judas had received the sop,

John 13

³⁰ ...[he] went immediately out.

The conclusion, then, is unavoidable, that Judas was not present when Jesus instituted His memorial supper. *Matthew* 26:27 is urged as an objection against this conclusion:

Matthew 26

²⁷ And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it.

Mark also says that they all drank of it. But we reply that "all" need not necessarily refer to the twelve, but might refer only to all who were present; for after Judas had left them, and Christ was in the garden with only the eleven, He said to them,

³¹ All you shall be offended because of me this night.

No one will claim that Judas was present with them. Luke's account is supposed by some to disprove this conclusion. In order to make the subject perfectly clear, we will give his account in full.

Luke 22

¹⁷ And He took the cup [one of the Passover cups], and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves;

¹⁸ For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine,

until the kingdom of God shall come.

¹⁹ And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

²⁰ Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

²¹ But, behold, the hand of him that betrays me is with me on the table.

The objection is, that Christ is here represented as mentioning the traitor but not until after it had taken place, and that, consequently, Judas was at the Lord's Supper. To this we answer thus:

1. We already proved that the Lord's Supper followed the Passover (*Luke 22:20*), and that Judas left during the Passover supper. See *John 13:30*, in connection with the other proofs given above.
2. We have also seen that Luke's account is not chronological; that he mentions many events out of their regular order.

There is, therefore, no alternative left us but to conclude that *Luke* has not followed the consecutive order of the events in this instance. Should we conclude otherwise, we not only make confusion of the accounts of the other evangelists, but we make *Luke* inconsistent with himself.

But it is still further objected that there is no break between verses 19 and 20, and that the statement,

²¹ Behold, the hand of him that betrays me is with me on the table,

—closely follows the words,

²⁰ This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you,

—the two sentences being connected by the conjunction “but.” Keeping in mind the two points already brought out, as

just mentioned above, a reference to the Greek of the text will remove this objection. The word translated “but” in verse 21 is *pleen*.

Liddell & Scott’s *Lexicon* gives this definition:

“Adv. after parenthesis, yet, still, but.”

Robinson says of it:

“At the beginning of a clause, much more, rather, besides, passing over into an adversative particle, but rather, but yet, nevertheless;—Also where the writer returns after a digression to a previous topic.”

Andrews’ *Latin Lexicon* says the same of the corresponding word in the Vulgate.

Thus this objection is entirely removed. *Luke* introduces the subject of the Passover, and speaks of the cup. This seems to remind him of the Lord’s Supper, and he briefly describes that in verses 19-20, they being thrown in parenthetically, and in verse 21 he resumes the narrative concerning the Passover.

We think, therefore, that Luke’s account does not disagree in the least with that of the other evangelists, nor disprove our conclusion that Judas was not present when the Lord’s Supper was instituted.

Open or Closed Communion

This fact is not without weight upon the subject of open or closed communion. When we consider the nature and object of the Lord’s Supper, it will appear that Christ could not have allowed Judas to remain on that solemn occasion. The object of the Lord’s Supper is stated thus:

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you show the Lord’s death till He come.

This information Paul says he...

²³ ...received of the Lord.

The supper, then, was intended as a memorial, to keep in mind the death and not merely to keep the fact in mind, but as an expression of the partaker's belief in Christ's death.

But a mere belief that Christ died is not sufficient to constitute Bible belief in this great sacrifice. The devils believe, but their belief is of no benefit to them. There are many disbelievers in Christianity who will admit that there was such a being as Christ, and that He died; and yet their belief is of no profit to them, for they do not discern Christ's divine nature, nor the object for which He died.

We must understand that He died to vindicate the claims of justice; that God's law had been broken, and that the death of the sinner was demanded; that Christ died in man's stead, that through faith in Him we might be saved from death. But,

James 2

²⁰ Faith without works is dead.

And therefore our faith in Christ is nothing unless accompanied by obedience. To reap any benefit from Christ's sacrifice we must turn from our sins, and keep the whole law of God. See *Isaiah* 1:16-18; 55:7; *Romans* 6:1-6; *Matthew* 7:21-23; *Luke* 6:46, etc.

Now no one, however "liberal," would claim that one who has no faith in Christ could be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. No one would think of inviting a heathen or a profane worldling to that ordinance.

But, as we have seen, faith in Christ implies an honest desire to keep God's law; consequently, no one who is a violator of the law of God, even though he may profess faith in Christ, has a right to come to the Lord's table. We think this proposition cannot be controverted.

We do not say that one must be without fault before he can

commune, but he must have repentance for his sins, and an earnest desire to put them away. With trust in God, that he for Christ's sake will forgive sin, the individual must humbly strive to walk in the light as fast as God shows it to him.

Now how was it would Judas? We find that he had cherished his selfish and avaricious feelings, and had finally yielded to them altogether, and had been stealing from the common purse which our Lord and His disciples had.

John 12

⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bore what was put therein.

He had been carrying on a constant deception. He had become so hardened, even under the sublime teachings and solemn warnings of Christ, that he had bargained to betray his Lord. He had deliberately sold himself to the devil for twenty dollars. He was a thief, a liar, a murderer, and a traitor; a villain of the deepest die; a hardened, unrepentant sinner.

And his sin is augmented by the fact that he sinned against the greatest light that any man could have. It would have been sacrilege for such a one to eat of the Lord's Supper; to partake of the body and blood of Christ. We read:

1 John 1

⁷ If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

But Judas was walking in darkness, and could have no fellowship with Christ and His loyal disciples. He had nothing in common with them. He was with them, but not of them.

These two positions strengthen each other. From the very nature of the Lord's Supper, as explained by the Holy Spirit, we see that it would have been morally impossible for Judas to remain on that occasion; and by our Lord's action we may learn something as to what persons may be permitted to eat

of the supper which is called by His name.

For in the light of the foregoing testimony it seems clear that Christ designed that the traitor should be pointed out at the time that he was, so that he might withdraw and not be present at the ordinance which was to follow. This idea is strengthened by our Lord's words to Judas,

John 13

²⁷ What you do, do quickly.

²⁸ Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spoke this unto him.

Although none of the disciples fully understood that Judas was to betray Christ (or that he was to do it immediately), yet the fact that Christ knew of his intentions, and that nothing could be gained by further attempt at concealment, would naturally cause him to obey Christ's command to go at once.

To the proposition that none but those who show their faith in Christ by obedience to God's law can rightfully partake of the Lord's Supper, it may be objected that, although Christ, who was its founder, had a right to bar whomsoever He saw fit, His followers are not competent judges as to who is worthy and who is not; that they have no right to deprive anyone of the privilege. It is claimed that such an act savors of bigotry, and is a mark of illiberality. To this we would reply:

1. It is the Lord himself who sets the standard; His followers dare not go beyond Him.
2. The question of liberality or illiberality is not concerned in the case. One may be liberal with that which is his own, and may dispose of it as he pleases; but to take the same freedom with that which is another's would be sin. But the supper in question is "the Lord's Supper;" consequently no one but He can dispense its privileges. The word "illiberal," when used with reference to those who do not believe in communing with law-breakers, is sadly misapplied.

3. Those who do so cannot be said to deprive anybody of the privilege of communion. They simply refuse to commune with them for the obvious reason that communion with them is impossible. There is not perfect union and harmony. There cannot be while one keeps the law and the other pursues in breaking it.

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁴ For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?

4. No one decides as to another's fitness or unfitness; the individual does that for himself. If he professes to have faith in Christ and to love God's law, no one can have any right or wish to exclude him. He may be at heart a law-breaker, although correct in his profession; but of this no one can judge. God alone can read the heart. If the individual presumes to act the part of a hypocrite, the responsibility is his own. And,
5. As to being deprived of the privilege of the Lord's Supper, we would reply, that it is very far from being a privilege to one who is unworthy. Paul tells us in *1 Corinthians* 11:15 that he who does not discern the Lord's body is an unworthy partaker. The phrase, "not discerning the Lord's body," means that the individual does not realize the nature and object of the ordinance. This would be the case if the person did not realize that Christ's blood was shed...

Romans 3

²⁵ ...for the remission of sins that are passed,

—and that when we accept it in our case we virtually pledge ourselves to abstain from sin in the future;

1 John 2

⁶ ...to walk, even as He walked.

In short, if a person presumes upon the mercy of God, and thinks that the sacrifice of Christ renders any effort on his part unnecessary, he would certainly be unworthy. And Paul

says that he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself.

The ordinances of the Gospel are duties to be performed, and not merely privileges to be enjoyed. But they are not duties that are enjoined upon all, irrespective of their condition.

There are two kinds of duty: primary and secondary; and it is the non-performance of the first that makes necessary the performance of the second. It is every person's duty to keep the law of God. There is no individual who is free from this obligation. Had man never sinned, keeping the law of God would have been his whole duty.

But all men have sinned, and now God commands all men everywhere to repent. Christ died that we might find forgiveness of our sins by repentance and faith in Him, and we are called upon to show our faith by performing certain duties. But we are not called upon to do these duties without first having repented. Christ's teaching was,

Mark 1

¹⁵ Repent, and believe the gospel.

Paul preached,

Acts 20

²¹ Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the true order. And the repentance must be complete. We must keep the whole law. Keeping eight-tenths or nine-tenths of the law is not enough.

The Need of Unity

As we have before remarked, then, there is no exclusiveness about the matter. Certain ones who do not render obedience to all the law of God, will say,

“Come, let us partake of communion together.”

We would be glad to do so, but how can there be communion when there is disagreement? When they say,

“Let us commune together,”

it is equivalent to saying,

“Let us show our union or agreement; let there be perfect harmony between us.”

And yet they refuse to agree. It is sometimes said:

“We will waive this point; we will not let our opinions interfere; we will agree to disagree.”

But an agreement to disagree is disagreement still, and brings no union. Besides, it is not our opinion that separates us, but the commandment of God.

But what if the person asking to commune does not understand all the law, but is walking up to all the light that he has? Then give him the further instruction that he needs. If he has been conscientiously walking in all the light that he had, he will thank God for further light, and will at once accept it.

But what if he cannot see as you do, and is still honestly trying to do right? Then pray that his eyes be opened. If he is really honest, God will not permit him to wander in darkness.

But whether honest or dishonest, whether walking in the light or self-deceived, there can be no true communion where there is material disagreement. The Saviour prayed thus for His disciples:

John 17

¹¹ Holy Father, keep through your own name those whom You have given me, that they may be one, as we are.

And in this prayer He included his whole church, for He said:

²⁰ Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall

believe on me through their word;

²¹ That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us.

Christ, then, did not contemplate many churches, nor one church with the individual branches “each serving God in his own way,” but an individual church, between the members of which the union should be as close as it was between Him and the Father.

And this union and harmony was not intended to be a union which should be brought about by an agreement to ignore certain doctrines of the word of God, for that would be union only in name. The prayer of the Lord Jesus was:

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth.

Christian union, therefore, can only exist where all believe and speak the same thing. The apostles continually urged this state of things upon those to whom they wrote.

Romans 12

¹⁶ Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Romans 15

⁵ Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 13

¹¹ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Philippians 2

² Fulfill you my joy, that you be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Philippians 3

¹⁶ Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

1 Peter 3

⁸ Finally, be all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

To say that it is impossible for all to see alike, is to impeach the wisdom of Christ and His inspired apostles. The exhortation of Paul is peculiarly noteworthy:

1 Corinthians 1

¹⁰ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same judgment.

Nothing could indicate more perfect unity than this. All must have one mind and one judgment. And this state of things existed in the early church, as we learn from:

Acts 4

³² And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul.

What has been done can be done; and this condition must necessarily exist among the true followers of Christ.

A Lesson in Humility

There is another lesson that we may learn from the example of Christ on this occasion; one that all the followers of Christ should ever keep in mind, and which if acted upon, would take the edge off from any such epithet as “exclusive” or “bigoted.” It is this:

Christ could not suffer Judas to commune with His loving followers, and yet He washes his feet. What an amazing instance of humility! The King of glory condescends to wash the feet of His betrayer, a vile wretch with whom He could have

nothing in common. No word of harshness or reproach for his perfidy, but a manifestation of tenderness, as though he were His best friend.

And after giving Judas this proof of His gentleness and humility, He gives him to understand all his villainy is known, and delicately requests him to do his work at once, that his presence may not mar the scene of harmony and love that should follow.

4. Showing Love by Receiving Service

Present Truth, November 22, 1900

Timeline: VII-24 (Washing the Disciples' Feet)

John 13:8

WHEN, on the night that He was betrayed, Jesus was washing the feet of His disciples, Peter said to Him,

John 13

⁸ You shall never wash my feet.

He would gladly have washed the feet of the Master, or have done any other service for Him, and would have counted it an honor to be allowed to do the most “menial” task for his Lord; but he shrank from being waited on by Jesus. Jesus replied,

⁸ If I wash you not, you have no part with me,

—and then Peter was more than willing to accept the service.

There is a lesson in this that we are very likely to overlook. People often forget that love is shown in receiving, just as well as in giving. Many wish to do everything themselves, but are too proud to receive service from others. Peter of course felt that he was too humble to receive such service from his Master and Lord; yet there is a part of humility that is really pride, but it is no part of love.

Whoever really loves another is willing to receive favors from the one loved. This is most strikingly apparent in our relation to the Lord. There is nothing in the world that we can do for Him.

Romans 11

³⁵ Who has first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

³⁶ For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be the glory for ever.

The only way we can show our love for Him is by taking His gifts as freely and gladly as He bestows them.

Psalm 116

¹² What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation.

To hold ourselves aloof from Him, and take His benefits, without which we cannot live, under protest, as it were, not being willing to acknowledge ourselves under obligation to Him, is an evidence of lack of love for Him.

When we know how to love Him as we ought, we shall know how to love our fellow-beings on earth.

5. Something to be Followed

Signs of the Times, July 15, 1886

Timeline: VII-24 (Washing the Disciples' Feet)

John 13:14-15

IN REPLY to some queries an exchange has a column of replies, among which is the following categorical answer:

“We should not follow Christ’s example in washing one another’s feet.”

And this notwithstanding Christ’s emphatic statement:

John 13

¹⁴ If I then, [your] Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

An “example” is something “which is to followed or imitated;” and Christ said that He designed that His disciples should follow His example. He wished them to do as He had done to them.

More than this, “ought” implies duty; it is the old form of the past tense of the word “owe” and therefore indicates obligation. If we say a person ought to do a certain thing, we indicate that to do that thing is a debt that he owes. So when Christ says,

¹⁴ ...you ought to wash one another’s feet,

He means that to do so is a duty; it is a debt that Christians owe. Again Christ says:

John 13

¹⁷ If you know these things, happy are you are if you do them.

“Happy” is equivalent to “blessed.” A blessing is pronounced on those who do according to Christ’s example in this respect.

And what if, knowing these things, we do not do them? Certainly the blessings will be withheld. The matter is as plain as words can make it.

True, there is only one mention of it in the Bible; but do those who plead this fact as against the adoption of the ordinance, mean to imply that Christ never did and said the things recorded in the 13th chapter of *John*? We believe not, for we never heard any doubt expressed as to the truthfulness of the account.

Then if it is a fact that Christ washed His disciples' feet, and said,

¹⁴ ...you also ought to wash one another's feet;

¹⁵ For I have given you an example,

—isn't it just as valid as though the account were repeated fifty times? It certainly is.

We are morally certain that if such evidence could be found in favor of Sunday-keeping, or of "infant baptism," those who believe in these practices would not ask for any stronger testimony in their support.

We also know that there are hundreds of men who would shout for exultation if they could find as strong an argument for Sunday-keeping as the 13th of *John* contains for feet-washing.

The trouble is, it is too humiliating an ordinance to be generally adopted; and a strong tendency nowadays is to reject all the Bible except Christ's own words, and to reject all of His words that are unpalatable.

6. The Greatness of Service

Present Truth, June 28, 1894

Timeline: VII-24 (Washing the Disciples' Feet)

Luke 22:25-27

SERVICE is not a mark of degradation, but of greatness. We are accustomed to think of the position of a servant as a menial one, because it has been made so in the majority of cases by the customs and traditions of men; but considered from the standpoint of Gospel truth, it is not so. To His disciples the Saviour said,

Luke 22

²⁵ The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

²⁶ But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serves.

²⁷ For whether is greater, he that sits at meat? but I am among you as he that serves.

From the world's standpoint, he that sits at meat is greater than he that serves; yet Christ, the only begotten Son of the eternal God, came and took on earth a place of a servant; and in this He did not degrade himself, but invested with His own glory and greatness all service for the benefit of our fellow-men.

And is not God himself the greatest servant in the universe? Who does so much to minister to the comfort and happiness of all creatures as He?

Not only does He minister in things that are great and exalted, but in all the little things that pertain to daily existence, whether of high or low, rich or poor. The veriest vagabond of the street is not passed by. To him, equally with the prince, it is granted to live and move and have his being in the Lord.

Acts 17

²⁸ For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

He gives to him...

²⁵ ...life, and breath, and all things,

—as freely as to anyone else.

Matthew 5

⁴⁵ He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

The path that leads to greatness is the path of service; and in proportion to the service we have rendered to our fellows here, and to the capacity we have developed for being a blessing to others, will be the height of the station assigned us in the world hereafter.

7. The Lord's Supper (1898)

Present Truth, May 19, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, May 29

Timeline: VII-22 (Preparation for the Passover) / VII-23 (Celebration of the Passover) / VII-25 (The Lord's Supper) / VII-26 (The Betrayer Revealed) / VII-28 (Retirement to Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:18-30

NO MERE empty form has any place in the Gospel of Christ. Every act which Jesus did while here upon the earth, and every ordinance which He instituted, is full of meaning.

The meaning may not always lie upon the surface, and the words addressed to Peter, when the Lord established the ordinance of feet-washing, may often be applicable:

John 13

⁷ What I do you know not now, but you shall know hereafter.

But the whole life of Jesus was simply a revelation of the Gospel, and every deed had its place and its significance. From the account given in another place concerning the institution of the Lord's Supper we learn what its meaning is:

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come.

That is to say, all that is accomplished by the work of Christ, which centers in His death on the cross, is designed to be set forth in the Lord's Supper. This gives to it a fullness of meaning which it is impossible for us to grasp all at once, or adequately to consider within the limits of a single article. We shall hope, however, to call attention to some of the great principles involved, from which each one may be able to draw other lessons, according to the extent of his own experience in the Gospel.

The Body of Christ

The record tells us that:

Matthew 26

²⁶ As they were eating, Jesus took the bread [“a loaf,” RV margin] and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

The previous verses speak of the preparations which had been made for the Passover supper, and it was this which they were eating. The bread, or the loaf, which Jesus took from the table, was therefore the bread provided for the Passover supper. And this we know was unleavened bread.

Deuteronomy 16

³ You shall eat no leavened bread with it, [the Passover]; seven days shall you eat unleavened bread therewith.

When Jesus took the bread from the table, just such bread as they had been eating, He did nothing which would even suggest transubstantiation, but He simply blessed it (“gave thanks,” margin) just as He did when He fed the hungry multitude,¹¹⁸ and said, “This is my body.”

The Life of God

The force of this statement may be more clearly seen if we consider briefly the real purpose of the work of Christ in behalf of man. He found the whole human family...

Ephesians 4

¹⁸ ...alienated from the life of God,

Ephesians 2

¹ ...dead in trespasses and sins,

—and He declared the aim of His mission in these words:

¹¹⁸ **Mark 6** ⁴¹ And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fishes He divided among them all.

John 10

¹⁰ I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

All life is of God, the Father, whose distinguishing characteristic is that:

Jeremiah 10

¹⁰ He is the living God.

This life has been revealed in His only begotten Son.

John 5

²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in himself.

God is independent and self-existent. His name is I AM. *Exodus* 3:14. But man is neither independent nor self-existent. God through Jesus Christ is the source and the preserver of his life.

Acts 17

²⁸ In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

This was just as true before sin entered into the world, as it has been since that time.

Ere sin entered into God's fair universe, and while as yet there was no estrangement between Him and any of His creatures, and so no need as yet of atonement and reconciliation, there was for all this, need of One who should stand between the Uncreated and the created Life.¹¹⁹

Now the original sin of man was the refusal to recognize this fact.

It was the lust of independence at whatever cost; the longing for a separate kingdom of his own, the assertion of self and of self-sufficiency, the dethronement, the annihilation of God, the deification of self.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ J. G. Butler, *The Bible-Work: The Old Testament*, Vol. 1, Chapter 23, 1889.

¹²⁰ P. G. Medd, *The One Mediator*, Lecture II, 1884.

The inducement which Satan held out for disobedience was,

Genesis 3 [RV]

⁵ You shall be as God.

Life Through Union With Christ

But Jehovah is...

John 17

³ ...the only true [real] God,

—and beside Him there is none else, and the exaltation which was promised on condition of disobedience and departure from God proved to be a fall, and dependent man would at that moment have ceased to exist, if it had not been for the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

Titus 2

¹⁴ Who gave himself for us.

He through whom all things were created and sustained before sin appeared, accepted the additional burden of sin, and still offered to minister life to the human family. But this involved His taking our flesh and suffering in it the penalty of sin, and so uniting himself with us as the Son of man in the experience of death that we might be united with Him in the experience of life.

Romans 6 [RV]

⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection;

⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death no more has dominion over Him.

¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died unto sin once: but the life that He lives, He lives unto God.

¹¹ Even so reckon you also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

The Bread of Life

Now it was God's plan that man, even in his state of inno-

cence, should receive life by eating such food as the Lord provided for him.

Genesis 1

²⁹ And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And the lesson which it was necessary to teach to man after he had sinned, and which it is necessary for us to learn today, is that in the bread which we eat every day we are receiving life from God through Jesus Christ, who said:

John 6

³² ...my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

³³ For the bread of God is He which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world.

⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.

⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of the bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

We are now better prepared to understand the meaning of His statement,

Matthew 26

²⁶ This is my body.

The life of God, from which man cut himself off by his own sin, has been restored to him in the gift of Jesus,

Colossians 3

⁴ ...who is our life.

The curse, which is death, came upon all things, but:

Galatians 3

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

By His death on the cross the channel of life from God to man was kept open for all, and through the acceptance of Christ by faith this gift of life may be continued to us throughout eternity. While...

Romans 6

²³ ...the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,

—yet this life is supplied to us in the food which God provides for us, of which bread, being in itself a perfect food, is a complete representative. The grain, from which the bread is prepared, is simply the body in which the life of the Word is brought to us.

Luke 8

¹¹ The seed is the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 15

³⁸ But God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.

And so all unleavened bread, which is simply bread in which there is no element of decay or death, is the body which the Lord himself has given to His own life, in order that by eating it we might receive life from Him. Those who recognize it as being wholly a gift of God, brought to us by the Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and so receive it by faith as the manifested life of Jesus, will enjoy this blessing of life for ever and will...

Revelation 22

¹⁴ ...have right to the tree of life.

Isaiah 65

²¹ And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

Popish Assumption

The claim that any human being has the power by any

words of his to change the bread into the Lord's body is simply the assertion of that spirit which...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁴ ...opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

It is a refusal to recognize what God has already done, for:

1 Corinthians 15

³⁸ God gives it a body as it has pleased Him,

—and an assuming of the prerogatives of God the Creator. It is the same denial of man's dependence which cut man off from the life of God in the first place. Man is simply the creature, and not the creator, and his only hope is in recognizing this fact, and receiving life from God in harmony with His plan, without pretending to any power which would render him independent of God, and make a Saviour unnecessary.

Matthew 26

²⁶ Take, eat; this is my body.

The Fruit of the Vine

²⁷ And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it;

²⁸ For this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

The principles already set forth will apply with equal force to the statement of Jesus concerning the wine. The blood is the life.

Genesis 9

⁴ But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, you shall not eat.

Jesus has said,

John 15

¹ I am the true vine.

In the pure, unfermented juice of the grape, the product of the vine, we have the nearest possible approach to liquid life just as God has prepared it. But, just as in the case of the bread, this gift of life comes to us through Jesus and His work in our behalf, and is in very truth His life, His blood.

At the marriage of Cana of Galilee, Jesus changed the water into wine by His own life-giving power, and so gave them His own life to drink, just as He gave the multitude His own life to eat when He multiplied the loaves by the same power.

The pretended power assumed by man to change the wine of the Lord's Supper into His blood, is:

1. A rejection of the fact of man's entire dependence upon God for life,
2. A putting of himself in the place of God, and
3. The assertion of his ability to save himself.

Thus does the Lord's Supper show forth His death, and the fact that we receive life through His death, and lifts eating and drinking above the mere gratification of appetite, and teaches us how to eat and drink to the glory of God.

It is designed to show us that there is but one life and that is the life of God, and that it is only through the Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus that we have life now, and that through our faith in the same Gospel that same life will be continued to us as long as God himself shall live.

How glorious it will be to realize this experience in the...

2 Peter 3

¹³ ...new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

Revelation 21

³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them,

and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Revelation 22

³ And there shall be no more curse.

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come.

8. Unleavened Bread at Communion

Signs of the Times, March 25, 1886

Timeline: VII-22 (Preparation for the Passover) / VII-23 (Celebration of the Passover) / VII-25 (The Lord's Supper) / VII-26 (The Betrayer Revealed) / VII-28 (Retirement to Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:17-30

What kind of bread should be used in a celebration of the Lord's Supper? Some say that unleavened bread alone should be used; others argue for leavened bread; and still others say that it makes no difference. Which is right?

TO ANSWER categorically, we should say that only unleavened bread should be used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The reasons for this answer are as follows:

The Example of Christ

By using the bread we follow the example of Christ. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ in connection with the last Passover (*Matthew 26:17-30*), and it is certain that only unleavened bread was used on that occasion; because during the whole of the Passover week, no particle of leaven was allowed in the Jewish dwelling. The law on this point was very strict.

Exodus 12

¹⁸ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

¹⁹ Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eats that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.

²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations you shall eat unleavened bread.

This may be said to be only negative testimony; but it is

more than can be produced in favor of leavened bread. If in the absence of positive command, we follow the example of Christ, we certainly cannot go wrong. But this is not all that we have.

Representing Christ's Body

The Lord's Supper is designed to represent the death of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come.

It is a memorial of that which was foreshadowed by the Passover and by all the sacrifices of the old ceremonial law. There is, therefore, the same reason for using unleavened bread in the Lord's Supper that there was for using it in the Passover. When Christ broke the bread, He said:

¹⁴ This is my body, which is broken for you.

Since the bread of the communion represents Christ's body, it must be without blemish, or else it is not a fit symbol; for Peter says:

1 Peter 1

¹⁸ You know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Now leaven is a fermentation, and fermentation is decomposition and decay. Then certainly leavened bread cannot officially represent the spotless body of Christ, any more than leavened or fermented wine can properly represent His precious blood. Therefore we hold that it was no accident which led to the use of unleavened bread at the institution of the Lord's Supper.

A Plain Command

This conclusion is verified by *Exodus* 23:18, which reads thus:

Exodus 23

¹⁸ You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread.

This is a positive commandment, and leaves us no choice in the matter. It cannot be said that this applies only to the sacrifices under the old ceremonial law; for they were no more the blood of the Lord's sacrifice than is the cup of the Lord's Supper. Indeed, the Bible speaks more plainly of this than it does of those; for Christ himself said, when He took the cup:

Matthew 26

²⁸ This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

It is plain enough that *Exodus* 23:18 does not refer to the literal blood of Christ; for no man ever offered, or could offer that with anything; and it is equally plain that it does not refer to anything that was or used to represent Christ's blood, whether before or after His death.

In view of the reasons here given, and especially of the explicit commandment in *Exodus* 23:18, we think we are justified in saying not only that it is right to use unleavened bread at communion, but that it is wrong to use any other.

It may seem to some a trifling matter, but nothing can be a trifling matter upon which the Lord has seen fit to give the commandment.

9. The Lord's Supper (1901)

Present Truth, February 7, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for February 17

Timeline: VII-22 (Preparation for the Passover) / VII-23 (Celebration of the Passover) / VII-25 (The Lord's Supper) / VII-26 (The Betrayer Revealed) / VII-28 (Retirement to Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:17-30

THERE are several interesting things in the portion of Scripture set apart for this lesson besides the Lord's Supper itself; but if we spend time over the sending of the two disciples, Peter and John, into the city, to find the place for the Passover Supper, and the wonderful way in which everything took place just as Jesus had foretold, we shall have no time for that which is to us of the greatest importance.

One thing, however, we may note in passing, and that is that the disciples do not seem to have been at all surprised that Jesus knew just what they would find in the city, and what the man whom He said they would meet would say to them. They seemed to take it as a matter of course that the Master should know everything. Can we not be as trustful?

A Lesson of Loving Service

There is one thing intimately connected with the Lord's Supper, which is commonly overlooked and ignored. That is the washing of the feet of the disciples, which took place just as the Passover meal was ready, and the disciples were sitting down. The rendering, "supper being ended," of *John* 13:2 in the *Common Version*, is incorrect. "Supper being ready" is what we should read, or "during supper," as in the *Revised Version*.

Luke 22

²⁴ There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

This strife would very naturally show itself in an attempt to

secure the place of honor at table, especially at this time, when they supposed that Christ was about to take the kingdom. We know that this is a matter of no small importance to worldly people. Jesus therefore told them that the place of honor in His kingdom is the place of greatest and lowliest service; and He gave them a practical illustration of this, by rising from the table and washing their feet. Then He said,

John 13

¹³ You call me Master and Lord; and you say well; for so I am.

¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet.

¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

No commandment of the Lord Jesus is more emphatic than this, preceded by His own example. Why is it not obeyed by all who profess to be His followers?

If anything in the world could have won the heart of Judas, and held him back from the dark crime which he was about to commit, it would have been the sign of Jesus kneeling at his feet, and washing them. Yet Christ was the same then that He is now and always; and then, as always,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

Just such service the Lord is doing for us and for all mankind continually. Christ is greatest, because He does the greatest service; and the recognition of His constant, loving service for us will lead us continually to repentance, and will bind us to Him.

It is most fitting that the ordinance of foot washing should accompany the Lord's Supper, since both show communion with Christ. His word is Spirit, and we are made clean by the word which He speaks to us.

John 15

⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue in my love.

Ephesians 5

²⁵ Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it;

²⁶ That He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by a water bath in the word.

And,

John 13 [RV]

¹⁰ He that is bathed needs not save to wash his feet.

That is to say,

Colossians 2

⁶ As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.

Galatians 5

²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

The water in which the feet are washed, represents the water of life, the Spirit of God, in which we are continually to walk. Thus only have we fellowship with Christ; for He says,

John 13

⁵ If I wash you not, you have no part with me.

Supping with Christ

Whatever Christ did was the work of God in Him:

John 14 [RV]

¹⁰ Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me does His works.

And,

Ecclesiastes 3

¹⁴ Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever.

Therefore no act of Christ is merely for a moment or a day, but for eternity. It is not merely that its effects continue throughout eternity, but that every act of Christ on this earth in the flesh, is a revelation to us of His constant work, even when He is invisible to mortal eyes. So the Lord's Supper with His disciples, the same night that He was betrayed, shows us what He is daily doing. He says:

Revelation 3

²⁰ 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 sup with him, and he with me.

The Lord's Supper is a constant thing to all who know Him indeed. His flesh is true food, and His blood is true drink, so that whosoever eats of Him shall live by Him, and whoever does not eat of Him has no life.

John 6

⁵⁵ For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

⁵⁶ He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him.

⁵⁷ As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats me, even he shall live by me.

We are not only to sit down at table, and sup with Him, but He himself supplies the food, giving us himself to eat.

The Real Presence

Jesus was undoubtedly really present with His disciples that night in the upper room, and He is no less really present with us now; for He says:

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

There has been no end of controversy as to "the real presence" of Christ—whether or not He is really present in the Lord's Supper, and how He is present. All such controversy indicates strange blindness as to the words of Christ; for that

last Supper was for the express purpose of revealing His presence not only then, but at every meal.

As they were eating the Passover Supper, Jesus took some of the unleavened bread that was on the table (there was no other), and said,

Matthew 26

²⁶ This is my body.

All that is necessary is to believe His word. He had demonstrated the same thing, when He fed the five thousand in the wilderness. In His hands the five small loaves grew to food for the multitude, and there was more left, after all were filled, than when they began. The same truth was also shown in the giving of the manna—bread from heaven—in the desert.

1 Corinthians 10

³ [They] did all eat the same spiritual meat;

⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed [went with] them: and that Rock was Christ.

Christ is the living Bread sent down from heaven:

John 6

³⁴ Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

³⁵ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst.

⁴⁸ I am that bread of life.

⁴⁹ Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

And it was of Him that the children of Israel ate in the desert. He was really present then; He is as really present now.

Not Discerning the Lord's Body

Very few of the Jews in the wilderness recognized Christ's presence among them. They tempted Christ, saying,

Exodus 17

⁷ Is the Lord among us, or not?

1 Corinthians 10

⁹ Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

Because they did not believe, they did not enter into God's rest, but died in the desert. So we read, concerning the Lord's Supper:

1 Corinthians 11

²⁷ Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

²⁹ For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

³⁰ For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

It is just the same as it was with the chief priests and the rulers of the Jews. They did not recognize the presence of the Lord in a human body, and so they put Him to death as a criminal, saying,

Matthew 27

²⁵ His blood be on us, and on our children.

If they had known Him as...

1 Corinthians 2

⁷ ...the hidden wisdom,...the wisdom of God,

⁸ ...they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

They were none the less guilty, however, for they might have known if they had believed that which had been told them.

But professed Christians today are just as much in danger of rejecting Christ, and bringing upon themselves the blood of the Lord of glory, through not recognizing Him, as were the Jews of old.

John 14

⁶ [He is] the Life.

People say that our life comes from Him, but that does not fully express the truth; it rather tends to conceal its fullness. He is our life, and in taking that which imparts life to us, and continues it, we are taking Christ himself; for there is no life but His life—himself.

Whether we believe or not, we are living by Him,—by His flesh and blood,—just as were the unbelieving Jews in the wilderness. This life is given to us, in order that it may be...

2 Corinthians 4

¹¹ ...made manifest in our mortal flesh.

If we recognize that Christ is our life, then...

Galatians 2

²⁰ ...the life which we live in the flesh will be by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us.

Christ himself will live in us, doing the same works that He did when He came in Judea. Our part will be to yield to the life, that God may use it in His own way to His glory.

But if we do not recognize the life; if we do not discern the Lord's body in the gifts whereby we receive the life of God, then we take His life, without allowing the power of the resurrection life to appear in us. We are thus guilty of putting Him to death.

The death of the Lord is the bestowal of life upon us; there-

fore every breath of life that comes to us from God; every morsel of food that renews our fainting life; every drink of the refreshing, life-giving fluid that comes to us from the rock or the vine, is proof to us of the death of Christ—of His gift of himself to us, to...

Galatians 1

⁴ ...deliver us from this present evil world.

In everything that has life, and that gives life, the cross of Christ—the power of God—is revealed. Every meal that we eat, therefore; every glass of pure water, or pure fruit of the vine that we drink; every breath of life that we inhale, is proof to us that God has made us accepted in the Beloved, and that He gives Him to us for the forgiveness of our sins.

Do you thus know the Lord? Are you recognizing His presence daily and hourly, and every moment, and thus living by and with Him? If so you must be glad and rejoicing all the day, in the consciousness of God's pardoning love. If not,

Isaiah 55

⁶ Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.

Acts 17

²⁷ He [is] not far from every one of us;

²⁸ For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

10. Bread and Wine

Present Truth, February 5, 1903

Timeline: VII-25 (The Lord's Supper)

Matthew 26:26-29

THESE two elements, which form the perfect diet for men, are repeatedly spoken of in the Scriptures as that which God has given him for food. Melchizedek, Priest of the Most High God, representing Christ,

Genesis 14

¹⁸ ...brought forth bread and wine,

—for the refreshment of the patriarch Abraham. In *Psalms* 104 we read that God has given for the service of man...

Psalms 104

¹⁵ ...wine that makes glad the heart of man,...and bread which strengthens man's heart.

On the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread and wine to represent His broken body and shed blood, upon which we may feed by faith, and so have His life in us.

Matthew 26

²⁶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

²⁷ And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink all of it;

²⁸ For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

At different times both bread and wine were given in their perfection by Christ to His people. In the ordinary course of nature, the bread which strengthens man's heart, having passed through the earth, has been more or less affected by the curse under which the whole creation labors. It does not therefore convey a perfectly pure life, nor can it impart perfect strength.

But when Jesus fed the Israelites with bread from heaven, untouched by the curse, they ate...

Psalms 78 [margin]

²⁵ ...the bread of the mighty.

Again, when at the marriage feast He manifested forth His glory in the giving of wine direct from His personal presence, instead of through the usual channel, the people recognized that it was “good wine,” and different from that to which they were accustomed. It was, in fact, such wine as had not been tasted on earth, since Adam was driven out of Paradise, and forced to till the ground which should not henceforth yield unto him her strength.

Of both the bread and the wine we are told that we shall partake in the heavenly kingdom, the restored Eden. The bread that came from heaven is called...

Psalms 78

²⁵ ...angel's food,

—and Christ has promised to the overcomer that He will give him...

Revelation 2

¹⁷ ...to eat of the hidden manna.

He said also to His disciples when they drank wine at His table on the eve of His crucifixion,

Matthew 26

²⁹ I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new, with you in my Father's kingdom.

So as we come periodically to “the Lord's table” on earth, and take of the unfermented bread and wine by which He has chosen to reveal himself to us, we look forward to “that day” when through partaking of Him on earth, we shall feast with Him eternally in Paradise, where...

Revelation 22

³ ...there shall be no more curse.

11. The Promise of His Coming

Present Truth, June 14, 1894

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 13:33

OUR Lord had been on earth among men for several years. He had gathered about Him a little band of disciples who loved Him. Their eyes had seen Him, and their hands had handled Him, and they had walked and talked with Him as with a friend. His kindness and love had bound them to Him.

And now He tells them that He is going away. He had previously told the unbelieving Jews that He was going away, and that they should die in their sins, and could not follow Him. That caused His disciples no trouble because they believed on Him, and He surely would take them with Him wherever He went. But no; unto them also He said,

John 13

³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews; where I go you cannot come; so now I say to you.

What wonder that the disciples were sorely troubled at this announcement. But it is not in the heart of the loving Saviour to cause His children pain.

Lamentation 3

³² Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.

So He said to them:

John 14

¹ Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.

² In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.

³ I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a

place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

This promise is as sure as the word of God; and the word of God is as sure as His throne. We know that Christ was once here upon earth; therefore we may know that just so surely will He come again.

³ I will come again.

That means “another time,” “once more.” When He was here before, that was His first coming. So when He comes once more, that will be His second coming. That is what we are plainly told by the apostle, in words almost identical with those of the Saviour:

Hebrews 9

²⁸ Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

A thousand texts could not make the matter any plainer, that Christ will certainly come again. Therefore as it is certain that no one is a believer on Christ unless he believes all the words of Christ, there cannot be the slightest doubt but that every believer in Christ must believe in His second coming. And every lover of the Lord must look for and love His appearing. To such, a crown of glory is promised at His coming.

2 Timothy 4

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.

1 Peter 5

⁴ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away.

The doctrine of the Lord's coming, therefore, and the thought that it is very near, is not a thing with which to

frighten people. Of course those who do not love the presence of Christ's representative, will be troubled at the thought of His appearing.

But the fact is, that the Holy Spirit is only "another Comforter" (*John* 14:16), and that Christ is *the* Comforter. The thought of His coming is therefore a comfort to His followers.

Titus 2

¹³ The glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ [is the] blessed hope,

—that cheers His disciples in this present evil world.

12. Thoughts on John 14

Signs of the Times, February 11, 1889

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14

THE 14th chapter of *John* is one of the most comforting chapters in the Bible. It was intended to comfort those to whom it was spoken, and not them alone, but all the disciples of Christ, till the end of time. The opening words indicate this:

John 14

¹ Let not your heart be troubled.

Christ had told them that He was going to leave them, and their hearts were troubled. They loved Jesus; they wanted to be with Him. And so He proceeds to comfort them with words that have been a joy and solace to many a weary, troubled heart.

² In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you.

There is abundance of room, but it was necessary that Christ should prepare a place for each one, by his death and subsequent ministration in the heavenly sanctuary. But this is not all.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there you may be also.

And this promise is as sure as the word of God. Many times is this promise repeated.

Hebrews 9

²⁸ To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time.

When the time came for Him to depart, and the sorrowing disciples saw Him ascend to Heaven, the assurance was given,

Acts 1

¹¹ This same Jesus...shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.

Separated from Him whom they love, sojourners in a strange land, the children of God have the blessed hope that their Lord himself will some day come to take them home. Some who profess to be followers of Christ say,

“Don’t be scared with the idea that the Lord is coming; He may not come for a thousand years. There is no need for alarm.”

What reason has the child of God for fear? Paul says that we are to comfort one another with the promise that the Lord will come to receive us unto himself.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Christ says that when we see the signs that indicate His speedy approach, we must...

Luke 21

²⁸ ...look up and lift up [our] heads, for [our] redemption draws near.

The willing and obedient child does not run and hide at his father’s return. The wicked may tremble, and call...

Revelation 6

¹⁶ ...to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath

of the Lamb;

—but the righteous will say,

Isaiah 25

⁹ This is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

At the request of Philip,

John 14

⁸ Lord, show us the Father,

—Christ presents another comforting thought:

⁹ Have I been so long time with you, and have you not known me, Philip?

Indeed they knew Christ.

- They had seen His labors of love and self-denial. He had never slighted the poor and needy.
- They had seen Him moved with compassion when He miraculously fed the famishing multitude.
- They had seen Him stop to heal the sick, when excessive labor had well-near exhausted His strength.
- They had seen Him moved to tears at the grave of Lazarus.
- They had heard His gentle words of reproof and encouragement to the erring.

And as He saw the care and trouble caused by sin, they had heard Him say, in tones of love and pity,

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

They knew Him to be a tender, loving, pitying friend. And so He says,

John 14

⁹ Have I been so long time with you, and have you not known me?

The answer might be,

“Yes, but how does this answer the question?”

Why,

⁹ ...he that has seen me has seen the Father.

John 10

³⁰ I and my Father are one.

All the goodness and loveliness, the tenderness and pity, exhibited in the life of Christ, were but a representation of the nature of the Father. As Paul says,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

Many persons picture God as the stern Judge, and Christ as the loving Saviour; but the Father and the Son do not thus divide their offices.

1 John 4

⁸ God is love.

That is His nature.

Romans 5

⁸ God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Comforting thought, that both Christ and God are interested in, and anxious for, our salvation. Would we know the extent of God's love?

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It was an infinite sacrifice, and was the result of infinite love.

But blessings rejected turn into curses, and the fact that God is love will not prevent His wrath from being visited upon those who despise His love. And in this, still, Christ and the Father are one. It is...

Revelation 6

¹⁶ ...from the face of Him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,

—that the wicked seek to be hid. But none need to suffer this wrath, for all Heaven is interested in our behalf.

2 Kings 6

¹⁶ They that are for us are more than they which are against us.

God is willing that we should be called His sons.

1 John 3

³ And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure.

13. Christ's Second Coming

Present Truth, August 8, 1895

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:1-3

He comes not an infant in Bethlehem born,
He comes not to lie in a manger;
He comes not again to be treated with scorn,
He comes not a shelterless stranger;
He comes not to Gethsemane,
To weep and sweat blood in the garden;
He comes not to die on the tree,
To purchase for rebels a pardon.
Oh, no; glory, bright glory
Enviorns Him now.¹²¹

John 14

¹ Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.

² In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

THESE words were spoken by our Saviour himself, in His talk to His disciples, in the evening of the day on which He was crucified. He had been with them in constant companionship for over three years, and besides the tie of personal love which bound them to Him, they had given Him reverence as...

Matthew 16

¹⁶ ...the Christ, the Son of the living God,

—and had...

Luke 24

²¹ ...trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed

¹²¹ R. F. Cottrell, Poem: *The King in His Beauty*.

Israel.

They had looked for a speedy deliverance from the Roman yoke, and now consternation and grief had taken hold of their hearts as they listened to His words:

John 13

³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Where I go, you cannot come; so now I say to you.

Peter voiced the common desire, and said,

³⁶ Lord, where do You go?

And to this question the Saviour replied,

³⁶ Where I go, you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow me afterwards.

And then He proceeded to comfort their troubled hearts, telling them how and when they could follow Him and be with Him.

Titus 2

¹³ The glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, [is the] blessed hope...

—that is set before the church of Christ. It has been the hope of the church in all ages. The ancient prophets foretold in minutest detail...

1 Peter 1

¹¹ ...the sufferings of Christ,

—and at His first advent the...

2 Peter 1

¹⁹ ...sure word of prophecy

—was fulfilled to the letter. But

1 Peter 1

¹¹ ...the glory that should follow,

—was no less the theme of inspired penmen, and the followers of Christ were pointed forward to the time when His glory should be revealed, as the time when they also should...

Colossians 3

⁴ ...appear with Him in glory,

and...

1 Peter 4

¹³ ...be glad also with exceeding joy.

It was with this hope that our Saviour comforted His sorrowing disciples.

John 14

³ I will come again.

This means “another time; once more.” Not thousands of times, as they would have us believe, who claim that in fulfillment of His promise He comes whenever a saint dies, but only once more will He come again, to consummate the great plan of salvation. To this the apostle bears emphatic testimony, in these words:

Hebrews 9

²⁷ And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment:

²⁸ So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

It is appointed unto men once to die; in order that men might have life, Christ was once offered for sin, bearing...

1 Peter 2

²⁴ ...our sins in His own body on the tree;

—and so, when His work for sinners shall have been finished, He will come once more—“the second time”—not as a sin-bearer, but for the salvation of those, who by means of His sacrifice and mediation, have...

Hebrews 9

²⁶ ...put away sin.

The Manner of His Coming

As the disciples stood gazing up into heaven after their ascending Lord, two shining ones—messengers from the heavenly courts—appeared and said to them:

Acts 1

¹¹ You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

And how did He go into heaven?

⁹ [Even] while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

So His coming will be personal and visible. Said the angels,

¹¹ This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come *in like manner* as you have seen Him go into heaven.

Paul says,

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout.

It will be the same one who was baptized by John in the Jordan, and who from that day...

Acts 10

³⁸ ...went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil;

—the same one who, wearied and faint, sat by Jacob's well, and found refreshment in revealing to a poor sinner the fountain of living water.

It was the knowledge that Christ himself would come in person, that animated the patriarch in his deep affection,

when he said:

Job 19

²⁵ For I know that my redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

²⁶ And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

“Whom I shall see for myself, and not a stranger,” is the reading according to the margin. And this serves to connect the hope of the patriarch with the promise of Christ. The disciples mourned the anticipated departure of the Saviour, as that of a dear friend and companion, as well as the one who should redeem Israel; and the patriarch triumphed, even in His sore distress, and the thought that when his Redeemer should stand at the latter day upon the earth, he should see in Him a friend, and not a stranger. Happy is the man whose acquaintance with Christ is such that He can look forward to His return with the same fond anticipation.

Jesus “shall so come in like manner” as He went into heaven. How did He go? While they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Then when He comes a cloud will attend Him, and He will be seen. And the beloved disciple testified:

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.

Again he says, describing his prophetic vision:

Revelation 14

¹⁴ And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

Christ, speaking of the events connected with His coming, said:

Matthew 24

³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

He will come as He departed. But whereas only a few saw Him go away,

Revelation 1

⁷ ...every eye shall see Him

—when He returns.

Matthew 16

¹⁷ [He will come] in the glory of His Father,

Matthew 25

³¹ ...[accompanied by] all the holy angels. He will then sit upon the throne of His glory,

Psalms 50

³ [And] a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ [He] shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,

Joel 3

¹⁶ ...and the heavens and the earth shall shake.

None will be able to hide from their eyes...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁸ ...the brightness of His coming;

Luke 17

²⁴ For as the lightning, that lightens out of the one part under heaven, shines unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in His day.

Surely the question, “How will He come?” is sufficiently an-

swered.

The Purpose of His Coming

Why will He come? Because if He should not come the second time, His first coming would have been in vain. Said He,

John 14

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

He comes to take to himself the purchase of His own blood. He has gone to prepare a place for those who become His friends indeed, and He will come and take them to it. His coming will be the great consummation of the plan of salvation. In vain would be all His sufferings for men, if He should not return to complete that which He has begun.

Christ's words imply that if He should not come, His disciples could not be with Him. Notice: He said He would come to receive them to himself, that (in order that) where He was there they might be also. The object of His coming is to take His people to himself.

Now it is evident that Christ does not do things that are unnecessary, but it would be unnecessary for Him to come for His people, if they could be with Him without His coming. Not only so, but it would be the height of folly for Him to come for His disciples if they went to be with Him when they died, hundreds of years ago.

So the fact that Christ will come for His people, is evidence that they cannot be with Him until He comes. Since Christ's followers cannot be with Him until He comes, then they all will receive their reward at the same time. To this the apostle bears witness, when, speaking of the faithful of past ages, he says:

Hebrews 11

³⁹ These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

⁴⁰ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

And again the Apostle Paul says:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

“So,” that is by the resurrection of the dead and the translation of the living, at the coming of Christ, will the Saviour’s promise be fulfilled, to take His people to himself, to be with Him.

But the taking of His people to himself involves something else. The earth is the kingdom which God prepared for His people “from the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 25

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Genesis 1

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Psalm 8

⁶ You made him [man] to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet.

To the meek it is promised that they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5

⁵ Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Psalm 37

¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

But this cannot be done while the wicked remain upon it; for:

Isaiah 48

²² There is no peace, says the Lord, unto the wicked.

Therefore before the righteous can delight themselves in “the abundance of peace,” the wicked must be removed from the earth. And so when, in prophetic vision, John saw the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, he heard the elders around the throne in heaven say:

Revelation 11 [margin]

¹⁷ We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which are, and was, and are to come; because You have taken to yourself your great power, and have reigned.

¹⁸ And the nations were angry, and your wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that You should give reward unto your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear your name, small and great; and should destroy them that corrupt the earth.

Christ himself said that when He should come, it would be to...

Matthew 16

²⁷ ...reward every man according to his works.

So, then, His coming means the salvation of the righteous, and the destruction of the wicked.

The Events of the End

A few words as to the manner in which the final redemption of the righteous will be effected, may be in place. The Apostle Paul tells us that it will be by the resurrection of the dead, and the translation of the living. To the Corinthian church he wrote:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Thus the righteous enter into their eternal reward; but not immediately do they dwell on the earth. The earth must still be fitted for their dwelling-place, by the destruction of those who have corrupted it. When Christ appears in the clouds of heaven, in power and great glory, the righteous, because they are righteous, are strengthened to behold His glory; but the wicked cannot endure it. Says Isaiah:

Isaiah 11

⁴ He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.

And the Apostle Paul, speaking of “the man of sin,” the lawless one, says that he is the one...

2 Thessalonians 2

³ ...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His

mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

This, however, is not the final destruction of the wicked, and the cleansing of the earth, for the millions who have died in sin lie all this time in their graves, unconscious of the wonderful events that are taking place on the earth. Not at that time do they receive the recompense for their evil deeds. Neither do the wicked who are alive at the time of Christ's appearing, and who are slain by the brightness of His coming, receive their punishment at that time. They simply drop dead, unable to endure the dazzling glory of Christ's presence.

Jeremiah 25

³³ And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

The condition of the earth at that time is thus described by the prophets:

Jeremiah 4

²⁰ Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled; suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.

²¹ How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

²² For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

²³ I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. [Compare with *Genesis* 1:2.]

²⁴ I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

²⁵ I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

²⁶ I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.

²⁷ For thus has the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

Isaiah 24

¹⁷ Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.

¹⁸ And it shall come to pass, that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that comes up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

²¹ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

²² And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

The earth will then be in its original chaotic state; in the condition described as “the deep,” “the abyss” or the “bottomless pit.” Upon the dark, dreary, desolate place, Satan will be left for a thousand years. See the prophet:

Revelation 20

¹ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

³ And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Unable to practice any of his hellish deceptions upon men, because there are no living men upon the earth, he is most

effectually bound. No humble convict in solitary confinement in the dark cell was ever more surely deprived of liberty.

During the thousand years the righteous will be in heaven, engaged with Christ, in passing judgment upon fallen angels and wicked man.

Revelation 20

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

1 Corinthians 6

¹ Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

² Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

³ Know you not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

This period of one thousand years comprises the “many days,” at the end of which the wicked are to “be visited.” At the end of that time Satan shall be loosed from his prison, because the wicked will then be raised:

Revelation 20

⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

And they will have opportunity to practice for a little season the deceptive arts which are his very life.

The holy city, the New Jerusalem, will have descended from God out of heaven, and Satan will gather the hosts of the wicked round it, making them believe that they can capture it for their own.

Revelation 20

⁸ And [Satan] shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

⁹ And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

The fire shall devour Satan and all his hosts. That fire...

Malachi 4

¹ ...shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the fire shall burn them up,...and shall leave neither root nor branch.

The same fire that causes...

2 Peter 3

⁷ ...the perdition of ungodly men,

–will also melt the earth, and purify it from the curse, so that from it shall come forth a renewed earth, fitted for the abode of righteousness.

⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

The righteous, safe in the city of God, and thus enabled to...

Isaiah 33

¹⁴ ...dwell with everlasting burnings,

¹⁸ ...shall meditate terror,

Psalms 91

⁷ ...[which] shall not come near them; [for]

⁸ Only with their eyes shall they behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Then when the wicked shall have been consumed,

Nahum 1

¹⁰ ...like stubble fully dry,

—and the fire cease for lack of fuel upon which to feed, the righteous shall go forth to inherit the land for ever.

Isaiah 61

⁴ They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall prepare the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

Yes,

Amos 9

¹⁴ They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them.

Psalms 37

¹¹ And [then they] shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Isaiah 32

¹⁶ Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

¹⁷ And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

¹⁸ [Then the] people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.

Isaiah 51

³ For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her

waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like a garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein; thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

Isaiah 54

¹⁷ This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, says the Lord.

14. The Blessed Hope

Present Truth, April 1, 1897

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:1-3

When Jesus was about to leave His disciples He said:

John 14

¹ Let not your heart be troubled...

³ ...I will come again.

When, therefore, the thought of Christ's soon coming troubles people something is wrong. Many shut their eyes to the evidences that the end is near, and are startled when the doctrine of the Second Advent is presented.

What is needed is such an entire surrender of the heart and such a turning to God in the obedience of faith that the thought of the coming of the Saviour in power and glory will be a precious one.

It is to those that "love His appearing" that He will give the crown of life "in that day."

2 Timothy 4

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that *love His appearing*.

15. I Would Have Told You

Present Truth, January 3, 1895

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:2

John 14

² In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

THESE words of the Saviour, spoken to His disciples just before His betrayal, manifest His unchanging interest in their welfare and that of His church. He would keep nothing from them which it is for their interest to know. He would not leave them to speculate over any point of truth which pertains to their salvation.

His assertion that He would not have left the disciples ignorant concerning the nature of His Father's house is an assurance that He has not left them ignorant concerning the path by which that house is to be reached. As we are told elsewhere in His word,

2 Peter 1

³ His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue.

Therefore there is no room for speculation concerning the things which pertain to salvation. None of these things have been withheld from us; they are all revealed in the word of God. We find there a knowledge of God. We find there a knowledge of God's will, which is His law. We find Jesus saying,

Matthew 19

¹⁷ If you will enter into life, keep the commandments,

—and citing the law which says,

¹⁸ ...You shall do no murder, You shall not commit adultery,

You shall not steal, etc.

If that law had been changed, He would have told us. If that commandment which says,

Exodus 20

¹⁰ The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any work,

—had been meant to apply in this age to the first day of the week, He would have told us. But so far from telling us this, He has expressly declared that:

Matthew 5

¹⁸ Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Not speculation, nor reasoning, but the knowledge of Christ, is the source from whence we learn what things pertain to life and godliness. Speculation is not knowledge, nor is spiritual knowledge deduced by the reason of man. It is revealed in the word of the Lord. And he who feels obliged to speculate, and infer, and reason upon the word in order to find out the truth, may thereby know that what he needs is a closer acquaintance with Christ.

When we know the Saviour well enough we shall know that He has himself revealed to us every part of the way from earth to that place where He has gone. He has told us all things which pertain to a saving knowledge of the truth.

16. A Personal, Visible Coming

Present Truth, June 14, 1894

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:2-3

John 14

² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

WE HAVE the promise of the Saviour that He will come again, the second time. The question now is,

“How will He come?”

So long a time has passed since He was here before, that many have entertained the idea that the coming of Christ is the same as the death of His saints. They think that He comes whenever a saint dies.

A moment's thought should be sufficient to show us that this cannot be true, because in that case there would be many comings of the Lord, whereas the Scriptures speak only of His second coming.

Other proofs may be given, to show that the second coming of Christ has no connection whatever with the death of good people; but at present we will be content with reading the exact manner of His coming. We turn to the record of the ascension of Christ, and we find that:

Luke 24

⁵⁰ He led them [His disciples] out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

⁵¹ And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Acts 1

⁹ While they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

¹⁰ And while they look steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

¹¹ Which also said, You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

They saw Him go up bodily into heaven; He will come in like manner as they saw Him go up; therefore He will come in person, so that He can be seen. This is what we read in:

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.

There will be no doubt or uncertainty about the matter when He comes. Read again the words of the Apostle Paul, who wrote just what he had received from the Lord himself:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede, or go before] them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.

There will be no mistaking that event. Compare with this last text the words of:

Psalms 50

³ Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.

It is the same testimony. Again our Lord tells us how clearly His coming will be seen by all living on the earth. If someone shall say that Christ has already come, and gone away again,

or that He is in some secret place, we are not to believe him.

Matthew 24

²³ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

²⁵ Behold, I have told you before.

²⁶ Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

²⁷ For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

No one on the earth can be ignorant of that grand event when it takes place. Therefore we are assured that Christ's coming has not yet occurred, but that it is still future, an object of hope to all who love Him.

17. Christ's Coming

Present Truth, October 6, 1892

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:2-3

John 14

² In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you,

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself that where I am, there you may be also.

Note what is involved in this promise:

1. Christ will *surely* come again, for He said so.
2. He will come *again*, that is, the second time.

That means that His coming is to be as real and personal as His first advent. It is not death, not conversion, that is promised, but the literal return of the Lord.

3. But His coming is *the only way* by which His disciples can be with Him.

His coming is for the purpose of taking His people to himself. If they could be with Him without His coming, there would be no necessity for Him to come. But He will not come in vain. He will come to gather His saints, and He will find them here.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first;

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18. Receiving His People

Present Truth, June 14, 1894

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:2-3

WE KNOW from Christ's own promise that He will come again, and we also know from the infallible word that His second coming will be as real and as personal as was His first advent, although with infinitely more glory.

“But why is He coming? what is the necessity for it?”

There must certainly be a necessity for it, because the Lord does not trifle; and so we ask,

“What is the object of the second coming of the Lord?”

We have only to listen attentively to the words of Christ, to know exactly why it is necessary for Him to come to this earth again. Turning to His promise, we read,

John 14

² I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Why is He coming? To receive His children unto himself. What for? In order that where He is, there they may be also. What then is the inevitable conclusion? That Christ's people cannot be with Him until He comes the second time. They cannot be with Him in any other way than by His coming to take them to himself.

If the promise of Christ were heeded as much as it should be, there would be no uncertainty as to the state of the dead, and the way and the time of the saints' going to be with their Saviour. They are asleep, and cannot be with the Lord until, with the righteous living, they are caught up to meet Him when He comes the second time. Read what the Apostle Paul

says by the word of the Lord:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

What has become of all those who have died in faith in Christ? They are asleep.

Hebrews 11

³⁹ And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

⁴⁰ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

They are not with the Lord, and cannot be until He comes to awaken them. To say that departed saints are with Christ now, is virtually to deny the promise of Christ, that He will come again for the purpose of receiving His people to himself. For if they were with Him now, there would be no necessity for Him to come to receive them.

But Christ does not utter nonsense. He said that He would come, and for the sole purpose of receiving His people to himself. Therefore it is just as certain as the words of Christ, that Christ's people cannot be with Him until His second coming, which is still future. Once more we read the plain statement of the Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

With these statements in mind, we can understand why the coming of the Lord is called a “blessed hope.”

Titus 2

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is the time when...

Isaiah 40

¹⁰ His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.

It is the time when His people shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

It is the means by which they may be with Him whom having not seen they love. It is the only way by which they can see Him and be with Him. Therefore it is the object of their intense longing. In this world they are oppressed, but the Divine encouragement is,

James 5

⁷ Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.

⁸ Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the

earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

Isaiah 40

¹ Comfort you, comfort you my people, says your God.

The message of comfort is that the Lord is coming. It is the one thing with which mourners are to be comforted.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Let no one presume to offer anything else as comfort than that given by...

2 Corinthians 1

³ ...the God of all comfort.

19. The Coming of Christ

Signs of the Times, March 3, 1887

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:3

UNDER this title, after speaking of the several unscriptural and fanciful interpretations which are given to the promise of our Saviour,

John 14

³ I will come again,

—the *Methodist Recorder* says:

Other interpreters regard it, and we think correctly, as referring particularly to the personal appearing of Christ at the end of the world. It is a broad, comprehensive promise, intended not only for the apostles, but for believers in every subsequent age. It is the same as if He had said, “I will not stay always in Heaven; I will, after awhile, at a time which it is not now proper to reveal, come back to you.”

The object of Christ’s departure from His disciples, as He plainly informs us, was that He might prepare a place for them.

John 14

² In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And the object of His coming again, He declares, will be to receive them to himself, that where He is, there they may be also.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

This very clearly shows that His coming again does not refer to His appearance to His disciples after His resurrection, nor to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pente-

cost, but to His second coming, at the end of the world,...

2 Thessalonians 1

¹⁰ ...to be glorified in His saints, and admired by all them that love Him.

This visible, personal coming of Christ is that which was announced by the angels to His disciples at His ascension.

Acts 1

¹¹ This same Jesus, [said they,] which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

This is in harmony with the entire teachings of God's word on the subject. The apostle Paul assures us that:

Hebrews 9

²⁸ Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

And,

Colossians 3

⁴ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory.

Titus 2

¹¹ For, [says he again,] the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

When Christ instituted the last Supper, He commanded His followers to observe it in remembrance of Him, until His coming again.

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you

do show the Lord's death till He come.

The volume of divine truth closes with the blessed assurance of His coming.

Revelation 22

²⁰ He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

This is the glorious hope of the church and of every true believer, the return of the Saviour—the coming of the Bridegroom. The church shall not always mourn her absent Head. Believers in Jesus shall not always be left in orphanage. The Master says,

John 14

³ I will come again.

Blessed assurance and hope!

20. The Way, the Truth, and the Life

Present Truth, March 15, 1894

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:6

John 14

⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes unto the Father but by me.

THESE words of our Lord spoken to Thomas on the evening preceding the crucifixion, contain the very essence of the whole Gospel. Without Christ, nothing whatever that any person can find or that he can receive from others can take him a step nearer to the Lord than he already is.

The Way

There are many paths in the world, but only one way to the world to come. Men can find out many ways that are true, but there is only one truth that leads to the realms of eternal day. There are many things that exist in our world, but only one manifestation of eternal life.

Christ is the way. Wherever He is not, there is not the way. There are paths which run alongside and seemingly parallel with the way; yet they do not lead to God. A man may walk in them if he chooses, and imagine himself to be traveling directly toward the celestial city; but if he does so he is deceived, and will never reach the city of God, so long as he continues therein; because Christ, and Christ alone, is the way.

It matters not what knowledge he may have, or what strength of purpose or good intentions; if he is not walking in Christ, he is not in the way. Christ is the way of God; all other paths are the ways of self.

The Truth

Christ is the truth. It matters not how much knowledge one

may have, if he has not Christ he has knowledge merely and not “the truth.” There is a difference between simple knowledge and...

Romans 9

¹ The truth in Christ.

Knowledge with Christ is “the truth;” knowledge without Him is knowledge merely, and though true, it is not the perfect truth. The world has knowledge, and wisdom of a worldly sort; yet the Apostle Paul declares that:

1 Corinthians 1

²¹ ...the world by wisdom knew not God.

So while they had knowledge, they still had not the truth, because they were in great error concerning God. The familiar proverb says,

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,”

—and never is the saying truer than when it concerns religion. Knowledge should help a person to recognize God, Him who is the Author and Preserver of all things; but he who will not recognize God in His works, thereby perverts his knowledge so that he makes it declare something that is not true, and so turns it into a lie, as did the heathen of whom we are told in the 1st chapter of *Romans*.

Romans 1

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

A half truth is the most dangerous of falsehoods. So he who has knowledge, yet cannot see Christ, is the most certain of all persons to be misled.

The Life

Christ is also the life. But here again we find only nothingness for the one who has not Christ. For though all men have life, which comes from their Creator Jesus Christ and is therefore His life, he who will not recognize in his life the life of Christ thereby shuts out Christ and His eternal life from himself; but he who glorifies God by recognizing Him as the Creator and the Giver of all things, recognizing Him not merely in form but in reality, as evidenced in his words and deeds, thereby accepts Christ and has eternal life.

There is no life outside of Christ.

1 John 5

¹² He that has the Son, has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

That which he has who has not the Son, seems to be life, but it is not. It is only a vapor, that appears for a moment, and then vanishes away.

James 4

¹⁴ Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.

He who will have life, can find it only in Christ.

21. As God Is

Present Truth, April 23, 1896

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:9

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ.

John 14

⁹ He that has seen me, has seen the Father.

JESUS manifested the Father. When Jesus went about among the lowly homes of Judea and Galilee, associating with the simple people who loved Him for His kindness and homeliness, He was showing what God is.

There was no barrier of reserve or haughtiness to repel, but an air of gentle refinement that drew the common people to Him. Even the children felt no timidity in coming to Him, and He found time to give attention to the simplest details of the life of the people.

This was showing what God was. And what He was He is:

Hebrews 13

⁸ ...the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Today, then, God finds delight in drawing the humblest to himself. There is no barrier on His side to make any afraid of trusting and confiding in Him as a friend. What Jesus was, He is, the friend of those who need Him, gentle, patient, finding joy in companionship with the lowly and the humble.

He was all that before Jesus came in the flesh;¹²² but when we see it in the life of Jesus, we can see it as in other ages it...

¹²² **Isaiah 66** ¹ Thus says the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that you build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? ² For all those things has my hand made, and all those things have been, says the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

Ephesians 3

⁵ ...was not made known unto the sons of men.

God wants us to know Him, and in Jesus we see Him as He is.

22. Better than Miracles

Present Truth, November 23, 1893

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:12

Jesus said to His disciples:

John 14

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

IT IS NOT to be wondered at that the question is often asked,

“What are these greater works? Why do we not see them performed by the followers of Christ?”

It is not possible for man to tell what the greater works are, for nobody can conceive of any greater works than Jesus did:

Matthew 11

⁵ The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

The statement that is sometimes made, that the promise of Jesus is fulfilled in the great numbers that have accepted the Gospel through the preaching of His followers, does not meet the case. While conversions are included in the promise, miracles of healing, and even of raising the dead, cannot be excluded; for they were all among the works which Christ did.

That promise has not yet been fulfilled, except for a brief period in the days of the apostles. But a fulfillment of it at one time does not exhaust it, because it is unlimited.

John 14

¹² He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.

Perhaps we shall find the complete answer to the question why miracles are not now wrought, by considering a case of failure, in contrast with the spirit which Jesus manifested in performing His mighty works. When Philip was preaching in Samaria, he performed some wonderful miracles, and among those who believed in consequence was one Simon, who had bewitched the people with his sorcery,

Acts 8

⁹ ...giving out that himself was some great one.

¹³ [He] continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

Finally Peter and John came, and laid their hands on the people, who received the Holy Ghost. This caused Simon to wonder the more, and he offered the apostles money, saying,

¹⁹ Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

²⁰ But Peter said unto him, Your money perish with you, because you have thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter; for your heart is not right in the sight of God.

What was the trouble with Simon? It was self. The fact that he was willing to give money, in order to get power to bestow the Holy Spirit, shows that he wanted to make money out of it. Pecuniary gain, and self-glorification were the motives that prompted his desire for the Holy Spirit's power. He doubtless was not fully conscious of all this, but persuaded himself that his object was to do good;

Jeremiah 17

⁹ For the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it.

And Simon's heart was not right with God. We see from this that the power of the Holy Spirit cannot be used for selfish ends, and therefore it cannot be given where there is a

possibility that the one to whom it is given will become exalted because of it, and take honor to himself. It is the Spirit and power of God, and if men take any of the glory of the power to themselves, they would be putting themselves in the place of God; and then people would be led astray, because they would follow a sinful man, instead of God.

Now note a peculiarity of Jesus.

Matthew 12

¹⁵ ...and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all;

¹⁶ And charged them that they should not make Him known.

So when He raised the ruler's daughter from the dead,

Mark 5

⁴³ He charged them straitly that no man should know it.

Also when He healed the man full of leprosy,

Luke 4

¹⁴ He charged him to tell no man.

And so we find that He did on other occasions. In no case do we find Him telling anybody to advertise Him through His miracles, except in the case of the demoniac of Gadara, and then He was about to leave the country because the people would not allow Him to stay.

How many religious teachers are there in these days, who would pursue a similar course under the same circumstances? In these days any event of importance is heralded far and wide. Sometimes minor matters are magnified into vast proportions, so as to have a good report. If by any means a miracle healing should be performed, the probability is that the papers would fairly groan with accounts of it.

Of course in all this there would not be any conscious egotism, or desire to make self prominent. No doubt it would be expressly stated that the glory was all due to the Lord. The ob-

ject would be to win converts to the faith. Nevertheless it would not be the way Jesus did; and as long as there is a spirit in man, different from the Spirit of Christ, they will not be able to do the things that He did.

We may say that times have changed, but the fact remains that the truth of God has not changed, and the conditions under which the Spirit and power of God are given, have not changed.

Let it be remembered that Jesus never performed any miracles merely for show. Every one was for the purpose of relieving pressing need. He did them because with His sympathizing nature, and the power that He had, they were the most natural things in the world for Him to do. In doing them His whole thought was for others, and not for himself. Said He,

John 8

⁵⁰ I seek, not my own glory.

Neither were Christ's miracles wrought for the purpose of winning converts, because there had to be belief before miracles could be performed. We read of His own country, that:

Matthew 13

⁵⁸ He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

His words and His very presence were what won His disciples. Remember that His most intimate disciples, those who followed Him the most steadfastly, and who continued His disciples after His ascension,—followed Him before they saw any miracles.

When many professed believers on Him left Him the very next day after one of His most wonderful miracles, and He said to the twelve:

John 6

⁶⁷ Will you also go away?

Peter answered for the twelve, making no reference to His miracles, by saying,

⁶⁸ Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

⁶⁹ And we believe and are sure that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

It was His words that held them to Him. It was His words that charmed the soldiers who were sent to take Him.

John 7

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this Man.

This is why Jesus did not want to have His miracles advertised. He did not want people to follow Him from selfish motives, nor out of mere curiosity. Of course they could not be concealed, yet they were wrought because of pure love for the needy, and not for the purpose of making converts. He wished, as He does still, people who follow Him because they love Him.

In this we see that there is something far better than the power to work miracles. It is the meek and quiet spirit of Jesus. The ability to work miracles is inferior in importance to the power to bring to people the words of God.

1 Corinthians 12

²⁸ And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Jesus had “emptied himself” (*Philippians* 2:7, RV), and God worked through Him, so that when miracles were performed, the people “glorified God.”¹²³ So God can work now only through those who are wholly emptied of self, having the mind of Christ in them. Now, as in the days of Simon the sorcerer, those who desire the power to work miracles, will be the very ones who will not receive it.

¹²³ *Matthew* 9:8; *Mark* 2:12; *Luke* 5:26, 7:16, 13:13, 17:15, 23:47.

We see in Samson a specimen of the spirit that will be manifested in those for whom the Lord works mightily.

Judges 14

⁶ A young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand; but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

So we have in the 25th of *Matthew* the difference between the false and the true followers of Jesus. The one tell of the wonderful things that they have done, while the true followers are unconscious of the fact that they have done anything of value. And so we may conclude that when the disciples of Jesus do the “greater works” of which He spoke, they will not be conscious of the fact that they are doing anything extraordinary.

Therefore instead of wondering why miracles are not done, and faintly longing for the power to do them, the right thing to do is to hunger and thirst after righteousness; to seek to know the will of God, and to study His word until its Spirit permeates the soul. To have the power...

Isaiah 50

⁴ ...to speak a word in due season to him that is weary,

—just as Jesus did, is the thing most to be desired. And that can be done only by those who speak the words of God as He did. Then when:

- self is wholly gone;
- the individual is completely surrendered to the Lord;
- he is living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord;
- he is seeking not his own, but only the glory of God;
- he is willing that God shall do whatsoever He wishes with him, no matter how humble the task;

—then will the lowliest services of love be transformed by the power of God into the most wonderful works, and men will praise the Lord for His goodness.

23. Men Whom God Can Use

Present Truth, September 5, 1895

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:12, 10

WHEN those who profess the truth of God have allowed self to become so thoroughly dead that only Christ shall appear in all they do, then there will be mighty works done. Then may be fulfilled the words of Christ,

John 14

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father.

But those works cannot be done as long as there is any likelihood of any one's taking any of the credit to himself. Those who do them must have this spirit which was in Christ:

¹⁰ The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the work.

When men allow the Spirit of Christ to dwell in them and control them, and are willing and anxious that He alone should be glorified; when, like Samson, they can rend a lion with the strength given them of God, and tell neither father nor mother of it,—then will the kingdom of God come with power. Through such men God can work.

Judges 14

⁵ Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

⁶ And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

24. Greater Works Than These

Present Truth, May 13, 1897

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:12

Jesus said,

John 14

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

THE first question that almost invariably arises whenever this is read, is,

“What greater works can anybody possibly do than the Lord did?”

or,

“How can anybody do greater works than he did?”

To this the hearer is obliged to answer, “I don’t know.” But the fact that we do not know, and can not form any conception of the thing, has no effect upon it. Jesus has said it in the most positive manner, and that is sufficient.

Let it be remembered that it is only those who believe that can do these great works; and certainly no one who is not able to do the works, can be expected to know anything about the matter.

But the very asking of the questions, “What?” and “How?” implies more or less unbelief. The person may not realize it, but there is at least a shade of doubt underlying those questions; there is a trace of the notion that we will not believe what we cannot understand.

Now if there is unbelief even in the slightest degree, then it is certain that no works at all will be done; for:

John 6

²⁹ This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.

But if there is unbelief, there cannot possibly be belief. Therefore the one who questions this matter need not expect ever to know anything about it.

“But it is not unbelief that prompts my questioning,” some will say; “it is only a real desire to know what the works are, and how they are to be done.”

In other words, it is curiosity. Well, of one thing we may be sure, and that is that whatever good works one has, come from God; for that which was true of Christ must most certainly be true of us,

John 5

³⁰ I can of my own self do nothing.

John 14

¹⁰ The Father that dwells in me, He does the works.

Since...

Philippians 2

¹³ ...it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure,

—it is not necessary for us to know how. Our part is simply to yield ourselves as instruments of righteousness. The instrument does not need to know what the one who handles it is doing, nor how he is able to do it. Nay, the instrument cannot know how, else he would no longer be the instrument.

Psalms 106

² Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?

Finally, it is useless to ask how we can do greater works than those which Christ did, for those who do them will be unconscious of them. When at the last day the Lord says to

the faithful ones,

Matthew 25

³⁴ Come, you blessed of my Father,

—and enumerates the good works that they have done, they will wonderingly ask,

“Lord, when did we ever do these things?”

They will have been so yielded to the Lord that His mighty power will have wrought in them in the most natural and unobtrusive way, just as it does through the growing plant.

It is well that we are thus ignorant. If it were possible that the mighty works of God could be wrought through self-conscious folks, it would be most uncomfortable for those who were obliged to live with them. If we thought that we were doing greater works than Christ did, we would become so conceited and overbearing that nobody could live with us.

Let us be content, yea, we may even rejoice, that we are weak and ignorant, since our Father is almighty and all-wise, and He is ours.

25. In His Name

Present Truth, February 23, 1893

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:13-14

John 14

¹³ And whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

¹⁴ If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

A WONDERFUL PROMISE is this, and as sure as it is wonderful, for it is the word of the Lord. Yet there are many who think that they have asked for things in the name of Jesus, and have not received them. That they have asked for things and have not received them is certain. Then the trouble must be that they have not asked in the name of Jesus. And yet they have closed their petitions with the words, “in the name of Jesus.” What is the trouble?

The answer will be found in a consideration of what it is to ask in the name of Jesus. The mistake that too many make is to suppose that Jesus meant, by the words which we have just read, to put himself at the service of every man’s selfish desires; that He meant that whatever their fancy might light upon, would be given to them if in their asking they would simply use His name.

But that this is a mistake, we learn from the words by the apostle James:

James 4

² You lust, and have not, you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not.

³ You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.

Selfishness is sin, and the root of all sin; and Christ is not the minister of sin. Therefore His promise does not mean that

He will serve as the panderer of the lusts of all who may take His name upon their lips. The name of a person stands for all that He is worth. In business a man's name represents himself, so the name of Jesus represents the Lord. Therefore asking anything in the name of Jesus means to ask for anything that is in Christ. Now we read that God has...

Ephesians 1

³ ...blessed us with all spiritual blessings [in Christ].

It is His Divine power that has given to us...

2 Peter 1

³ ...all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Psalm 84

¹¹ No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Now we do not want anything except that which is good, but we are not able to tell what that is; so we must ask with a heart subject to the will and purpose of God. We must be assured that His way is perfect, and that He will give us every needful thing.

1 John 5

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us;

¹⁵ And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

He who asks for anything according to the will of God, is certain to have that request granted. This does not limit the range of our request, for God is...

Ephesians 3

²⁰ ...able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

And His love that prompts Him to do is equal to His power. There are very many things that God has told us expressly to

ask for. These we may name when we come to Him. But after we have asked for all that our sense of need prompts us to ask, we can still ask Him to give us as much more as He sees that we need, and it will be supplied.

Romans 8

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

²⁷ And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

To use the name of the Lord in a petition that is not according to His will, is to take the name of the Lord in vain:

Exodus 20

⁷ And the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that takes His name in vain.

Why is it any better to use the name of the Lord in a meaningless petition, than to use it lightly in any other matter? This is a matter for serious thought. No one need say that this is making it a dangerous matter to offer prayer. It is a serious matter but not a dangerous matter.

It will be said that we cannot always know the will of the Lord, so as to know how to ask according to His will. If we do not know the will of the Lord in any given case, we have simply to ask that He will give us that which is best,—simply to ask that His will may be done.

To ask that the will of the Lord may be done does not imply that there is any danger that He would not do His own will if we did not ask Him; but if it is a true prayer it means that we are perfectly content that His will should be done. It means that having prayed thus, we shall be content with the issue, accepting it as the will of the Lord.

But to ask things not according to the will of God, using His name, is not the only way of taking the name of the Lord in vain in prayer. If we ask for things that are according to His will, and then do not believe that we receive them, that is taking the name of the Lord in vain. For if we do not believe, we do not receive. And if we do not receive the things for which we ask, we ask in vain; and if we ask in vain, using the name of the Lord, it is evident that we have taken His name in vain. We have taken His name upon our lips simply because it is customary, without any definite object in so doing.

The name of Jesus is above every other name. It is a strong tower. It is the Father's name, for in Him are all the Father's purposes accomplished. And this is the name of the Lord, as proclaimed by himself,

Exodus 34

⁶ The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

And this name contains all that any person can require, and it is a name that will never be dishonored by failure.

Hebrews 4

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

¹⁵ For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

26. The Spirit as Guide

Signs of the Times, November 11, 1886

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:16-26

John 7

³³ Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me.

³⁴ You shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, there you cannot come.

WHEN Christ told His disciples that He was about to go away, and that they could not follow Him, their hearts were filled with sorrow and anxiety. They dreaded to face an unfriendly world alone.

He had been their guide and instructor, and they had learned much from His teachings. They knew of no one who could fill His place. Peter had echoed the sentiments of all the disciples when, in answer to Christ's inquiry if they also would go away, he said,

John 6

⁶⁸ Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

They knew that no one else could do for them what Jesus had done; and the thought of being separated from Him was a sad one. To comfort them, Christ gave them the assurance that He would come again and receive them unto himself, and that by this means they could again be with Him.

John 14

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

But even this promise was not sufficient, for there would still intervene a long period during which they would be left alone. How could they do without the presence and counsel of

their Lord? Again Jesus meets the difficulty by promising that whatsoever they should ask in His name should be done for them; and He added,

John 14

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever;

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth.

This Spirit was to be sent in His name, and was to take His place until His return. Said Christ,

John 14

¹⁸ I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I will come to you.

This coming does not refer to His personal, visible coming, when He will receive His people to himself, but to the Spirit who should come in His name. The Spirit was to be their guide, to prepare them for His coming at the last day.

The offices of the Spirit are many; but there is a special one pointed out in this discourse of our Lord. Said He:

John 14

²⁵ These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

It is as a teacher that the Spirit is here brought to view.

Many persons entertain very erroneous views as to the manner in which the Spirit operates. They imagine that it will teach them something which the Bible does not contain. When certain Bible truths are presented to them for their observance, they excuse themselves from all responsibility in the matter by saying that they are led by the Spirit of God, and do not feel it their duty to do that particular thing. They say the

Spirit was given to guide into all truth; and, consequently, if it was necessary to obey that portion of the Scripture, it would have been brought to their notice. The fact that they do not feel impressed to obey is proof to their minds that there is no necessity for obedience.

To such persons the Bible is of no account; they make its truth depend entirely upon their own feelings. And they actually charge God with the inconsistency of authorizing His Spirit to speak in contradiction of His revealed word. The fact that God cannot lie should convince anyone that His Spirit and His word must always be in harmony.

Christ prayed for his disciples,

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth.

The psalmist David said,

Psalms 119

¹⁴² Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth.

From these passages we learn that when Christ said,

John 16

¹³ When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth,

—He meant that the Spirit would lead them into a proper understanding of that which had already been revealed. He plainly stated this when He said,

John 14

²⁶ He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Many things that Christ said were not understood at the time; but they were made plain by the Spirit, after Christ had ascended to heaven. And it is thus that the Spirit teaches us now; it leads those who are humble and teachable into a

proper understanding of the written word of God.

Paul gives testimony on this point which is not uncertain. In *Ephesians* 6:13-17, he describes the Christian's armor. The following is the concluding portion:

Ephesians 6

¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Christ said that when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, should come, He would...

John 16

⁸ ...reprove [convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Paul says that:

Romans 3

²⁰ ...by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Both these passages are harmonized by the one quoted from Paul to the Ephesians. The Spirit does indeed convince of sin, but it is by impressing on the minds and hearts of men the claims of God's word. The Bible is the sword, the instrument by which the Spirit pierces the heart and lays bare its wickedness. The Spirit is the active agent, but the word of God is that through which it works. The two always act in unison.

We should look with suspicion upon any spirit that counsels opposition to the word of God. John tells us that there are many spirits, and that we are to try them.

1 John 4

¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

In *Isaiah* we are told by what we are to try them:

Isaiah 8

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

It is the spirit of darkness that leads men to act contrary to the word of God.

27. Looking for Peace

Present Truth, February 8, 1894

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:27

John 14

²⁷ Peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you.

HAVE you that peace of God, then? You look for it to see if you have it, and you are alarmed because you cannot find it. That is not the way to know that we have it.

By believing His word, which says He has given us peace, we have His peace. It is not what we can find by looking about, but what we know by the word of the Lord, and in that word we can rest and have peace, for He speaks peace.

28. Peace Amidst Trouble

Present Truth, April 15, 1897

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:27

Jesus says,

John 14

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.

TO WHOM? To everybody; and He has given it to us. There are some people that do not believe He has given it, and they do not take it, and there are some people who do not want it; but the fact remains that God has given His peace.

But what about that peace—"my peace,"—the peace of God, which passes all understanding? Read further:

²⁷ ...not as the world gives; give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Do not worry. What was the characteristic of Christ's peace? Some think that peace is a sort of happy-go-lucky feeling of complacency, an easy, lazy feeling, because one has nothing to disturb the even tenor of life; everything is prosperous with him, and he has peace,—nothing to do, nothing to worry him.

That is what men think of peace, but that is not the way of Christ. From the cradle to the grave, the devil was seeking every possible opportunity to take His life. The scribes and Pharisees were continually nagging Him, criticizing every word He uttered. He had lies told about Him. They said,

"He has a devil;"

"He is mad;"

"He is a fanatic;"

"He deceives the people;"

“He is leading them astray.”

And those things He had to endure. Not only His enemies, but even His brethren did not believe on Him.

And so wherever He went He found trouble always;—something to oppose Him, something to come upon Him. He was always in turmoil, He was always in trouble; but He was never troubled. He said,

Hebrews 2

¹³ I will put my trust in Him,

—and the Father never failed Him.

John 16

³³ In the world you shall have tribulation,

—but do not be troubled.

³³ ...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Christ's gift is of such a nature that a man can have trouble, and not be troubled; he can have affliction and sorrow, and not be sorrowful; he can have heaviness, and yet rejoice; he can have warfare, and be at peace. That is the peace that Christ gives. It cannot be manufactured; but whoever receives Jesus Christ into the life—receives the peace of God,

Isaiah 61

³ ...the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

No one was allowed to make any oil like the oil with which the priests were anointed. What do we learn from that? It was not merely an arbitrary prohibition. This is the lesson: Do not try to manufacture an artificial joy. It was to show that it could not be done, that this prohibition was made. Just receive the free grace of God.

29. Peace Negotiations

Present Truth, August 18, 1898

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:27

John 14

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you.

HOW does the world give peace? A striking answer is furnished by the nations of the world. Take for instance the recent struggle between Spain and the United States. After much blood and treasure had been spent, Spain began to negotiate for peace.

The United States of course responded, but let it be distinctly understood that while the matter was under consideration the war would be vigorously prosecuted. And so war and “peace” measures were considered at the same time between the same parties. Out of the same fountain both sweet water and bitter are supposed to be sent forth.

Take the nations of Europe. Peace is now supposed to prevail. There is no actual fighting anywhere. But what is the attitude of every power? Armed to the teeth, and industriously increasing their armaments. They stand with weapons in hand, waiting only a threatening movement on the part of another, to let fly.

The “peace” of which there is so much boast is exactly the same “peace” that prevails between two pugilists, who stand with clenched fists, and who have not yet come to blows because each wishes to let the other begin, so that he may learn his antagonist’s plan of attack.

“But that is not peace at all,” you say.

Just so; for the world does not give any real peace.

Isaiah 57

²¹ There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.

The world cannot give what it has not. An “armed peace” is not peace; yet the only way the world has of preserving peace is by maintaining armies so strong that others will not dare attack them. But those very armies are a preparation for war, and a constant menace to peace. So the peace which the world gives is in reality war.

Not so the Lord. He speaks peace, because He is peace. God is...

1 Thessalonians 5

²³ The very God of peace.

The Gospel is...

Romans 10

¹⁵ ...the Gospel of peace.

Jesus Christ is...

Isaiah 9

⁶ ...the Prince of Peace.

God's rule is a reign of peace. To the helpless, tempest-tossed sinner the Lord says:

Isaiah 27

⁵ Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.

But He does not throw the burden of peace negotiations upon the rebels. No;

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

He takes the initiative, and makes peace with rebellious man.

¹⁹ ...not imputing their trespasses unto them.

He takes the responsibility of the sin all upon himself.

God does not stand upon His dignity. He does not demand that everything shall be done to satisfy His wounded feelings. No; the mind of God in Christ showed itself in that...

Philippians 2

⁷ [He] made himself of no reputation.

The One who is sinned against takes the blame upon himself, and makes the way very easy for the offending one to lay down his weapons. He has no enmity against the sinner, nay, He does not fight the sinner; He is only love and perfect peace, and His sole effort is to induce the rebel to accept His peace.

Let the people learn God's character before they talk about conducting war on Christian principles. War on Christian principles is just such war as Christ wages. He has no hatred in His heart, and He does not kill His enemies. On the contrary, He is filled with infinite love and pity for them, and He gives His life for them.

Luke 9

⁵⁶ The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Instead of taking life, He gives life, even His own life of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Romans 5

¹ Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Not simply are we at peace with Him, but we have His peace dwelling in our hearts, and sanctifying us. Then,

Colossians 3

¹⁵ Let the peace of God rule in your hearts,

—and,

Philippians 4

⁷ The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

30. Peace

Present Truth, February 6, 1896

Timeline: VII-27 (Parting Counsel)

John 14:27

John 14

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,

THAT perfect peace in which He continually lived is ours, therefore, and we have to make use of it, to know its greatness.

He has given it to us, whether we accept it or not. If we have once had it, and have thrown it away, still it is ours. He has not withdrawn it, for He said, “my peace I leave with you.”

So then in the place where we rejected or lost the peace, there we may always find it.

31. Abiding in God

Present Truth, December 28, 1893

Timeline: VII-30 (The True Vine)

John 15:4

The Saviour says,

John 15

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me.

IF WE abide not in Him, our whole lives will be utterly barren. How may we abide in Him? Turning to the 4th chapter of 1 *John*, we read:

1 John 4

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.

⁸ He that loves not knows not God; for God is love.

If therefore we cherish enmity and hatred toward those around us, we cannot abide in God; we cannot even know Him. But again we read,

¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.

And what must we do to love? Can we love by trying to love, by exerting ourselves to make love come into our hearts? Who was ever able to love in that way? Who ever seriously tries to get love for another by such a process? But if we cannot love one of the human family by trying and exerting ourselves to love them, no more can we love God in that way.

1 John 4 [RV]

²⁰ He that loves not his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Love comes by beholding. We see one on earth whom we admire, and almost before we know it love has sprung up in our hearts. We made no exertion, but simply let it come, there was no barrier in its way. And that is the only way that love ever comes.

1 John 4

⁷ Love is of God,

—all love that is true love,—and whether it be love toward God or man, it comes in the same way. The trouble is, there is a barrier in the way of our love toward God. Sin placed that barrier there; it is self. The door of the natural heart is closed to that which is Divine. Jesus says,

Revelation 3

²⁰ 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 sup with him, and he with me.

Open that door, and the love of God will come in. Jesus will come in, and we shall see Him,

Song of Solomon 5

¹⁰ ...the chiefest among ten thousand,

¹⁶ ...[and] altogether lovely;

—and love will be the inevitable consequence.

But until the door is open, we do not see Christ. There is much rubbish about the door, which must be cleared away,—the rubbish of self, selfish ambition, pride, jealousies, and all the other works of the flesh. We cannot see Christ through self. Though He is the beauty and the majesty of heaven, so long as we look at self, we shall not be able to discern Him.

We may remove this rubbish by counting ourselves dead unto sin,¹²⁴ dead to all selfish desires and selfish acts. Then

¹²⁴ **Romans 6** ¹¹ Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

there will be no difficulty about opening the door; and then we shall see our Heavenly Visitor in His beauty, and our hearts will be filled with His grace. We will abide in Him.

1 John 4 [RV]

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us;

—because “love is of God” and we have opened our hearts and let that love in. And,

Romans 13

¹⁰ ...love is the fulfilling of the law.

⁸ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loves another has fulfilled the law.

By love will the keeping of the law be manifested to those around us.

1 John 2

⁴ He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in Him.

⁵ But whoso keeps His word, in Him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him.

32. Abide in Christ

Present Truth, October 12, 1893

Timeline: VII-30 (The True Vine)

John 15:4-5

The work of the Christian is to abide in Christ.

John 15

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me.

⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing.

The fruit which hangs upon the branches is produced by the nourishment supplied by the vine. Just so the work which the Christian does must be done by the energy and wisdom of Christ flowing into him, or it will amount to nothing.

It is very common, however, for the branches of Christ to think that they are the vine, and attempt to bear fruit of themselves. But such fruit is always bitter, like the apples of Sodom.

It is not the work of the branch to regulate the flow of sap through itself and direct the formation and growth of the fruit that depends from its sides, but simply to let the sap flow as it is supplied by the roots of the vine, and let the fruit form by the power of the life principle that is within it. No more is it the place of man to control and direct the energy that is given him from God; but simply to let the life and power of God flow through him and work in him, as God himself may direct.

If it were left to man to wield the power of God to suit himself, he would be worse than the devil; for the devil does not have the power of God. It is God's part to direct and control the power which He supplies, and man's part to let that

power work in him without hindrance.

If a branch abides in the vine it must maintain its connection with the vine. Any obstruction that comes between the two may stop the flow of the life-giving sap, and the branch will wither and die.

So the Christian must abide in Christ by maintaining his connection with Christ. But he cannot do this without knowing the mind of Christ; and here is the point where failure often comes in. He ceases to seek to know the mind of Christ, and begins to direct the affairs by his own wisdom. And then everything begins to go wrong. He finds that it is hard work, and so he shoulders a heavy burden of care and perplexity, because his wisdom is not sufficient to make things move harmoniously and successfully. And sooner or later, if he persists, he becomes discouraged and is tempted to give up.

But how can we know the mind of Christ? We can know it by the study of His word and by prayer. And this is why no time is ever lost that is spent in earnest prayer. It is said of Martin Luther that the larger the day's work that was to be done by him, the greater was the amount of it which he devoted to prayer; and it was a rule that he always found to work well.

And it will be found so by all who will try it today; for by prayer, when offered in sincerity and faith, we place ourselves where Christ can work in us, where He can enlighten us by His wisdom and energize with His strength; and thus avoid the perplexity and mistakes which would otherwise attend our work.

Not only must we be where God can reveal His purposes, but we must let Him carry out His purposes in His own way. There have been men who have tried to accomplish the purposes of God themselves, and their experience has been recorded for our profit. Abraham and Sarah tried it and the result was Ishmael; Rebecca and Jacob tried it, and the result

was separation and long years of sorrow.

God will work out His purposes in the best possible way if we will let Him,—if we will remove the hindrances that are within us, the barriers that are directed by self.

Psalm 115

¹ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto your name give glory, for your mercy and for your truth's sake.

33. The Motive

Present Truth, November 18, 1897

Timeline: VII-30 (The True Vine)

John 15:5-8

John 15

⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches: he that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.

⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit.

THE motive of true fruit-bearing, in the Christian life is to glorify God. The vine does not think of itself: it bears for others; it rewards the husbandman's toil. So the Christian will forget self in his desire to labor for God.

“Much fruit” for God's glory will be his desire. This will demand much prayer. His asking will not be for selfish things: his will is God's will; the Lord's good pleasure is his pleasure. To such it is said,

John 15

⁷ You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.

But the asking will be for God—asking, receiving, abiding, fruit-bearing.

34. Fullness of Joy

Present Truth, August 12, 1897

Timeline: VII-30 (The True Vine)

John 15:11

John 15

¹¹ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

THERE is something wonderful in these words, especially when we consider the circumstances under which they were spoken.

¹¹ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.

That shows us that by receiving and retaining what Jesus says to us, we receive and retain His joy. Joy comes by believing the words of the Lord, as we read,

Romans 15

¹³ The God of hope fill you with *all joy* and peace in believing.

Notice, it is “all joy” in believing, just as Jesus says:

¹¹ ...that your joy *may be full*.

By receiving His words we get fullness of joy—perfect joy. But that shows us also that He had perfect joy—fullness of joy; for it is His joy that we are to receive.

John 15

¹¹ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

We get fullness of joy through Jesus, simply because His joy is perfect. As men sometimes express it, “his cup of joy was full.”

When was it that He expressed the wish that His perfect joy might remain in His disciples? The very night when He was

betrayed; while He was on the way to the place where He knew that He would be delivered into the hands of cruel men, to be mocked, and beaten, and scourged, and crucified. Ah, that is joy worth having,—a joy that is perfect in distress and affliction, a joy that is perfect in itself, and does not depend on circumstances!

It is the possession of such joy, and that alone, that enables one to endure affliction. Jesus, because of the joy that He had continually before Him, and present with Him,

Hebrews 12

² ...endured the cross, despising the shame.

This joy is found, not in doubting, not in experimenting, but in trusting. There are millionaires that would give all their possessions for such joy, that delivers from painful anxiety, when the poorest man can have it by simply taking the words of the Lord and letting them work out their fulfillment in Him.

How can Christians be otherwise than glad, when they serve a Master who is gladness itself?

35. All for Us

Present Truth, May 6, 1897

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:7

NOTICE how constantly the thoughts of Jesus were for His children. When His disciples were troubled because He had said He was about to leave them, He assured them,

John 16

⁷ It is expedient for you that I go away.

He was not thinking of himself, of getting away from this cruel world and back again into the heavenly city. For us He went away.

John 14

² I go to prepare a place for you.

His thoughts are with us now and His work for us. Now He appears...

Hebrews 9

²⁴ ...in the presence of God for us.

And when He comes again it is for His people.

John 14

³ I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

From first to last the Lord's plans and thoughts were for the interests of His children, and so are they still. God himself is "for us," and,

Romans 8

³¹ If God be for us, who can be against us?

36. Comfort in Conviction

Signs of the Times, March 14, 1895

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:7-8

John 16

⁷ It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

⁸ And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

THE first thing that the Holy Spirit does in the way of comforting is to convict of sin. But does the Holy Spirit condemn? Christ said,

John 12 [also John 3:17]

⁴⁷ I came not to condemn the world.

There is a difference between conviction and condemnation, and in the recognition of this difference we get the Lord. Many suppose that when the Lord reproves, it is a sign of His anger against us. Conviction is showing a man that he is guilty. Condemnation is the putting of the sentence upon him. We are already under condemnation, because of transgression.

Now the Lord comes to us and convicts us by His Spirit, but when He has brought us to this place where we are convicted and acknowledge the fact that we have sinned and are worthy of death, just there the Lord comes in and takes away the condemnation. He carries us to that point, and then the sentence is remitted. God describes himself as the...

2 Corinthians 1

³ Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

⁴ Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

He comforts us by showing us sin. The comfort of God's reproof lies in the fact that the very thing which causes the conviction is the righteousness which is given to take away the sin for which we are convicted.

Now what is the purpose of the comfort which the Lord gives us? That we may be able to comfort any who are in trouble. God gives us His Spirit in order that we may be able to minister the same to others. So before we can be of any use in proclaiming the message of the Gospel to others, we must receive this comfort in the conviction of sin.

Here is the line between condemnation and justification. We may hold back and pass into condemnation, or we may yield and have no condemnation. If when the conviction comes we accept it, and the righteousness which brings the reproof, then there is no condemnation. But,

John 3

¹⁹ This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

When the Holy Spirit comes, the light is come. It is shining into our hearts to make us see where we have been making mistakes and failings. Many things which we thought virtues we find to be vices. Our diffidence was trust in ourselves, and the fear that we thought was modesty and goodness we find is simply self-love and sensitiveness and the fear of what somebody might say. We thought it was an evidence of our humility, when it was pride. That is an evidence that...

Isaiah 60

¹ ...your light is come.

Now if we cling to self, that light will be condemnation and become darkness,

Matthew 6

²³ ...and if the light which is in you be darkness, how great is

that darkness!

We had been in darkness all the time, because the light which was shining had not been received. Now if the light shines and we allow it to become darkness, we are worse off than before.

But yielding to it, we who sometimes were darkness become...

Ephesians 5

⁸ ...light in the Lord.

37. Ministering the Spirit

Present Truth, September 21, 1899

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:7-8

John 16

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

⁸ And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

TO WHOM is the Spirit of God given? To the believer. What work is wrought when the Spirit is given to the believer? The world is reproved, or convinced, or convicted of sin. How? Not simply because the one who received the Spirit goes and tells people that they are sinners, but because in that power of life, the Spirit which is given, the works of God are so manifested in the individual, that His life is a reproof to those who walk contrary to God's Word.

It is not necessary that one should stand in a public place and declare to people that they are sinners, in order that the world should be reproved of sin, although words spoken in the power and demonstration of the Spirit will convict,—but the individual who has within him the Spirit of Christ will be as a witness, whose life without a word will convict of sin.

So it can be stated as fact that all success in working for God in the extension of His kingdom, is based upon a person's own individual experience, and his work is simply to minister to others the experience that God has given him. What else can he do?

Acts 3

⁶ Such as I have, I give unto you.

What else can we give?

38. The Comforter

Present Truth, March 23, 1893

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:8

BEFORE Jesus went back from earth to heaven He promised to send the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—to abide with His people for ever, as His representative.

Since it was by the anointing of the Spirit that He accomplished all His work here on earth,¹²⁵ it is evident that the presence of the Spirit is the same as the presence of the Lord. The same instruction, counsel, and works of love that came from Christ, are continued by the Spirit.

Conviction of Sin

In promising the Comforter, Jesus said,

John 16

⁸ And when He is come, He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Romans 3

²⁰ By the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 7

¹⁴ [But] the law is spiritual.

It is the nature of the Spirit, for the righteousness of the law is the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore there is no conviction of sin

¹²⁵ **Isaiah 61** ¹ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; ³ To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.

in any soul on earth, that is not the working of the Spirit of God.

But while the Spirit convicts of sin, it is always a Comforter. It is as a Comforter that it convicts. Few people stop to think of that. Remember that nowhere is it said that the Spirit *condemns* for sin. There is a difference between conviction and condemnation.

Conviction is the revealing of sin. But it depends on the person's course after he has been convinced of sin, whether or not he will be condemned. For,

John 3

¹⁹ This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The mere pointing out to a person that he is a sinner is not condemnation; the condemnation comes from holding to the sin after it is made known.

Conviction of Righteousness

Let the mind grasp the thought that the same Spirit that convinces of sin also convinces of righteousness. It is always a Comforter. The Spirit does not lay aside one office while it performs another. It does not leave aside the revealing of righteousness when it convinces of sin, nor does it cease to be a convincer of sin when it reveals righteousness. It does both at the same time, and herein is the comfort to all those who will take it. It convinces of sin because it convinces of righteousness.

But let us consider this matter a little, and then meditate upon it. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God—the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. Therefore the righteousness revealed by it is the righteousness of God. Now it is only by looking at righteousness that we can know sin and its sinfulness. The law, by which is the knowledge of sin, is not sin, but is the ex-

pression of God's righteousness.

A man may look at sin, and if he has never seen anything else he will think it is all right. Even one who knows the right, may lose the knowledge of it by looking at sin, so great is the deceitfulness of sin. So the Spirit must reveal the righteousness of God in His law, before the sinner can know sin as sin. The apostle says,

Romans 7

⁷ I had not known sin but by the law.

So it is as the revealer of the perfect righteousness of God that the Spirit convinces of sin. It is evident, therefore, that the closer one comes to God, thus getting a more perfect view of Him, the greater will be his sense of his own imperfections. He gets this knowledge of sin, not by studying himself, but by beholding God.

As an illustration, take man in relation to the works of God. When does one ever feel his insignificance so much as when in mid-ocean, or by its side? Its vastness makes him feel his littleness. So when one stands amid the lofty mountains. On such an occasion one does not have to look at himself to realize how small he is. It is while looking up,—beholding the mighty works of God,—that he realizes that in comparison he is nothing. The psalmist says,

Psalms 8

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained;

⁴ What is man that You are mindful of him? and the son of man, that You visit him?

If this is a result of contact with and beholding the works of God, what must be the result when considering the character of God himself?

Psalms 84

¹¹ The Lord God is a sun.

He is greater than all the heavens.

Psalm 36

⁶ Your righteousness is like the great mountains; your judgments are a great deep.

As while beholding the visible works of God's hands one feels his own physical insignificance, so in contemplating the righteousness of God, one is made conscious of his own spiritual lack. Now the message of comfort which God sends to His people, especially for the days immediately preceding His coming is this,

Isaiah 40

⁹ Behold your God!

That means that as a necessary preparation for His coming, He wants us to know our own lack of righteousness by beholding His righteousness.

Supplying the Lack

Thus far we have been speaking of the knowledge of sin by the righteousness of God. Now mark the comfort that there is in that same conviction of sin. Remember that the sensibility of a lack of righteousness is caused by the revelation of God's righteousness. Also remember that the Spirit, that convinces of both sin and righteousness, is given to men. Christ said,

John 14

¹⁶ I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever;

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him; but you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you.

What necessarily follows from this? Just this, that whoever accepts the Spirit, which, by its revelation of the righteousness of God, convicts the soul of sin, and allows it to abide with him, thereby gets the righteousness which it brings. The sense of need is itself the promise of supply.

It is God who produces a sense of a lack of righteousness, which is conviction for sin. But He does not do this in order to taunt the sinner, and cause him to despair. He does it for the purpose of letting the sinner know that He has that which will abundantly supply all that he lacks. In fact, it is by the very bringing of the supply of righteousness, that the soul knows itself to be sinful.

Therefore, whoever will take God exactly at His word need not be under condemnation for a single minute, although always, and ever anew, conscious of his own imperfections. As every new defect is pointed out, he may cry,

“O Lord, I thank You that You have this new thing to give me, and I take it as freely as You give it.”

This is true rejoicing in the Lord. This is the truth that God was trying to teach ancient Israel, when He spoke His law from Sinai, and is what He has been anxious for us to learn all these years. The law was ordained...

Galatians 3

¹⁹ ...in the hands of a Mediator.

That is, in the hands of Christ, for He is the...

1 Timothy 2

⁵ ...one Mediator between God and man.

He is Mediator because He reconciles us to God. Since the enmity consists in the fact that we are not subject to the law of God, the reconciliation consists in the putting of that law in the heart and mind. So Christ is Mediator because He is the medium through which the righteousness of God is conveyed to us.

An Example at Sinai

This was most forcibly illustrated at the giving of the law from Sinai. Some time before the people had been perishing with thirst, and God said to Moses,

Exodus 16

⁵ Go on before the people, and take with you of the elders of Israel; and your rod, wherewith you smote the river, take in your hand, and go.

⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.

This was done, and the people drank and were revived. But the water which they drank was miraculously given by Christ. In fact it came directly from Him. The apostle Paul says that:

1 Corinthians 10

⁴ They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.

The Rock which the people saw, and which Moses smote, was a symbol of Christ. But Horeb is another name for Sinai. So that the law of God was spoken from the very same mountain from which God had caused the water to flow, which was even then quenching their thirst.

When God came down upon the mount, it was the very personification of Him and His law. No man could touch it without dying. Yet from it at that same time the water which gave life was flowing. This water, which, as we have seen, came from Christ, is a symbol of the Spirit which is given to all who believe.

John 4

¹⁰ If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that said to you, Give me to drink; you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water.

¹³ Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again:

¹⁴ But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 7

³⁷ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

³⁸ He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.

In that event God has given us a great object lesson. Although the law gives the knowledge of sin, and sin is death, the law comes to us in the hands of a Mediator, ministered to us by the Spirit; and:

Romans 8

² The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, [makes us] free from the law of sin and death.

It is thus that the commandment of God is life everlasting. Is there not the very essence of comfort in this? At the same moment that the knowledge of sin comes to us, righteousness to cover and take away all the sin is revealed.

Romans 5

²⁰ Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

The law, which convicts is spiritual, and the Spirit is the water of life, which is given freely to all who will take it. Could anything surpass the wonderful provisions of the grace of...

2 Corinthians 1

³ ...the God of all comfort, the Father of mercies?

Who will not drink and drink again, and thus continually be filled?

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one
Stoop down, and drink, and live.

I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Horatius Bonar, Hymn: *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say*, 1846.

39. The Convincing Power

Present Truth, October 9, 1902

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:8

WHEN a truth was presented to a Bible-class recently, someone said,

“That is very good, if you can only convince people that it is so.”

But that is not our work, for we could not possibly do it if we tried. Only the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, can...

John 16

⁸ ...convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Our part is to set the truth before the people, both by word and deed. This, however, must be done by the Spirit; for:

1 John 5

⁶ It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

It is only by the Spirit that the truth can be spoken; and only the Spirit working upon those who hear can convince them of truth. How important, then, that those who are Christ's witnesses...

Galatians 5

¹⁶ ...walk in the Spirit.

Psalms 27

¹⁴ Wait on the Lord: be strong and let your heart take courage; yea, wait on the Lord.

Many people seem to get the idea that the Lord delights to keep people in suspense, waiting for Him to fulfill His promises. This is not so. Jesus says of those who cry continually unto Him, that:

Luke 18

⁸ He will avenge them speedily.

When the prophet Daniel prayed, an angel was sent to help him at the beginning of his supplication.¹²⁷

2 Chronicles 16

⁹ The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose hearts are perfect towards Him.

It is true that the Hebrew word rendered “wait,” in *Psalms* 27:14 has the signification ordinarily attached to it; but it means more. Its primary signification appears in the first instance of its occurrence in the Bible, namely,

Genesis 1

⁹ Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place.

To *gather*, to *twist*, or *bind together*, is the primary meaning of the word; the secondary meaning, to *tarry*, arises from this, since what is thus joined together will remain in that state. So we read *Psalms* 27:14, and similar exhortations, with a fuller comprehension, when we understand them as saying,

“Fasten yourself to the Lord; be bound up in the same bundle with Him; let the threads of your life be interlaced and joined into one; and you will find strength.”

¹²⁷ **Daniel 9** ²³ At the beginning of your supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show you; for you are greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

40. A Reprover of Sin

Present Truth, January 19, 1899

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:8, 13-14

WHEN God bestows His Spirit upon any it comes as a reprover of sin.

John 16

⁸ And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

The Spirit poured out upon the day of Pentecost was never withdrawn from the church, but as the church lost its first love, reproof became distasteful and was unheeded. Men prefer to continue in sin undisturbed.

Thus the Spirit was prevented from manifesting itself, and this is why the fruits or the gifts of the Spirit are not more largely seen among professing Christians.

Many are praying for the Spirit in the expectation that it will come as a spiritual enthusiasm, giving them power to do mighty works in a way that will immediately exalt them to a high place in the public esteem, and cause them to be much sought after.

When their prayers are answered and the Spirit comes, convincing of sin in the form of some rebuke for transgression on their part, they often take offense at the manner in which the rebuke is conveyed to them.

If the channel of reproof is one that warns their self-esteem, they promptly close their ears to its message, and refuse to receive anything from such a source, but in doing this they are rejecting the Spirit and making void their own prayers.

Proverbs 1

²³ Turn at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto

you, I will make known my words unto you.

Psalm 25

⁹ The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way.

When Christ came to His own, His own received Him not. The teachers and religious leaders of His day were offended at His sayings. They had desired the coming of the Messiah, but their one thought had been of the personal exaltation that would accrue to themselves when the King of Israel should be revealed.

Had Christ been prepared to gratify these selfish ambitions they would have been among His warm adherents. But although He came to do for them an infinitely greater thing, because this involved the humbling of their pride, they rejected Him.

The same test is applied to the men of this generation by the offer to them of God's Spirit. It brings all power and blessing, the fullness of the Divine life, but because it gives no occasion to the flesh to glory, it is rejected even by some who claim to desire it above everything else.

Those who hate to be reproved for their sins, hate the Holy Spirit, for it is the Comforter that convicts of sin, and if Christ were to come to them, they would reject Him also for the same reason.

The Spirit does not speak of itself.

John 16

¹³ Whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

It is still possible for men to deny the Holy One and desire a murderer to be granted unto them.

41. Reformation Without Ceasing

Present Truth, February 14, 1895

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:13

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth.

John 14

⁶ Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

THEREFORE the Spirit leads us into the truth by leading us into the knowledge of Christ. So Christ said:

John 16

¹⁴ He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

This is the same that we read in:

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

¹⁰ But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

“The deep things” is a term that applies specially to the things of God.

Psalms 92

⁵ O God, how great are your works! and your thoughts are very deep.

Romans 11

³³ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

But Jesus said,

John 16

¹⁵ All things that the Father has are mine: therefore said I that He [the Spirit] shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

Consequently “the deep things of God,” and His unsearchable judgments, are but...

Ephesians 3

⁸ ...the unsearchable riches of Christ.

All this serves to show us that truth is infinite and inexhaustible. To limit truth is to limit God. He who thinks that he knows all the truth, thinks that he fully comprehends God; and that is the same as thinking that he is equal to God. This is true not only concerning the whole range of truth, but also of every particular truth. Every thought of God is deep and unfathomable; therefore no one can ever exhaust any truth of God.

Therefore truths that are new to men must be continually shining forth from the word of God. And they must be new to the church as well as to the world; for the church is composed only of men, and there are no men, however good, who know everything, and who can find nothing more in Christ to be learned.

This was what gave the Reformation its power. The Reformers set forth truth that was new to the mass even of professed Christians, and that was all that made it a reformation. And because the truths were new, they stirred the people.

The trouble with the Protestant church of today is that it has bound itself by creeds to just what the Reformers preached. But to be true successors of the Reformers, does not mean that we should believe only the things that they did, but that we should be *moved by the same spirit*.

A true reformation never stops; but a reformation consists in the presentation of truth that tends to lift people out of the

easy grooves in which they are resting; and it must never cease its lifting.

There is, indeed, much talk of new things, and of progress, but it is not the kind of progress that works reformation. To seek to manufacture enthusiasm by the invention of new theories, is fatal. Sensationalism is spiritual death.

Truth is not to be invented, but discovered by searching. It comes not from man, but from the word of God. In the true Reformation there is no straining after effect, but a simple adherence to the word.

The preaching of the word was what began the Reformation. But the word is not exhausted. There is enough left yet to work a revolution not only in the world, but also in the church.

Let Christians practice and teach the word of God without any gloss or interpretation, and the results will be marvelous. Let them begin with the fourth commandment, and keep the day which it enjoins, the Sabbath of the Lord,—the seventh day of the week,—and there will be such a revival of religion as the world has never seen.

42. Deep Things and Hard To Be Understood

Present Truth, February 5, 1903

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:16-18

IN HIS talk to His disciples, just before His betrayal and crucifixion, Jesus said to them:

John 16

¹⁶ A little while, and you shall not see me; and again, a little while, and you shall see me, because I go to the Father.

To us those words seem simple and plain enough; but the disciples said among themselves:

¹⁷ What is this that He says unto us, A little while, and you shall not see me; and again, a little while, and you shall see me; and because I go to the Father?

¹⁸ They said therefore, What is this that He says, A little while? we cannot tell what He says.

What was there difficult about what Jesus said to them? Nothing whatever; He meant just what He said, that He would be with them but a little while longer, and would then go to the Father, and that it would be but a little while till He returned. It is all very simple and easy of comprehension.

Why then could not the disciples understand? Just because it was so simple and straightforward. Jesus told them in plain language, in short words and simple sentences, just as one would talk to a child, exactly what would take place; and the disciples could not understand, because they did not believe that it could be so. It was out of their line of thought, and they could not readily adjust their minds to anything new.

It is the same way still. People will listen to men who use the most high-flown language about what they have been accustomed to hear, and what they already believe, and will call it beautiful. They will even listen with delight to flights of imagination, and will profess to “understand” it, although

there is nothing in it to understand.

But let one come down to simple realities,—to the reason of things,—and though these be set forth in the clearest and simplest terms, they will shake their heads, and say,

“Such things are too deep; we cannot understand them.”

It ought to be the easiest thing in the world to believe things that are so; but it is the easiest things that people stumble over most. Is there not great need for us to become as little children?

43. Overcoming in Christ

Present Truth, October 26, 1893

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:33

To His disciples on one occasion Jesus said,

John 16

³³ In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Why should this fact cause us to be of good cheer? Why should we rejoice because someone else has overcome the world, when it must also be overcome by ourselves? The grand truth which answers this question is, that we are not overcomers in ourselves, but overcomers in Christ.

To the Corinthians the apostle writes,

2 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and makes manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place.

How is it that we are always caused to triumph in Christ? It is simply because Christ has triumphed over everything, and in Him victory is ours.

Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet was without sin.

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

He has met and overcome every obstacle that can possibly be brought against humanity in the struggle for the life to come. And whenever any of these things, "the world, the flesh, and the devil," meet Him, they meet their Conqueror. The victory has been already won.

And therefore in Christ we have the victory; for when we are in Him, the temptations assail Him, and not ourselves. When we hide our weakness in His strength, there is only His strength to fight the battle. He has gained the victory, and the beaten foe can never recover from his defeat so as to hope for victory over Him.

What, then, must we do to overcome? And why is it that we are so often overcome? The obvious answer is that we cannot overcome outside of Christ. What we have to do is to take the victory that has been already won, the victory that has been gained by Him. He overcame for us, that He might bestow His triumph upon us. And we take the victory by faith, for it is by faith that Christ comes into our hearts. This is what is meant by the apostle John, when he says,

1 John 5

⁴ This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

By faith we bring Christ into our hearts and lives.

Ephesians 3

¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

And Christ being there, He is there as the Conqueror of all that is to be met and overcome in the Christian warfare.

The glorious truth is thus made manifest, that the victory over every temptation and difficulty is already ours, in Christ. We need not, therefore, come up to the conflict with a faint heart, but with all confidence, knowing that defeat cannot possibly be the outcome, no matter how formidable the foe may make himself appear.

The battle is already fought, and Jesus Christ holds out to us the victory. We have simply to take it, and say,

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁷ Thanks be unto God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

44. Trouble and Comfort

Present Truth, September 27, 1900

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:33

John 16

³³ In the world, you shall have tribulation.

THIS is just as distinct a promise of Christ as is any other in the Bible.

1 Peter 4

¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

In this world trouble should be expected as a matter of course. It is indeed necessary for us to have trouble, and we should know that...

1 Thessalonians 3

³ ...we are appointed thereunto.

Philippians 1

²⁹ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

Since it is given to us to have tribulation, it must be a good thing, for:

1 Timothy 6

¹⁷ [God]...gives us richly all things to enjoy.

You say that it is absurd to enjoy tribulation? Don't say that, lest you be found casting discredit on God's Word. Listen:

1 Peter 2

¹³ Rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings.

So tribulation is given to us to enjoy, just as much as anything else. The Apostle Paul said of himself:

Colossians 1

²⁴ Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake.

Again:

2 Corinthians 12

¹⁰ I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.

The *Revised Version* reads:

"I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries,..."

You say that this is a new view to take of trouble. It is a very old view, and if it is new to you, you have been depriving yourself of a great deal of comfort and blessing; for surely everybody has trouble, and trouble is designed by the Lord to be a great blessing to us.

Let me ask you who are in trouble: Are you comforted in the midst of it? If not, why not? Here is the truth:

2 Corinthians 1

³ Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

⁴ Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.

Now if you have not found comfort, what have you done with it? It is certain that you have had comfort, because no trouble comes without it. Since God comforts us in all our trouble, we ought always to be comforted. Perhaps we have been throwing away the kernel of the nut, and swallowing the shell.

John 16

³³ In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world;

—says Christ. Remember that we cannot have any trouble of any kind whatsoever, or for any cause, that is not also the suffering of Christ. We share it with Him, even though we know it not.

But He does not fail, nor become discouraged. He has conquered trouble, and His peace abounds in the midst of it; therefore if we know that we suffer with Him, we shall experience all the joy of His victory in it.

Moses deliberately chose...

Hebrews 11

²⁵ ...rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

And after he had had long experience in both, he esteemed...

²⁶ ...the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

If the reproach of Christ is so full of joy, what must the unveiled glory be?

45. Good Cheer

Present Truth, August 1, 1895

Timeline: VII-32 (The Coming of the Comforter)

John 16:33

Christ said:

John 16

³³ In the world, you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

THE good cheer rests upon nothing we have done or can do, but upon what He has done. Therefore there is good cheer for the Christian all the time.

46. Christ's Prayer for His Disciples

Present Truth, October 8, 1903

Timeline: VII-33 (Jesus' Intercessory Prayer)

John 17:9-23

IT MUST have been a wonderful privilege to bow in prayer with Jesus. No wonder that the men who had this privilege should come to Him with the request,

Luke 11

¹ Lord, teach us to pray.

Heaven must have seemed very near to them when the Son of God brought His petitions to the throne of grace, and they heard Him speak, “strong in faith,” to His Father in heaven.

The prayer that is recorded in this chapter is a mine of wealth, from which believers have never ceased to draw hope and courage and inspiration. It must have revealed to the Saviour's listening disciples new heights and depths of His thoughts for them, although they could not then take it in. In after years the words of the prayer would be treasured and studied with an ever-growing appreciation of its depth of meaning.

If we would study it, we must remember that it is a prayer, and should be studied in the spirit of prayer. Its secrets are revealed, not to the cold inquiry of the critic, but to the heart that is melted with the love that inspires it.

John 17

⁹ I pray for them.

This prayer was not for the world. Christ pleads for the world, and His life is freely given for the sinner, but this prayer deals with things that the world can never know until it takes the place of the disciple. Every one of us who has accepted Christ as our Saviour is included in the prayer, for He says:

John 17

²⁰ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

We too may draw near and listen to this prayer, as the disciples did, knowing that it is made in our behalf. We were present to the mind of Christ on that night, as well as the eleven disciples.

Christ was always praying for His disciples. In the night watches, while they slept, He was pleading on their behalf for the gifts they valued then so lightly. He said to Peter,

Luke 22

³² I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.

And still it is Christ...

Romans 8

³⁴ ...who also makes intercession for us.

1 John 2

¹ We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

In this Christ is our example. We are to take a responsibility for others, even if they fail to feel it for themselves,

Ephesians 6

¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

John 17

¹¹ Keep through your own name.

It was in the name of the Father that Christ came. It was God who showed Him what to do, and what to say, and the name of the Father was His defense.

Proverbs 18

¹⁰ The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runs

into it, and is safe.

Into that name the believer is baptized, so that henceforth it is his own. He goes in the name of the Lord, and that name, through faith, makes men whole. The man who takes the name of the Lord as his protection will not take His name in vain, for God always honors His own name.

John 17

¹⁴ I have given them your Word.

Here is the report of one who did God's will. Happy the servant who can thus give account of his work to God. Many ministers are not following Christ in this respect. Instead of giving the people the Word they are giving them the chaff of human speculations. Their work is not leading men to Pentecost.

God was able to pour out His Spirit upon the church within a few weeks, because Christ had done a great work in the hearts and minds of the disciples by giving them the Word of God. That Word makes...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁷ The man of God...perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Paul followed the example of Christ and...

Acts 20

²⁷ ...shunned not to declare...all the counsel of God.

The equipment of the disciples was a complete one. As soon as the Spirit should come upon them, they were to go throughout the earth, preaching the Gospel. As Christ himself had been sent, so He was sending the disciples. As He himself had been equipped for His work, so He had equipped them.

Jesus Christ connects every believer with himself in His great mission. Not one is left out from the work. The idea that the work of Christ's church is to be done by a certain section,

known as ministers, has no countenance in the Scriptures. Every man has his work. Every one is sent into the world as Christ was sent into the world.

John 17

¹⁵ I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil.

¹⁸ As You have sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Perhaps your lot is cast in unpleasant surroundings, and you have thought it difficult to be a Christian where you are. You wish that you could be as favorably situated as others are, and not be obliged to associate with those who delight in sinful pleasures.

Remember that Jesus has sent you into the world, as He was sent himself. You are safer where you are, if you serve Him, than you would be in an easier place. He has prayed for you that the Father would keep you through His own name. He does not pray that you might be taken out of the world, but that you might be kept from the evil.

John 17

¹⁵ I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil.

The life of Christ is a missionary life, and therefore it is safest where the need is greatest. He left heaven for the dark corners of this world, but He had more of heaven here in seeking the lost than He could have had in staying with those who had not gone astray.

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth.

It is truth that sanctifies. Error will not do it, hence the need of knowing and loving the truth. Just as men may be always growing in the knowledge of the truth, so sanctification is to be a progressive, life-long work.

¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Jesus sanctified himself that we might be sanctified. It was not for His own gain but for ours that He submitted to all the experiences which sanctified Him. We are to show the same spirit, and not to seek sanctification for our own sakes, but because of the increased power it will give us wherewith to help others. We are to become ever more and more helpful, as we learn more and more of the sanctifying truth of God. Christ made himself one with us.

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same.

It is in becoming one with others that we can help them.

John 17

²¹ That they all may be one.

It was a wonderful unity for which Christ prayed. Nothing less than the perfect oneness existing between His Father and himself is the measure of the unity that Christ will work in His church.

There seems now to be discord and strife in the church, but because Satan has sown tares among the wheat, that does not make the wheat worthless. Both will grow together until the harvest, and then Christ's work will appear free from counterfeits.

Where there is a spirit of love and unity, there are members of Christ's church. Where self is lifted up, and strife and divisions appear, we may know that Satan has been at work and has sown tares. Sectarian divisions are not of Christ, and they will not long exist among those who are sanctified through the truth, and are separate from the world as Christ was. The world may hate them as it did Him, but notwithstanding this, they will serve others, as He did.

Some hold the opinion that sectarian divisions are necessary. If they are, it is the flesh that makes them so, for they are entirely opposite to that for which Christ prayed. There is only one body and one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, and one God, who is in all: how then can His body be divided into several parts? Division is a work of the flesh, not a fruit of the Spirit.

Ephesians 4

¹ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called,

² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

³ Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling;

⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

⁶ One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

John 17

²² The glory which You gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

²³ I in them, and You in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

It takes something more than pertains to our fallen nature to bring about the oneness for which Christ prayed. Only the glory which Jesus had with the Father is sufficient for it. When the oneness is seen, the glory will be revealed.

The glory of heaven is the spirit of self-surrender that prevails there. Self-denial is the test of discipleship and the sign of true greatness. The spirit that took Christ to Calvary was the glory of heaven. Heaven delights in self-sacrifice, and when this rules, there can be perfect unity.

John 17

²³ That the world may know that You have sent me, and have

loved them, as You have loved me.

The world derides the idea of self-sacrifice, but to every man and woman there come times when the glory of this world reveals its hollowness, and their hearts cry out for the living God. At such times a man in whom the Saviour's prayer is fulfilled can be to them as cold water in a thirsty land. His unworldliness is the very thing that appeals to them then, for they long for a like deliverance.

Christ is praying still. Now,

- it is we for whom He asks that we may be sanctified through His truth;
- it is we to whom He has given His Word;
- it is for us He asks that we may be one as He and His Father are one,

—that in this day of educated doubt and spiritual dearth, the hungry world may once more be compelled to believe the love that He has for them, because they see it fully manifested in His disciples.

47. In the World, But Not of the World

Present Truth, May 21, 1903

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VII-33 (Jesus' Intercessory Prayer)

John 17:15

THE great question that has always confronted men is, How can I live a Christian life in the midst of the rush and bustle of the world? Too often it has been given up as unanswerable.

Most people have thought, and still think, that it is impossible. So they have not attempted to be Christians, or have put it off until they could retire from the world and live a sort of hermit life. Still others have thought there must be a different standard for one living in the thick of the busy world, from that for those who live in comparative solitude.

Every such idea is a mistaken one. While the example of Christ with His disciples shows that it is right and necessary for one to have seasons of retirement, it is a fact that He made no provision for any such class as monks or hermits. To the Father, He said of His disciples:

John 17

¹⁵ I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil.

His people are to be the light of the world; and the object of a light is to shine in the midst of the darkness. They are to be the salt of the earth, which means that they are to come in contact with those who need saving.

Salt that has to be kept shut up in a box and carefully kept from coming in contact with any perishable substance, lest it lose its savor, might as well be thrown away at once. So the religion that has to be kept in a cell, in order that it be not lost, is not worth preserving.

In short, the Christian is not to live for self, but for others.

He is to preserve his Christianity by putting it into active service. Thus it was with Joseph, with Daniel and his three fellows, with David and Hezekiah in the midst of the cares of a great people. What was the secret? They walked with God, and could be alone with Him even in the midst of a crowd.

Nehemiah was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, king of Persia. As he served the king his heart was heavy because of the condition of Jerusalem. The king learned the cause of his trouble, and asked him what he wanted; and while the cup was in his hand, before replying to the king,

Nehemiah 2

⁴ [He] prayed to the God of heaven.

It is the presence of the Lord that makes every place sacred, for He himself is a sanctuary for His people, and we need not lose Him in the crowd.

The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ John G. Whittier, Poem: *The Master* (from the book, *The Panorama, and Other Poems*, 1856).

48. Knowing and Telling the Truth

Present Truth, February 13, 1902

Timeline: VII-33 (Jesus' Intercessory Prayer)

John 17:17

IN ORDER to tell the truth one must first know the truth. This is self-evident; nobody can tell the truth if he does not know the truth. What is truth? It is the Word of God—the Word of life. Christ said to the Father:

John 17

¹⁷ Your Word is Truth.

And as He is the Divine Word He also said:

John 14

⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life.

How may we know the truth?

John 8

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If you continue in my Word, then are you my disciples indeed;

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

He who truly knows Christ knows the truth, and so can tell the truth. But the truth is the life; therefore, in order to tell the truth we must recognize Christ wherever there is life.

He who does not know the life does not perceive the truth; and this does not mean simply that he cannot tell the truth about Jesus, but he cannot know or tell the truth about any created thing; because everything that exists is the visible manifestation of the working of life.

This explains much of people's failure to report things correctly, and their unintentional misrepresentation of others. People who do not know the truth cannot be expected to tell the truth about what they see and hear; they cannot be expected to repeat or describe them accurately, since they do

not see or hear correctly. They have defective sight and hearing. They do not willfully deceive, but they are themselves deceived.

49. Your Word is Truth

Present Truth, March 14, 1895

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VII-33 (Jesus' Intercessory Prayer)

John 17:17

THE highest character is that which is the embodiment of truth; and this is the character that God will give men through the reception of His word.

John 17

¹⁷ Your word is truth.

The word is not simply true; it is truth. He who knows the word of God will not have gained merely a knowledge of some peculiar theories relating to one particular part of the domain of human thought, but in every department of thought and life he will have been made wiser. There is no truth which originated independently of God's word.

Psalms 33

⁹ He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.

The purpose of the Scriptures is to make men wise unto salvation.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 119

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

If the Scriptures are earnestly and prayerfully studied with this purpose in view, they will be found to be the words of eternal life. If they are studied for some other purpose, it will be found not to yield the satisfaction sought.

50. Where Eternal Life Begins

Present Truth, February 4, 1897

Timeline: VII-33 (Jesus' Intercessory Prayer)

John 17:21

John 17

²¹ That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that You have sent me.

IT IS the desire of Christians to possess, or to be possessed rather, by that perfect mind and heart which is the evidence of the indwelling within them of their Lord, that, being one with Him they may together, as He has prayed, be one with the Father.

Those who are not filled and possessed with this desire, though they may be growing and developing, are not yet full-fledged Christians.

It is with this complete renunciation of self that eternal life begins.

51. The Unity of the Church

Advent Review, October 21, 1902

Timeline: VII-33 (Jesus' Intercessory Prayer)

John 17:22-23

THE Bible is full of the idea of unity in the church of Christ, but we do not read so much about uniformity. This unity is to be the unity of life and growth, and not a mere outward connection. In Christ's prayer to the Father for His disciples, He said,

John 17

²² And the glory that You gave me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

²³ I in them, and You in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

Here we see that the glory of the Lord is to effect the union of believers, and the union is to be that of the Father and the Son.

The union of the Father and the Son is union of spirit. We cannot comprehend this union, but we may know that it is not a forced union, but that it results from their very nature. They have one life. Their thoughts and purposes are the same, not because they come together and compare notes and agree to be alike, but because one life is in them both.

So the union of believers is to be a vital union, or it is not any union at all. It is not accomplished by strife and debate and decisions of majorities, but by yielding the mind to Christ and hearing His voice. They are to be united by the mind and Spirit of Christ. The life of the Father and the Son in each member of the church will produce the most perfect union in the whole body.

For the human body is the most perfect example of unity, and it is the example that the Bible gives us. Christ is the Head of the body, the church.

Ephesians 1

²² And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church,

²³ Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

Colossians 1

¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.

1 Corinthians 12

¹² For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many.

In the human body there are many members, and each member has a different office from the rest; there is not uniformity of action among the members, but there is the most perfect unity. All work together in perfect harmony for one object. So it is in the body of Christ.

⁶ There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all.

This gives no ground for the idea that there may be divisions in the church of Christ, one division believing one thing, and another division believing and practicing another thing.

²⁴ ...God has tempered the body together,...

²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body.

Ephesians 4

⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of your calling;

⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

⁶ One God and Father of all, who is above all, and thru all, and in you all.

The apostle's exhortation is,

1 Corinthians 1

¹⁰ That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

But let it be borne in mind that this union is not artificial, but natural; not the human nature, however, but the divine nature.

The unity of belief in the church is not forced by the church coming together and the majority defining the creed to be believed. The church cannot define doctrine, nor make laws for itself or anybody else.

The church of Christ is made up of all who obey the Lord's commands, not a body to issue commands. The Head directs, the body obeys. God speaks; each one must listen to His voice, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and no one can give faith to another,

Ephesians 2

⁸ It is the gift of God.

52. Being with Christ

Present Truth, July 20, 1893

Timeline: VII-33 (Jesus' Intercessory Prayer)

John 17:24

HE WHO loves, always wishes to be with the object of his love. For love of men, Christ came to earth to dwell with them; and then, as He was about to return to heaven again, He prayed,

John 17

²⁴ Father, I will that they also, whom You have given me, be with me where I am.

In like manner also, they who loved the Lord, long for nothing so much as to be with Him where He is. The disciple who loved the Lord the most, and who leaned on His breast at the last supper, begins the *Revelation* with the words,

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold, He comes with clouds,

—and closes with the prayer,

Revelation 22

²⁰ ...Even so, come, Lord Jesus,

—in response to the promise of Jesus,

²⁰ Surely I come quickly.

When the disciples were sorrowing over the fact that Jesus had made known to them that He was about to go away, He said to comfort them,

John 14

¹ Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.

² In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again,

and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

The coming of the Lord is the Christian's hope—the blessed hope.

Titus 2

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul, more than any other, wrote of the coming of the Lord. In all his epistles he had something to say about it. He loved the Lord, and therefore he loved His appearing. Just before his martyrdom, he said,

2 Timothy 4

⁶ I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.

In writing to the Philippians, he said,

Philippians 1

²² What I shall choose I know not.

²³ For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

As seen in what has been said about the preceding part of this chapter, there was nothing of selfishness in this desire of Paul's. He was the last person in the world to think about himself, and to spend his time sighing for rest. He had no desire to leave his work before it was done. There was no joy to him in thinking of leaving the work undone, for someone else to finish.

The preceding article¹²⁹ has set forth the fact that when Paul said,

Philippians 1

²¹ ...to die is gain,

—he had no thought of gain to himself, in getting rid of some of the work. His only desire was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it was by life or by death. And as he did not know in what way the Lord would best be magnified, he had no choice in the matter, as to whether he should live or die.

So in the verses before us, he says that he does not know what he would choose, if the choice were given him. The true Christian will not choose for himself, but will leave all choice to the Lord.

It is manifestly absurd to suppose that the apostle Paul expressed an earnest desire to die, immediately after saying that he did not know what he should choose. To suppose that when he said that he had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better, when he had just said concerning life and death,

²² ...what I shall choose I know not,

—is to accuse him of the inconsistency of saying,

“I do not know whether I should choose to live or to die, but I should much prefer to die.”

Paul did not know whether life or death would best glorify the Lord, and therefore he left the whole matter with the Lord, who alone could know, and did not trouble his mind about it. He had no choice in the matter. But there was something which he desired as far better than either one, and that was to

¹²⁹ The article Waggoner is referring to is called “Christ in Everything.” It is included in the collection, “Paul and the Early Church,” under the Section, “Philippians”.

be with Christ. And being with Christ is something that cannot be gained, either by remaining on this earth, or by dying.

He Will Come For Us

How may we be with Christ? There is only one way, and that is by His coming for us. Christ said to His disciples,

John 14

³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where heart I am, there you may be also.

He will not come in vain. He comes in order that His people may be with Him, where He is; and that would be useless if they could be with Him in some other way. It would not only be useless, but very foolish, for Christ to come again, to take His people to himself, so that they may be with Him, if they could go to be with Him by dying; for the most of them, at least, would in that case be with Him before He came.

The fact that Christ said that He is coming in order that His people may be with Him, is evidence enough that they cannot be with Him except by His coming. The Apostle Paul well understood this. To the Thessalonians he wrote:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

What the apostle longed for, therefore, was the coming of the Lord. And there could be no selfishness in this; on the contrary, it was pure love for the Lord. There was in the desire

nothing like a longing to leave the work for someone else to finish; for the coming of the Lord is at the end of the work.

Matthew 24

¹⁴ This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

So the longing for the return of the Saviour has taught us,

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

The Apostle Paul had wonderful revelations, but the time of the coming of the Lord was not one of them. To the apostles Christ had said,

Acts 1

⁷ It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power.

When Daniel, the beloved of the Lord, desired to know about the times which had been shown him in vision, it was said,

Daniel 12

⁹ Go your way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Matthew 24

³⁶ But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

This is in order that all Christians, in all ages, may alike look for the coming of the Lord. Nothing else has ever been set before man as the object of their hope; for by that alone can they be with the Lord.

It makes no difference though the Apostle Paul knew that he was to die before the coming of the Lord; that was not the object of his desire, but Christ's coming only. When he was

about to be executed, the coming of the Lord was the one theme on his tongue.

And so we, not knowing and not caring whether it will be our lot to sleep or to live till the end, may, with the apostles and prophets, rejoice in hope of His coming.

53. Could You Not Watch With Me?

Present Truth, December 31, 1896

Timeline: VII-26 (The Betrayer Revealed) / VII-28 (Retirement to Gethsemane) / VII-29 (A Warning to Peter and the Ten) / VII-34 (Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:21-38

WHEN the last supper was prepared, and, in the evening, Christ and the twelve had seated themselves and were eating, He said to them,

Matthew 26

²¹ Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Later, when they had finished this, their last meal together, and their hearts were warm and tender from the loving acts of service from the Master, which followed the supper, they sang a hymn and went out upon the mount of Olives. Then Christ said to them,

³¹ All you shall be offended because of me this night.

But Peter replied,

³³ Though all men should be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.

Whereupon Christ foretold to him the thrice repeated denial of Him which he should make before the morning light. This roused Peter to the still stronger assertion.

³⁵ Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You.

All the disciples, also, said the same thing. They were apparently very positive,—it seemed that they spoke with absolute assurance. Nothing, not even the fear of an immediate and ignominious death, could influence them to deny Him. But when they had come to Gethsemane He said to them,

³⁶ Sit here, while I go and pray yonder.

And selecting Peter, James, and John, for a more special test

of their love and tenderness toward Him, and additional opportunity for its expression, He went with them on yet a little farther and there left them with the request that they stay and watch with Him. The words with which He prefaced this request were enough to have filled their hearts with such a tender earnestness of anxious affection as to have driven sleep from their eyes:

³⁸ My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

Yet, in both mind and heart, they so failed to realize and appreciate His anguish and its cause, that they not only did not watch and pray with Him, but slept. Three times He repeated to them their opportunity, and yet they still slept,—returning, then, to the others, they all were sleeping. They had all forsaken Him, already, in their ignorance and self-assurance. They were positive in their assertions that they would never deny or forsake Him.

But all their protestations had been made purely in the assumption that each was able to carry out his intention in his own strength. Here was lacking entirely the humility of faith and trust in the power of God to supplement their expression of their intention to be faithful with the necessary strength and wisdom to remain so indeed.

The truth is they were still unconverted men. They did not yet realize the weakness of man—nor yet understand the power of God. They had not yet distinguished things material from things spiritual. That they were so dull of heart and slow of understanding, increased their sorrows and multiplied their trials, while it deprived them of the joy, almost supernal, which might have been theirs to have been in loving sympathy with the Master in those last hours of agony.

They must have afterwards felt that the utter self-abrogation and service of their whole after lives could not atone for any one of the lost moments of watching and prayer which

they allowed to pass so carelessly then.

But that which Christ said to them, He still says, and to all:

“Watch! Pray! Carry my Gospel to the people!”

It is just as possible for us to lose the great opportunities offered us now, as it was for them then. The victories to be gained over self and Satan are just as great now as then. The work to be done, in our own hearts, and in the world, is no less—but there is less time in which to do it.

Yet, at the same time, the love of God is the same, without diminution or variance, and to Him all things are possible, so therefore to us, through His love and omnipotence.

The disciples failed pitifully when they thought they were able, in their own strength, even to profess Christ only, to the world. The lesson to us is that we should fall into no such error, but, asking, receive from Him day by day the necessary strength and wakefulness in which to watch, and pray, and work with Him until the end.

54. Not My Will, But Yours, Be Done

Present Truth, September 25, 1902

Timeline: VII-34 (Gethsemane)

Luke 22:42

Luke 22

⁴² ...nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done.

IN READING the account of Christ's prayer in the garden, people quite naturally get the idea that the well-known words just quoted, which He uttered, were a sort of protest, as though He would say,

"Well, if I cannot have what I desire, let your will be done."

This is because we judge Him by ourselves, who are so apt to regard God's will as a hardship to be endured, rather than a blessing to be desired. We should remember that the words are a request, and are but the continuation of what Jesus had already prayed:

Luke 22

⁴² Father, if You be willing, remove this cup from me...

Christ's prayer was all in harmony with what He had taught His disciples to pray, namely,

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your will be done.

This prayer recognizes the fact that God's will is the only perfect will, and that only what He wills is right and good. Nothing is more disastrous for any man than to have his own way.

We are to meditate upon God's ways until we know that His ways and His will are as much better than ours as the heaven is higher than the earth, and then we shall ardently long for His will to be done.

Thus we shall most earnestly pray to be saved from having

our own way and doing our own will.

55. Suffering in the Flesh

Present Truth, February 14, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for February 21

Timeline: VII-34 (Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:36-46

THE text covers the account of Jesus in Gethsemane, which is the title of the lesson. The real student of the Bible, however, will not be content with reading only the record in *Matthew*, but will turn to *Mark* 14:32-42 and *Luke* 22:39-46. In our study we shall combine the three, referring to the incidents mentioned in each Gospel, as though there were but one narrative.

It was in Gethsemane that the suffering of the cross was undergone, and the victory won. Here Jesus...

Hebrews 12

⁴ ...resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Here,

Hebrews 2

¹⁸ [He] suffered, being tempted,

—no less than in the wilderness, just before He began His public ministry. We may well believe that in the few hours, or the single hour, in the garden, Jesus suffered as much as in the entire forty days in the wilderness. Christ's public work on earth began and ended with a time of intense trial and suffering.

If we ask why Jesus passed through this time of agony in the garden, the answer will quickly be returned, that it was because of the great trial and the crucifixion, which He saw just before Him. But one may say that, and still utterly fail to comprehend what was involved in it for Him and for us; for everything that it meant to Him, it means also to us.

Do not forget this. Jesus was the representative Man. The

Son of God took human flesh solely in man's behalf. He suffered nothing by himself alone,—nothing that merely concerned Him, and that began and ended with Him,—but He suffered for and with humanity; and this He does still, for:

Hebrews 13

⁸ Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

Let us read something of what the Scriptures have to say concerning the suffering of Christ. Read *Hebrews* 5:7, and you have the key to the whole matter.

Hebrews 5

⁷ In the days of His flesh,...He...offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard.

But somebody will say that He was not saved from death, and that therefore His prayers availed nothing. What a great mistake! His prayers did avail, and He received all that He asked for: He was saved from death.

You ask how this can be, since He was crucified in less than twenty-four hours? Ah, do not think that Jesus was moved to such agony by the prospect of mere physical suffering and death. It was not this that wrung drops of blood-like sweat from Him. He had already said¹³⁰ that He would not pray to be delivered from that hour, because it was for the express purpose of undergoing the trial of that hour, that He came into the world. For what, then, did He pray in such agony?

The answer is that He prayed to be saved from sin, which is...

¹³⁰ **John 12** ²⁷ Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause I came unto this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name. Then there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁶ ...the sting of death,

—and therefore its essential element. It is only by being saved from sin, that one can be saved from death.

Hebrews 2

¹⁸ [Jesus] suffered, being tempted,

—and this temptation was manifestly temptation to sin: for we read that:

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ [He] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

He was tempted to sin, but the temptation was ineffectual, although it was so strong that it caused Him such intense suffering as no other person ever endured.

At the beginning of His career, He had been offered the world and all its glory, if He would but prove disloyal to the Father; now the same temptation came to Him with greatly multiplied force. It was not that His mind turned with longing to the world and its empty glory, and that He dreaded to be crucified to it, but just the opposite.

Hebrews 1

⁹ [He] loved righteousness, and hated iniquity,

—and His fear was lest the flesh should prove too weak in the trial, and that some hasty word might find expression, or at least some thought of enmity might have a momentary hold upon Him. He had voluntarily become partaker of flesh and blood in equal measure with all mankind; and in that trying hour all the forces of hell had combined to take advantage of the weakness of the flesh.

When He said in loving extenuation of the failure of the three favored disciples to watch with Him,

Matthew 26

⁴¹ The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak,

–He knew by actual experience, as no other soul ever knew or can know, the full extent of human weakness; but He also knew the power of the eternal Spirit over all flesh.

When a little later Jesus hung on the cross, the priests mockingly said:

Matthew 27

⁴³ He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now.

Ah, they did not know how true their words were. His faith had said:

Isaiah 50

⁷ The Lord God will help me; therefore I shall not be confounded,

–and His faith was not misplaced. While yet in the garden,

Luke 22

⁴³ There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

And He was delivered, even though He hung on the cross. Yea, the cross was His deliverance, for by it He was...

John 12

³² ...lifted up from the earth,

–even to heaven, and the world was crucified unto Him. Because He was sinless, He suffered on the cross; and because He was sinless it was impossible for the grave to hold Him. He was kept absolutely free from the slightest semblance of sin, under the most trying circumstances, and thus had the mastery over death.

Philippians 2

⁸ He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,

–but it was a willing offering. Death gained no victory when Jesus Christ went into the tomb.

Hebrews 5

⁷ His...prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears,

–were heard and answered, and He was so completely saved from death, that He could suffer it in order to destroy it. As Samson was a conqueror over the Philistines even when he was voluntarily delivered, bound, into their hands,¹³¹ so Christ was victorious over death when He endured its pains. Thus did He show how God can gird himself with the extremest wrath of man, as with a garment, and make it to praise Him.

Psalms 76 [RV]

¹⁰ Surely the wrath of man shall praise You: the remainder of wrath shall You restrain.

What is there in this for us? Everything.

1 Peter 4

¹ Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin;

² That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the

¹³¹ **Judges 15** ¹¹ Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Know you not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that you have done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. ¹² And they said unto him, We are come down to bind you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that you will not fall upon me yourselves. ¹³ And they spoke unto him, saying, No; but we will bind you fast, and deliver you into their hand: but surely we will not kill you. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock. ¹⁴ And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. ¹⁵ And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

In nothing was Jesus apart from mankind. It was in our flesh,—in yours and mine,—that He suffered being tempted, and that He conquered. He has overcome the world, and every soul who believes, and holds fast to the faith, that Jesus is come in his flesh, has the victory that has overcome the world.

This is what this story means to us. He who grasps this truth has learned the lesson; whoever does not know this personally and practically does not know this lesson, even though every word of the Scripture be at his tongue's end.

2 Timothy 2

¹¹ It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him:

¹² If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

Hebrews 12

³ Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.

Looking unto Jesus, not a one far off in the heavens, nor yet a one down in the depths of the earth, He as one who fills all things, even dwelling in our bodies,¹³² we have the instant and continual victory over every lust of the flesh. It is conquered in advance, and our intelligent faith in Christ's life that is now manifested, keeps us free from its power.

¹³² **Romans 10** ⁶ But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) ⁷ Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) ⁸ But what says it? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; ⁹ That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

¹¹ For the scripture says, Whosoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.

1 John 1

⁴ These things we write unto you, that your joy may be full.

What can give the oppressed, sin-sick soul who has long been the slave of fleshly lusts, greater joy than to know that precious and eternal victory is even now dwelling in his sinful flesh? It is true, use it and have the joy of it. The secret is this:

Philippians 2

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

That mind was the mind of the Spirit—the absolute will of God. The Holy Spirit of God was His life, so that the motions of the flesh were but the motions of the Spirit. Thus it was that even when dead, He was raised from the dead,

Romans 1

⁴ ...according to the Spirit of holiness.

The will of God was supreme in Him. Now God is able so to strengthen us...

Ephesians 3

¹⁶ ...with might by His Spirit in the inner man,

¹⁷ That Christ will dwell in [our] hearts by faith,

—and then we shall no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh and the carnal mind, but shall allow God to do His will in us, even as it is done in Christ. This was demonstrated as a possibility for all mankind, even every member of the human race, when Christ said,

Luke 22

⁴² Not my will, but yours, be done.

This is the whole of the Gospel of our salvation, and to this end—the rule of actual righteousness in every believing soul—all the Scriptures were written.

Are you willing that God's will should be done in your mortal body? Then with Christ pray,

Matthew 26

⁴² Your will be done,

–and the power that said,

Genesis 1

³ Let there be light: and there was light,

–will do it.

56. Always Watching

Present Truth, August 10, 1899

Timeline: VII-34 (Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:38-41

JUST before His trial and crucifixion, Jesus took several of His disciples and went into the garden to pray, for He was

Matthew 26

³⁸ ...exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

As He withdrew himself a short distance from them, He said,

³⁸ ...tarry here, and watch with me.

Then He fell upon His face, and in the agony of His soul He cried to God for strength to carry Him through the awful ordeal. When He returned to His disciples,

⁴⁰ He found them asleep.

To Peter He said in tender reproach,

⁴⁰ What, could you not watch with me one hour?

And then He gave that admonition,

⁴¹ Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

As it was then, so has it always been; there is not one moment when we can safely cease to watch. The devil is a wily foe, and at this time especially,

Revelation 12

¹² The devil is come down unto you having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.

Peter neglected to watch that “one hour,” and a little later on he denied his Lord. So there is no hour which may not prove an hour of defeat and overthrow, if we neglect to watch.

The watching must be constant. Watch against evil; watch against sin;

Luke 21

³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

57. Made Sin

Present Truth, October 11, 1894

Timeline: VII-34 (Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:39

WE GAIN some faint idea of the infinite sacrifice which Christ made for us when we consider that God...

Ephesians 5

²¹ ...has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin.

To realize its meaning fully would require that we fully comprehend the Divine nature of Christ and the nature of sin. Between the two there is an infinite gulf. The one is as utterly unlike the other as it possibly can be. Christ was infinitely pure: sin was infinitely loathsome and impure.

Yet Christ was made sin for us. The serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness was a faithful representation of Christ upon the cross, not only because it hung upon the wood, but because it was a serpent, representing sin.

Christ consented to be made the very thing that was most loathsome to Him and to His Father; to become that which was strictly unlike His Father as anything could be; and to be separated from His Father as far as sin is separated from Him, which is as far as the east is from the west.

No wonder the Saviour, as He felt this awful gulf of separation yawning between them, prayed that the cup might pass from Him.

Matthew 26

³⁹ And He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.

But He drank the cup and endured the cross that we, who were made sinners by Adam's fall,

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ ...might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 6

¹ We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

58. Temptation

Present Truth, June 29, 1899

Timeline: VII-34 (Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:41

We are commanded,

Matthew 26

⁴¹ Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.

CHRISTIANS would often be saved the ignominy of defeat in their battle with the devil, if their strength were only employed to keep out of temptation, instead of being employed in trying to resist, when they have voluntarily placed themselves within its grasp.

The Betrayal, Trial, and Crucifixion

*This section covers the last day (Friday)
of Jesus' life on Earth:
His trial and crucifixion.*

*All the Gospel Writers give accounts
of this most important day
in the history of this world,
which marked the defeat of Satan's kingdom,
and the certainty of Christ's restoration
of a newly-renovated race in a New Earth.*

Certain details are only mentioned once by some of the Gospel Writers.

John records the "Hearing before Annas."

Matthew records the "Confession and Suicide of Judas."

Luke records the "Hearing before Herod."

John mentions that Nicodemus was present at "The Burial."

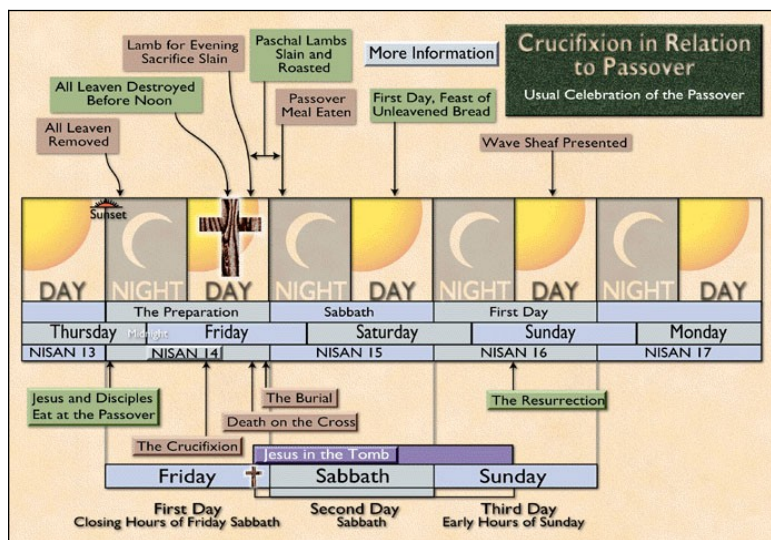
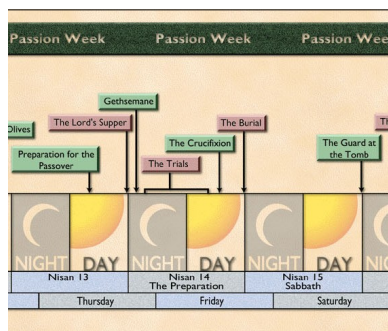
Matthew mentions "The Guard at the Tomb."

These are only a few examples.

Each Gospel account is needed to get the full picture.

- VII 35 Hearing Before Annas
VII 36 Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin
VII 37 Day Trial Before the Sanhedrin
VII 38 Judas' Confession and Suicide
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1. Betraying Christ

Present Truth, December 6, 1894

Timeline: VII-34 (Gethsemane)

Luke 22:47-48

Luke 22

⁴⁷ And while He yet spoke, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him.

⁴⁸ But Jesus said unto him, Judas, do you betray the Son of man with a kiss?

JUDAS Iscariot is not the only person among men who has betrayed Christ. The time and circumstances of that final act in the garden of Gethsemane were not the only ones that have invested or may invest a like tragedy. The Saviour needs not to be personally and visibly seized in order to be betrayed. Christ is identified with His followers.

To the persecutor of His Church, He said,

Acts 9

⁴ Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

His persecution and betrayal are no less real when accomplished in the persons of His disciples.

What was the motive that prompted Judas to this terrible deed? Looking at the elements of the evil that stirred his soul, we see first and foremost the trait of covetousness.

Matthew 26

¹⁵ What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?

A very common trait it was, and is today. Yet we are not inclined to feel very deeply over the fact (if so it be) that we are covetous. If we were a thief, or a murderer, or an adulterer, in the eyes of men, or in our own eyes, we might regard ourselves quite differently; but covetousness in the heart, that has not yet assumed the form of a heinous overt act, does not look

like anything serious.

But beware! that was the very thing that led Judas to betray his Lord. In the light of that act, the nature of covetousness is correctly seen. It may lead us where it did him. Certainly it will lead us in the same direction.

Judas did not foresee the crucifixion and death of his Master any more than did the other disciples; but this fact did not lessen his guilt or change the character of his sin. The betrayer of Christ does not always see the consequences of his deed.

Judas harbored a spite against his Lord, because by Him his covetousness had been rebuked. Out of his covetousness grew the spite, and the betrayal was its fruit. Covetousness is a fertile soil for every evil seed; and every evil seed is within it. No planting is necessary; it springs up and grows of itself, and must be continually cut off or it will bear its baleful fruit.

But cutting off will not cure the evil. That can only be done by a complete removal of covetousness from the heart. So long as that remains, so long shall we have within us the germ of every sin, even such a sin as that of Judas. By allowing this lust to grow and develop until it controls us as it finally did him, we shall be brought where he was brought. By partaking of the spirit that animated him in opposition to the cause of truth and righteousness, we partake also of his sin and condemnation.

The assembly of Jews who condemned Stephen were betrayers and murderers of Christ.

Acts 7

⁵² Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers.

And as certainly as He is persecuted in the persecution of

His followers, as He said to Saul, so certainly is their betrayal and murder the betrayal and murder of himself. There are some who...

Hebrews 6

⁶ ...crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.

They are far from imagining themselves in the same position of Judas, but in the day when all eyes will be open to the truth, they will know and confess the fact.

Covetousness throws a softening, palliating mirage around the most glaring sins. It is covetousness that makes the human heart...

Jeremiah 17

⁹ ...deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

It is covetousness that stands out in most marked contrast to the Spirit of Christ.

Philippians 2

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

But this spirit, this mind of Christ, we may have. We may “let” it be in us, and if we let it in, it will come. And there is our hope and our salvation from covetousness and all the sins to which it leads.

2. The Sword

Present Truth, September 24, 1896

Timeline: VII-34 (Gethsemane)

John 18:10-11

WHEN Peter drew the sword to defend Christ from a mob, Jesus told him to put it up.

John 18

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

¹¹ Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up your sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?

When Christ was upon the cross, He said of the wretched rabble that had placed Him there,

Luke 23

³⁴ Father, forgive them.

When the disciples were persecuted and martyred they followed Christ, never appealing to earthly power for the punishing of their enemies. Yet they lived in the days of Nero, whose name has become a synonym for brutal power, so much so that to this day cruelty enthroned is spoken of as "modern Nero."

Christianity today is exactly what it was in the days of Christ and the apostles.

3. The God of Battles

Present Truth, December 12, 1901

Timeline: VII-34 (Gethsemane)

Matthew 26:52

MANY times do we see this expression, “the God of Battles,” in accounts of fierce battles among men, and always it is misapplied. It is true, indeed, that:

Exodus 15

³ The Lord is a Man of war.

And one of His most frequent titles is:

Psalms 46

⁷ The Lord of Hosts [or, “armies”].

But He does not fight with weapons invented by man. Neither does He design that His people shall ever fight with such weapons. When Peter struck out in His Lord’s defense, the Master said,

Matthew 26

⁵² Put up your sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

2 Corinthians 10

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;

⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

In the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, God showed how necessary it is for people, and His people above all, to fight. He showed also that it was not His purpose that Israel should do any fighting and killing on the way to the promised land, nor in the conquest of it.

Think of how they came out of Egypt. Not a blow did they strike. Human arms would have been of no avail; and even if they could have been able to fight their way out, it would have been with the loss of many lives; but not a soul was left to die in Egypt when God undertook their deliverance.

At every step God worked in such a way as to demonstrate that man had no hand in the matter; and at the last the whole Egyptian army, with the king, was destroyed without the striking of a single blow. Now read how it might have been all through the subsequent history of Israel:

Deuteronomy 1

³⁰ The Lord your God which goes before you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.

God said to them:

Exodus 23

²⁷ I will send my fear before you, and will destroy all the people to whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs unto you.

²⁸ And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.

Whatever instruments of warfare men may invent, their enemies can make their equal, and so meet them on even terms; but nobody can invent weapons that will be of any value against an army of hornets. The simple weapons that God calls into use are far more effective than all the ponderous machinery that men can devise. How much better, then, to allow God to do our fighting for us.

Yet professed Christians will declare that if we did not defend ourselves we should doubtless lose all our possessions and even our lives. Have they forgotten the story of God's power in Egypt and at the Red Sea? or do they not believe it?

4. He Opened Not His Mouth

Present Truth, September 11, 1902

Timeline: VII-36 (Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin)

Matthew 26:63

Matthew 26

⁶³ But Jesus held His peace.

Christ was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and...

Isaiah 53

⁷ ...as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

WE MISS much of the lesson that we are to learn from this, by thinking only of Christ's patient endurance of the physical suffering that He passed through.

We think of Him standing bound to the pillar while the scourge lacerates His back, and not uttering one cry; but many wicked men have born the same amount of physical pain without a groan.

But there is something worse than bodily torture, and that is taunts and abuse. The Lord Jesus was reproached; He endured great...

Hebrews 12

³ ...contradiction of sinners against himself.

False accusation was brought against Him, but He "held His peace." Here is where we need to learn from Him. We need to learn:

- To keep our mouths closed when words are spoken to us, that sting worse than the sharpest blows.
- To be quiet when our best actions are misjudged, and our most sincere words of help are misinterpreted.
- To keep still when taunted with failure.

If we allow ourselves the self-destructive luxury of a retort,

we have yet to learn the simplest lesson of the cross of Christ.

But here is comfort for us: He is with us, doing the same thing now. We have said that Jesus was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; but the Scripture says,

Isaiah 53

⁷ He *is* brought as a lamb to the slaughter,

and,

⁷ ...He opens not His mouth.

Let us give diligence to learn this lesson from Him; for

James 3

² If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

5. Christ's Trust in Adversity

Present Truth, February 15, 1894

Timeline: VII-36 (Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin)

Matthew 26:67-68

Matthew 26

⁶⁷ Then they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands,

⁶⁸ Saying, Prophecy unto us, you Christ, Who is he that smote you?

THERE is no time when one would naturally feel less that the Lord is with him than when being sorely tempted. But that is the very time when we must know it and confess it. The tempted one says,

“I am bad; is the Lord in me now? I believe He was there in that good meeting, when every one was happy. But here I am alone, and feeling depressed, and everything goes wrong, and the enemy is tempting me, and I feel as though the Lord has left me. By and by when this temptation passes, and I feel better, and as though the Lord is with me, I will confess it then.”

But it is in the trial that we need Him with us. It was in the trial that the Saviour confessed the Father.

Isaiah 50

⁵ The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

⁶ I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

⁷ For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

⁸ He is near that justifies me; who will contend with me?...

⁹ Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?

When Jesus was in the Judgment Hall, and every one of His disciples had forsaken Him, and the soldiers were mocking Him and heaping upon Him the refinement of insult, who saw in Him the Son of God? Not even His own disciples. There was no outward evidence. The priests and soldiers saw no sign that He was the Son of God.

1 Corinthians 2

⁸ If they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

What evidence had He himself? What fruit of all His labors was there? He had chosen twelve disciples, and one of them had betrayed Him, one had denied Him with cursing, and all had fled. Of course His enemies would throw this in His face. They doubtless said,

“You came making great professions; but where are your followers?”

We know that they did mock at His claim to be the Son of God.

Matthew 26

⁶⁸ Prophecy unto us, you Christ, Who is he that smote you?

Matthew 27

³⁹ And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads,

⁴⁰ And saying, You that destroys the temple, and builds it in three days, save yourself. If you be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

⁴¹ Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said,

⁴² He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

⁴³ He trusted in God; let Him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

⁴⁴ The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth.

Even the face of God was hidden from Him. What evidence did the Saviour have? The word of God.

Isaiah 50

⁷ I know I shall not be ashamed.

⁸ He is near...

It was the same in the temptation in the wilderness. Weakened by fasting,

Isaiah 52

¹⁴ His visage...marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men,

—a wanderer in the desert, the devil comes to Him and says,

“You do not look much like the Son of God.”

Himself coming as an angel of light, he tries to make out that Christ is an imposter. He says,

“If you are the Son of God, you created all things. Why don’t you take the stones and satisfy your hunger?”

And Christ knew that He could have done it. He knew that He was the Son of God in the wilderness, just as well as when at the supper, He washed the feet of the disciples as a humble One,

John 13

³ [He knew] that He was come from God, and went to God.

He held to the word of God all through His temptation. He confessed, and declared the name of the Lord, witnessing a good confession.

That is what it means to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. It does not mean simply on certain occasions when there seems to be a wave of glory sweeping over the congregation, and we are moved in spite of ourselves.

- It is so just as much when we are physically helpless.

- It is just as true when the enemy is pressing us with temptations.
- It is as much so when afflictions are pressing about us, as when all is pleasant and clear.

To confess is to hold the word of God as true continually. And the value of confession is confessing it in the heart.

Romans 10

⁹ Believe in your heart.

Deuteronomy 6

⁶ These words...shall be in your heart.

Let not the enemy snatch it away. It is only by the fixed knowledge, through His word, that God is with us, that we can ever resist any temptation. So when the enemy comes in like a flood, let the Spirit of the Lord lift up the standard against him in your heart.

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Keep “the faith of Jesus,” and victory is yours.

6. Power of a Look

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

Timeline: VII-36 (Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin)

Matthew 26:74

Luke 22:61-62

WHEN Christ was in the judgment hall, the night before His crucifixion, Peter denied Him with cursing and swearing, saying,

Matthew 26

⁷⁴ I know not the man.

Then,

Luke 22

⁶¹ The Lord turned and looked upon Peter,

—and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, that he should deny Him thrice,

⁶² And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

That look converted Peter. Fifty days later Peter stood up before the multitude and boldly preached Jesus. He charged the death of Jesus upon the people, yet with such love and tenderness that they were converted. The threats of the rulers were not able to cause him to waver in the least.

What could have made so marvelous a change in so short a time? Nothing but the look of the Lord. We may be sure that Peter never forgot that look. During that fifty days he had been living in the light of that look; and all his life long the knowledge of the love that was conveyed to him by it, must have been to him an inspiration.

What the Lord did for Peter, He will do for us. He says,

Isaiah 66

² To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

Psalm 80

¹⁹ Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause your face to shine; and we shall be saved.

7. You, God, See Me

Present Truth, May 30, 1895

Original title: Thou, God, Seest Me

Timeline: VII-36 (Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin)

Luke 22:61-62

Luke 22

⁶¹ And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, you shall deny me thrice.

⁶² And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

CONSIDER what was wrought by that look of Jesus. It reminded Peter of his sin. It awoke in him a consciousness of guilt. With that consciousness of sin came contrition. He went out, and wept bitterly. That was also wrought by the look. But:

Psalms 51

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Therefore that look, which carried conviction and contrition, also brought forgiveness. For,

1 John 1

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

There is healing power in the look of the Lord. Even the beasts are troubled when the Lord hides His face from them.

Psalms 104

²⁹ You hide your face, they are troubled: you take away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

How much more then must men be troubled when they do not walk in the light of His countenance.

There is also salvation from sin in the Lord's look. When Daniel prayed for his people, he said:

Daniel 9

¹⁸ Open your eyes, and behold our desolations.

And also,

¹⁷ Cause your face to shine upon your sanctuary that is desolate.

So the Psalmist says,

Psalms 80

³ Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause your face to shine; and we shall be saved. [see also vs. 7 and 19]

Sin cannot endure the presence of the Lord.

Habakkuk 1

¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil.

So as the bright sunlight destroys disease germs, the light of God's countenance destroys the seeds of sin. What a comfort, then, to be able to say,

Psalms 90

⁸ You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

When the light of His countenance shines upon them, they vanish. We need not be afraid to have the Lord see us. Rather should we rejoice that He condescends to look upon us. One of the most blessed promises in the Bible is this:

Isaiah 66

² To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

Isaiah 57

¹⁵ For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

8. Three Great Mistakes

Present Truth, June 10, 1897

Timeline: VII-36 (Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin) / VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate) / VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

Matthew 26:69-75; 27:11-26

NOTICE three great mistakes made by different parties in connection with the trial of Jesus, each having its special lesson.

1. Peter's self-confidence made a coward of him when he came to the test. Knowing the Lord and loving Him, he yet denied the truth because the flesh failed him.
2. The prejudices of the priests and rulers made them blind to all truth and honor, and while their attitude was in itself a confession that they were wrong, they so deceived themselves that they knew not what they did.
3. Pilate's love of office and position led him to yield to the clamor of prejudice, although he knew what he ought to have done. He knew Jesus was a just man, and half-feared that He might be more than man, but he would endanger his position if he did right.

Here are lessons:

1. For followers of the Lord who trust in their own ability and knowledge of the form of the truth;
2. For those whose prejudices refuse to let them investigate the truth with open hearts; and
3. For any whose positions may appear to stand in the way of right doing.

Jesus triumphed in it all because, as even His enemies said,

Matthew 27

⁴³ He trusted in God.

9. Setting Up Christ's Kingdom

Present Truth, March 21, 1895

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:36

The Saviour said to Pilate,

John 18

³⁶ My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

THE possession of earthly power is attained as well by votes as by fighting. The power is the same; the only difference is in the manner of getting it. In the one case it is given; in the other it is forcibly taken. Political leadership makes use today of both the sword and the ballot; they are but different means of attaining the same end.

Therefore if Christ had spoken these words before an earthly ruler today, He might have appropriately said,

“If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants vote, that I should hold the power of this world, and not be delivered into the power of others.”

And in that case they would actively engage in every political campaign, in order that the kingdom of Christ might be established through the only peaceful means by which earthly leadership is attained.

And therefore any effort that is made to establish the kingdom of Christ by such means, is based upon the idea that His kingdom is of this world. But to this His own words are directly contrary. His kingdom is “not from hence.”

The kingdom of Christ is not in any way dependent upon or connected with the exercise of earthly power. It was not power that was wanted for its establishment; the Saviour had

an abundance of that. He said in the hour of His betrayal,

Matthew 26

⁵³ Think you that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

When the unseen presence that went with Jesus moved between Him and the murderous mob,

John 18

³⁶ ...they went backward, and fell to the ground.

And when He was brought before Pilate, He said,

John 19

¹¹ You could have no power at all against me, except it were given you above.

It was by permission of that power that Christ was “delivered to the Jews.”

Nor did the Saviour lack popularity. He might have been made a ruler by popular choice; for we read that on one occasion the people had planned to come by force and make Him a king. But He defeated their purpose by departing alone into a mountain.

John 6

¹⁵ When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain himself alone.

The Saviour thus deliberately refused to have His kingdom established by force of arms, or by the choice of the people.

There was one other notable occasion upon which Christ refused to be invested with earthly power. When He was tempted of the devil, the latter carried Him up...

Matthew 4

⁸ ...into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

And he said to Jesus,

Luke 4

⁶ All this power will I give You, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it.

⁷ If You therefore will worship me, all shall be yours.

Nor did the devil speak falsely in claiming the ownership of the kingdoms of earth; for in overcoming Adam, he came into possession of that which Adam had, which was the earth,—a fact which earth’s history has abundantly testified.

Jesus refused the offer; and had He consented afterward to be made a king, either by force of arms or by popular choice, He would have done tacitly what the devil asked Him to do in the mountain; for to accept a gift, is to acknowledge the authority and right of the giver. Christ could accept no gift from...

2 Corinthians 4

⁴ ...the god of this world.

Had Christ consented to be made an earthly king, it would have defeated the setting up of His kingdom on earth. And every effort made to establish His kingdom by an earthly means, is an effort against His kingdom. Christ will not take the kingdoms of earth as a gift from Satan, He will take them as a Conqueror. And it was through death that He conquered.

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Mark 3

²⁷ No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

It was by entering into the “strong man’s house”—the grave

—that Christ conquered and bound the adversary, and spoiled him of his goods,—the mortals whom he had laid therein.

Jesus says to His servants,

Matthew 28

¹⁸ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

²⁰ And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

It is not power, therefore, that is lacking today for the setting up of Christ's kingdom. "All power in heaven and in earth" was not given them to be used in overthrowing any of the kingdoms of this earth, but that they might go...

Mark 16

¹⁵ ...into all the earth, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

And that Gospel operates by the power of the cross, upon which believers are crucified with Christ.

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The suffering, humiliation, and death to which Christ obtained all power in heaven and in earth, is not yet finished, but is still endured in the persons of His followers. But the "Gospel of the kingdom" is going today to every nation, tongue, and people, to hasten the glorious day when all this shall be ended, and when He who has all power in earth shall exercise it as earth's acknowledged King.

But this can never be upon the world that now is, for this world is...

2 Peter 3

⁷ ...reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdi-

tion of ungodly men.

The earth must be prepared for the setting up of Christ's kingdom by the purification of fire, which will rid it for ever of sin and sinners. When the kingdom of Christ is set up, all earthly kingdoms will be utterly swept away, as chaff before the wind.

Daniel 2

⁴⁴ And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

⁴⁵ Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

The kingdom of Christ has nothing in common with the kingdoms of the world, nor assimilates any part of them into its self, but simply sweeps them all away, and takes their place. And then will the will of God...

Matthew 6

¹⁰ ...be done in earth as it is in heaven.

It is the Gospel, and that only, that is working today, or can work, for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ.

10. Truth and Its Importance

Signs of the Times, December 28, 1888

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:37

WHEN Jesus stood before Pilate, accused as a malefactor, He vindicated His character by these simple words:

John 18

³⁷ To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice.

Pilate, unconscious of the fact that Jesus had already given the substance of the best definition of truth, asked,

“What is truth?”

—and immediately went out. His question, and the fact that he did not seem to expect an answer, would indicate that he did not believe in the existence of such a thing as truth.

There have always been, and are still, many, many people in the same condition as Pilate. There are many who affect to disbelieve in the existence of truth and goodness. The reason for this is plain. Their own hearts are corrupt, and they have naturally sought the association of those of like character, until they know nothing of truth.

- The licentious man, who has always associated with men and women of low and depraved tastes, does not believe that there is such a thing as virtue.
- The knave thinks all men can be bought, providing the price is fixed high enough.
- Pharaoh, who knew nothing by experience of real worship directed to a God who could discern the motives, did not believe that there existed any such being.

Only the man whose heart is pure, or who has longings for purity of soul, can know and appreciate the truth; for it is only the man who will do God's will who shall know of the doctrine.

John 7

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

When Jesus said that He came into the world to bear witness of the truth, and that everyone that is of the truth would hear His voice, he expressed in another form what He had already told His disciples:

John 14

⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life.

He is the one that is holy and true,

Revelation 3

¹⁴ ...the faithful and true witness.

One of the definitions of truth is,

“Exact accordance with that which is, or has been, or shall be.”¹³³

This exactly agrees with what is revealed of Jesus.

Hebrews 13

⁸ [He is] the same yesterday, and today, and forever,

—Jehovah,

Revelation 1

⁴ ...the one which is, and which was, and which is to come.

In His prayer for the disciples Jesus told what truth is, and what it will do. Said He:

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth.

¹³³ *Webster's Dictionary*, 1828.

But Jesus is the Word of God, the one through whom alone the character, and attributes, and power of God are made known to men. The law of God, the ten commandments, is declared to be the truth, as the psalmist says:

Psalms 119

¹⁴² Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth;

—and,

¹⁵¹ You are near, O Lord; and all your commandments are truth.

These commandments were spoken by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and,

Deuteronomy 5

²² ...he added no more,

—so that they are, in an eminent degree, the truthful word of which Christ spoke in His prayer, yet it was the voice of the Son of God, the divine Word, who uttered them, so that the commandments of God are inseparably connected with our Lord Jesus Christ. They proceeded from Him, being an expression of His own righteousness.

That this is so is shown still farther by the words of the prophet concerning Christ:

Isaiah 42

²¹ The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honorable.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that this chapter is a prophecy of the Messiah, and the law is expressly declared to be His righteousness. So when the prophet David spoke by inspiration in Christ's stead, he said:

Psalms 40

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God; yea, your law is within my heart.

Now take these facts, together with Christ's words,

John 18

³⁷ Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice,

—and we have the most positive evidence that the keeping of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are inseparably connected. No one can keep the commandments without faith in Jesus, and no one ever has real faith in Jesus except as he is driven to it by the terms of the violated law, and by a sincere desire to have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in him.

The righteousness which is...

Philippians 3

⁹ ...through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,

—is the only righteousness that will secure one a dwelling-place in the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell. The importance of this truth is shown by what it will do for us. Christ showed in His prayer that it will sanctify us. The apostle Peter writes:

1 Peter 1

²² Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.

And Christ, who declared himself to be the embodiment of the truth, said to the Jews who believed in Him:

John 8

³¹ If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed;

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

But the same apostle wrote,

Acts 15

⁸ And God, which knows the hearts, bore them witness, giv-

ing them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us;

⁹ And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

From these texts which we have just grouped together, we learn that the law of God is the truth that makes men free, and purifies the heart, but that it is not the law in the abstract that does this, but:

Romans 8

² The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,

—and that this is effected by...

John 16

¹³ ...the Spirit of truth.

The law of God is called a...

James 1

²⁵ ...law of liberty,

—and so it is, but only to those who obey it; and none can obey it except as they yield to the striving of the Holy Spirit, and come to Christ.

The truth which makes free is not an outward compliance with the ten commandments. The Pharisees outwardly appeared righteous unto men, yet they were in the worst kind of bondage. David says:

Psalms 51

⁶ Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part you shall make me to know wisdom.

And speaking of the man who shall abide in the holy hill of the Lord, who shall be...

Romans 8

²¹ ...delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God,

—he says that it is the one that...

Psalm 15

² ...walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.

The man who does that is one with Christ, even as he was one with the Father, because Christ had the law in his heart.

The keeping of the commandments of truth is all that God requires of man. Says Solomon:

Ecclesiastes 12

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

There can be nothing more required of man than to do this; but it cannot be done except by faith in Christ. This does not mean a passive assent to the principles of the Christian religion, but such faith as brings Christ to dwell in the heart, so that he can work in us that which is good.

The comprehensiveness of the law of truth is shown by the text last quoted. It is the whole duty of man, and by it every work, with every secret thing, shall be brought into Judgment. This shows that the commandments of God are that word of God which is...

Hebrews 4

¹² ...quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Keeping the commandments is something more than a form. It consists in having every act, every word, and every thought just such as they would be if Jesus were dwelling within the man, acting and speaking and thinking through him. It consists in acting and speaking in every instance just

as Jesus would act or speak under the same circumstances. Surely this cannot be done unless Christ dwells in the heart.

Who, then, has outgrown the ten commandments? Are they of a lower grade of morality than is required of Christians in this age? Nay, verily. Let no one say that to exalt the law of God is to deny Christ; for in no other way can we so exalt Christ, and so appreciate the necessity of having his continual presence with us, as by exalting the breadth and holiness of the law.

But will there ever be any people on the earth who will have attained to that perfection of character? Indeed there will be. Says the prophet:

Zephaniah 3

¹³ The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.

When the Lord comes there will be a company who will be found...

Colossians 2

¹⁰ ...complete in Him,

—having not their own righteousness, but that perfect righteousness of God which comes by faith of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3

⁹ And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

To perfect this work in the hearts of individuals, and to prepare such a company, is the work of the Third Angel's Message. That message, therefore, is not a mass of dry theories, but is a living, practical reality.

Happy will those persons be who form the remnant of Israel, in whose hearts the righteousness of God's law of truth is perfected. For them mansions will be prepared in that glori-

ous city wherein there shall in nowise enter anything that defiles,

Revelation 21

²⁷ ...neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie.

And as they approach that great and strong city, the walls and bulwarks of which are everlasting salvation, the cry will be raised,

Isaiah 26

² Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth, may enter in.

And as the everlasting doors are lifted up, they will enter, with the King of glory at their head, and they shall henceforth have a right to the tree of life, and dwell in His presence forever.

11. For What Purpose

Present Truth, May 3, 1894

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:37

FOR what purpose are you living here in this world? Not, What purpose have you determined to live for? but, What purpose is your existence here designed to serve? Jesus Christ said,

John 18

³⁷ To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

This is the true purpose of every man's existence, whether he realizes the fact or not. We are here to witness to the truth. And what is truth?

John 17

¹⁷ Your word is truth.

John 14

⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And:

Isaiah 43

¹⁰ You are my witnesses.

By this will the success or failure of each life here be determined.

12. God is Love

Present Truth, March 28, 1895

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:37

Jesus said to Pilate,

John 18

³⁷ To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

IT IS for precisely the same end that all other persons have been born into the world; and it is only for this end that existence can be continued to them.

They can bear this witness in all the walks and occupations of life; by deeds, even better than by words. They are to bear witness as Christ bore it, and the truth to which they are born to witness is that:

1 John 4

⁸ God is love.

13. No Self-Defense

Present Truth, July 8, 1897

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:37

FROM the time of His betrayal to His last moment upon the cross Jesus was thinking of others. He was not on His defense during His trial. He told Pilate,

John 18

³⁷ To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

The secret of His calm composure which so impressed Pilate was that He was witnessing to save others, not to save or defend himself.

14. I Am the Truth

Present Truth, October 26, 1893

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:37-38

Jesus said to Pilate:

John 18

³⁷ For this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice.

³⁸ Pilate said unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews.

IF PILATE had remained with Jesus he might have found out the answer to his question. It would have been well for him if he had.

Many are today asking this same question, and like Pilate, are running away from the answer. The reason why people fail to know the truth is not that it is so difficult, but because they do not enquire in the right place for it, or are in too great a hurry to wait for an answer.

Pilate enquired at the right source, but he did not stay for the answer. He probably thought that the question could not be answered. But Jesus had already answered it. Only the night before He had said in His prayer to the Father:

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth.

And but a short time before He said,

John 14

⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Whoever would know the truth must come to Jesus, and must remain there. He is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. All truth is to be found in Him, and aside

from Him no truth can be found.

John 1

⁹ [He is] the true light which lights every man that comes into the world.

But men must cherish the light, and walk in it, or it will be of no use to them. This is shown by the case of the Jews, who, like Pilate, had the Truth before them but did not recognize it.

John 12

³⁵ Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walks in darkness knows not where he goes.

³⁶ While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light. These things spoke Jesus, and departed, and hid himself from them.

But Jesus will not depart from those who do not reject Him. To those who accept Him as the truth, He says,

Matthew 28

²⁰ I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

And so all who wish may know Him as the very present truth, to shed light on every difficult question.

15. What is Truth? (1899)

Present Truth, July 27, 1899

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:38

THE question of Pilate at the trial of the Saviour should be the honest inquiry of every soul:

John 18

³⁸ What is truth?

And why? Because it is by the truth that men are sanctified and made free.

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth.

John 8

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 14

⁶ Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.

What then is truth? The answer is simple and short:

John 17

¹⁷ ...your Word is truth.

To know God's Word is to know the truth; but this means more than to give a formal assent to it, for the Psalmist says,

Psalms 51

⁶ You desire truth in the inward parts.

This is apparent, for by the law (which is the truth¹³⁴), all are to be judged.

Error comes in with sin; and as there is no union between

¹³⁴ **Psalms 119** ¹⁴² Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth.

righteousness and sin, so truth and error cannot mix. Truth does not naturally find a lodgment in the carnal heart, for by it sin is made known, and sin never invites inspection.

Almost from the very beginning of the human race there has been a fierce struggle between these two opposing forces, and in the latter days especially is this conflict to be waged more than ever; for so insidious will the work of Satan be that, if it were possible, the elect themselves will be deceived.

Matthew 24

²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

With the truth there is no compromise. Every decision must be clean-cut. There can be no half-way position.

Matthew 12

³⁰ He that is not with me is against me.

There is no neutral ground.

16. What is Truth? (1903)

Present Truth, January 29, 1903

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:38

John 18

³⁸ What is truth?

THIS question, which Pilate apparently deemed unanswerable, is definitely and directly answered for us in the Scriptures of truth, in three statements which agree in one.

John 17

¹⁷ Your Word is truth;

Psalm 119

¹⁴² Your law is the truth;

John 14

⁶ I am the...Truth.

Christ is the Word which was in the beginning, without whom nothing was made; and therefore His life is the law for all created things, which have their being only in Him.

The Scriptures are the truth, because they testify of Him. He came into the world—the Word was made flesh—for the purpose of bearing witness unto the truth. So the answer to Pilate's question was right before him unrecognized, in the person of Christ, who is the embodiment and sum of all truth.

We see, therefore, that it is possible to have the truth with us, and yet not know what is truth. Christ, the Word,

Deuteronomy 30

¹⁴ ...is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart,

—and to most of us the Bible is the most common book, yet comparatively few know and yield to the truth. In the days of His flesh, when He walked and talked with men, but few recognized in the Man of Nazareth, the Divine Word, the Son of

the living God. To Peter, who acknowledged Him, Jesus said,

Matthew 16

¹⁷ Flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

Truth, therefore, can be known only by revelation.

The Apostle Paul had been almost from his birth a diligent student of the Scriptures and the traditions of his people; yet he did not know the truth until, as he said,

Galatians 1

¹⁵ It pleased God...

¹⁶ To reveal His Son in me.

Then he did not need to confer with flesh and blood, not even with those who were apostles before him; but immediately he preached the truth with confidence and authority. So he prayed for the churches called out by his ministry, that they might receive...

Ephesians 1

¹⁷ ...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.

John 16

¹³ When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth.

This is the anointing without which it is impossible to perceive and know for ourselves what is truth, but with which we...

1 John 2

²⁷ ...need not that any man teach [us].

So the truth which comes to us through the word must be revealed by the Spirit of truth. The law of truth must be written in the fleshy tables of our hearts by the Spirit of the living God. Christ must be revealed by the Spirit which, He says,

John 16

¹⁵ ...shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

Thus shall we know the truth, and experience the freedom which it brings.

17. No King But Caesar

Present Truth, August 28, 1895

Original title: We Have No King But Caesar

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate) / VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

John 18:33-37; 19:12-15

WHEN Jesus was before Pilate, on trial for His life, there was a great question before the people for their decision. They thought that they were deciding whether or not Jesus should live.

But that was a mistake. With that they had nothing to do. Jesus had come down from heaven for the sole purpose of giving His life for man, as a voluntary offering. He had said,

John 10

¹⁷ I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself.

¹⁸ I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

He himself was life, even everlasting life, because He was the truth, which is eternal.

Therefore the people were not settling the question whether or not Jesus should live. That He should live, even though put to death, was a settled fact, beyond the power of man or demons to alter.

There was a far different question before the people that day, and that was, whether or not they would accept Jesus, even in His humiliation, as their King, and so share His eternal life. It was a question of service; a question of whom they would acknowledge as their king.

The thing for which Jesus was tried was for claiming to be a king. The first recorded question that Pilate put to Jesus was

John 18

³³ Are you the King of the Jews?

Jesus at first did not answer directly, but after putting a question to Pilate, said,

³⁶ My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

This was a direct claim that He was a King; for if He had a kingdom, as He here declared, He must be a King. Pilate so understood it, for he asked again,

³⁷ Are you a King then?

Jesus answered,

³⁷ You say that I am a King.

Most versions give it as indicated in the margin of the *Revised Version*,

³⁷ You say it, for I am a King.

Things are not always what they seemed outwardly. Pilate thought that he was trying a man for his life; in reality he was himself on trial, to see whom he would accept as king. He was not only convinced that Jesus was an innocent man, but the words of Jesus had produced in him the conviction that He was more than a mere man; that He was from above, and not from earth. Therefore he was strongly inclined to let Jesus go. He was even...

Acts 3

¹³ ...determined to let Him go.

But the Jews cried out,

John 19

¹² If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend: whosoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.

¹³ When therefore Pilate heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat,

—and delivered Him up to be crucified. He had made the decision. He chose Caesar, and rejected Christ. But the people, as well as Pilate, were on trial, and they, as well as he, were to render the verdict upon themselves. When Pilate brought Jesus out to them, and said,

¹⁴ Behold your King!

—they cried out,

¹⁵ Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him.

And when Pilate said to them,

¹⁵ Shall I crucify your King?

They answered,

¹⁵ We have no king but Caesar.

It was not for them to decide the fate either of Christ or Caesar; but in deciding which of the two they would accept as their king, they decided whose fortunes they would share.

Every man, from the greatest king to the humblest peasant, has this same question to decide. As Caesar was ruler over the whole world, so he stands for the world; for earthly governments as against the Government of God; for the principles of the world, as against the principles of God.

When Christ declared that He was a King, He added,

John 18

³⁷ To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice.

The acceptance of Christ as King, therefore, consists in acknowledging and accepting the truth. The question then is between truth, and error. Truth is of God; for Christ is of God, and Christ is the truth. He is the Son of God, and...

John 8

³⁵ ...the Son abides ever.

The world is directly opposed to God.

1 John 2

¹⁵ If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

¹⁷ And the world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

As men decide for the world or for the truth, so will their fate be. He that decides for the truth does not add anything to it, for it will abide for ever, whatever his decision may be. He simply places himself under its protection, to abide for ever with it.

He who decides against the truth, and for the world, does not injure the truth in the least, but condemns himself to the ruin to which the world is already doomed.

In nothing is this decision for Caesar and against the truth more plainly manifested than in the Sunday question. On all sides professed Christian people are calling for stricter Sunday laws, and the more strict enforcement of those that already exist. The mere fact of appealing to the State to “protect” Sunday is a tacit acknowledgment that it is not the Lord’s day, because He is able to protect His own. In this appeal, therefore, we have the echo of the cry,

John 19

¹⁵ We have no king but Caesar.

Then there comes a case into court, in which people are declared “guilty” for being loyal to the fourth commandment. Officers and judge will agree that it is a case of human law against Divine law, but add,

“Here is the Act of Parliament, and we cannot do anything but enforce it.”

So they are overpowered by the cry,

John 19

¹² If you let this man go, you are not Caesar’s friend.

The law of the land, they say, must be enforced “right or wrong.” Thus,

2 Corinthians 4

⁴ The god of this world,

—is acknowledged, and the God of truth is rejected.

The test is coming to the whole world, to both high and low. The Sabbath question is to be the great test of whether or not men will accept the truth. Over the fourth commandment men decide whether they will live...

Matthew 4

⁴ ...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,

—or whether they will be content with the traditions of men; whether they will follow Christ, or custom and precedent.

Truth is seldom popular. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is not popular. So unpopular is it that to keep it just as God has said, marks people as “peculiar” and “eccentric.” It would be a very easy matter to acknowledge it and keep it “if everybody else would.” But “everybody else” will not, and the test comes in deciding to obey because God has spoken, regardless of what “the people” say, whether they be rulers or ruled.

Christ was not popular. There was no more unpopular being in the land than He was when He stood before Pilate and...

1 Timothy 6

¹³ ...witnessed a good confession.

It would have been so easy for Pilate to let Him go, if “the people” had only ceased their clamoring. It would have been so easy for the people to accept Him if any of the rulers or of the Pharisees had accepted Him. And the very people who wonder that men could have been so blind in the case of Jesus in Judea, make the very same mistake that the people did then, when it is the truth of Jesus in England.

Well it is for men that God does not always take them at their word the first time. Though often rejected, He is slow to leave men to themselves. The very men who...

Acts 3

¹⁴ ...denied the Holy One and the Just,

–and desired a murderer to be granted unto them, afterwards listened to the words,

¹⁹ Repent you therefore, and be converted,

–and many of them accepted the King whom they had before so shamefully rejected. So now the man who has hastily, either through ignorance, or through pressure from without, rendered judgment against the Lord, may still have an opportunity to reconsider his decision.

Consider the question carefully. Remember that truth is none the less truth because it is unpopular. Jesus was none the less King, because He was poor and despised.

Joshua 24

¹⁵ Choose you this day whom you will serve.

18. Jesus Condemned

Present Truth, May 26, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, June 5

Timeline: VII-39 (First Trial Before Pilate) / VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

Matthew 27:11-26

IN THIS lesson we have a view of the way in which humanity, when under the control of “the prince of this world,”¹³⁵ will treat divinity.

Matthew 27

¹¹ Jesus stood before the governor,...

¹² And...was accused of the chief priests and elders.

And Pilate understood the real animus of the whole matter:

¹⁸ For he knew that for envy they had delivered Him up.

Satan is the Accuser

It is the work of Satan to accuse. He is called:

Revelation 12

¹⁰ ...the accuser our brethren...which accused them before our God day and night.

He was, and is, the instigator of all accusation against Jesus; and envy always has been, and still is, the only ground of his accusation. It was envy of the honor given to the Son of God which led Lucifer,

Isaiah 14

¹² ...son of the morning,

–to rebel against the government of God and to seek to put himself on an equality with God. He said:

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.

¹³⁵ **John 12** ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Failing in this attempt to usurp the authority of God in heaven,

Revelation 12

⁹ ...he was cast out into the earth,

–and here he has inspired and fostered the same spirit of envy against God and His Son.

This is clearly set forth in the treatment which some of God's chosen representatives in the earth have received. When Joseph told a dream...

Genesis 37

¹⁰ ...to his father and to his brethren...

¹¹ ...his brethren envied him,

Acts 7

⁹ And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt.

But he who was thus the object of their unjust envy was God's chosen means of delivering them from death by famine. Later, when the Lord sent Moses to Egypt,

³⁵ ...to be ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush,

–his work in behalf of the people was not appreciated, and:

Psalms 106

¹⁶ They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord.

And now when the Son of God himself appears on earth to accomplish His work in behalf of man,

2 Corinthians 4

⁴ ...the God of this world,

–arouses the same spirit of envy against Him, even in the hearts of those who made the highest professions of loyalty to God, and the climax is reached in His being brought before

the governor with the demand that He should be put to death under the charge of being a mover of rebellion against properly constituted government. The very crime of which Lucifer was himself actually guilty, he now inspires men to charge upon the Son of God! What an illustration of the statement of the scripture:

James 3

¹⁶ For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

All this shows the working of selfishness, for:

1 Corinthians 13

⁴ ...love envies not.

The Just...Do Not Resist

But to all this accusation of envy,

Matthew 27

¹² [Jesus] answered nothing.

¹³ Then said Pilate unto Him, Do you not hear how many things they witness against you?

¹⁴ And He answered him never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly.

The charge of treason against the Roman government, which was preferred against Jesus, was utterly false, but since He was here to bear the punishment of those who were guilty of treason against the government of God, He made no defense.

Acts 8

³² He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so He opened not His mouth.

What a lesson for us! Although the right was altogether on His side and the charge against Him was wholly false, yet He made no effort to justify himself.

1 Peter 2 [margin]

²³ When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed His cause to Him that judges righteously.

Justifying oneself is simply one form of accusing another, and the Son of God never indulges in accusation. For He, even...

Jude

⁹ ...when contending with the devil He disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

A Fearful Choice

The choice which the people made, as between Jesus and Barabbas, is full of meaning and warning to us.

Matthew 27

¹⁷ Pilate said unto them, Whom will you that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

²⁰ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

Although the people were persuaded by their leaders, yet this did not relieve them of their own responsibility in the matter. This is shown by the reference made by Peter to this event in his talk to the people after the resurrection of Christ:

Acts 3

¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life.

Thus when humanity was given its choice between the Author and Giver of life on the one hand, and a robber and a murderer, a taker of life, on the other, it deliberately chose the latter. Such is the power of Satan in human hearts.

But envy over-reached itself, and the determination to “destroy Jesus” which Satan inspired in the minds of people was

but the sealing of his own destruction. For Jesus by His death was to...

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ ...destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

And so envy brought destruction upon itself.

Choose You This Day

All this has a meaning for us at this very time.

When Christ was upon this earth the world preferred Barabbas. And today the world and the churches are making the same choice. The scenes of the betrayal, rejection, and crucifixion of Christ, have been re-acted, and will again be re-acted, on an immense scale. People will be filled with the attributes of Satan. The delusions of the arch enemy of God and man will have great power. Those who have given their affections to any leader but Christ will find themselves under the control, body, soul, and spirit, of an infatuation that is so entrancing, that under its power souls turn away from hearing the truth to believe a lie. They are ensnared and taken, and by their every action they cry, "Release unto us Barabbas, but crucify Christ."¹³⁶

Assuming the Responsibility

When Pilate, who himself stated that he found no fault in Jesus, had allowed himself to be overborne by the wicked demand of the people, he made an effort to shift the terrible responsibility for the death of Jesus upon someone else.

Matthew 27

²⁴ He took water, and washed His hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see you to it.

¹³⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, January 30, 1900.

²⁵ Then all the people answered and said, His blood be on us,
and on our children.

Thus did a long record of iniquity come to its climax. The Lord saw it all in its beginning. When the people rejected the Lord from being king over them, and demanded a man for a king, that they might be like the nations around them, the Lord heard in their cry,

1 Samuel 8

¹⁹ Nay; but we will have a king over us,

—those words which found utterance so many years afterwards,

John 19

¹⁵ We have no king but Caesar.

And now they have become...

Acts 7

⁵² ...the betrayers and murderers,

—of their rightful King. A little later they began to draw back from the terrible responsibility which they had assumed, and complained of the disciples,

Acts 5

²⁸ You...intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

His Mischief Shall Return Upon His Own Head

In the destruction of Jerusalem was seen in a partial way, and as a type of the final destruction of the whole world, the results of rejecting Jesus.

Because Jerusalem knew not the time of her visitation and refused Him in whom alone was any hope of salvation, a terrible overthrow came upon her, and this was in itself a prophecy for the whole world.

The scenes that transpired at the destruction of Jerusalem will be repeated at the great and terrible day of the Lord, but

in a more fearful manner.

A world is represented in the destruction of Jerusalem.¹³⁷

And the time is at hand, for:

Zephaniah 1

¹⁴ The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hastes greatly.

In this perilous time who will be found traitors? Who will choose the friendship of the enemies of Christ? Who will accept the bribery of the world at the expense of the principles of righteousness and truth?

When the cases of all come up before the God of heaven for decision, He will ask each one the question, "What have you done to my only begotten Son?" What will those who refuse to accept truth answer? They will be obliged to say, "We hated Jesus and cast Him out. We chose Barabbas instead of Christ."¹³⁸

O that the goodness of God may lead us all to true repentance, and to the full acceptance of Jesus and His message of warning for the world at this time, that instead of being held answerable for His blood, His blood may be answerable for our sins, and we...

2 Peter 3

¹⁴ ...may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

¹³⁷ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages Book 3*, p. 417.

¹³⁸ Ellen G. White, *MS 40*, 1897.

19. Politicians and Christ

Present Truth, December 13, 1894

Timeline: VII-40 (Hearing Before Herod Antipas)

Luke 23:12

WHEN Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod, the governor of that province, who was then in Jerusalem. Herod amused himself for a while with Jesus, and then sent Him back to Pilate.

Luke 23

¹² And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves.

They both knew that Jesus was innocent, yet they were willing to sacrifice Him to their political ambition. This is the treatment that the cause of Christ will receive from worldly men. Let none of His followers expect any aid to Christianity from politicians.

Matthew 10

²⁴ The disciple is not above his Master.

²⁵ If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household.

20. Jesus and Pilate

Present Truth, March 7, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for March 17

Timeline: VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

Luke 23:13-26

IN THE days of our spiritual childhood we were wont to read of the trial of Christ before Pilate with feelings of intense pity for the Sufferer, and often with the pity there was mingled indignation over the way in which justice was trampled under foot.

But as our senses become more trained to discern the truth, we see something other than merely a man, albeit the Divine Man, on trial before a judge in the hands of a mob. We learn that Jesus does not ask for nor desire our pity. It was in His love and in His pity for us, that He endured the cross, despising the shame.

Read all the records in the New Testament and you cannot fail to be struck with their simplicity. There is no story-telling there; no effort to stir up the feelings or excite the sympathy of the reader, but only the plainest, most unvarnished statement of facts. There is no comment about the outrageous treatment of the Prisoner, nor the travesty upon justice.

One might suppose that the narrators had no personal interest whatever in the affair. And so indeed it is, in one sense; for while the evangelists related that of which they were eye-witnesses, the Spirit of God is the real Narrator, and He, the representative of Christ, would not have our minds so wrought up to personal sympathy with the Sufferer that we fail to see the lessons that the great trial teaches:

*It is a living picture of the history of the world
as it stands related to God and the Truth.*

The reference at the beginning of this article, which indi-

cates the Scripture set for the study of the Sunday schools, by no means presents to our view all that is expressed in the title of the lesson. The real student, therefore, will read the first verses of the 23rd chapter of *Luke*, together with *Matthew* 27:11-26; *Mark* 15:1-15; and *John* 18:29-40; 19:1-16.

The few glances that we take at this marvelous picture will be through the windows opened by any of the writers of the sacred narrative. We shall study the subject of the lesson, rather than merely the one portion of Scripture referred to by the lesson Committee.

The Truth Before the World

Christ before Pilate is the truth before the world. Those who think that truth will ever be popular in this world, so that it will be an easy matter to be a Christian indeed, may be disillusioned by looking at Christ's treatment at the hands of the Jews and Romans.

John 15

²⁰ If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

²¹ But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me.

¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love his own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Pilate did not try Jesus. Both Pilate and Jesus were on trial before the world. It was Pilate's opportunity to accept the truth, and the record of it is a picture of what every soul must pass through in relation to Christ. It shows the danger of hesitating and parleying over what one is convinced is truth.

It did not take Pilate long to discover that there was no charge against Jesus, and that...

Mark 15

¹⁰ ...the chief priests had delivered Him for envy.

Pilate himself declared,

Luke 23

⁴ I find no fault in this Man.

When he asked the priests, who demanded the death of Jesus,

Matthew 27

²³ What evil has He done?

—they merely shouted to...

Mark 15

¹⁴ Crucify Him!

All they asked of Pilate was the sentence of death, which they were not permitted to pronounce.

It is plain, therefore, that Pilate's only proper course was to release Jesus; but he did not dare do it. Why not? Because if he did, he would surely lose his position. Now it matters not that his position was that of Governor: it was no more to him than that of porter is to a man who is capable of doing only a porter's work.

Neither does Pilate's guilt depend on the fact that it was Jesus of Nazareth, whom he delivered up to be crucified, in order to keep his place. Christ is the truth, and wherever truth is rejected, no matter in what phase, there Christ himself is rejected.

So whenever anybody has the question before him to decide, whether he will accept some truth, at the expense of his worldly reputation or position, or whether he will reject it, in order to retain his place, he is in the same situation that Pilate was; and whenever truth is sacrificed, then Christ is crucified. To every soul the question comes, to be personally settled,

“What shall I do with Jesus, that is called the Christ?”

The moment Pilate began to temporize with the mob of

priests, he was wholly in their power. He said to them,

Luke 23

¹⁴ I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this man as touching those things whereof you accuse Him:

¹⁵ No; nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him.

¹⁶ I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him.

If Jesus were guilty, then Pilate had no right to release Him; but he declared that there was no fault in Him; and therefore he condemned himself when he said that he would have Him scourged. He thought that by making some concessions to prejudice and passion, he could disarm it; but therein he showed his ignorance of human nature, and that he was no real ruler; for everybody ought to know that the only hope of suppressing passion lies in giving it no place whatever. It must not be allowed a hearing.

There is not a soul who does not often find himself in the place of Pilate. Selfishness, pride, prejudice, passion, self-interest, all pull in one direction, and truth and duty are wholly opposed to them. Whoever thinks that he can compromise,—that he can gratify his evil propensities to a little extent, and thus win their consent for him to do what he knows to be right, makes a fatal mistake. Sin and error know no more compromise, in reality, than does righteousness.

Matthew 6

²⁴ No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.

The only safe way is to say no to ungodliness and worldly lusts.

Luke 23

²⁰ Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spoke again to them.

²¹ But they cried, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him.

²² And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil has He done? I have found no cause of death in Him; I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go.

²³ And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

Here we have “the voice of the people,” and we see that instead of its being the voice of God, it was opposed to God. So it has always been, and so it will always be in the present evil world. A “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” is the last crowning piece of Satan’s rebellion against God.

With the condemnation of Jesus Christ in mind, no one ought to give one moment’s thought to “what the people will say,” or what “the people” think.

King of the Jews

It is worthwhile, in passing, to note that Jesus declared to Pilate that He was the King of the Jews. He, never claimed to be anything else. Whoever, therefore, accepts Him as King, must, acknowledge Him as King of the Jews. It was as such that the wise men from the East worshiped Him at His birth.

Matthew 2

¹ Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

² Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.

John 4

²² Salvation is of the Jews.

This teaches us, therefore, that the law given to the Jews—not the Jewish law, but God’s law given to the Jews—is the law of Christ’s kingdom. This is further evident from the fact that that law was ordained...

Galatians 3

¹⁹ ...in the hand of a Mediator,

–even Christ, who is the Mediator between God and all mankind. So the law for all mankind is the law given to the Jews at Sinai.

Revelation 21

²⁴ [All] the nations of them that are saved, [who will] bring their glory and honor into it [the New Jerusalem],

–will have to enter the city by a gate having on it the name of some one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Revelation 21

¹² And [the city] had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

The Man

When Jesus had been scourged, so that His back was sore from the strokes, and He had been subjected to shame and indignity, He was led forth to the people with a crown of thorns on His head, and Pilate said,

John 19

⁵ Behold the Man!

A most pitiable spectacle He was indeed. Truly then He had no beauty that anybody should desire Him; but He was nevertheless “the Man,” the one Man in all that assembly; yea, the one Man in the world. God is...

Hebrews 2

¹⁰ ...bringing many sons unto glory,

and,

1 John 3

² Now are we the sons of God.

Yet He has but one Son—Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. Where then do we come in?

Ephesians 1

⁴ ...in Him.

In Him all become...

Ephesians 2

¹⁵ ...one new man.

Pilate did not realize the depth of meaning there was in his words.

1 Timothy 2

⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

There is but one Mediator, and He is “the Man Christ Jesus.” Only as in Him we come to...

Ephesians 4

¹³ ...the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

—do we attain to...

¹³ ...a perfect man.

He is the Representative Man, because He is the one perfect Man—the one who shows just what every son of Adam ought to be. Just to the extent that anybody is below the standard of Christ, is he less than a man.

We have all fallen even below the level of brutes, but in Christ lost manhood is restored; for in His stripes is the healing of all disease of body, soul, and spirit.

21. Blasphemy

Present Truth, July 5, 1894

Timeline: VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

John 19:7

THE Jews condemned Christ to death on the charge of blasphemy. They said to Pontius Pilate,

John 19

⁷ We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made himself the Son of God.

And when at His trial the Saviour had avowed His Sonship in answer to the question of the high priest, the latter said,

Matthew 26

⁶⁵ He has spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy.

The same charge that was brought against Christ, has been brought against His followers. To speak the truth in Christ always leads sooner or later to a charge of blasphemy from the synagogue of Satan.

What the Saviour spoke was not blasphemy, because He was in reality what He declared himself to be. And not only was He the Son of God, but His disciples were also sons of God, as John declares:

1 John 3

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God;

—so that one of His followers could without blasphemy have declared before the Jewish tribunal that he was a son of God. And this relationship they can and do declare today; and for it they are charged and will be charged, as He was, with blasphemy.

- It was “blasphemy” for the early Christians to affirm that there was but one God, thus speaking against the gods of Rome.

- It was “blasphemy” for the Reformers to speak against the idolatrous worship of the papist, by preaching justification by faith.
- And it is “blasphemy” now for Christians to speak in any manner derogatory to the established worship of the nation, whether that worship be Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, or Church of England.

But this no one who is a son of God can avoid doing, for the very announcement of that relation to and dependence upon God which the Saviour as a man sustained here upon the earth, is a testimony against any connection with or dependence upon the power of the State.

Connection with God as a son it is utterly incompatible with dependence upon the sustaining power of the civil arm. For the church to ally itself in any way with a power of the world, is nothing less than a denial of Him who has said,

Matthew 28

¹⁸ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;

and,

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Blasphemy is speaking against the honor and glory of God; and only those who know God can know when this sin is committed. And only those can know God who know His word, for this is the only revelation of himself that He has given to men.

Those who know not His word are the ones who charge the sons of God with blasphemy, while being themselves guilty of the sin they try to fasten upon others. Had the Jews known the word of God,

1 Corinthians 2

⁸ ...they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

They would not have brought against Him the charge of

blasphemy. And it is for lack of the knowledge of the word to-day that those who stand in the place of the scribes and Pharisees of old will charge the children of God with blasphemy, and with being anarchists and conspirators against good government.

While “critics” and infidels both in the pulpit and out of it are working to throw discredit upon the word, it is for the lack of that very word that they themselves, with the masses who look to them, are perishing in their sins.

22. Washing One's Hands

Present Truth, December 26, 1895

Timeline: VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

Matthew 27:24

TO WASH one's hands has been from old-time a symbol of innocence, or of declining any responsibility in a matter. To wash one's hands of an affair, is a familiar expression.

When Pilate at last yielded to the clamor of the priests, and consented to the crucifixion of Jesus,

Matthew 27

²⁴ ...he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see you to it.

When Moses built the tabernacle in the wilderness, he was directed to make a laver of brass, and place it in the court, between the tabernacle and the altar. This was to be filled with clean water, and the directions were:

Exodus 30

¹⁹ Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat;

²⁰ When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord:

²¹ So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not.

This was to signify that those who engage in the Lord's work must be clean, not physically, merely, but morally and spiritually. It is written,

Isaiah 52

¹¹ Be clean, you that bear the vessels of the Lord.

But that washing was only emblematical. Ordinary water cannot cleanse spiritual defilement. All the water of the Jor-

dan could not have cleared Pilate from the guilt of condemning an innocent person at the demand of the people. It was but mockery for him to say that he washed his hands of the affair, when at the same time he delivered Jesus to their will.

Even so the water in the brazen laver could not make a guilty priest innocent. The most that it could do was to indicate that they were already spiritually pure, if that were the case. The symbol without the fact was but a farce.

There is a priesthood now, whose duty it is...

1 Peter 2

⁵ ...to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

This priesthood does not consist of a single earthly family, but is composed of the whole household of faith,

⁹ ...a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.

It is as necessary for them to be clean when they engage in the Lord's service, which is a continual service, as it was for the priests of old. We read,

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁶ You are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

The Psalmist was well acquainted with the priests' custom of washing at the laver before they went to the altar, and so he said,

Psalm 26

⁶ I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass your

altar, O Lord:

⁷ That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all your wondrous works.

Here is washing that is effective. Washing in innocence; how may it be done? There is but one fountain of innocence, and that is...

1 Peter 1

¹⁹ ...the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

This blood is the water of life; for when the Roman spear pierced the side of Jesus,

John 19

³⁴ ...forthwith there came out blood and water.

Now,

1 John 5 [RV]

⁸ There are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three agree in one.

We know that:

Romans 8

¹⁰ The Spirit is life,

—and therefore the blood and water are life. In that stream, emblem of the river of life flowing from God's throne, we may all wash and be clean.

1 John 1

⁷ The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

How may we know that we wash in this fountain and find cleansing? By believing the Word of the Lord. Christ gave himself for the church,

Ephesians 5 [RV]

²⁶ ...that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word.

The margin has, “Greek: laver,” for washing, showing what was symbolized by the laver in the earthly sanctuary. Some versions have it,

“...cleansed by a water bath in the Word.”

If we believe the Word, we have the witness of the Spirit. But the Lord always makes everything very plain for us, so that we may comprehend even the infinite mysteries that pass all understanding.

We all wash every day. Washing with water the hands and face at least, if not the whole body, is the first thing that is done in the morning. Whence comes that water? From the same source that everything in the world comes—from the Word of the Lord. All created things are simply the living Word of God made visible. The water which we drink, and in which we bathe, is but one manifestation of the Word of the Lord.

Now we know that water cleanses. Nothing is more familiar than this fact. Therefore since the water in which we bathe is but one form of the Word of the Lord, every time we put our hands in water should be a reminder and an assurance to us of the power of God’s Word to cleanse from all defilement.

Just as surely as water will wash away the outward impurity, so surely will God’s Word when received in this simple faith, cleanse us from all sin. If we continually believe, living a life of faith, we are continually cleansed. What a blessed assurance!

Come to this fountain so rich and sweet;
Cast your poor soul at the Saviour’s feet;
Plunge in today, and be made complete,
Glory to His name!¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Elisha A. Hoffman, Hymn: *Glory to His Name* [also called: *Down at the Cross*], 1878.

23. Washing of Hands

Present Truth, December 12, 1901

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

Matthew 27:24

WHEN Pilate's temporizing policy had given the mob complete control over him, he could not resist the demand for the crucifixion of Jesus, and...

Matthew 27

²⁴ ...he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.

But he was not innocent; for he himself had declared that very day that he had power to release Jesus or to crucify Him.

John 19

¹⁰ Then said Pilate unto Him, Do you not speak unto me?

Don't you know that I have power to crucify you, and have power to release you?

His declaration of innocence was therefore false, and his washing of hands a meaningless form. Contrast with this the words of:

Psalms 26

⁶ I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass your altar, O Lord.

Pilate washed his hands to indicate that he was already innocent, although he was not; the Psalmist proposes to wash his hands in innocency, in order that they may be cleansed from guilt.

Innocence is the only thing that can cleanse from guilt; and this is supplied to us all freely in the life of Christ, who...

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ ...knew no sin.

In His innocence, His righteousness, we may...

2 Kings 5

¹³ Wash, and be clean,

–and so come to His altar, and He will be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness.

Psalm 51

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

¹⁹ Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon your altar.

24. The Day of Visitation

Present Truth, December 20, 1894

Timeline: VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 18 & 19

EVERY life has its day of visitation. It is a day when God by His Spirit appeals to us, and we choose, as we must do, whom we will serve. The destiny of no person will be determined otherwise than by his own choice.

Every day men are choosing for good or bad, and one choice leads to another in the same direction. Each move takes the individual further, until at last the climax is reached, when a final stand is taken, knowingly and deliberately, from which there will be no retrogression. Then, whether the individual knows it or not, his choice for eternity is made.

The day of visitation comes unheralded, nor does it by any sign proclaim itself an important day in our lives. The consequences with which it is fraught are not discerned. We can gather from it nothing to brace ourselves for any heroic action.

Our dependence is simply the principles we have developed, the love of the truth which we have acquired from choices already made. The love of the truth will be our only safety, and not the importance of the issue, for that may not appear.

Little did Pontius Pilate, as he gave sentence for the crucifixion of Christ, think of the history he was making for all subsequent time. Yet his foresight was as good as ours. It was the foresight of the wisdom common to men, but which does not penetrate an hour into future. Little do men now foresee that the evil they do in secret will one day be proclaimed on the housetops.

It was when the truth came to Pilate that he made his fatal mistake. So it is when the truth of God comes to people now that they make the decisive choice. Pilate tried to evade the is-

sue, but he could not. He knew that Christ was innocent; that it was for envy he had been seized and brought before him by the Jews; and he endeavoured to shift the responsibility, first upon the Jews themselves, and then upon Herod.

But he failed, and his failure is a warning to such as would do likewise. He was forced to make a decision, and in that decision the fear of man outweighed his convictions of right. He feared to lose his position more than he feared to violate his conscience and disregard the right.

He had some curiosity about the truth, but not a love of it. He had some curiosity as many have today, and all that they have, so far as concerns the choice of righteousness. He did just what all will do who swerve from the right because of the fear of man.

In the day of visitation we are to glorify God; and we are to live so that “the Gentiles,” beholding our good works, may also in that day glorify Him.

1 Peter 2

¹¹ Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

¹² Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

He is glorified by a life which vindicates the principles of His government; by a decision which justifies Him in His dealings with mankind.

Our choice must be in harmony with His law. It must be made in love of the truth. Otherwise it will be Pilate's choice, and we shall see only when too late, the folly which led us to throw aside, with the right, the heritage of righteousness and truth.

25. The Crucifixion of Jesus

Present Truth, April 12, 1894

Timeline: VII-41 (Second Trial Before Pilate)

Matthew 27:25

THE Jew hater who thinks he hates Jews because their fathers crucified Christ would himself have joined in the cry, “Crucify Him!” had he lived then; for it was an ignorant hatred that inspired it.

But the Jewish people have suffered heightened persecution for the deeds of their fathers, and it is not unnatural that they should wish to shift the responsibility from their father’s shoulders. In the Jewish journal *Menorah*, a writer says of the Jew:

He has only one important request to make of Christian teachers and preachers—namely, that they desist from teaching their schoolchildren and congregations the prevailing error that the Jews have crucified Jesus of Nazareth. Because of this error, the believing world look upon the Jew through an imperfect medium, it is this error which has caused so much prejudice, bitter hatred, and unjust persecution. If it were once corrected, the way would be opened for the correction of many other errors. Let the truth be told that not the Jews but the Romans crucified the great Nazarene teacher.

It is a pitiful protest against that declaration of the Jewish populace,

Matthew 27

²⁵ His blood be upon us, and on our children.

The accursed legacy has been a heavy load. Only a few days after the resurrection the rulers were ready to deny their awful responsibility. They commanded the disciples to be silent and said,

Acts 5

²⁸ You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to

bring this man's blood upon us.

The Lord sent the word of pardon to those who were red-handed in the guilt, and by this same word He speaks peace to us all; for we all have had a partnership in the cruel death.

Those who hate the Jews for his father's sake should remember that there is such a thing as crucifying the Son of God afresh.

26. The Crucifixion of Christ

Present Truth, March 14, 1895

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Matthew 27:33-35

Matthew 27

³³ And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha,
that is to say, a place of a skull,

³⁵ They crucified Him.

Revelation 13

⁸ [Christ was] the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

NOT merely in the days of Pontius Pilate, and at the instigation of wicked Jews, has the Son of God been “lifted up.” *John* 3:14.

John 3

¹⁶ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He was given, when the opportunity and the need came of believing in Him for salvation; and He was crucified when He was given. The crucifixion of Christ meant His lifting up. He said,

John 12

³² I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Men were drawn to Him before the days of Pontius Pilate. From the very first, men were drawn to Him, for only thus could any be saved from sin; and they are being drawn to Him in multitudes today. But not, either before the days of Pontius Pilate or after them, by any mere statement, prophetic or historical, concerning His death.

The lifting up of Christ was that He might be seen. Only by

seeing Him can they be drawn to Him. In all ages, from the very first, men have seen Him lifted up. Just as He had...

Galatians 3

¹ ...been evidently set forth crucified,

—among the Galatian brethren, so He has been set forth wherever there have been believers, through all time. This has been done through His identification with them.

Isaiah 63

⁹ In all their afflictions He was afflicted.

His sufferings began with the sufferings of His people, and with His people He suffers still. They fill up the measure of His afflictions.

Colossians 1

²⁴ Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul speaks of his own identification with Christ, which is the identification of all who believe in Him. He says,

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

When Paul was crucified, Christ was crucified; and what was true of Paul was true of all who, like him, died to sin by the crucifixion of the carnal nature.

Romans 6

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Galatians 6

¹⁴ But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me,

and I unto the world.

In their crucifixion Christ has been lifted up, and by the like experience of His people He is lifted up today. Our identification with Christ means not a loss of His identity, but of ours. Paul said:

Galatians 2

²⁰ I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

We are lifted up with Christ, yet we are not seen, but He; and men are not drawn to us, but to Him. In proportion as Christ's people die to self, He is lifted up before the world; and in proportion as He is lifted up, does the light of life shine forth.

27. Jesus Crucified

Present Truth, June 2, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, June 12

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Matthew 27:35-50

FEW are the words in which this most remarkable scene in human history is recorded, but every detail is weighty with meaning. The great central fact is stated in the briefest possible way:

Matthew 27

³⁵ And they crucified Him.

The attendant circumstances are set forth in the simplest and most direct manner. Only the Holy Spirit himself could give such an account of such an event.

It was the Son of man who was crucified, our representative. And,

2 Corinthians 5 [RV]

¹⁴ We thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died.

It only remains for us to accept His death, and for us each to know,

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ.

Then can we make our own the words of the Scripture:

Romans 6 [RV]

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that we should no longer be in bondage to sin;

⁷ For he that has died is justified from sin.

Galatians 6

¹⁴ But God forbid that I should glory, saving the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

It is thus that we experience the power of His death, that power by which He destroyed the devil and his works.

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

And since He,

1 Peter 2

²⁴ Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree,

My sin, oh, the bliss of the glorious thought!

My sin, not in part, but the whole,

Is nailed to His cross; and I bear it no more:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!¹⁴⁰

All this, and much more which we cannot now consider, is bound up in the simple statement,

Matthew 27

³⁵ And they crucified Him.

King of Glory

And there was His accusation:

Matthew 27

³⁷ This is Jesus the King of the Jews.

It was by preferring the charge of treason against Him that His condemnation had been secured from Pilate:

John 19

¹² If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend: whosoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.

¹⁴⁰ Horatio Spafford, Hymn: *It Is Well with My Soul*, 1873.

And yet in His examination before Pilate, Jesus had told him,

John 18

³⁶ My kingdom is not of this world.

But He was King, and in no experience did His kingship stand out more clearly than when He was upon the cross. For He was King because of what He was in himself, by virtue of His own character, and His death on the cross demonstrated before the whole universe His inherent fitness to be king over all.

The fact that He could die to save the world was the clearest reason why He should be made...

Revelation 19

¹⁶ King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And so the Scripture says:

Philippians 2

⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

And He is King today, the rightful King, for the Lord inquires:

Is it not I who my King have established
On Zion, holy mountain of mine?¹⁴¹

Each one of us, by the way in which we treat Jesus today, is

¹⁴¹ Psalm 2:6 from *The Book of Psalms: A New English Translation*, by Horace Howard Furness, 1898.

declaring whether he recognizes this rightful claim to be King, not on earthly thrones, but in his own heart,

2 Corinthians 10

⁵ ...bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

And so His accusation, while false from the standpoint of His accusers, was yet the expression of a great truth when properly understood.

Judges 8

²³ The Lord shall rule over you.

With the Transgressors

Jesus died where He had lived, with sinners.

Matthew 27

³⁸ Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

And these two men were representatives of the two classes of sinners, the repentant and the unrepentant. Jesus was crucified for all, but only those who are willing with humble confession of sin to recognize His kingship will be able to receive the benefits of His death.

It is perfectly evident that the taunts which were cast at Jesus as He hung upon the cross were inspired by the prince of darkness. When Satan met Jesus in the wilderness, he sought, by casting doubt upon His sonship, to induce Him to depart from the Father's plan for Him in using His own Divine power to save himself from suffering. Then he said,

Matthew 4

³ If you be the Son of God,...

And Satan today is still finding some who profess to be the children of God, who yet permit themselves be used as mouthpieces for speaking against Jesus.

Matthew 27

⁴¹ Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said,

⁴² He saved others; himself He cannot save.

Alas for humanity! How little it comprehends the work of Jesus! It was true that “He saved others,” and it is also true that by refusing to save himself on that day, again declining to use His Divine power to save himself from the suffering which He had willingly accepted in behalf of man, He saved both himself and us.

But it was for us that He endured the suffering, for He might have refused to drink the cup, but alas for the human family if He had taken that way of saving himself. How clearly does the cross show that there is no selfishness in Jesus.

⁴³ He trusted in God,

—they said in derision. Thus it was that in their scorn they were unintentionally bearing witness to the genuine character of His work. For He had said,

John 5

³⁰ I can do nothing of myself,

and

John 6

⁵⁷ I live by the Father,

—and He had thus placed himself on the same ground of weakness and dependence as humanity finds itself, to make righteousness (right-doing) by faith possible for helpless humanity.

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.

Well may we say:

Deuteronomy 32

³¹ For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.

What a scene of mockery and insult is witnessed at the cross! All join in the reviling:

Matthew 27

³⁹ ...they that passed by,

⁴¹ ...the chief priests,

⁴¹ ...the scribes and elders,

and,

⁴⁴ The thieves also.

No wonder that the sun, the eye of God, refused to look upon such an exhibition, and that...

⁴⁵ From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

Inanimate creation showed more sympathy for its Creator than did man who was made in the image of God. So cruel is sin.

Jesus has endured without a word all that Satanic malice could suggest in bodily suffering and taunts and derision, but now when He takes upon himself the experience of the lost sinner in His separation from God, that terrible cry is wrung from His human lips,

⁴⁶ My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

1 Corinthians 15

³ Christ died for our sins.

Isaiah 53

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has made the iniquity of us all to meet on Him.

And,

Romans 6

²³ The wages of sin is death,

–under separation from God. And it was this experience, the sense of being separated from His own Father whom He loved, whose thought had always been His thought, whose will had always been His will, that crushed His soul in that awful hour.

It is only in view of the cross that we can measure the cost of our salvation and understand that value which God himself has set upon the human soul.

Isaiah 13

¹² I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Hebrews 2

³ How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

The fact that Jesus...

Matthew 27

⁵⁰ ...cried again with a loud voice,

–just before He...

⁵⁰ ...yielded up the ghost,

–shows that it was not physical suffering which caused His death. He was crushed by the weight of the sins of the world and died literally of a broken heart. But in His agony of death, borne down by the weight of the sins which He had taken upon himself, He became conqueror and King of the universe. He had already said,

John 12

³² And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself,

–and so it was. When other kings have died the cry has been,

“The king is dead,”

–and they have turned to the new king with the cry,

“Long live the king.”

But this King gained both His kingdom and His subjects by His death.

Jeremiah 31

³ Yea, I loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you.

Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love, the love of God to me;
It brought my Saviour from above, to die on Calvary.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Ralph E. Hudson (1843-1901), Hymn: *Wondrous Love*.

28. What and Where Is Paradise?

Signs of the Times, May 26, 1887

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Luke 23:42-43

Luke 23

⁴² And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

⁴³ And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, today you shall be with me in paradise.

THIS language will be recognized at once as the request of the penitent thief who was crucified with Jesus, and the reply of our Lord. It has been the subject of an unlimited amount of controversy, and doubtless will be, as long as men choose to interpret the Bible according to their system of theology, instead of deriving their system of theology wholly from the Bible.

We do not design at this time to give a detailed exposition of the text, but simply to note a few points concerning paradise.

From Christ's language to Mary, recorded in *John* 20:17, three days after the crucifixion, it is very evident that He did not go to Heaven on the day when He gave the thief the solemn assurance that they should meet in paradise.

John 20

¹⁷ Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.

On account of this text, many who cling tenaciously to the idea that Jesus did not actually die, argue that Christ did go to paradise that day, but that paradise is not in Heaven.

Then they connect this text with their erroneous reading of *1 Peter* 3:18-20, and conclude that paradise is a sort of half-way house—an intermediate place between earth and heaven—where all souls, both good and bad, are retained until the

Judgment. In short, paradise is made identical with Hades. A very few texts will suffice to show that this is a most erroneous conclusion.

First, however, we wish to call attention to the fact that if this definition of paradise were true, the Saviour's promise to the thief would be made nonsense. If paradise were only a place where souls remain between death and the final judgment, then Christ's promise to the penitent thief would amount simply to this:

"Today you shall be with me in the place of the dead!"

There would certainly be nothing very comforting about that, and nothing that would require the exercise of much faith, seeing both Jesus and the thief were at that time hanging on the cross; but this is what Christ's answer meant, if the theory be true that paradise and Hades are identical. This fact alone should be sufficient to show the fallacy of such a view.

There are only three places in the Bible where the word "paradise" is used. One is in the text quoted at the beginning of this article. The second is in *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4, which we quote:

2 Corinthians 12

² I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knows;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.

³ And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knows;)

⁴ How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

This text proves conclusively that paradise is not an intermediate place between earth and Heaven, but that it is Heaven itself. In the first place, Paul says that he (for he speaks of himself) was caught up into the third Heaven, and

then in repeating the statement for emphasis, he says that he was caught up into paradise. Then Christ's promise to the thief on the cross involved nothing less than that the thief should be with him in the third Heaven.

In *Revelation 2* we find the following promise, given by the Spirit:

Revelation 2

⁷ To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

From this text we learn that paradise contains the tree of life. Turn now to *Revelation 22* and read:

Revelation 22

¹ And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

² In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life.

Here we learn that the tree of life is in the midst of the New Jerusalem, which contains the throne of God. But the tree of life is in the midst of the paradise of God; therefore we must conclude that the paradise of God is in the midst of the city of God, and that whoever goes to paradise goes into the immediate presence of God.

"Paradise" is an Anglicized Greek word meaning "a park or a beautiful garden." Earthly cities have parks and pleasure gardens, and the heavenly Jerusalem has one also, but as much more beautiful than earthly gardens as the city whose builder and maker is God, is grander than cities built by man. Now compare this with:

Ezekiel 28

¹³ You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the

emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold.

Read with this the description of the New Jerusalem, in the 21st of *Revelation*, and it will be seen at once that the Garden of Eden and paradise are the same.

When Adam sinned, he was driven from the Garden of Eden; nothing sinful could be allowed to remain there. So we read of the New Jerusalem which contains the paradise of God, that:

Revelation 21

²⁷ There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This, together with *Revelation* 2:7 and 22:14, teaches us that entrance into paradise, and enjoyment of its delights, is to be the reward of those who shall overcome through faith in Christ.

But the righteous are rewarded only at the coming of the Lord in His kingdom and the resurrection of the just;¹⁴³ and that was just what the thief asked for in the words,

Luke 23

⁴² Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

¹⁴³ **Matthew 16** ²⁷ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works. **Matthew 25** ³¹ When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. **Luke 14** ¹⁴ For you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

29. Which Shall It Be?

Present Truth, December 7, 1893

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Mark 15:27-28

Mark 15

²⁷ And with Him they crucified two thieves; the one on His right hand, and the other on His left.

²⁸ And the scripture was fulfilled, which said, And He was numbered with the transgressors.

IN THE solemn scene grouped together on Calvary we have all the three possible forms of death.

1. We have the death of the Sinless;
2. We have the death of the sinner who repents; and
3. We have the death of the sinner who puts away repentance.

Which of the three shall yours be? It cannot be the death of the Sinless. That belongs to Jesus alone. Therefore your death, as that of a sinner, is limited to two possibilities:

- that of the penitent, and
- that of the impenitent.

How awful is that of the latter, close beside the former, and Christ as near to the one as to the other, only to be put willfully and, as far as we see, hopelessly away. In that other criminal, as near the opened fountain, as welcome, had he asked it, to the living water, no conversion is seen; in his last end there is no testimony and no prayer, and if he believed not that Christ was He, must he not have died in his sins? It is as fixed as destiny, but it is fixed by choice.

Were it not for the equal promise, revived by the record of all the great sinners whom the Cross has saved, we should all despair; but as it is we all may and, if we believe it, must hope. He who remembered that penitent in His own hour of mortal

sorrow, will not forget us now.

Dear dying Lamb, your precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ William Cowper, Hymn: *There is a Fountain*, 1772.

30. Christ Crucified

Present Truth, March 14, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for March 24¹⁴⁵

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion) / VII-43 (The Burial)

Luke 23:35-53

Luke 23

⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit; and having said this He gave up the ghost.

ALL that any Christian needs to know on this earth is “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” *1 Corinthians* 2:2. It is all that any sinner needs to know, in order that he may become a Christian; it comprehends all truth, all that there is really to know, for that which is not the truth cannot in the strictest sense be known. To “know” that which is not so, is not knowledge but vain imagination.

The Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, said that no one should glory, save in the fact that he knew God:

Jeremiah 9

²³ Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

²⁴ But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

And the Spirit of God moved the Apostle Paul to exclaim,

¹⁴⁵ There was a further footnote on this article: “A portion of this Scripture will be found treated of in the ‘Editor’s Private Corner’.” This was a column in the *Present Truth* that ran for a few years, dealing with questions from readers. These articles have been gathered into the book titled, *Questions and Answers on the Bible*. The particular article Waggoner refers to is titled, “From Death to the Resurrection.”

Galatians 6

¹⁴ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Is there any disagreement? Impossible. Then what is the necessary conclusion? Just this, that God cannot be known, except in the cross of Christ.

Look at the two texts again, and consider the statements carefully, remembering that the same Spirit of truth speaks in each.

1. God says that nobody is to glory in wisdom, power, or riches,—the noblest things that this world knows,—but solely in the fact that he knows Him.
2. Paul, by the Spirit of God, earnestly desires to glory in nothing, save the cross of Christ.

Then the conclusion is inevitable, that the cross is the revelation of God, and that all that may be known of God is to be found in the cross. In the cross of Christ, in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and nowhere else, can men find God. It is there that God finds men.

This brings us face to face with the truth that creation means the cross. Thus: God can be known only in the cross, and all that can be known of Him is to be seen, in the cross, and nowhere else; but God says of men:

Romans 1

¹⁹ That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has manifested it unto them.

²⁰ For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and Divinity.

The cross reveals God and His glory, and the things that He has made reveal Him, and declare His glory, therefore it follows that all things were created by the power of the cross, and that all creation exists only in the cross. Thus it is that...

2 Corinthians 5 [RV, margin]

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation.

Let us go one step further. God says,

Ezekiel 20

²⁰ Hallow my Sabbaths: and they shall be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am God.

The Sabbath makes God known to those who accept it, because it is the sign of His perfect creation. But, as we have so clearly seen, it is the cross that reveals God and His glory, and makes us know Him. Therefore it is as clear as God's sunlight, that the Sabbath is in the cross—the perfection of it.

It is in the cross of Christ that we find perfect rest; but the cross must be to us something more than an empty sound, a figure of speech; for we cannot rest upon nothing. The cross is vivid reality; just as much so now as when Christ was crucified; for there is nothing worth having or knowing that is not in it, or that can be found outside of it.

The cross means death—Christ crucified. Christ merely extended upon the cross, and then taken down before He gave up His life, would mean nothing to us, no matter how much He suffered in the process. The sum of the whole matter is contained in the words,

Luke 23

⁴⁶ He gave up the ghost,

—as they are given in our version. But the words, “He gave up the ghost” are a most clumsy circumlocution for a very simple statement. It is all in one Greek word signifying,

“He expired.”

The simplest, most literal, and most natural, as well as most expressive rendering of the Greek is,

“He breathed out.”

It, or its equivalent borrowed from the Latin,

“He expired,”

—is a most familiar term, yet how little it is thought of as applied to God. A few minutes upon it now may give us food for hours of thought which may have a transforming effect upon our lives.

Christ breathed out His life. Why did He do it? In order that we might breathe it in. It is by His death that we live;

Isaiah 53

⁵ ...by His stripes we are healed.

We are continually “breathing out,” but we do not die, because we “breathe in” again. That is expiration and inspiration. How is it that after each expiration, after each breathing out, we inspire—breathe in again? Because God ever lives, and is continually breathing the breath of life into our nostrils, as in the beginning.

Genesis 2

⁷ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Job 33

¹ The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

Acts 17

²⁸ In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

²⁵ He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

If we expire,—breathe out,—in Him, we shall be sure to breathe in again; we keep on breathing, because God has not taken to himself His breath, but continually breathes it out to us.

The Cross the Source of Life

The cross of Christ on Calvary is therefore simply the revelation of...

Deuteronomy 33

²⁷ The eternal God.

It is the visible manifestation of the offering which Christ makes...

Hebrews 9

¹⁴ ...through the eternal Spirit.

The cross gives only another view of that which God did in the beginning, and which He has been doing...

Micah 5 [margin]

² ...from of old, from the days of eternity.

Colossians 1

¹⁹ It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,

Colossians 2

⁹ ...[even] all the fullness of the Godhead.

John 5

²⁶ As the Father has life in himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself.

Therefore He can continually be “breathing out” life to us, without exhausting the supply; and it is because He does this, that we live.

Moreover this is our pledge of future, eternal life. If we take the breath that comes to us moment by moment for just what it is, the life given us through the cross, we have the Son indeed, and having Him we have eternal life.

How simple, yet how glorious! It is simply glorious, and gloriously simple. We live in the presence of the cross, and the power of it—the power of God to salvation—is assured to us with every breath we breathe. The breeze that fans our cheek,

and that inflates our lungs, comes to us from the ever-present cross, from Christ and Him crucified.

How grand to know only Christ and Him crucified! It is to know life. Each moment we draw in a fresh supply of grace and truth and strength from the Crucified One. Every one who knows this, and who lives with it in mind, cannot but be righteous. He will be of...

Isaiah 11

³ ...quick understanding in the fear of the Lord,

—or, literally, as the margin indicates, the Spirit of God in Him, recognized and acknowledged, will make him scent the fear of the Lord. As Christ breathes out His righteous life, we shall breathe in righteousness. Therefore,

Psalms 150

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

31. He Saved Others

Present Truth, December 20, 1894

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Matthew 27:42

Matthew 27

⁴² He saved others; himself He cannot save.

THIS was the testimony which the enemies of Christ gave to Him as He hung upon the cross. By that saying they convicted themselves. For He who could save others must have been the Saviour.

The Lord had said through His prophet, that His righteous servant should justify many.¹⁴⁶ The persecutors of Jesus acknowledged that He had saved others. But if He had saved others, He could save them.

1 Timothy 1

¹⁵ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

There is no modification, and no limit. He came to save sinners, whoever, whenever, and wherever they may be. Let no one then be content with admitting that “He saved others.” Rather say,

“He saved me.”

Himself He Cannot Save

Matthew 27

⁴² He saved others; himself He cannot save.

The last statement was as true as the first.

Hebrews 9

²⁶ He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

¹⁴⁶ **Isaiah 53** ¹¹ He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.

Isaiah 53

⁵ With His stripes we are healed.

He could save others only by giving himself as a sacrifice.

Matthew 20

²⁸ The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

So of His followers.

Matthew 10

³⁹ He that finds his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it.

Philippians 2

⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

32. Himself He Cannot Save

Present Truth, April 29, 1897

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Matthew 27:42

WHEN Jesus hung upon the cross, the priests and scribes and elders said in mocking contempt,

Matthew 27

⁴² He saved others; himself He cannot save.

In those words there was a truth far beyond what the Jews had any thought of,—a truth that even the followers of Jesus do not appreciate. Whoever grasps the full meaning of the statement, “He saved others; himself He cannot save,” and whoever allows it to apply to himself, has salvation, for it contains the whole of the Gospel.

He Saved Others

The Jews acknowledged this, yet they crucified Him. He whose only offense was that...

Acts 10

³⁸ [He] went about doing good,

—was hanged as a malefactor, and He lifted no hand in self-defense, nor uttered a word of reproach against His persecutors.

Isaiah 53

⁷ He was oppressed, and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

He saved others, and, even while hanging on the cross,

Psalms 22

⁶ ...a reproach of men, and despised of the people,

—He showed His power to save, in the case of the penitent

thief; but himself He could not save.

The Secret of His Power

This was the secret of His power to save others. It was not simply that He would not save himself,—not alone that He unselfishly forgot himself,—but He *could not* save himself.

To have saved himself would have been the destruction of all others; for if He had planned to save himself, He would have stayed in heaven, and never exposed himself to reproach, and cruelty.

But such a thing was impossible. He could not thus save himself, for such a saving of self would have been selfishness, and there was no selfishness in Him. He absolutely could not remain in heaven and leave man to perish. But He could not save men while keeping himself in safety apart from them and their troubles. So,

Titus 2

¹⁴ [He] gave himself for us.

The Gospel and Giving

Thus we see that the Gospel has its origin and perfection in giving.

John 3

¹⁶ God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.

Matthew 20

²⁸ The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, [—not to be served, but to serve,—] and to give His life a ransom for many.

2 Corinthians 8

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.

He had everything, and we had nothing, so He gave up everything, and kept nothing; in order that we might have everything.

He Emptied Himself

Most clearly is this set forth in *Philippians 2:7*, in the rendering of the *Revised Version*, where we are told that when Jesus had everything, He did not count it a thing to be desired to hold it, “but emptied himself.”

Philippians 2 [RV]

⁵ Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,

⁷ *But emptied himself*, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.

The Greek word from which this is translated has the sense of “to drain out.” In a sense He annihilated himself, threw himself away, in order that He might save those who were lost and in danger of annihilation. He took no thought for himself; he did not defend himself against attacks that were made upon Him; utterly regardless, reckless of self, He was lost in solicitude for others.

The Purpose of Love

This neglect of self was not a momentary enthusiasm, as when one under a strong impulse saves another from impending death at the expense of his own life. On the contrary, it was a deliberate, settled purpose.

Calmly and deliberately, looking over the whole situation, and counting the cost, He laid down His life, that is, He placed it from Him, gave it up to the service of others; and when that was done, the moment of death was but an incident in a long career of the same giving.

His life was just as truly laid down for the sheep before He came to earth, and while He walked and talked and suffered

in Judea and Galilee, as when with His expiring breath He cried,

Luke 23 [Psalm 31:5]

⁴⁶ Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

A Lesson to Us

In all this history of self-sacrifice there is a lesson for us. We are not simply to admire the example of devotion, but to follow it. In it alone, is there salvation.

Jesus seemingly threw himself away, yea, that is what He actually did, for:

Isaiah 53

¹² He...poured out His soul unto death,

Philippians 2

⁷ ...emptied himself,

—drained the last drop;

⁹ Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.

His humiliation was His exaltation; His casting away of self was His salvation. And that was the only possible way of salvation; for, as before stated, to have sought to save himself would have been to deny himself, that is, to prove false to His nature.

Since God is love,—unselfishness,—the only way that He can preserve His own existence is to give himself away.

The Mind of Christ

1 John 3

¹⁶ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

“The brethren” for whom we are to give ourselves are the

sons of Adam, for all who are children of Adam must be brethren. Of course those who give themselves for their brethren in Adam, will without question give themselves for their brethren in Christ, who himself counts even those who do not know the name of God as His brethren, saying,

Hebrews 2

¹² I will declare your name unto my brethren.

“We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Let no one say or think,

“My life is so commonplace and uneventful that I have no occasion to lay down my life for anybody; no great opportunities come to me.”

It is not in dying on some great occasion that laying down one's life consists, the laying down of life consists in not counting it our own, reckoning ourselves as dead, deliberately putting our life from us, and forgetting all about it in thoughts of others.

Philippians 2

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Not by Our Effort

The lesson, in short, is that nobody can be saved by trying to be saved. Salvation is too great a thing to be accomplished by human efforts. Strange as it may seem, we can be saved only as we cease all efforts to save ourselves, and lose all thought of self in efforts to save others. Only so do we enter into full sympathy with Christ, and become laborers together with God.

But that casting away of self is our salvation, for while we are concerning ourselves for others, Christ, who is also concerning himself for others, is as a matter of course caring for us.

Job 42

¹⁰ The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.

Rest and Peace

Freedom from anxiety is thus assured to us. How easy to cast all our care upon Him, when we know He cares for us!

1 Peter 5

⁷ Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you.

And when we know that He cares for us, what need have we to care for ourselves? Thus we experience the truth that the Lord's yoke is easy, and his burden light.

Matthew 11

³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Debtors to All

One thing more. Paul said,

Romans 1

¹⁴ I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

That which was true of Paul, is equally true of us. Why was he debtor? The answer is plain, when we once stop to think; it is simply this, that Paul had received the whole of that which was given for the world. Christ gave His life for the world.

Hebrews 2

⁹ He...tasted death for every man.

But Christ is not divided; every soul gets the whole of Him.

Ephesians 4

⁷ Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

His life is light, and the light that shines for me, shines equally bright for all. He is the...

Malachi 4

² ...Sun of Righteousness,

–but the sun shines for all; each one gets all the benefit of the sun, and no one could get any more, even if he were the only person on earth. So each person gets the whole of the life of Christ, which is given to the world.

Now it is very evident that if I get the whole of something that is given to all the world, then I am debtor to the world; and the same is true of every soul.

The only difference between the most of us and the apostle Paul is that he realized that to him was the fullness of Christ given, and he accepted and appropriated the gift, while we are too often content with but a little of the divine life. We selfishly think to take just enough for our own use, and put a part away from us, not realizing that we must have the whole; and so we fail to realize that we are debtors.

May God grant that we all may have the eyes of our understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that we may know...

Ephesians 1

¹⁸ ...the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

–and may not reject that portion of the life of Christ which to the natural man seems disagreeable, but may allow His perfectly unselfish life to abide in us, so that we, not alone with our lips, but by the glad offering of ourselves for others, may truly render...

2 Corinthians 9

¹⁵ Thanks unto God for His unspeakable gift.

33. The Rent Veil

Present Truth, January 14, 1897

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Matthew 27:50-51

Matthew 27

⁵⁰ Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.

THIS veil was a heavy curtain suspended from the ceiling of the sanctuary, dividing it into two parts, called the holy place and the most holy place.

In the inner, or most holy place was the ark of the covenant, with its covering, which was called the mercy seat, above which, from between the cherubim, the glory of God appeared. The ark in this most holy place, screened from all human eyes, except those of the high priest, who could go within the veil only once a year, was a symbol of the throne of God in heaven.

Exodus 25

¹⁰ And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

¹¹ And you shall overlay it with pure gold, within and without shall you overlay it, and shall make upon it a crown of gold round about.

¹² And you shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it.

¹³ And you shall make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold.

¹⁴ And you shall put the staves into the rings by the sides of

the ark, that the ark may be borne with them.

¹⁵ The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it.

¹⁶ And you shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you.

¹⁷ And you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

¹⁸ And you shall make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shall you make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.

¹⁹ And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall you make the cherubims on the two ends thereof.

²⁰ And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.

²¹ And you shall put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you.

²² And there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Exodus 26

³¹ And you shall make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made:

³² And you shall hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver.

³³ And you shall hang up the vail under the taches, that you may bring in there within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.

³⁴ And you shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.

For this tabernacle, with all that pertained to it, was but a

shadow, a very faint shadow, of realities in heaven. It was called by Stephen,

Acts 7

⁴⁴ ...the tabernacle of witness,

—because both it and the tables of the law within it were witnesses against the unbelief of the Israelites. Solomon, who built the house to the Lord, said in his prayer at the dedication,

2 Chronicles 5

¹⁸ But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house which I have built.

In like manner Stephen said in his testimony before the Jewish council:

Acts 7

⁴⁸ Howbeit the most High dwells not in temples made with hands; as says the prophet,

⁴⁹ Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool; what house will you build me? says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?

⁵⁰ Has not my hand made all these things?

We see that those who lived in the time of the temple, who were in touch with the Lord, knew very well that it was not the real dwelling-place of God. All the people of Israel were accustomed to sing,

Psalms 11

⁴ The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven.

Those who heard Stephen's discourse, being perfectly familiar with the service connected with the temple, could plainly see that if they allowed him to continue, his next words must be something like this:

Hebrews 8

¹ Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum;
We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of
the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

² A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle,
which the Lord pitched, and not man.

That is why they were so incensed against Stephen, for they had positively rejected Christ, and did not want to hear of Him.

Yet some of these priests must have seen the veil of the temple mysteriously rent asunder when Christ died, and they knew that it was not done by human hands, and they could hardly have failed to recall the words of Jesus,

Matthew 23

³⁸ Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Never the absolute dwelling-place of God, it was not then even a symbol of it.

If the professed people of God in olden time had been faithful to their high calling, there would never have been any earthly tabernacle, with its exclusive priesthood; for God's promise was,

Exodus 19

⁶ You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.

Even so all God's people today are...

1 Peter 2

⁹ ...a royal priesthood,

⁵ ...a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

No other sacrifices have ever been acceptable to God.

Every believer is a priest, and therefore every one has a right to come into the presence of God. The rending of the temple veil at the death of Christ, was to emphasize the fact

that by the blood of Jesus we have boldness or liberty to enter into the holiest place by the new and living way through the veil, which He has consecrated for us, that is, His flesh.

Hebrews 10

¹⁹ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

²⁰ By a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;

We are not kept standing in the outer court, but having been...

Ephesians 2

¹³ ...made nigh by the blood of Christ,

—are urged to...

Hebrews 10

²² ...draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

Seeing therefore that Christ, our Brother, is High Priest, and we are partakers of Him,

Hebrews 4

¹⁶ Let us come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help,

—in our priestly work of...

1 Peter 2 [RV]

⁹ ...showing forth the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

34. The Nature of Sin

Present Truth, May 17, 1894

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Luke 23:44-46; Matthew 27:50-51

Luke 23

⁴⁴ And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

⁴⁵ And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into your hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost.

Matthew 27

⁵⁰ Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.

THE nature of sin can be correctly judged only in the light of Calvary.

- The Son of the infinite God expiring in agony upon the cross,
- The darkened sun,
- The quaking earth,

—these and all the dreadful tokens of that day proclaimed the nature of sin. All these came as the result of sin, and one sin alone would have made them necessary, since but a single sin would have brought death to the Son of God, if the sinner was to be redeemed.

Every sin that a person commits is an act fraught with the fearful realities of that dark day in the history of old Jerusalem,—realities that must be met and experienced by the impenitent at the day of Judgment.

35. Fear Not

Present Truth, January 7, 1897

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Matthew 27:51-54

When Jesus died upon the cross, the record says:

Matthew 27

⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

⁵² And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

⁵³ And came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

⁵⁴ Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

IN THE tense of the verb used by the centurion there is a possible suggestion of failure to comprehend that which the words themselves acknowledged. “Truly this was the Son of God” seems to imply the inability to realize the attributes of Divinity, and to be more the voicing of a sudden horror at the idea that they had been, as they thought, a party to the destruction of Deity, than an expression of the conviction that this body, now hanging lifeless upon the cross, had been the habitation of Divinity.

There is no evidence here of any thought of the rebuilding of this life which they had just seen pass from its body, but only the feeling, inspired by the miraculous manifestations to which they had just been witnesses, that a supernatural life had gone out of existence. The only feeling which they are credited with in this account is fear,

“They feared greatly.”

From the description of this scene it would appear that the local events accompanying the passing of life from the body of Christ on the cross, were, in miniature, like those which will occur at His second coming.

Then they who crucified Him, and who pierced Him, and all they who have denied Him through all time, will see Him, and will realize that,

“Truly this is the Son of God.”

Then they will know the truth and will indeed fear greatly. But selfish fear is not a means of grace. The great fear which the wicked will feel at the second coming of Christ will not be to their salvation. But quite the contrary, their fear will arise from the realization of the fact that the day of probation has passed and they are not saved.

Jeremiah 8

²⁰ The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

They who are saved may be awe-struck, but they will feel no fright or personal fear.

There are to be many evidences, in the heavens and in the earth, and among men, of the fulfillment of prophecy, in the passage of time towards its grand and final catastrophe; but it is the privilege of all who believe the Word of God to look upon these phenomena, and, understanding their significance, reverence God, but have no fear.

36. The Fulfilling Word

Present Truth, June 17, 1897

Timeline: VII-42 (The Crucifixion)

Matthew 27 / Mark 15 / Luke 23 / John 18 and 19

THE very things that caused the disciples of Jesus dismay and confusion in the hour of His trial and crucifixion, would but have strengthened their faith, had they believed the prophets and the words of Christ.

We can understand how Jesus himself saw prophecy fulfilling at every step of the way, from the betrayal to the trial by the chief priests, the delivering to Pilate, the shameful insults and spitting, and all the details of the crucifixion. And how His faith must have rested upon those scriptures, carrying assurance of power to endure all faithfully.

Isaiah 50

⁶ I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

⁷ For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded.

That was the hour of the power of darkness. To those who had not the Word every light seemed to be put out. But Jesus had the Scripture as a lamp unto His feet. Now, the...

2 Peter 1

¹⁹ ...more sure Word of prophecy [is still] a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn.

As the dawning of the day of the Lord draws near, the power of darkness will again make special efforts to overthrow all faith; yes, is even now doing so. Perilous times have come.¹⁴⁷ They will increase until...

¹⁴⁷ **2 Timothy 3** ¹ This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

Luke 21

²⁶ Men's hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

But as perils increase, and as the wrath of Satan is more violently manifested against the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, those who follow Christ's example in trial will see in these things the fulfillment of the Word, and find their faith grow stronger. Jesus says,

Revelation 3

¹⁰ Because you have kept the Word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly.

37. Why Did Christ Die?

Present Truth, September 21, 1893

THE fact that this question has been asked in all seriousness by an active Christian is sufficient reason for considering it, apart from the fact that it touches the very core of Christianity. It shows that the fundamental principles of the Gospel are not so generally understood as people are wont to imagine.

This is not because they are so obscure and complex as to be beyond ordinary comprehension, but because they have been so thickly enveloped in the fog of theological terms. Those terms are the inventions of men, and have nothing to do with the Scriptures.

If we are content with the simple statements of the Bible, we shall see how quickly its light dispels the fog of theological speculation.

The Sin Problem

1 Peter 3

¹⁸ Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

That is a sufficient answer, but we will read further.

1 Timothy 1

¹⁵ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

1 John 3

⁵ You know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin.

1 John 1

⁷ The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Read again:

Romans 5

⁶ For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

⁸ But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Once more:

Colossians 1

²¹ And you, that were sometime enemies, and alienated in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled

²² In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

All men have sinned.

Romans 3

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 5

¹² Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Sin is enmity against God.

Romans 8

⁷ The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

In one of the texts above quoted we read that men need reconciliation, because they are enemies in their minds by wicked works. *Colossians* 1:21. Therefore since all men have sinned, it follows that all men are by nature the enemies of God; and that also is what we read in *Romans* 5:10, above quoted.

But sin is death.

Romans 8

⁶ To be carnally minded is death.

Romans 5

¹² By one man sin came into the world, and death by sin.

Death came in by sin, because it carries death concealed within it.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin.

Sin when it is full grown brings forth death.

James 1

¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.

Sin is death, for the reason that it is enmity against God. God is...

Deuteronomy 5

²⁶ ...the living God.

Psalms 36

⁹ With You is the fountain of life.

Christ is called:

Acts 3 [margin]

¹⁵ ...the Author of life.

Life is the grand characteristic of God.

Acts 17

²⁵ He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

²⁸ In Him we live, and move, and have are being;...for we are also His offspring.

The life of God is the source of every created thing; and apart from Him there can be no life. But righteousness, as well as life, is the grand characteristic of God.

Psalms 92

¹⁵ There is no unrighteousness in Him.

Psalms 18

³⁰ As for God, His way is perfect.

Since the life of God is the source of all life, and all depend on Him, it follows that His righteousness is the standard of righteousness of all intelligent beings; for God's life is nothing but righteousness. Therefore life and righteousness are inseparable.

Romans 8

⁶ To be spiritually minded is life.

Now since God's life is the standard of righteousness, it is evident that everything that is different from the life of God is unrighteousness; and...

1 John 5

¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin.

But if the life of any being is different from the life of God, it must be because His life is not allowed free course through that being. But where God's life is not, there is death. Whoever is out of harmony with God—in enmity against Him—has death working in him, and death for his inevitable portion. So it is not by an arbitrary decree that:

Romans 6

²³ The wages of sin is death.

That results from the very nature of things. Sin is opposition to God,—rebellion against Him,—and is utterly foreign to His being. It is separation from God, and separation from God is death, because there is no life outside of Him. All that hate Him, love death.

Proverbs 8

³⁶ All they that hate me love death.

Let us now sum up the case of the relation between the natural man and God.

1. All have sinned.
2. Sin is enmity against God; it is rebellion.
3. Sin is alienation from God; men are alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works. *Colossians* 1:21.
4. Sinners are “alienated from the life of God.” *Ephesians* 4:18.

But God in Christ is the only source of life for the universe, and therefore all who are thus alienated from His righteous life are by the very nature of things doomed to death.

1 John 5

¹² He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

Reconciliation

From all that has preceded it is very evident that the only object that Christ could have in coming to earth and dying for men, was the reconciliation of man to God, so that he might have life.

John 10

¹⁰ I am come that they might have life.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

Colossians 1

²¹ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled

²² In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.

1 Peter 3

¹⁸ For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

Romans 5

¹⁰ If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

"But," someone will say, "You have made the reconciliation all on the part of men; I have always been taught that the death of Christ reconciled God to man; that Christ died to satisfy God's justice, and to appease Him."

Well, we have left the matter of reconciliation just where the Scriptures have put it; and while they have much to say about the necessity for man to be reconciled to God, they never once hint of such a thing as the necessity for God to be reconciled to man.

To intimate the necessity for such a thing is to bring a grave charge against the character of God. The idea has come into the Christian Church from the Papacy, which in turn brought it from Paganism, in which the only idea of God was of a being whose wrath must be appeased by a sacrifice.

Stop a moment, and think what reconciliation means. The existence of enmity is the only necessity for reconciliation. Where there is no enmity, there is no necessity for reconciliation. Man is by nature alienated from God; he is a rebel, full of enmity. Therefore man needs to be reconciled—to have his en-

mity taken away. But God has no enmity in His being.

1 John 4

⁸ God is love.

Consequently there is no necessity for Him to be reconciled; there is no possibility of such a thing, for there can be no reconciliation where there has been no enmity. Again:

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Surely, they who say that the death of Christ reconciled God to men, have forgotten this blessed text. They would separate the Father and the Son, making the former the enemy, and the latter the friend, of man. But God's heart was so overflowing with love to fallen man, that:

Romans 8

³² He...spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.

And in so doing He gave himself, for:

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

The Apostle Paul speaks of...

Acts 20

²⁸ ...the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.

This effectually disposes of the idea that there was any enmity toward man on the part of God, so that He needed to be reconciled. The death of Christ was the expression of God's wonderful love for sinners.

Consider further what reconciliation means. It means a change on the part of the one reconciled. If one has enmity in

His heart towards another, a radical change must take place in him before he is reconciled. This is the case with man.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

But to speak of the necessity for God to be reconciled to man, is not only to say that He cherished enmity in His heart, but to say that God was partially in the wrong, and that a change had to take place in Him as well as in man. If it were not in the innocence of ignorance that men talked about God's having been reconciled to men, it would be blasphemy. That is one of the...

Revelation 13

⁵ ...great things and blasphemies,

—that the Papacy has spoken against God. Let us not echo it. God is. He could not be other than He is, and be God. He is absolute and unchangeable perfection. He cannot change. Hear Him:

Malachi 3

⁶ I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Instead of having to change and be reconciled to sinful man, in order that they might be saved, the only hope for their salvation is the fact that He never changes, but is everlasting love. He is the source of life, and the standard of life. When any beings are unlike Him, the difference is on their part, and not on His. He is the fixed standard, to which all must conform, if they would live.

God cannot change to accommodate the desires of sinful men, not simply because such a change would lower His dignity, and make His Government unstable, but because He can-

not be other than He is,

Hebrews 11

⁶ He that comes to God must believe that He is.

Just a thought concerning the idea that Christ's death was necessary to satisfy outraged justice. Christ death was necessary to satisfy the love of God.

Romans 5

⁸ God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

John 3

¹⁶ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

Justice would have been met by the summary death of the sinful race. But God's love could not suffer that. So we are...

Romans 3

²⁴ Justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Through faith in His blood, God's righteousness—which is His life—is declared upon us, and thus...

²⁶ He [is] just, and [at the same time] the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.

The reason why it was necessary that Christ should die, in order that men might be saved, will be considered in the next section of this article.

Why have we dwelt so long upon the fact that man must be reconciled to God, and not God to man? Because in that alone is man's hope. If God ever had any enmity in His heart against men, there would always arise the torturing thought,

“Perhaps He is not yet sufficiently appeased to accept me; surely He cannot love so guilty a being as I am.”

And the more one realized his guilt, the greater would be

his doubt. But when we know that God never had any enmity towards us, but that He has loved us with an everlasting love, and that He has loved us so much that He gave himself for us, that we might be reconciled to Him, we can joyfully exclaim,

Romans 8

³¹ If God be for us, who can be against us?

Remission

Freedom from sin, or at least from its consequences, is what men have been seeking ever since the fall. Sad to say, however, the great majority have sought it in the wrong way.

It was with a lie against the character of God, that Satan caused the first sin, and he has been vigorously engaged in trying to induce people to believe that lie ever since. So successful has he been, that the mass of mankind regard God as stern and unsympathetic, a being who regards man with a coldly critical eye, and who would much rather destroy than save.

In short, Satan has largely succeeded in putting himself in the place of God, in the minds of men. Thus it is that much of the worship of the heathen is, and always has been, devil-worship.

1 Corinthians 10

²⁰ But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils.

Consequently all heathen worship springs from the idea that a sacrifice must be made to appease the wrath of their God.

Sometimes this sacrifice is in the shape of property, but often it is of the person. Thus arose the great hordes of monks and hermits among the heathen, and later among the professed Christians, who borrowed their ideas of God from the

heathen. These thought to gain the favor of God by scourging and torturing themselves. The prophets of Baal cut themselves with knives,

1 Kings 18

²⁸ ...till the blood gushed out upon them,

—hoping thereby to induce their god to listen to them. With the same idea of God, thousands of so-called Christians have worn hair shirts, walked barefoot on glass, made pilgrimages on their knees, slept on the hard floor, or the ground, and scourged themselves with thorns, starved themselves nearly to death, and set themselves the most impossible tasks.

But nobody ever found peace in any of those ways, because no man could get out of himself that which was not in him, and righteousness and peace are not in man.

Sometimes this idea of propitiating the wrath of God has taken an easier form,—that is, easier for the worshipers. Instead of sacrificing themselves, they have sacrificed others. Human sacrifices have always been to a greater or lesser extent connected with heathenism.

Men shudder as they read of the human sacrifices offered by the ancient inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, and by the Druids; but professed (not real) Christianity has its awful list. Even so-called Christian England has made hundreds of burnt offerings of men, for the purpose of turning away the wrath of God from the country.

Wherever there is religious persecution to any degree, it springs from the mistaken idea that God demands a victim. This is shown by the words of Christ to His disciples:

John 16

² The time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.

All such worship has been devil worship, and not worship

of the true God. Just here somebody has remembered that it is said:

Hebrews 9

²² Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.

And this makes him think that after all God did demand a sacrifice before He would pardon man.

It is very difficult for the mind to rid itself of the idea received as a legacy from Paganism, through the Papacy, that God was so angry at man for having sinned, that He could not be mollified without seeing blood flow, but that it made no difference to Him whose blood it was, if only somebody was killed; and that since Christ's life was worth more than the lives of all men, He accepted Him as a substitute for them.

This is almost a brutal way of stating the case, but it is the only way that the case can be truly presented. The heathen conception of God is a brutal one, as dishonoring to God as it is discouraging to man; and this heathen idea has been allowed to color too many texts of Scripture. It is sad to think how greatly men who really loved the Lord, have given occasion to His enemies to blaspheme.

Hebrews 9

²² Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.

What is remission? It means simply "sending away." What is to be remitted, or sent away? Our sins, for we read that:

Romans 3

²⁰ Through faith in Christ's blood the righteousness of God is declared for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

So we learn that apart from the shedding of blood there is no sending away of sins. What blood is it that takes away sins? Only the blood of Christ,

Acts 4

¹² For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

1 John 3

⁵ You know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.

1 Peter 1

¹⁸ Knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver and gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers;

¹⁹ But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.

1 John 1

⁷ If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

But how is it that the shedding of blood, even the blood of Christ, can take away sins? Simply because...

Deuteronomy 12

²³ ...the blood is the life...

Leviticus 17

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

So when we read that apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission, we know it means that no sins can be taken away except by the life of Christ. In Him is no sin; therefore when He imparts His life to a soul, that soul is at once cleansed from sin.

Remember that Christ is God.

John 1

¹ The Word was God,

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

God gave himself in Christ for men, for we have read of...

Acts 20

²⁸ ...the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.

The Son of man, in whom was the life of God,

Matthew 20

²⁸ ...came...to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

The case, therefore, stands thus:

- All have sinned.
- Sin is enmity against God, because it is a condition of alienation from the life of God.
- Therefore sin is death.

The one thing, then, that man stood in need of was life, and this is the one thing that Christ came to give. In Him was life that sin could not touch, and that could triumph over death.

John 1

⁴ In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

His life is the light of men. A single light may make ten thousand other lights, and still not be diminished. No matter how much sunlight any person receives, there is just as much for everybody else; and if there were a hundred times as many people on earth as there are, there would be no less sunlight for each one than there is now. So with the Sun of Righteousness. He can give His life to all, and still have as much left.

Christ came to impart the life of God to man, for it is that which they lack. The lives of all the angels in heaven could not have met the demands of the case; not because God was so inexorable, but because they could not have imparted any

life to man. They had no life in themselves, but only the life that Christ imparted to them.

But God was in Christ, and in Him God's everlasting life could be given to everyone who would receive it. Remember that in giving His Son, God gave himself, and you will see that a sacrifice was not demanded to satisfy God's outraged feelings, but that, on the contrary, God's inexpressible love led Him to sacrifice himself, in order to break down man's enmity, and reconcile us to himself.

"But why could He not give us His life without dying?"

That is to say,

"Why could He not give us His life, and still not give it?!"

We needed life, and Christ alone had life to give; but the giving of life is dying. His death reconciles us to God, provided we make it our own by faith. We are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, because in dying He gave up His life, and He gave it to us.

Being made partakers of the life of God, through faith in Christ's death, we are at peace with Him, because one life is in us both. Then we are...

Romans 5

¹⁰ ...saved by His life.

Christ died, but He still lives, and His life in us keeps us united to God. The imparting of His life to us frees us from sin, and the continuing of that life in us, keeps us from sin.

John 1

⁴ In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Jesus said,

John 8

¹² I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Now we can understand how it is that:

1 John 1

⁷ If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

His light is His life; walking in the light is walking in His life; and when we thus walk, His life is flowing through us, a living stream, cleansing from all sin.

2 Corinthians 9

¹⁵ Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

His life is light, and will dispel all earth's darkness. In His light (life) we shall see light. Only as we consider hard questions in the light of His life, can we understand them.

Romans 8

³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

³² He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Let the weak and fearful sinner take courage, and trust in the Lord. We have not a God who demands a sacrifice from man, but one who in His love has offered himself a sacrifice. We owe to God a life perfectly in harmony with His law; but since our life is just the opposite of that, God in Christ has substituted His own life for ours, and so we can...

1 Peter 2

⁵ ...offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Then,

Psalm 130

⁷ Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.

⁸ And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

38. Lessons from the Rejecters

Present Truth, July 31, 1902

Original title: Back Page

WHEN Jesus was in Herod's court the soldiers mocked Him, and shamefully abused Him. When He hung on the cross the priests and people reviled Him, making light of His claims to be the Son of God and King. They really thought that He was but an imposter, a stirrer up of sedition, a fomenter of discord, an over-thrower of the established order of things. If they had known who He was,

1 Corinthians 2

⁸ ...they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But they were all wrong. Learned doctors were as much in error as the ignorant people, and were even worse, because it was they who led the people astray. That there was sincerity among the priestly opposers, is shown by the fact that afterwards, under the preaching of the apostles and elders,

Acts 6

⁷ ...a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Perfectly sincere people, therefore, may be wholly wrong. Saul of Tarsus is a notable instance of this, for he verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; and he did. Jesus also told His disciples that the time would come when whoever should kill them would think that he did God service.

John 16

¹ These things I have spoken unto you, that you should not be offended.

² They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.

These things should be a warning to us, not to revile or de-

spise or speak evil of any.

Titus 3

² To speak evil of no man,

—is as much a duty as to be subject to proper authority. Gamaliel's advice is as good for us as it was for the Jewish Sanhedrin. If the work be of men, it will surely come to naught, for every plant that God has not planted shall be rooted up. Therefore the best way to demonstrate whether or not men are in error is to...

Acts 5

³⁸ ...let them alone,

—advice that was given also by the Saviour.

Matthew 15

¹⁴ Let them alone.

We must not forget, however, that all the Jews—both priests and people—might have known who Jesus was, and so avoided their great mistake; and the great company of priests might have believed on Him at first, as well as afterwards.

He was the Truth, plainly revealed before their eyes, and both words and deeds testified to it. They had no excuse, yet there was forgiveness for them. Such is the marvelous forbearance and lovingkindness of our God.

Thus the case of the rejecters of Jesus is to us both a warning and an encouragement.

The Resurrection and Ascension

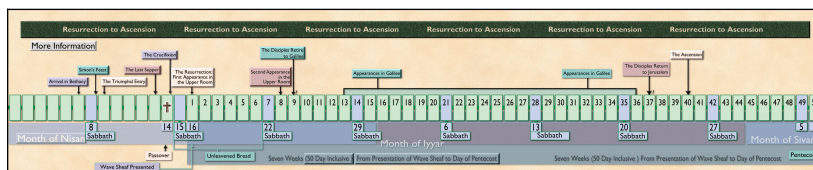
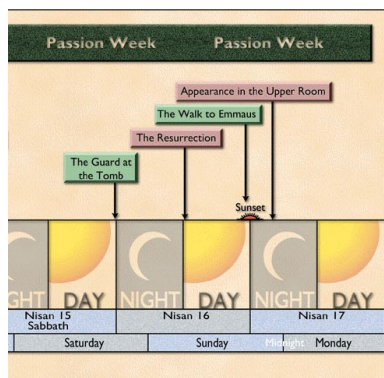
*After resting in the grave on the Sabbath,
Christ rose from the dead,
early on the beginning of the first day.*

*He made numerous appearances on the first day,
another appearance a week later,
further appearances over the next weeks around Galilee,
and finally ascended to Heaven on the 40th day.*

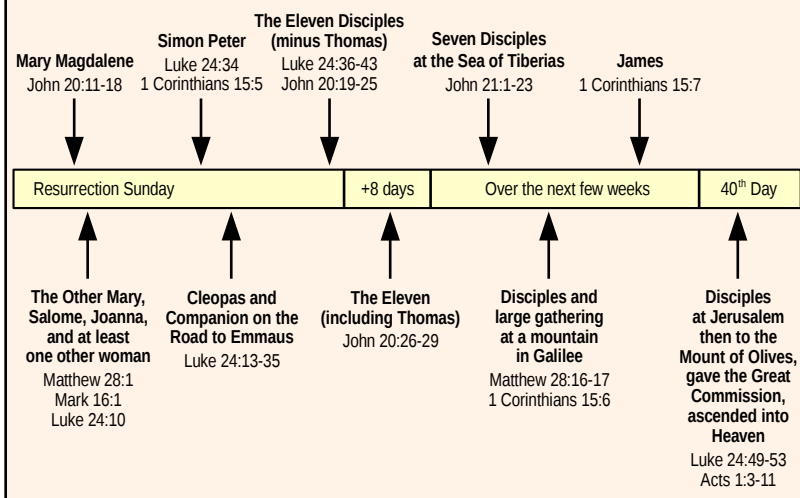
*This was a time of intense education to the disciples.
All the teachings and significance of the Gospel,
which they had misunderstood,
were now set before them in the proper light.
Ten days after Christ's ascension,
repentant, and unified,
they were ready for the descent of the Holy Spirit
in power on the Day of Pentecost.*

- VIII 1 The Resurrection
 VIII 2 The Walk to Emmaus
 VIII 3 First Appearance in the Upper Room
 VIII 4 Second Appearance in the Upper Room
 VIII 5 Appearance by the Lake of Galilee
 VIII 6 Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee
 VIII 7 The Ascension
 VIII 8 Epilogue to John's Gospel

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	DA	Ch.
28:1-15	16:1-11	24:1-12	20:1-18	779-787	81
...	16:12	24:13-32	...	795-801	83
...	16:13	24:33-49	20:19-23	802-807	84
...	16:14	...	20:24-29	807-808	84
...	...	...	21:1-23	809-817	85
28:16-20	16:15-18	...	...	818-828	86
...	16:19, 20	24:50-53	...	829-835	87
...	...	...	20:30, 31; 21:24, 25	...	...



Appearances of Christ after the Resurrection



1. The Sabbath and the Resurrection

Signs of the Times, June 1, 1888

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

Matthew 28:1

Matthew 28

¹ In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week...

HERE we have New Testament testimony upon the subject of what day should be called the Sabbath. It is the day that immediately precedes the first day of the week, therefore the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. This is just what the commandment says:

Exodus 20

¹⁰ The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

And Luke, in speaking of the Sabbath day which immediately preceded that first day of the week in which Christ arose from the tomb, says that the women...

Luke 23

⁵⁶ ...rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

This item alone should be sufficient to firmly establish anyone who may be wavering concerning the Sabbath in the New Testament.

But some may say that this Sabbath was past before the resurrection, and that the change in the day could not take place until Christ had risen and appeared to His disciples. We reply that the resurrection of Christ has nothing to do with the matter.

The gospels were all written years after the occurrence of the events which they record, and the names which they give to things must be the names by which the Holy Spirit wishes those things to be known throughout the entire Christian age. With one accord they speak of the seventh day of the week—

the day immediately preceding the first day of the week—as “the Sabbath.” The first day of the week they call simply “the first day of the week,” and nowhere in the Bible is it given any other title.

Now when the Bible says that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and throughout both the Old and the New Testament it is called the Sabbath, by what authority do men give that title to the first day? How dare men take such liberties with the word of God? The Lord looks with favor only on those who tremble at His word.

Isaiah 66

¹ Thus says the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that you build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

² For all those things has my hand made, and all those things have been, says the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

Facts must outweigh conjectures; yet even in the face of the uniform testimony of Scripture, some will argue that:

“Redemption is greater than creation.”

Well, suppose for a moment that it is; what has that to do with the Sabbath? How is it possible to find any connection between the alleged fact that redemption is greater than creation, and the Sabbath day?

The seventh-day Sabbath rests upon the great fact that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh, and that He afterwards blessed and sanctified that day. Now to make the redemption argument apply to the alleged change of the Sabbath, people must argue like this:

“Redemption is greater than creation, therefore the Lord did not bless and sanctify the seventh day.”

But says one,

“That is nonsense.”

Of course it is, and so it is nonsense to argue that anything in God’s plan of redemption can possibly affect the day which He himself has made holy, and commanded all men to observe.

But who knows that redemption is greater than creation? Has it been revealed in the Bible? No. Then what man has known the mind of the Lord so well that he could declare it? Who can fathom infinity, so as to compare two infinite works?

No power less than that of an infinite God could create a world, and it requires the same power to redeem it. And no mind but the mind of God can ever comprehend either work. Then it well becomes poor, ignorant mortals to accept the judgments of God, as “righteous altogether,”¹⁴⁸ and not try to do for Him that which He has not done.

The idea that men can commemorate finished redemption by resting on Sunday is a wild one. In the first place it has never been commanded, and that alone is sufficient to condemn it. If it had been commanded, then we should have to observe two days, for no power can ever annul the fact that the seventh day is the sacred rest-day of the Lord.

But God has not required another day of rest. The resurrection of Christ is a pledge of the final redemption of all who believe in Him; but it did not mark the close of redemption. Paul says that:

Romans 8

²² The whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.

²³ And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-

¹⁴⁸ **Psalms 19** ⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

And he also says that the possession of the Spirit is simply the pledge of our inheritance, until the purchased possession is redeemed and given to us.

Ephesians 1

¹³ In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

Only when the saints shall stand around the throne of God, in the kingdom of glory, can they celebrate redemption completed; and those who share that triumph will have lived not according to their own views or preferences, but...

Matthew 4

⁴ ...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

2. They Knew Not the Scripture

Present Truth, March 20, 1902

International Sunday-school Lesson for March 30

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

John 20:1-18

IT WAS a devoted band of followers that Jesus had gathered round himself. They were human, and therefore we are not surprised when occasionally traces of selfishness appeared, and they strove to see who should have the best place in the Master's kingdom.

But no one can say that with the exception of Judas, they had attached themselves to Him on the mere hope of personal gain. They were attached to Jesus on His own personal goodness and loveliness. They loved Him for what He was. He satisfied all the longings of their souls, so much so that when, grieved on the departure of many who had seemed dedicated to Him, He asked the twelve,

John 6

⁶⁷ Will you also go away?

—they replied,

⁶⁸ Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

On the night of the trial of Jesus,

Mark 14

⁵⁰ They all forsook Him and fled.

But this was because things had suddenly happened contrary to what they were expecting, and they were panic-stricken. One by one they returned, and all followed Him to Calvary, and assisted in taking Him down from the cross, and laying Him in the tomb. Thus, having done all that could be done for the dead before Friday's sun set, they returned to their dwelling,

Luke 23

⁵⁶ ...and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

But they could not long remain away from the place where they had left the loved One. Their hopes had perished, but their love remained unchanged. They supposed that He had been mistaken as to His mission; but they knew He was good. So as soon as possible after the Sabbath was passed some of the women started for the sepulcher.

John 20

¹ On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and saw the stone taken away from the sepulcher.

² Then she ran, and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him.

³ Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher.

⁴ So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher.

⁵ And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet he went not in.

⁶ Then Simon Peter came following him, and went into the sepulcher, and saw the linen clothes lie,

⁷ And the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

⁸ Then that other disciple went in also, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed.

⁹ For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

This shall be the basis of our study this week, and it will serve as an introduction to our Easter article next week.¹⁴⁹

Why did they not know the Scripture that foretold the res-

¹⁴⁹ The article Waggoner is referring to is found in the section, *The Perean Ministry*, Article 54, "Christ's Resurrection the Sign of His Coming."

urrection of Jesus from the dead? Because they did not believe when they read. For this explanation we have the authority of Christ's own words to the two disciples with whom He walked to Emmaus the day of His resurrection. After they had told their mournful story, Jesus said to them:

Luke 24

²⁵ O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

And then,

²⁷ Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures things concerning himself.

There was no lack of Scripture evidence concerning the resurrection of Jesus. The Apostle Paul declared that in all his preaching he had said...

Acts 26

²² ...none other things than the prophets and Moses did say should come:

²³ That He should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should give light to the Gentiles.

Christ, speaking to the disciples who still doubted after they had seen the sepulcher, and had heard the testimony of those who had seen Him, said unto them:

Luke 24

⁴⁴ These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

⁴⁵ Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,

⁴⁶ And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

Moses had written of the Seed of the woman, who should

bruise the serpent's head. He had also recorded the promises to Abraham,—promises which could not possibly be fulfilled to him except by the resurrection of the dead; and every Jew was familiar with the words to which God affixed His oath:

Genesis 22

¹⁷ Your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.

David had written, not of himself, but prophetically of Christ, and in His name:

Psalms 16

⁹ My flesh also shall rest in hope.

¹⁰ For You will not leave my soul in hell [the grave], nor suffer your Holy One to see corruption.

¹¹ You will show me the path of life.

Time and space would fail us to recount all that is written in the Psalms and the prophets concerning Christ. But in order that no shred of evidence might be lacking, God had placed on record the story of Isaac's birth, which was life from the dead; also the sacrifice which Abraham made in the calm confidence of the resurrection; and, more than all, many cases of resurrection from the dead showed Christ actually risen as well as slain from the foundation of the world.

Everything spoke of Him whom the disciples had seen demonstrated to be...

John 11

²⁵ ...the resurrection and the life.

Yet,

John 20

⁹ ...they knew not.

How strange! No, it was not strange; for the same story is being repeated today by thousands of Christians. Those disciples were certainly Christian; for they followed Christ, and loved Him. But they believed not, and therefore they knew

not. The Lord loved them; but although they were...

Ephesians 1

⁶ ...accepted in the Beloved,

—they were not fitted to be teachers, as long as there was a vestige of unbelief left in their hearts; for how can one teach another what one does not know?

And belief,—simple, complete, and unfaltering faith which is sure that God's Word is true from the beginning, and that every one of His righteous judgments endures for ever, is the only key to knowledge.

Psalms 119

¹⁶⁰ Your word is true from the beginning: and every one of your righteous judgments endures for ever.

Hebrews 11

³ By faith we understand.

Why did they not believe, and thus know? It was not because they were willful, or obstinately set on having their own way. They thought that they believed, and if anybody, except the One who spoke with authority, had accused them of infidelity, they would no doubt have resented it, just as many Christians will now.

But they did not believe and know, simply because they had their own ideas of what was fitting and harmonious, and they read the Scriptures in the light (or darkness, rather) of their own opinions. They read the Bible to find backing for their theories, instead of coming to it with an empty mind to be filled with God's thoughts.

So few people know how to read the Bible! When one is found who believes just like a little child, it is a pleasure to teach him. Indeed, such ones need very little teaching. Their own reading is sufficient to give them knowledge; for they believe.

The teacher's sole task with them is to assist them in storing their minds with the Word. They are not continually asking him to "harmonize" this and that passage; for their minds are so filled with the wonder of each new truth that dawns upon them that they have no room for questions.

The majority, however, even of professed Christians, are continually seeing in the Bible discrepancies, and failures to harmonize exactly. Not that they disbelieve; oh, no; they would not think of doubting God's word—after they have so adjusted its various parts that they "harmonize."

Presumptuous mortals! truly the God who is so enduring that He suffers their manners, is well called:

Romans 15

⁵ The God of patience.

What would they think of a young art student, or of one who had never yet put brush to canvas, who should presume to criticize the work of a master, saying that his colors did not harmonize? His conceit would rightly be set down to his ignorance; but no language could be true that would rightly describe the audacity that would lead him to seize the brush from the master's hands, and daub a finished picture in an attempt to make it "harmonious"!

Yet this would be nothing in comparison with the one who tinkers with God's word, taking off a little from the meaning here, and adding a little there, in order that it may agree with his ideas of harmony.

How should we do? We should do just as the art student does in the master's studio. He will study. And study, in his case, means that he will look long and attentively at the master's work. He will fill his mind with the Master's thoughts, that he can see the finished work even when away from it. He will gaze until his crude taste is cultivated to appreciate real harmony; and then many things which at first seemed to him

incongruous, will be seen to be absolutely necessary and perfect harmony.

If this be so with man's work, how much more should be done with God's? The course that we have just indicated is the only one that can properly be termed study, when the Bible is the subject. Read it again and again until its teachings are impressed on your mind; and then keep looking at those different and seemingly discordant features until they blend, as they surely will, into one picture which reveals the perfect beauty of the Lord, and then you will know for yourself with an assurance that nothing can shake, that:

1 Corinthians 15

²⁰ Christ is risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

3. The Resurrection of Jesus (1901)

Present Truth, March 28, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for April 7

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

Luke 24:1-12

Luke 24

¹ Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

² And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher.

³ And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

⁴ And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments [“dazzling apparel,” RV]:

⁵ And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why do you seek the living among the dead?

⁶ He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee,

⁷ Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

⁸ And they remembered His words,

⁹ And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

¹¹ And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

¹² Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulcher; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

The Sabbath and the First Day of the Week

There is incidentally, in this connection, a little evidence concerning the Sabbath, which ought not to be overlooked. The reader cannot fail to note that this chapter is but a continuation of something that has gone before. It says that early in

the morning of the first day of the week,

Luke 24

¹ ...they came unto the sepulcher,

—without specifying who are referred to by the pronoun “they.” No specification is necessary, since in the Gospel as written by Luke, there were no chapter divisions, and the verses immediately preceding the first verse of our lesson are these:

Luke 23

⁵⁴ And that day [the day that Christ was crucified], was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

⁵⁵ And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and behold the sepulcher, and how His body was laid.

⁵⁶ And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

Now it is all plain; the verses last quoted are absolutely necessary to the understanding of this lesson, and they make the picture complete. They show us, in the most natural way possible, not only what day the women kept as the Sabbath, but what day the Spirit of God calls the Sabbath, and what day should be kept by all followers of Christ.

The Scripture before us presents three days in succession:

- “the preparation,”
- “the Sabbath,” and
- “the first day of the week.”

They came in just that order. Reckoning back from the first day of the week, a problem that presents no difficulty to any child who can count up to seven, we see that, since there are but seven days in a week, the Sabbath, which immediately precedes “the first day of the week,” must be the seventh day of the week, commonly known as Saturday; and “the preparation” for the Sabbath is of course the sixth day of the week, or

Friday.

It is evident that when Luke wrote, there was no thought of such a thing as that Sunday should take the place of the Sabbath. It must not be said that the women, being Jews, would as a matter of course rest on the seventh day, because it is not merely a question of what the women did or thought, but of the language of the Holy Ghost.

The point is, that in the book known as the New Testament, and commonly recognized as “the Christian Scriptures,” given by inspiration of the Spirit of God, the seventh day of the week, the day in the fourth commandment, is called “the Sabbath day,” without the slightest intimation that any other day had taken or ever should take its place.

If the resurrection of Christ had the slightest effect on the day of the Sabbath, here is the place where it should be made known; but no hint of such a thing is given.

Do you who study this lesson keep the Sabbath day? Perhaps you are a Sunday-school teacher: Do you take the Scriptures as your guide, and use the language and follow the precepts of the Bible? Do you teach,

1 Corinthians 2

¹³ ...not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches?

If not, why not? If not, why do you call yourself a Christian, and profess to be a teacher of the Bible?

The Stone Rolled Away

Mark's narrative tells us that as the women went to the sepulcher,

Mark 16

³ They said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?

It was a very natural question, yet wholly unnecessary if

they had believed the words that Christ had repeatedly spoken to them before the crucifixion. He had told them that He should rise the third day, and when they reached the sepulcher,

⁴ ...they saw that the stone was rolled away,

—by the life power that was in His words. You say that it was done by an angel? Very true; but the angels...

Psalms 103

²⁰ ...that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word,

—move not only in response to that word, but by the power of it. The resurrection of Jesus shows the power that life has over death. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, spoke of the crucifixion of Christ,

Acts 2

²⁴ Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be held of it.

Why was it impossible? Because,

John 1

⁴ In Him was life,

—and the light of that life cannot be shut in by the power of darkness. Life, real life, conquers, it gains the victory over every foe.

The power of life—the power of the resurrection—may be seen every day by anybody who has eyes that are open. “The Open Grave” in Hanover, Germany, a view of which accompanies this article, exhibits it in a most striking manner.

About one hundred and fifty years ago a lady died and was buried in a churchyard in Hanover, and, doubtless by her order, the grave was made as secure as human ingenuity could make it. Heavy stones were piled round and upon it, and all

were fastened together by strong iron clamps. On the bottom stone is a sentence, of which the following is an exact translation:

“This grave, purchased for eternity, must never be opened.”

But the grave is open, nevertheless, and yet no man has ventured to lay hands on it. The seed of a tree was also buried, and the germ of life in it could not be shut in. It was not possible that it could be held by the grave stones. Silently it pushed its way out and still the tree, with its roots in the grave, is year by year pressing the stones farther apart. Life is coming from the grave.

Without any voice, the tree is preaching the power of the resurrection to the hundreds of visitors who view it.



Proof of Christ's Resurrection

What is the evidence that Christ did really rise from the grave? Someone answers that we have the testimony of those who saw Him after He had risen. Very true, and no testimony could be better.

Every effort made by the Jews to guard against the stealing of the body of Jesus,—the sealed rock and the Roman guards,—as well as the story that they circulated after the resurrection, only served to make more positively certain the fact of His resurrection. As a matter of history, no fact is better at-

tested.

But all this is not sufficient. We read that:

Acts 4

³³ With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus;

—and this they could do, because they had all seen Him. But we are called upon to be witnesses, as well as they, and it will not do for us merely to repeat their testimony. Surely the Lord will not be satisfied with any lower grade of testimony than is acceptable in an earthly court; and in court people must tell only that which they themselves know, and not what they have heard or read about the case.

We are in court, and the case is one of life and death; all turns on whether Jesus who was crucified is alive or not. You and I are questioned about the matter; we are under oath, and we must witness to the truth. You answer promptly,

“Yes; He is risen.”

“How do you know?” asks the judge.

“Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and Paul have testified”—

“Hold!” exclaims the judge; “those men are not now in the witness box; you are not to repeat their testimony; they can speak for themselves when they are called on; what can you tell us from personal knowledge?”

Would you say, as some have said,

“Of course I was not there, and I can’t say anything from personal knowledge, but I believe the evidence of those who say that they saw Him?”

Then you would be in an embarrassing situation indeed. Mind, it is not claimed that you do not do well to believe those who say that they saw Jesus after His resurrection; but it is a fact that if you are to convince others you must not give any second-hand testimony.

“What else can I do?” you ask.

Well, you may not be able to do anything else; but there are those who, in answer to the question how they know that Jesus has risen from the dead, can, answer promptly:

“He lives with me;”

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

That is evidence that must be accepted in any court; it cannot fail to carry conviction. The desire of the Spirit is that we may know...

Ephesians 1

¹⁹ The exceeding greatness of the power of God toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

That desire may be a reality with everybody. Your salvation depends upon that piece of knowledge, but, thank God, it is the easiest thing in the world to find out. So the question is asked,

“What do you know about the resurrection of Jesus?”

4. The Resurrection of Jesus (1898)

Present Truth, March 31, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, April 10

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

Mark 16:1-8

THE details of the record are of interest, but the central teaching of this lesson is found in the words of the “young man” (an angel, *Matthew* 28:5), who said:

Matthew 28

⁵ You seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified:

⁶ He is risen; He is not here.

Let us study once more the resurrection of Jesus and its meaning to us. It is not sufficient to know of the resurrection as an historical fact, to which we give our assent after weighing the evidence. There is abundant evidence to the truthfulness of the record, but we must know the resurrection in a deeper sense than this. It was as...

Luke 24

⁷ ...the Son of man,

1 Corinthians 15

⁴⁷ ...the second Man,

⁴⁵ ...the last Adam,

—that Jesus passed through all His experiences upon the earth, including His death and resurrection. When...

John 1

¹⁴ The Word was made flesh,

—Jesus, took the place of humanity as its representative, being...

Galatians 4 [RV]

⁴ ...born of a woman, born under the law,

⁵ That He might redeem them which were under the law.

Our acceptance of His work in our behalf is more than to believe that He passed through certain experiences; it is to enter into those experiences with Him.

- We do not simply believe that Jesus was crucified, but we believe on the crucified Jesus.
- We do not simply believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, but we believe on the risen Jesus.

And this faith consists in receiving Him as the crucified and risen Jesus, a real union with Him in the experience of death and resurrection. Let us then consider, from this standpoint, something of the fullness of the meaning of the resurrection.

The Source of All Hope

And first we will note that everything in the way of salvation depends upon the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15

¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.

Romans 4

²⁵ [He] was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

These Scriptures make it clear that our hope rests wholly in the resurrection. But a consideration of some other passages may enable us to enter more fully into the meaning of this teaching.

The curse, which was death, was upon man, and in taking his place, Jesus took the curse of death upon himself. We do not see man in the place of honor, where he was first put, as he has fallen through sin,

Hebrews 2

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for

every man.

But life for us depends not simply upon the fact that He bore the curse of death for us, but our hope centers in the fact that He was able to do this and still live.

Revelation 1 [RV]

¹⁷ Fear not; I am the first and the last:

¹⁸ And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades.

James 1

¹⁵ Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death,

—which is the curse, and so our sins caused the death of Christ,

1 Peter 2

²⁴ Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

But since...

²² [He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth,

—He was able to pay the penalty for our sins and pass through the grave. Being without sin, there was no sting in His death, and so God raised Him up,

Acts 2

²⁴ ...because it was not possible that He should be held of it.

Jesus himself said:

John 10

¹⁷ Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

¹⁸ No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

But this “power” grew out of the fact that He was free from sin, since sin is the only thing which can take life from anyone. Now our life depends upon His life.

Romans 5

¹⁰ We shall be saved by His life.

John 14

¹⁹ Because I live, you shall live also.

Therefore if death had conquered Him and the grave had held Him, death would still be a conqueror, and every tomb would be an eternal prison house; but:

Mark 16

⁴ When they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away,

—and the young man said unto them,

⁶ He is risen; He is not here.

Thus was the stone rolled away from the door of every tomb, and no grave can hold any member of the human family when is heard the voice of Him who has...

Revelation 1

¹⁸ ...the keys of death and of Hades.

1 Corinthians 15

²³ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

So plain is it that all our hope of life has its foundation in the grand truth that:

Mark 16

⁶ He is risen; He is not here.

Christ the Representative Man

Now we come to the representative character of the work of Christ for us, and our personal relation to His experiences.

We have already pointed out that it was as the second head of the human family, taking the place of him who had failed, that He lived and died. Now our acceptance of Him as a per-

sonal Saviour from sin involves the acceptance of all His experiences for us, and our union with Him in those experiences. Thus we read in the Scripture:

2 Corinthians [RV]

¹⁴ For the love of Christ constrains us: because we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all died.

Galatians 2 [RV]

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ.

Ephesians 2

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;)

⁶ And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

It thus appears that when Christ died, “all died,” because in His representative capacity He was the whole human family, and that when God raised Him from the dead, He “raised us up together,” for the same reason.

But all these benefits are only temporary, unless they are received through faith. It is by the cross, the death and resurrection of Christ, that all men live, whether saints or sinners, and so all are sharing in the benefits of His work now, and all will come forth from their graves because of the resurrection of Christ.

But it is only those who receive these benefits by a personal faith in Jesus as the One through whom they come, who will be able to retain them to all eternity.

Ephesians 1

³ God...has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,

—but we must acknowledge that these blessings are all in Christ and that they are received and retained only as we re-

ceive Him, else we shall not be able to keep that which God has given to us.

So it is with the resurrection. The curse, which is death, is upon all, and yet men live, because Christ bore the curse upon the cross, and...

Romans 6

⁹ ...being raised from the dead, dies no more.

But this brief period of life is granted simply as a time of probation, a time in which to accept by personal faith in a risen Redeemer the blessings which have been provided “in Him,” that so His work may avail for us to all eternity.

Romans 6 [RV]

⁴ We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have become united with the likeness of His death, we shall be also with the likeness of His resurrection;

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin;

⁷ For he that has died is justified from sin.

⁸ But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him;

⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him.

¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died unto sin once: but the life that He lives, He lives unto God.

¹¹ Even so reckon you also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

This is simply the experience of receiving Christ as a crucified and risen Saviour. It is a practical statement of what it means to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is to...

Philippians 3

¹⁰ ...know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the

fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

What It Means To Us

What then does the resurrection mean to us? It means, first of all, our acceptance of the death of Christ for us and our death in Him; and then it means His resurrection and our participation in His resurrection life, as a daily experience.

It means that, our interests have been transferred to the heavenly kingdom, and that we have been made to...

Ephesians 2

⁶ ...sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

And so we are exhorted:

Colossians 3

¹ If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Jesus sits on the right hand of God.

It means a victory over the world through our faith in His resurrection life:

1 John 5

⁴ For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

—and a final and complete victory over that last enemy which is death.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵² The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵⁴ ...then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?

⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So let the word be on our tongues, and the experience of the

life of it in our hearts,

“He is risen!”

5. The Stone Rolled Away

Present Truth, June 20, 1895

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

Mark 16:3

IT IS unbelief that bars the way to the good we many times would do, but leave undone. The two women who came to the sepulcher on the resurrection morning said,

Mark 16

³ Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?

They, like the rest of the disciples, had been blinded to the events that were then in process of fulfillment, and their unbelief saw a great stone in their path, barring their way to the Lord.

But the stone was not there; it had been rolled away by Divine power; and thus they found it when they arrived at the sepulcher.

What unbelief was then, it is now; it still sees a great barrier in the way. And thus it deludes and discourages those who allow it to work in their hearts.

Let us remember that what is seen by the natural mind in the Christian pathway, is not there. So if the way seems hopeless—filled with rocks and obstacles that we could not surmount—we may know that it is simply unbelief seeking to delude us. The eye of faith will show us what is there in truth. And with that eye see the stone before us rolled away.

6. Raised from the Dead

Present Truth, February 1, 1894

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

Matthew 28:7

Matthew 28

⁷ And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goes before you into Galilee; there shall you see Him: lo, I have told you.

THE miracle of the resurrection lies at the very foundation of the Christian's hope. There would be no hope for any man were it not for the resurrection of Christ. The Apostle Paul makes this point very clear in his epistle to the Corinthians. He writes:

1 Corinthians 15

³ I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

⁴ And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

¹² Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

¹³ But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen;

¹⁴ And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

¹⁷ ...you are yet in your sins.

¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

It would have accomplished nothing for us that Jesus Christ should have died for our sins and been buried, if the work had stopped there. With that alone to look to, we would only be

plunged deeper into the darkness and despair of our mortality. But the record does not end in the gloom of the sepulcher, but in the glory of triumph.

Romans 4

²⁵ [Christ] was delivered for our offenses, [but He] was raised again for our justification.

The resurrection was a most glorious demonstration, before all the universe, of the success of the plan of redemption. It was the crowning manifestation of the power of God in the flesh. It told Satan in unmistakable language that all his work must fail, and his kingdom come to an end. It was an unmistakable assurance of the power of God to put life and righteousness into one who was dead in sin. And what it was then, it is today.

Romans 1

⁴ [Jesus Christ was] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

In the same way do we become the sons of God. We are begotten again, Peter tells us,

1 Peter 1

³ ...unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

⁴ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever.

And Paul said,

Philippians 3

⁸ I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

¹⁰ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death;

¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

And he also prayed for us, that...

Ephesians 1

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know...

¹⁹ What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

In times past, before we believed the word of salvation, we walked...

Ephesians 2

² ...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

But now it is said to us,

¹ And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

⁴ [For] God who is rich in mercy, for His great love where-with He loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ (by grace you are saved);

⁶ And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

We can now say with Paul,

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Romans 6

⁴ We are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as

Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

And this resurrection from the dead is our assurance and the ground of our hope, because it is a triumphant demonstration of the power of God to give life and righteousness to one dead in trespasses and sins. Jesus Christ died as a sinner.

Isaiah 53

¹² He was numbered with the transgressors.

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ [God] made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Isaiah 53

⁵ He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Because our sin was put upon Him, He was cut off from the favor of God; and when upon the cross He cried out,

Matthew 27

⁴⁶ My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

—it was no fanciful utterance. God had forsaken Him. He had hidden His face from Him. In that last dreadful hour spent in Gethsemane, Christ passed without the pale of the mercy and favor of God; and it was this that caused His sufferings. He felt what the wicked will feel at the last day when they, because of sin, experience the wrath of God.

Christ went where men will never be compelled to go. We shall never have to experience the dreadful certainty that God has forsaken us. Christ stood in that place in order that we

might never have to go there. If we are ever there, it will be entirely our own work

Satan had the power of death.

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

And when Christ, as a sinner, passed into death, he hoped to be able to keep Him in his power. But his hopes were vain. God, by His glory, raised up Christ from the dead, and He came forth from the tomb a Conqueror, taking with Him the keys of death and hell.

Revelation 1

¹⁸ I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

That demonstrated the triumphant success of the plan of salvation,—that plan which is based on the power of God to give new life to the one who is dead in sins. The devil then knew that his work to defeat that plan had failed, and that his kingdom must come to an end.

And therefore God can judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ. For we read that:

Acts 17

³¹ He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained, whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead.

What He did in Christ He can do in all; for Christ was made a man like ourselves.

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful

high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

And therefore God can require all men to be righteous, and judge them by that standard.

Today, that word of power by which Christ was raised up from the dead, is sounding in the earth, and whosoever will hear and believe in it will know the power of His resurrection.

Ephesians 5

¹⁴ Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give you light.

John 5

²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on Him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

²⁵ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself.

²¹ As the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom He will.

7. And Peter

Present Truth, September 24, 1896

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

Mark 16:7

WHEN the women came to the sepulcher on that morning of the third day the angel reminded them that Christ had said He would rise again the third day, and told them to hasten to tell the disciples.

Mark's narrative adds two words, not mentioned by the other writers, which we know meant so much to one in that sorrowing company:

Mark 16

⁷ Go your way, tell His disciples, and Peter.

Poor Peter had denied his Lord, and then knowing his awful sin, and remembering Christ's words, that before the hour of cock-crowing he would deny Him thrice, his heart must have well-nigh broken as the Lord turned upon him that last look of love and sorrow.

It must have been the love in the look that kept any heart at all in him; and now on the morning of the third day, with no recollection of Christ's words regarding the rising again from the dead, with only the leaden sorrow of this sin weighing upon his soul, he must have wept at the dawning of another day of waking and reflection.

But then came the word that the angel spoke, "Tell His disciples, and Peter." The Lord knew Peter's sorrow; and how that special personal message must have thrilled the burdened heart! It is not to be wondered at, that the fervency of Peter's desire to see Jesus and fall at His feet, was rewarded by an interview that same day.

We are told that the Lord had appeared to Peter before He

appeared to all together.¹⁵⁰ All assembled were to see Him that day that they might be witnesses of the fact that He rose the third day according to the Scriptures; but the tender compassion of the Lord for the erring, even for the one weakly denying Him with cursing, were shown for the encouragement of the repentant sinner in all time by that special message and the special interview.

It was the look of the Lord, too, that saved Peter in the midst of his sin, and gave him repentance and contrition of heart. Jesus had told him that Satan was trying to get him into his power, that he might sift him as wheat. He said:

Luke 22

³¹ But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.

It was the prayer of Christ that saved Peter from utter shipwreck of faith. We may well think it a blessed thing to have the prayers of such a One, and long for such a promise as that for ourselves. We have it.

John 17

²⁰ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

Jesus prays for every believer.

Romans 8

²⁶ The Spirit itself makes intercession.

God longs to help and to save. Peter's awful sin could not baffle the love of God which brought him to repentance and to the feet of Christ, more humble, less self-reliant.

That love is drawing every sinner today. Oh, that God's goodness might yet lead to repentance the multitudes who are refusing to be drawn, and still continue to do despite to the Spirit of Grace.

¹⁵⁰ **Luke 24** ³⁴ The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon.

1 Corinthians 15 ⁵ And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

8. The Resurrection of Christ

Present Truth, May 4, 1893

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

Matthew 28:11-14

TAKEN as a simple matter of history, there is nothing better attested than the fact of the resurrection of Christ. It was well known to all the people who lived at that time, and was a matter of common report.

When the apostles spoke to the Jews, they talked of the resurrection of Jesus as something that did not need to be proved, but as that of which everybody was well informed.

When Paul stood before Festus and King Agrippa, and spoke of the resurrection of Christ, Festus tried to make light of the matter, but the apostle replied that he was not mad, but spoke forth the words of truth and soberness, and then added:

Acts 26

²⁶ For the king knows of these things, before whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

The fact is that the Jews never disbelieved that Jesus had risen from the dead after the crucifixion. This is shown by their action after the resurrection. An angel had come down from heaven, and had rolled the stone away from the sepulchre. Before the dazzling light of his countenance, the guards had fallen to the earth as dead men. Then Jesus came forth, and met His disciples, who went to tell the rest of the brethren.

Matthew 28

¹¹ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

¹² And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money to the soldiers,

¹³ Saying, Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.

¹⁴ And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

Who that knew anything about Roman discipline would ever believe such a story as that? What Roman soldier would ever dare acknowledge that he had slept on guard, if it were really so? The story was absurd, on the face of it; for although in spite of the sure death that always follows detection, a single soldier sometimes sleeps on guard, it is not possible that an entire guard should fall asleep at the same time.

But the story which the Roman guard was bribed to tell was its own best refutation. For the very fact that they were not put to death, although they told that they had slept while on guard, and had allowed their charge to be stolen from them, is evidence that nobody really believed the story. The very means used to discredit the resurrection, established the truth of it.

Importance of the Resurrection

To bear witness of the resurrection of Christ was the one work of the apostles and their co-workers. This appears more fully than anywhere else in the account of Paul's case, which Festus gave to Agrippa. After telling about the desire of the Jews to have judgment against Paul, and of his own demand that they appear against him in a regular manner, he said that when the accusers came,

Acts 25

¹⁸ They brought none accusation of such things as I supposed;

¹⁹ But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

That was the sum of the whole matter. The Jews said that Jesus was dead, and Paul affirmed that He was alive. To the

mind of the heathen ruler it seemed a most foolish, trifling controversy. What difference did it make to him or to anybody else, whether Jesus were alive or dead?

Ah, the heathen ruler did not know that this simple question was the greatest thing in the world; that on it hung everything, even the destiny of the whole world. For as the apostles and disciples preached, they did not speak of the resurrection of Jesus as a mere fact of history, but they dwelt upon the results of that event. That which angered the rulers of the Jews was that they...

Acts 4

² ...preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

Without the resurrection of Jesus there could be no life for man. The Apostle Paul puts the matter thus:

1 Corinthians 15

¹² Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

¹³ Now if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen;

¹⁴ And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

¹⁵ Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ; whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

¹⁶ For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.

¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

²¹ For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

All our hope comes from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So the Apostle Peter blesses God that:

1 Peter 1

³ [He has] begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Notice that in the discourse of Paul concerning the resurrection he says not only that if Christ be not risen those who have fallen asleep in Him are perished, but that “you are yet in your sins.” The resurrection of Jesus assures the resurrection of men from the dead, only because it brings the forgiveness of sins. The hope of the resurrection is simply the hope that comes from righteousness received through faith in Christ,

Romans 4

²⁵ Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

The Apostle Peter connects the “lively hope” to which God has begotten us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, with the fact that:

1 Peter 1

⁵ We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

The Power of the Resurrection

The Apostle Paul’s earnest desire was to...

Philippians 3

⁸ ...win Christ,

⁹ And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith;

¹⁰ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

And in His prayer for us he desired...

Ephesians 1

¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

The power of Christ is the power of the resurrection. Paul declares that the Gospel of God is...

Romans 1

³ Concerning His Son Jesus Christ, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

⁴ And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

It was by the Spirit that Christ was quickened, or made alive:

1 Peter 3

¹⁸ For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

And the Spirit has the power of giving life, because it is the Spirit of holiness.

Romans 8

¹⁰ And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Life and righteousness are identical, as we learn from:

Romans 8

⁶ To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

And also from:

Galatians 3

²¹ If there had been a law given which could have *given life*, verily *righteousness* would should have been by the law.

The Spirit of God, therefore, gives life to the dead, because it gives righteousness to sinners. In order to see that this is what is to be learned from the resurrection of Christ, read again the quotation from the 1st chapter of *Ephesians*, and then follow on with the 2nd chapter:

Ephesians 2

¹ And you has He quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins;

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ (by grace are you saved;)

⁶ And has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Therefore we know the power of the resurrection of Christ only by experiencing the same power in the forgiveness of sins, and in overcoming sin. Thus we share even now in the resurrection of Christ, and that is the assurance of the future resurrection at His coming.

Read also the same thing in the *Epistle to the Colossians*:

Colossians 2

¹⁰ You are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power:

¹¹ In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

¹² Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation [working] of

God, who has raised Him from the dead.

¹³ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened [made alive] together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

All tell the same thing: the forgiveness of sins comes by the resurrection of Christ, not as a historical event that took place eighteen hundred years ago, but as a present thing, which we are to experience day by day with Him.

Thus we may see how the resurrection of Christ is to be the one theme of Christian preaching now as well as in the days of the apostles. We are to be reminded of it, not by the formal observance of a day once a year, which has never been commanded, but by going through the process daily.

Witnesses of the Resurrection

This shows us how we, as well as the apostles, may be witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. For we are to be witnesses as well as they.

A witness is one who tells what he knows, if he is a true witness. Otherwise his testimony is good for nothing. He is not to bear witness to what has been told him, but to that of which he himself is personally assured, by his own experience.

If only one man knows a certain thing from his own personal knowledge, and he tells a dozen other men, and the whole thirteen then go into court and testify to that fact, there are not thirteen witnesses, but only one. The one man has simply repeated his testimony thirteen times. The case is no stronger for the testimony of the twelve men who repeated what had been told them. They might better have held their peace.

So it is with the witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. He who tells it because somebody else has told him, is not a witness, and might better say nothing about it. If pressed closely,

all that he can say is that somebody told him so.

But is it possible for anybody in these days to be able to give testimony concerning the resurrection of Christ, of the same nature as testimony that is required in earthly courts? Most certainly.

Can it be thought that God requires less positiveness in His witnesses than earthly judges in those who appear before them? Not by any means.

How can they give such testimony? Simply by knowing Christ, and the power of His resurrection. The question is,

“Does Jesus live, or is He yet dead?”

All know that He died: may we know that He is alive again? Most assuredly. The experience of the Apostle Paul may be that of every one. The Jews said that Christ was dead, and Paul affirmed that He was alive. They are brought before the court on that point. How does Paul demonstrate that Christ is now alive? Thus:

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

That is sufficient. That is as good testimony as could be given in any court. A man is said to be dead. I say he is alive. The question is,

“How do you know?”

And I reply,

“He lives at my house, and is my constant companion.”

That is the evidence today to the world, that Christ is risen from the dead. On this testimony alone can unbelievers be convinced.

The Christian's hope, therefore, is seen to be a certainty,

and not a doubtful thing. If they know that Christ is risen, they know just as well that they too will be raised from the dead. Thus Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

The Gospel makes known Christ as the risen Saviour, who is alive for evermore. His life is manifested in the mortal flesh of those who believe on Him. They pass from death unto life with Him.

Nevertheless they are mortal. To sleep in the grave is their sure lot, unless prevented by the coming of the Lord. But as they live by faith, and not by sight, they hold fast their faith. So, whether waking or sleeping, their life is hid with Christ in God.

The Spirit of God which is given them is their life, and their assurance of immortality. The life is theirs now, but the immortality will be bestowed only at the coming of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first;

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air;

and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

9. Resurrection

Present Truth, August 7, 1902

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

Matthew 28:13

FANCY a British soldier, and not one only, but a company of them, excusing themselves for allowing a prisoner to escape, whom they had been detailed to guard, with strict orders to keep him, by saying that he was assisted to escape by friends of his who came while they were asleep!

And, more incredible still, fancy the military authorities saying,

“Very well; if you were asleep, of course you are not to blame,”

—and allowing the matter to rest there! It is impossible to imagine such a thing; yet that is all the “proof” that was ever put forth against the resurrection of Jesus.

The Roman guard told how He came forth from the grave which they had received strict orders to guard. Just as though they had not been there, and the chief priest bribed them to say:

Matthew 28

¹³ His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.

And that was the story they spread. Rome’s discipline was iron in its cruelty and relentlessness, and in every nation death has been the penalty for soldiers who slept on guard; yet those soldiers received not even a reprimand. That shows that the Roman authorities knew that it was a lie.

No soldier would ever have dared tell such a story if he had not known that it would not be believed. Thus Pagan Rome bore its testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, and so to the justness of His claim to be the Messiah, the Saviour of the

world.

10. Why Do You Weep?

Present Truth, April 4, 1901

Original title: Why Weepest Thou?

Timeline: VIII-1 (The Resurrection)

John 20:11-18

THE women had been to the sepulcher very early in the morning, and had found it open, and Mary Magdalene had run to tell Peter and John, and, meeting them, had said,

John 20

² They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him.

Then the two apostles ran in haste to the grave, and went in, Peter first, and then John. John says of himself that he went in also, and he...

⁸ ...saw, and believed.

But the words that immediately follow, namely,

⁹ For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead,

—plainly indicate that what he believed was what Mary had said, that they had taken the Lord away, and not that He had risen. This is also evident from the fact that the eleven had not believed the two who returned from Emmaus, and Jesus, when He came in, reproved them for their hardness of heart.

Peter and John, having looked round,

¹⁰ ...went away again into their own home;

¹¹ But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher;

¹² And saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, whom the body of Jesus had lain.

¹³ And they say unto her, Woman, why do you weep? She said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.

¹⁴ And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ Jesus said unto her, Woman, why do you weep? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said unto Him, Sir, if you have borne Him hence, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.

¹⁶ Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and said unto Him, Rabboni.

We have in this far more than a simple story of loving loyalty and tender-hearted devotion. It is a lesson of admonition and comfort to all that mourn. All sorrow is caused by absence from the Lord, or rather, by inability on account of sin and unbelief, to recognize His presence; for:

Psalm 16

¹¹ ...in His presence is fullness of joy.

He makes all who see Him exceeding glad with His countenance.

Psalm 21

⁶ For You have made him most blessed for ever: You have made him exceeding glad with your countenance.

Too often we are perversely content to be sad, and many know not the cause of their sadness; but there are many who, like Mary, know that the cause all their grief is that they have lost the Lord. Yet even while they wander in doubt and darkness, vainly seeking Him, He is not far from them.

Be sure that He who came to seek and to save the lost, will surely manifest himself to every one who is seeking Him. There are souls who are constantly mourning their separation from the Lord, whose mouth might be filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing, if they would but put forth the hand of faith; for they would then find Jesus.

Angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for those who shall be heirs of salvation. So here were angels

ready to minister comfort to the mourners. The other disciples, in their haste, missed the experience that Mary had. They did not see the angels, nor the Lord. It is well to wait on the Lord.

Habakkuk 2

³ If the vision tarry, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not tarry.

Don't be in too big a hurry, when you do not at once see the Lord where you look for Him. He is a God that hides himself; but He hides himself only that He may be found.

Jesus came so quickly after His messengers that they had no occasion to speak words of comfort to the sorrowing woman. He addressed her the same as they had,

John 20

¹⁵ Woman, why do you weep?

Think of the significance of this question twice repeated. Why did she weep? It was because the grave was empty. But that ought to have caused her to rejoice; for it indicated that Jesus had opened the doors of death and the grave, and that He held the key.

Why did she weep? Because as yet she knew not the Scripture, that Jesus must—mark that word “must”—rise from the dead. There was no real need for her to weep. Indeed, she was weeping for that which was the most joyful thing that has occurred since God laid the foundation of the earth,

Job 38

⁷ When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

And all her weeping was because she did not know the Scripture; and the only reason why she did not know it, was that she did not believe it.

“Why do you weep?” Is it because of your sins? Then the

message from God is that your iniquity is pardoned.

Isaiah 40

¹ Comfort you, comfort you my people, says your God.

² Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Isaiah 44

²² I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and as a cloud, your sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed you,

—says the Lord. He gives...

Isaiah 61

³ ...the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that [people] may be called trees of righteousness.

In our deepest trials, we may be sure that Jesus is nearest. When it seems as though we had lost all that is worth having, then we may be assured that right by our side are treasures far more precious than we have ever dreamed of.

Mary was mourning for a man whom she thought to be dead, and she found a living Saviour, Christ the Lord. He has come...

Isaiah 61

² ...to comfort all that mourn,

—and,

2 Corinthians 1

⁴ [He] comforts us in all our tribulation.

No matter how great the trouble, in Him there is peace, and He is with us always, even to the end of the world.¹⁵¹ There is no need for anybody to weep other tears than those of joy.

¹⁵¹ **Matthew 28** ²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

It is not a sin to weep, but one should know truly why he weeps. Tears may flow because of sin, and much more at the thought of God's goodness and tender mercy; but these very tears, if our eyes are open, contain the assurance of salvation, for the sunlight of God's love falls on them and makes the bow of promise.

There is no situation so desperate but that the very trouble itself affords hope, if we but recognize the Lord in it. "Why do you weep?" Is it because you have allowed your eyes to remain closed to the...

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...exceeding great and precious promises?

Then let the tears swing open the gates, that...

Ephesians 1

¹⁸ ...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, you may know...the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

One word was sufficient to dry Mary's tears, and to bring her in rapture at the feet of Jesus. It was her name, uttered as only Jesus could speak it. He said "Mary," and she at once greeted Him as her Divine Master, and not the gardener, as she had supposed.

Would you like to have the same experience? It is yours already. He says to you,

Isaiah 43

¹ Fear not; for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine.

Blessed assurance! He stands by the open grave, calling

each child of Adam by name, saying, “I have redeemed you.” How can we longer continue weeping? Weep, if you will, but be sure you know why. Are you weeping for sadness, or for joy? Why do you weep?

Listen to the voice that singles you out from all the multitudes of earth, no matter how obscure your station, and gives to you personally the assurance of acceptance, and hail Him as your Master for ever.

11. A Walk with Jesus

Present Truth, April 11, 1901

Timeline: VIII-2 (The Walk to Emmaus)

Luke 24:13-35

IT WAS afternoon of the day on which Jesus rose from the grave, and two of the disciples, perplexed and wearied by the events that had taken place, and the reports that they had heard, started to walk from Jerusalem to their old home about eight miles distant. They had followed Jesus till His crucifixion, and had remained in Jerusalem over the Sabbath; but now that their hopes that He would redeem Israel were all shattered, they were sorrowfully about to go back to their former employment.

It is true that they had heard the testimony of the women who went to the sepulcher in the morning and found it open, and occupied, not by the dead body of Jesus, but by the two living angels, who said that Christ was risen; but they had not seen Jesus themselves, and, sad and disheartened, they were leaving the place which they had thought, a few days before, would be the scene of their glorious triumph over the hated Romans.

Ah, they did not know that the triumph, not over the Romans, but over the enemies of all mankind, had been achieved, and that Jesus had spoiled principalities and powers, and had set free a multitude of captives.

All this disappointment and sorrow was due to unbelief. They were not worse than other men, and would doubtless have indignantly repudiated the charge that they did not believe the Bible; yet they were really infidels. They said to the stranger who joined them, to whom they told the subject of their mournful conversation,

Luke 24

²¹ Today is the third day since these things were done.

Jesus had told them more than once that He should be crucified, and that He should rise again the third day, and their own words ought to have reminded them of His, and to have convinced them that, since everything else had taken place just as He had foretold, He must be risen, according to the promise. But they were too stunned to grasp anything.

Note the words of Jesus to them, after they had finished the story of their hopes and disappointment:

Luke 24 [RV, margin]

²⁵ O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe, after all that the prophets have spoken!

They were not reprov'd because they believed a part only, but not all, that the prophets had spoken, but because after all that the prophets had said of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, they did not believe. The words of the prophets were plain; we can see clearly enough that they all bear witness...

Acts 10

⁴³ ...that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.

—but they had a wrong idea so firmly fixed in their minds that the plainest words of truth meant nothing to them, or else seemed to them to confirm their views. Such is the power of prejudice.

They could say in defense of their erroneous ideas, “We have been taught” that the prophecies refer to temporal dominion, just as many people nowadays think that the words, “I have been taught so” are sufficient reason for any belief or unbelief. But no matter what a man has been taught, he has no business to believe any teaching that is contrary to the plain Word of God; and each one to whom God has given a mind, ought to know, when teaching is according to the Word, and when it is not.

Jesus the Silent Listener

Luke 24

¹⁵ It came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

¹⁶ But their eyes were held that they should not know Him.

But He was with them, listening to their conversation, before they saw Him. Did two men ever walk along together, that Jesus was not present with them, though invisible? We know that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them (*Matthew 18:20*); but:

Acts 17

²⁷ He is not far from every one of us.

There is no conversation, whether by the way or in the house, that He does not hear. He knows even the thoughts of the man who is alone.

Psalms 139

¹ O Lord, You have searched me, and known me.

² You know my downsitting and my uprising, You understand my thought afar off.

³ You compass my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, You know it altogether.

Isaiah 41

¹⁰ Fear not; for I am with you.

—Jesus says. When we see Him not, He is as really present as though we could see Him. If He wished, He could disclose himself to our sight any minute. This is a lesson for all sad and discouraged souls. He did not ask what those two men were talking about because He did not know, but to draw them out to talk with Him, so that He might comfort them.

Would you, ever be discouraged if you knew that Jesus was by your side? Then why do you ever become disheartened?

He is there with words to warm your heart. What matter if He does begin by telling you that you are a fool? Doubt is this world's wisdom, and it is foolishness with God; and before God can lift us up He must cast us down.

You have no more cause for discouragement than those two men had, and they had none at all; for the things over which they were sorrowing were their everlasting joy and salvation. They had heard of the resurrection, but did not believe in it; therefore they were sad. If they had believed that Jesus was alive, they would have been glad.

Well, we have also heard that Jesus is risen; but if we are sad and despondent, we show that we do not believe it.

Hebrews 7

²⁵ He ever lives,

—and that one fact is cause for continual rejoicing.

What if Jesus had made himself known to the two disciples at first, and had then proceeded to unfold the Scriptures to them? Do you suppose they would have learned as much as they did? Certainly they would not. They would have been too excited to listen.

He could have convinced them immediately, by making himself known; He could have shown them His hands and feet; but that would not have been best for them. He gave them the Word, and let that convince them. Then they were not only themselves fortified against any possible doubt, but they had the means of making others know the truth as well as they did; and Jesus reveals truth to us, not for our own sake merely, but for others.

The Word is Spirit and Life

Christ is the Word, and the words which come to us in written form, yet spoken directly to us, convey to us the life, the personality, of the Lord. Therefore the disciples who saw

Jesus in the flesh had no advantage over us. He says,

John 6

⁶³ The flesh profits nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.

We often wish that we could have Jesus on this earth, and perhaps we wish that we had the privilege now of going to Him personally, and asking Him to clear up some perplexity. But we can go to Him just as really as Peter, James, and John ever could; and if we could see Him we should not learn any more or believe any quicker. In the words of inspiration we have the strongest possible ground for our faith.

New things are continually breaking forth from God's Word.

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.

The morning, the end of the world's night, is near at hand:

Romans 13

¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand.

Therefore the light is shining brighter and brighter. Never in the history of the world have such floods of light streamed upon the world as now; and still there is more to follow. Now, as never before, do the words of Jesus apply:

Matthew 13

¹⁶ Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

¹⁷ For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.

Known in Breaking Bread

It was in the breaking of bread that Jesus was made known

to the two disciples. That is where everybody ought to be able to discern His body.

1 Corinthians 11

²⁴ And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

²⁹ For He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

His Word—His own presence—is with us, and He says:

Proverbs 6

²² When you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you wake, it shall talk with you.

He walks with us by the way, and, comes in to sup with us. There is not a meal at which He is not present, for the bread that we eat bears the sign of the cross. In it we have His broken body.

It may be that when Jesus took up the loaf that evening at Emmaus, the two disciples for the first time noticed the wounds in His hands; but we, as well as they, may discern the wounds of Christ, at every meal to which we sit down, and we may find healing in them.

Study the Word, having first received the anointing, that you may see,¹⁵² and then you will be able to go to your friends with burning, rejoicing hearts, and tell them what things were done in the way, and how the Lord was known of you in breaking of bread.

Be known to us in breaking bread,
But do not then depart;
Saviour, abide with us, and spread

¹⁵² **Revelation 3** ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see.

Your table in our heart.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ James Montgomery (1771-1854), Hymn: *Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread*.

12. By the Way

Present Truth, January 17, 1895

Timeline: VIII-2 (The Walk to Emmaus)

Luke 24:32

Luke 24

³² Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?

SO SAID the two disciples after they had traveled to Emmaus in company with the unknown Saviour. That interview “by the way” had been to them a blessed and joyful experience.

But is not the same Saviour able and willing to commune with us by the way? Was not that incident recorded for our instruction and our comfort? Yes; if we but will, we may converse with Him “by the way.”

No pressure of daily duties can be so great as to shut us away from Him, or banish from our minds His words. The journey to Emmaus will be made all the more quickly and easily for His companionship. The two disciples were not worried and perplexed after they met Jesus, and He began to open to them the Scriptures. They were not fatigued when they reached Emmaus, for they...

³³ ...rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem,

—a journey of threescore furlongs.¹⁵⁴ Little do we know what we rob ourselves of when we exclude ourselves from the company of Jesus “by the way.”

¹⁵⁴ 60 furlongs = 7.5 miles.

13. The Anointing Which Teaches All Things

Present Truth, April 11, 1901

Timeline: VIII-2 (The Walk to Emmaus)

Luke 24:27

THE reason why the disciples mourned and wept and were sad after the crucifixion of Jesus is given in:

John 20

⁹ For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

This evidently does not mean that they were not familiar with the words of that Scripture, for:

Acts 13

²⁷ The voices of the prophets [were] read in their synagogue every Sabbath day.

And the adored writings were the chief study of every Jew. Yet notwithstanding this, “they knew not the Scripture.” On the road to Emmaus,

Luke 24

²⁷ [Jesus] expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Their hearts burned within them, and their sorrow gave place to joy as He opened to them the Scriptures. But not yet did they truly know the Scriptures. They were still in the condition of the Ethiopian eunuch. In response to Philip’s question,

Acts 8

³⁰ Do you understand what you read?

—he said,

³¹ How can I, except some man should guide me?

One has no need of a guide in territory that one knows. A deeper and richer experience was theirs a little later, when Je-

sus...

Luke 24

⁴⁵ ...opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.

No further need then that any should guide them; for:

1 John 2

²⁷ The anointing which you have received of Him abides in you: and you need not that any man teach you: but the same anointing teaches you of all things.

²⁰ You have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.

And it is only thus that anything can be really known. This anointing, the divine enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Spirit of Truth to guide into all truth, is for every believer, for John wrote these words to the whole church, and Paul prayed that all might receive...

Ephesians 1

¹⁷ ...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Acts 19

² Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?

Do you know the Scriptures?

Luke 11

¹³ If you then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

14. The Power to Forgive

Present Truth, November 10, 1898

Timeline: VIII-3 (First Appearance in the Upper Room)

John 20:19-23

A READER of the *Present Truth* asks for an explanation of *John* 20:33, saying,

I know God alone has power to forgive sins, but I have been asked the question, and to take the verse as it reads it seems as though Christ gave His disciples that power.

Let us first read the verse and its connection. Jesus had appeared to His disciples as they were gathered together, and said,

John 20

¹⁹ Peace be unto you.

²¹ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father has sent me, even so send I you.

²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive the Holy Ghost;

²³ Whose soever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins you retain, they are retained.

God's Word Absolutely True

One thing must be settled first of all, and that is, that we must take this verse, as every other thing that the Lord said, just as it reads. When once we know that we have the words of the Lord just as He spoke them, that is, that we have them accurately translated, then we have nothing to do but to believe them without any alteration or amendment or any fitting of them to some preconceived ideas.

In this case there cannot be the slightest doubt that our version gives the correct rendering of the words of Jesus to His disciples. Therefore we must accept the statement that Christ gave His disciples power to forgive sins. Why should we wish

to believe otherwise? The fact that some people pervert the good gifts of God, should not hinder us from receiving them with gladness.

Men Sent in Christ's Stead

John 20

²¹ As my Father has sent me, even so send I you.

Then those whom Christ sends are commissioned to do the same work which He did here on the earth. And whom does Christ send? He sends every one who hears and accepts His gracious invitation,

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me.

Revelation 22

¹⁷ Let Him that hears say, Come.

This is unconsciously admitted by every Christian, even though he might think it almost if not quite presumption to think that he is sent in Christ's place; for there is no one who does not find comfort in the assurance,

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

But this assurance is in connection with the charge,

¹⁹ Go you, therefore.

Every believer is commissioned to bring sinners to God, by the power of Christ, who is with him for that purpose. But there is plainer evidence still, that God has bestowed upon mortal men the high privilege of being:

2 Corinthians 6

¹ ...workers together with Him.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

This includes every one who is in Christ. It is not limited to the eleven who saw Jesus in the flesh. Whoever is in Christ, is a new creature. With such ones,

¹⁷ ...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

One who is in Christ is not the same person that he was before; he is another man.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation.

To whom has God given “the ministry of reconciliation”? Read the text, and see. It is to those whom he has reconciled to himself. Every one who is in Christ is a new creature, is reconciled to God, and has received the ministry of reconciliation. His life work is to induce others to be reconciled to God.

All Things are of God

But how are we to do this? We are not sufficient for such a work. Of course we are not; but we must remember that when we are in Christ,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁸ All things are of God.

Even Jesus said,

John 5

³⁰ I can of my own self do nothing.

John 14

¹⁰ But the Father which dwells in me, He does the works.

This ministry of reconciliation is on this wise:

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them.

With Christ all things were of God. It was God in Him who was reconciling the world. And the same God...

¹⁹ ...has put in us the word of reconciliation. [margin]

What follows?

²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us; we pray in Christ's stead, Be reconciled to God.

This is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. How few appreciate it. So many professed Christians are content with the thought that Jesus can save them, not realizing that He has sent them to be salvation to others.

John 3

³¹ He whom God has sent, speaks the word of God; for God gives not the Spirit by measure.

God puts the word of reconciliation into him, and he cannot but speak it. But when the word of Christ dwells in men richly, it must necessarily have the same effect that it had in Christ. That is just why God puts it into us. Now read an example of the power of the Word.

An Example of the Power

Matthew 9

² And, behold, they brought unto Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy: Son, be of good cheer; your sins be forgiven you.

³ And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

⁴ And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think you evil in your hearts?

⁵ For whether is easier, to say, Your sins be forgiven you; or to say, Arise, and walk?

⁶ But that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, (then said He to the sick of the palsy),

Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house.

⁷ And he arose, and departed to his house.

⁸ But when the multitude saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

The word that heals is the word that forgives. The power to work miracles is the power that forgives sins. This is the word and the power of God alone, but He has committed it to men. He has put into men the word and ministry of reconciliation. But,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁸ All things are of God.

If this is not remembered and acknowledged, there is nothing at all. Jesus said,

John 14

²⁴ The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

He was here on earth as we are, in order that we might be here on earth as He is. Leaving himself and His own glory entirely out of the account, He spoke only the words of God, and the result was mighty works. That same word is given to us, if we will but accept it, with the consequences which follow.

The Power Given to Men

Note that Jesus calls himself "the Son of man." He is the Son of God, but it was not under that title that He declared His authority to heal and to forgive.

Matthew 9

⁶ The Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins.

So in *John* 5:27, God has given the Son authority to execute judgment,

John 5

²⁷ ...because He is the Son of man.

Strange, isn't it? If we had written that, we would have said that He has authority to execute judgment because He is the *Son of God*, wouldn't we? But no; it is because He is the *Son of man*. Jesus was here on earth as man,

Acts 2

²² ...a Man approved of God,

–the representative Man; and when the people saw the power that was in Him,

Matthew 9

⁸ ...they...glorified God, who had given such power unto men.

The salvation of God,

Hebrews 2

³ ...at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him;

⁴ God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will.

⁵ For unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

⁶ But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that You are mindful of him? or the son of man, that You visit him?

⁷ You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of your hands;

⁸ You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.

Man's Place in God's Plan

God has given a work to men, that is not given to angels, which excel in strength. That work is the preaching of the Gospel. Why is it given to men instead of to angels, who are so much wiser and stronger? Because,

Hebrews 2

⁵ ...unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come.

“The world to come” is the new earth, which was in the beginning, and over which God gave man dominion.¹⁵⁵ But now we do not see all things put under man, as in the beginning, because man has sinned, and lost the crown of glory, and so the dominion. Nevertheless,

Ecclesiastes 3

¹⁴ Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever.

God having given the earth to man, will never take it away from him. But man has lost the power to rule the world, simply because he lost the power to rule himself. He rejected the word of the Lord. So we see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels, that is, made man, and as man we see Him,

Hebrews 2

⁹ ...crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

He has by His life and death won the right to the dominion of the earth, and is now exalted,

Ephesians 1

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

But all who believe are raised with Him to the same posi-

¹⁵⁵ **Genesis 1** ²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

tion.

Ephesians 2

¹ And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;)

⁶ And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

So then we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. All that He has is ours. He has gone on before us to the capital of our common heritage, leaving us here for a season to continue the work which He begun; but He is still with us with all His power, by the Spirit, in order that the work may be done as He did it.

A Priceless Treasure in Worthless Vessel

True as the world was in the beginning given to man to rule, to man is entrusted the work of bringing it back into its first condition. The word which God puts into the mouths of them that trust Him is the word that is to...

Isaiah 51

¹⁶ ...plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, You are my people.

But,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁸ All things are of God.

Hebrews 5

⁴ No man takes this honor to himself.

2 Corinthians 4

⁷ We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men.

It is not to a priestly class that this work is given, but to all believers, for all true believers are priests of God.

1 Peter 2

⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

No man can at will declare the forgiveness of sins, any more than he can at will perform miracles. But to every contrite soul, to every one who is mourning because of his sins, God has commissioned us to say,

“Your sins be forgiven you.”

In order, however, for one to say this, he must himself know to the full the power of forgiveness. He must know from experience that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And whenever any man assumes any power as belonging to himself, or has a spirit of exaltation or boasting because of his supposed power, the word is not in him.

John 5

³⁰ I can of my own self do nothing.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁸ All things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

What a glorious calling is ours in Christ Jesus! Think of it! To be taken into partnership with the God of heaven, who himself supplies all the capital and does all the work! What an

“unspeakable gift!” *2 Corinthians* 9:15. Truly,

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him.

But, thanks be to His name,

¹⁰ He has revealed them unto us by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 7

¹ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

15. How to Understand the Scriptures

Present Truth, May 9, 1901

Timeline: VIII-3 (First Appearance in the Upper Room)

Luke 24:44-45

HOW to understand the Scriptures: not in what sense we should take them; not in what light we should regard them; but how we may arrive at a perfect understanding of them. The matter is set forth in few words in *Luke 24:45*.

Jesus had appeared to His disciples, who could scarcely believe that He who had brought others from the grave could himself rise from the dead.

Luke 24

⁴⁴ And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

⁴⁵ Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.

John 3

²⁷ A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.

Knowledge of Truth is for All

But since...

1 Timothy 2

⁴ [God] wills that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth,

—it is possible for every one to receive a perfect knowledge of God's Word, which is the truth. And the acquirement of this knowledge does not at all depend on one's education or strength of intellect, for the things concerning Christ are...

Matthew 11

²⁵ ...hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto

babes.

Proverbs 2

⁶ The Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

To whom does the Lord give wisdom?

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

It is given to every one who lacks it, and who asks for it. There is no partiality with God, and He gives nobody a monopoly of wisdom or of any branch of knowledge. But someone will say,

“I have asked for wisdom, and yet I have not obtained it.”

Now be careful not to charge God with falsehood. The Lord says:

Matthew 7

⁷ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

⁸ For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.

If you have not received wisdom, then as surely as God is the God of truth you have not yet asked for it. Remember that there is such a thing as asking amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts:

James 4

³ You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.

And in that case we are told that we shall not receive. This is no contradiction of the statement that every one that asks receives; for he who asks amiss, really does not ask at all. Whoever asks for a thing different from what God has promised, or for the purpose of using it in a way that God has

not designed, has not asked for that which God has promised.

Wisdom is Righteousness

Many unconsciously ask amiss, not knowing what wisdom really is. We have seen that the Lord gives wisdom, and that a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven; then in order to ask to some purpose we need only to know that:

James 3

¹⁷ The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

To ask for wisdom, then, is to ask for peace, purity, gentleness, goodness.

Job 28

²⁸ The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Christ opened the minds of the disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures. Thus it reads in the more correct rendering of the *Revision*. The difficulty did not lie in the Scriptures, but in the minds of the disciples, and so it is today. It is for this reason that we have this exhortation:

Romans 12

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

It all consists in getting a new mind, the mind of Christ, and this mind becomes operative in us as soon as we yield our bodies a living sacrifice to God. When we are willing that the mind that was in Christ shall be in us, and that this mind shall control the flesh, crucifying it, and keeping all its passions

dead, then floods of light will pour in upon us from the Holy Scriptures.

The trouble is that we deceive ourselves so willingly. We like to persuade ourselves that we have yielded all except one or two pet sins; but the ship is not loose from her moorings until the last cable has been let go.

1 Corinthians 1

²⁴ Christ [is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God,

and

³⁰ [He] of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

But He is meek and lowly in heart; He is righteousness; therefore no one need hope to understand the Scriptures, until he is perfectly willing that everything that the Bible reproves shall be given up and taken away, and that all the righteousness which the Bible commands shall be received into the life.

When one comes to that frame of mind, then his darkness shall be as the noonday, and he, like Christ, will be of...

Isaiah 11

³ ...quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.

To use an expression which is so familiar that all can get the idea, he will grasp the truth of the Bible by instinct. As the margin indicates, he will “scent” the fear of the Lord, which is wisdom.

Applying the Eyesalve

The proper prayer is,

Psalm 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

The way to get the eyes opened is to apply the eyesalve that the Lord supplies, which is the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 3

¹⁸ I counsel you to...anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see.

Isaiah 11

¹ And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

² And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Acts 10

³⁸ God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.

1 John 2

²⁰ You have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.

The Spirit of the Lord God, which was upon Christ to make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, proclaims...

Luke 4

¹⁸ ...recovering of the sight to the blind.

Matthew 10

²⁴ There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hid, that shall not be known.

In the last days the knowledge of God is to be proclaimed so fully that all must hear, and all who wish for heavenly wisdom will understand. God said to Daniel that in the time of the end the words that were sealed should be opened:

Daniel 12

⁴ ...many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Nevertheless,

¹⁰ ...the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

All therefore that is necessary to make the most ignorant person proficient in knowledge, not in “theology,” but in wisdom that is recognized and respected among the world’s people, is to yield one’s soul and body to the Lord, to do His commandments. Give your mind over to Christ, for Him to renew it, and open it, and understanding will be natural to it.

And the children may know, for Paul said that Timothy,

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation.

He had not only studied the Scriptures from childhood, but he had known them when he was but a child. What a child can understand may surely be easily grasped by anybody who has a childlike mind.

Psalms 119 [RV]

¹³⁰ The opening of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Then,

Isaiah 34

¹⁶ Seek out of the Book of the Lord, and read.

And through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, grace and peace shall be multiplied unto you.

2 Peter 1

² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

16. Witnessing for Christ

Present Truth, May 18, 1899

Timeline: VIII-3 (First Appearance in the Upper Room)

John 20:21

John 17

¹⁷ Your word is truth.

John 12

³² And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.

TRUTH attracts and, like a magnet, draws the true in heart. These accept the truth, no matter at what cost.

God could have commissioned angels to preach the Gospel, but that work is given to men.

John 20

²¹ As my Father has sent me, so send I you.

In view of this commission, the only concern to us should be that this work be faithfully done. The lifting up of Jesus Christ in our lives is our work. When we sow and water, God gives the increase.

We never make headway in proclaiming the truth by finding fault. This repels instead of drawing. The injunction of the apostle is,

2 Timothy 4

² Preach the Word.

Let error alone. The only work a Christian has in the world is to preach the truth, hold up the pure and the good. Christ said,

Mark 16

¹⁵ Go into all the world and preach the Gospel.

That is the business of every Christian today. And since this is the Lord's commission, we may expect the Lord to open the way.

Everywhere, amid all the “isms” that are rife at the present day, the honest in heart are searching after truth. What a wonderful privilege it is to have the truth to give them. If sometimes our own way seems hard, and we grow weary, this will disappear when we go to work for others.

Just as activity is the life and strength of the physical body, so the spiritual life of a Christian depends upon his efforts to help the needy. The Apostle Peter addressing the followers of Christ, said:

1 Peter 2

⁹ You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

A little farther on in the epistle he says:

¹¹ Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts.

These prevent the virtues of Christ from shining out in His people. A lighted lamp with a clean glass will shine brightly; but when the glass becomes smoked and dirty, the light is dim. So truth must have its sanctifying effect upon the receiver. It must be allowed to shine out, unobscured by fleshly lusts.

The truth will transform a man's life completely, make him refined, gentle, considerate, self-sacrificing. Is it doing that for you?

To represent Christ is to re-present Christ,—*to present Him again*. When He was upon earth, His whole life was spent in doing good, watching for openings to present the truth.

- At one time we see Him working with Nicodemus, revealing to him precious truths.
- Again, He is by the well talking to a fallen woman,

teaching her the way of life.

There was with Him no respect of persons. Now if we would re-present Him, we will make it our life work to look for opportunities to do good. It may be by a word fitly spoken, a kind act, or even a pleasant smile. We do not need to force the opportunities, but simply watch for souls as those who must give account.

What a need there is today of unselfish, consecrated effort in spreading the Gospel.

Isaiah 60

² Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.

Yet in the face of the God says,

¹ Arise and shine.

Or, as one translation has it,

¹ Arise and be enlightened, for your light is come.

The thing for all to do is to become enlightened, for the light is here; then let that light shine forth undimmed. There is but little of the real spirit of the Master now in the world, yea many are longing to see a revelation of Christ. Then let our constant prayer be,

“Lord, enlighten me, and purge me of everything that will prevent your light from shining out through me.”

17. In the Upper Room

Present Truth, April 18, 1901

Timeline: VIII-3 (First Appearance in the Upper Room) / VIII-4 (Second Appearance in the Upper Room)

John 20:19-29

JESUS had risen from the grave very early in the morning, and appeared to Mary and to Peter, and had walked with two of the disciples to Emmaus. These had immediately returned to Jerusalem, and had told the eleven, who still remained in the “upper room” which they had taken for the Passover week. They related all their experience, and how Jesus was made known to them, but the apostles did not believe them.

John 20

¹⁹ Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

²⁰ And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father has sent me, even so send I you.

²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive the Holy Ghost:

²³ Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins you retain, they are retained.

²⁴ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with there when Jesus came.

²⁵ The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.

²⁶ And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas was with them; then came Jesus, the doors being

shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, Reach here your finger, and behold my hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.

²⁸ And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.

²⁹ Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Some Misapprehensions

We have quoted this entire portion of Scripture, because it is one that is misapprehended in several particulars by the majority of readers.

In the first place, it is a mistake to suppose that the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews; what the text teaches is that the doors of the place where the disciples were assembled, were shut for fear of the Jews. The significance of the statement, which is repeated, that “the door was shut” is seen in the fact that Jesus came in. If there be a soul who will rejoice at the Lord’s presence, that is sufficient to bring Him in, no matter how tightly the doors are shut.

Another thing from which the minds of people need to be disabused, is the idea that the disciples were holding a religious service, and celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. They were “within,” that is, at home, in the “upper room” where all of them abode.

Acts 1

¹³ And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

Moreover, they were at supper, for in the account in *Mark* 16 we learn that He appeared unto them...

Mark 16

¹⁴ ...as they sat at meat.

The two disciples who were about to begin their evening meal at Emmaus, rose up as soon as they recognized Jesus, and hastened back to Jerusalem, where they found the apostles at supper, and had scarcely finished telling their story when Jesus himself appeared in the midst of them.

As to their celebrating the resurrection, the fact that they did not believe that it had taken place, is sufficient to refute that idea. The two disciples who had walked to Emmaus in company with Jesus,

Mark 16

¹³ ...went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them.

When Jesus appeared in the midst of them,

¹⁴ [He] upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.

These facts also effectually dispose of the notion that the disciples were beginning the observance of the first day of the week in honor of the resurrection. They could not have been doing that, when they did not believe that Jesus had risen.

As for the second meeting, “after eight days,” no species of reckoning that does not count two as one can make it fall on a Sunday. It was certainly not sooner than the Monday of next week, and may have been later still.

Yet these two texts comprise the principal part of the ground upon which Sunday observance is based! A “custom” cannot be built out of a single occurrence, and this one first day of the week is absolutely the only one directly referred to in the New Testament, with the exception of one incidentally mentioned in *Acts*.

But if there were a thousand such references, it would make no difference. An incidental reference is not a commandment. The fact that something or anything was done on a first day of the week, is no ground whatever for keeping that day. The original commandment of God still stands. It is safe to say that the apostles, and all the disciples who saw the Lord after the resurrection, died without dreaming of such a thing as that Sunday would be substituted for the Sabbath of the Lord.

The Breath of Life

John 20

²² [Jesus] breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive the Holy Ghost.

Job 33

⁴ The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

Job 32

³ There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration [breathing in] of the Almighty gives them understanding.

The breath of the Lord is a marvelous thing.

Acts 17

²⁵ He gives to all life, and breath, and all things,

—and it is His own breath that He gives to all; but the way in which men receive it makes a vast difference in the benefit that they derive from it.

In the beginning God made man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Before the breath came to him, man was only a lump of clay—a man, but good for nothing as a man. As soon as the breath of God came into him, he was a “very good” man, and so he remained as long as he was loyal to God, content to be wholly dependent on Him.

Even so now the breath of God upon us, if we receive it

constantly as coming from Him, and conveying to us His Spirit, will make and keep us good. We shall then live by faith just as we live by breathing; that which sustains physical life in us, will at the same time supply and nourish spiritual life.

Ambassadors for Christ

John 3

³⁴ He whom God has sent, speaks the words of God; for God gives not the Spirit by measure.

The Lord says,

Proverbs 1

²³ I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

The words of the Lord are Spirit and life, and the Spirit makes known the words of God. The Word of God is almighty; by it the heavens and the earth were created;¹⁵⁶ by it they are now upheld;¹⁵⁷ by it they will be renewed;¹⁵⁸ and by it

¹⁵⁶ **Psalm 33** ⁶ *By the word of the Lord* were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

¹⁵⁷ **Hebrews 1** ³ Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things *by the word of His power*, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

¹⁵⁸ **2 Peter 3** ⁵ For this they willingly are ignorant of, that *by the word of God* the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: ⁶ Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: ⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, *by the same word* are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁸ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His promise*, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. ¹¹ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, ¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire

men are made new, meet to be partakers of the inheritance.¹⁵⁹

Therefore it inevitably follows that whosoever is filled with the Spirit, and speaks the words of God, must speak with the same authority that God himself does, and so He can speak the words that remit sin. It is God's voice speaking by his mouth. And this power was not given to the apostles alone, but it is for all who receive the Spirit. The true successors of the apostles are all who receive the word of the Spirit. All Christians are...

2 Corinthians 5

²⁰ ...ambassadors for Christ,

—sent on the same mission that He had.

The Blessing of Faith

The Lord is very long-suffering; our High Priest has...

Hebrews 5

² ...compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.

The disciples ought all to have believed the testimony that was given them concerning the resurrection, and especially the Scriptures, that made it so plain. But when they did not, Christ gave them palpable evidence. He leaves everybody without excuse.

But let all beware how they presume upon God's goodness and forbearance and longsuffering. Because God is patient with the ignorant and unbelieving, it is not wise to refuse to believe until the last scrap of evidence has been presented. The wisest man is he who believes the most. To be slow to believe is not an evidence of superiority.

shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

¹³ Nevertheless we, *according to His promise*, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

¹⁵⁹ **1 Peter 1** ²³ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which lives and abides for ever.

Who has not heard people emulating Thomas, and excusing their unbelief by saying almost with an air of pride,

“I am like doubting Thomas; I must put my hands in the prints of the wounds, before I can believe.”

Strange that they who are so well acquainted with the story of Thomas do not remember what Christ said to him:

John 20

²⁹ Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Do you notice that no blessing was pronounced upon him? That does not mean that Thomas was rejected; but it does mean that by his stubborn unbelief he deprived himself of a great blessing.

In the kingdom of heaven faith is at a premium, and he who believes most readily gets the chief blessing.

18. Seeing and Believing

Present Truth, October 20, 1892

Timeline: VIII-4 (Second Appearance in the Upper Room)

John 20:25-29

IT IS a very common saying that “seeing is believing.” But like many of the sayings among men, it is not true. The fact is, that very many things which may be clearly seen are not believed.

In the things of God, *believing is seeing*. The things which are invisible, are clearly seen by faith. Not because the person who believes *imagines* that he sees them, but because they are there as real things, and his faith reveals them.

Those who say that they have to see a thing before they can believe it, should learn a lesson from the case of Thomas. He would not believe that Christ had risen. He said,

John 20

²⁵ Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.

A few days afterward he had the privilege of doing that very thing, and he cried out,

²⁸ My Lord and my God.

Then Jesus said unto him,

²⁹ Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

He believed, but his belief brought no blessing with it. Let us not deprive ourselves of the blessing by demanding demonstration instead of simple evidence.

19. Believing Without Sight

Present Truth, January 25, 1894

Original title: Front Page

Timeline: VIII-4 (Second Appearance in the Upper Room)

John 20:29

John 20

²⁹ Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

IT IS quite natural to wish that we had lived in Judea or Galilee in the days when Christ was there. We wish that we could have seen Him, and have listened to His teaching, and could have talked with Him. That we should have doubted His word never enters our heads. We are sure that under such circumstances we should have implicitly believed in Him.

There is a way by which we may tell whether we would or not. If we fully believe Him now, we should doubtless have believed Him if we had lived then. If we at all doubt His word now, we should most certainly have disbelieved Him if we had seen Him in the days of His ministry on earth.

Let it not be forgotten that not by any means all the people who saw Jesus believed that He was the Son of God. In fact, believers were very few. Indeed, at the very last, after His resurrection, and just before His ascension,

Matthew 28

¹⁷ ...some doubted.

And these were of the brethren, and not of the scoffing priests and scribes. The greater number of the people who saw Jesus, did not see in Him anything more than a common man. There was nothing in His personal appearance to indicate that He was more than an ordinary laboring man. The prophet Isaiah said:

Isaiah 53

¹ Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

² For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

³ He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

On one occasion Jesus asked His disciples who people said that He was. They answered:

Matthew 16

¹⁴ Some say that You are John the Baptist; some say, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

¹⁵ He said unto them, But whom do you say that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

Peter had been with Jesus a long time, yet he had no means of knowing that He was the Christ, except by revelation of the Spirit of God. Those who had a mind to do the will of God, knew Christ and His teaching; others did not.

The disciples in Judea and Galilee had exactly the same chance to know Christ as the Son of God that we have, and no more. God has given to us the Holy Spirit as a guide, as well as to them. Through the testimony of the Spirit we may know and believe Christ; and no one has ever had any other evidence.

The Apostle John wrote in order that we might have the same fellowship that he had, who had seen and handled and talked with Christ in the flesh.

1 John 1

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

² (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

³ That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

It is a most pleasant thought, that we have an equal chance with those who followed Jesus on earth. He has promised to dwell with us, and we may talk with Him. To be sure, we cannot see Him; but that makes no difference, for those who saw Him on earth, saw nothing with the natural eyes but an ordinary man.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁶ Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.

So we are not to know Christ after the flesh, for...

John 6

⁶³ ...the flesh profits nothing.

But, knowing by the Spirit, we may rejoice in Him,

1 Peter 1

⁸ ...with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Matthew 22

⁴² What do you think of Christ?

20. The Test of True Love

Present Truth, April 25, 1901

Timeline: VIII-5 (Appearance by the Lake of Galilee)

John 21:15-22

IT WAS the third time that Jesus had showed himself to a company of His disciples after the resurrection. Suddenly cut off from association with Him on whom they had been accustomed to depend as children upon a parent, not knowing the meaning of what had taken place, and uncertain as to the future,—doubtless thinking that their work as fishers of men was finished, when it had not yet begun,—they had followed the suggestion of Peter, and returned to their former occupation.

But success did not attend their toil. After a wearisome night with the net, with no result, Jesus had appeared on the shore and guided them to success, and now they had finished the meal which He had provided for them, when suddenly He put to Peter the question,

John 21

¹⁵ Do you love me more than these?

What memories that question must have recalled to the mind of Peter! He could see himself in the garden, saying to Jesus,

Luke 22

³³ Lord, I am ready to go with You, both into prison, and to death;

and,

Matthew 26

³³ Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended,

—and yet fleeing at the first assault, and afterwards denying the Lord with oaths. But he had learned the lesson of humil-

ity, and would no more compare himself with others, so he contented himself with saying,

John 21

¹⁵ Yea, Lord; You know that I love You.

The simple statement was as strong as words could make the truth.

¹⁵ Jesus said unto him, Feed my lambs.

Most men would ask that one should do something for them, that he should do them a personal favor, in order to show love; but Jesus asks those who profess to love Him to show it by doing something for somebody else. The Apostle Paul said,

Romans 1

¹⁴ I am debtor, both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

Why was he debtor to all men? Because he had received so freely of the rich grace of God.

Romans 5

⁵ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Now the love of God manifests itself in giving.

Titus 2

¹⁴ [He] gave himself for us.

John 3

¹⁶ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

God changes not, and His love is ever the same; therefore when His love is shed and abroad in the heart it must necessarily show itself in service for mankind.

1 John 4

⁷ Love is of God.

It is only with the love of God—the love which He has for us—that we can love Him; therefore whoever loves the Lord must necessarily love and serve those for whom He gave himself in love.

Real Love is Spontaneous

Let nobody, however, get the idea that the Lord asks us to do something to prove that we love Him. The tree does not bear apples in order to prove that it is an apple tree, although it is indeed known by its fruit; but it bears apples because the fruit is in it and must necessarily come forth. Even so love is one of the first fruits of the Spirit, and love serves because that is its nature.

The fact that Jesus did not ask Peter to feed His sheep and lambs, in order to prove that he loved Him, is evident from the fact stated by Peter,

John 21

¹⁵ You know that I love You.

He knows the state of our hearts better than we do, and He does not ask proof of our love, but He tells us what is pleasing to Him, that we may know how we may give our love exercise.

An Insult to God

We often hear people mourning their lack of love for the Lord; but we never read any such pious cant in the Bible. There are many whose religion does not go much further than a confession of lack of love for the Lord, and a mournful expression of sorrow for it.

Many people who do really love the Lord are deceived into using the same cant phrases, thinking that it would be presumption for them to say unqualifiedly that they love God,

and that they must, as a mark of humility, profess that they do not really love Him.

But let it be understood that half love is not love. God is infinitely greater than we, and we can never comprehend Him, so as perfectly to appreciate all that we receive from Him; but each individual can easily love Him with all his heart and soul and strength, and that is all that is required, or that is possible.

Nobody ever heard a little child mourning over its lack of love for its mother; it is never conscious of any such lack, for it has none. To be sure, it cannot do the labor that an older person would do, but it loves just as much, and its love is just as sweet to the mother. It simply loves, and does not worry about it.

There is a great deal of unconscious hypocrisy among religious people, and in nothing is it more plainly manifest than in the complaint that they do not love the Lord enough. Such talk is sinful, and is an insult to the Lord.

What would be thought if the Bible story told us that when Jesus asked Peter,

“Do you love me?”

—he had deliberated a few minutes and had said,

“Well, I dare not say unqualifiedly that I do, for I know that I don’t love you as I ought, but I am quite sure that I have a love for you. However, I want to love you more, and I mourn every day over the fact that I love you so little. It is my chief complaint that my love’s so weak and faint, but I long for grace to love You more.”

What a blow such a confession would have been to the Master. You say,

“But shouldn’t one confess such a thing if it is true?”

Let us not call it confession; it is rather denial of the Lord. If Peter had answered the Lord in that manner, it would have been a worse denial than when he denied Him with cursing; for Peter did really love the Lord even when sudden fear overcame him and led him to deny that he knew Him. While deliberately to talk about lack of love for the Lord is only to say that He is not lovable.

We cannot help loving any person or thing that seems lovely to us. A lovable person draws our love spontaneously. So when people say that they do not love the Lord as much as they think it is their duty to, they acknowledge that they are under obligation to Him for favors received, but that He is to them so repulsive that they cannot love Him.

Let us not insult the Lord anymore, but rather get acquainted with Him, and find that He is the One...

Song 5

¹⁶ ...altogether lovely,

—and love will come of itself. It cannot be forced.

Love Needs Expression

Why did the Lord ask Peter if he loved Him, when He knew it already? Partly to test him, to see if he still retained his boastful spirit, and thus to help him to be on his guard against it.

But be sure that this was not all. He would not have asked the question three times, if He had not wished to hear Peter say, “I love You.” The Lord loves to hear expressions of love from those whom He loves.

Peter’s fall, after his boastful protestation of loyalty to the Master, would naturally cause him to be backward about speaking of his feelings; he would think that anything that he might say would be regarded with suspicion, and that he had forfeited his right to speak the sentiments of his heart.

But Christ would draw him out, and let him understand that professions of love from him were most welcome.

Is It Esteem, or Love?

It is unfortunate that our translation does not convey the fine distinction that is expressed in the questions and answers in this lesson. The word “love” in this passage is not from a single Greek word, but from two, which have altogether different shades of meaning.

Peter used the same word throughout, but Christ used a different word the first and the second time that He asked, “Do you love me?” The last time He used the stronger word.

The word that Jesus first used is one that means, to regard, esteem, to cherish with reverence, to be content with. It is used of love as considered with reference to the tendency of the will.

The word that He used the last time, and which Peter used throughout, signifies love in its tenderest form, as an emotion, a passion. Its root idea is that of embracing and kissing, while the first word never has any such signification.

The one word indicates admiration for some good and sufficient reason, which may be given, but the other indicates spontaneous love.

Leaving technicalities aside, we may express the meaning of the text in this way:

“Simon, son of John, do you like me more than the others do?”

Peter replied,

“Yea, Lord; You know that I love You.”

Again Christ said:

“Simon, son of John, do you esteem me, and regard me with

reverence?”

Peter again replied,

“Yea, Lord; You know that I love You.”

The third time Jesus used Peter’s word, saying,

“Simon, son of John, do you really love me?”

And then Peter, grieved that the Lord should seem to doubt his love, appealed to His own knowledge, saying,

“Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”

Mind Your Own Business

Love means sacrifice, and Peter was given the assurance that he should find ample opportunity for demonstrating his love. He was told plainly,

John 21

¹⁹ ...by what death he should glorify God,

—and then, turning round, he saw John following, and asked,

²¹ Lord, and what shall this man do?

He was curious to know what the other man’s work would be; but Jesus did not gratify him.

²² If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? follow me,

—was all the answer Peter got.

It will be well for us to take the answer to ourselves. It is none of our business what work God has for somebody else; if we attend to our own business, it is enough. Nobody can know for another.

Each person may and should know for himself just what the Lord has for him to do, and how He would have it done, and

be content to do that, allowing everybody else to answer for himself to the Master. Somebody else is unfaithful; “what is that to you?” This one does not think it is necessary to keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; “what is that to you? follow me.”

Peter had said that he would follow the Lord even though all forsook Him; now the Lord tells him and us to follow Him, no matter what another may or may not do. No man is judge over another; no man can be conscience for another.

To every man is given his work, according to his ability, and each one can best help the others to do their work, by doing his own faithfully.

21. What Is That To You?

Present Truth, June 28, 1894

Timeline: VIII-5 (Appearance by the Lake of Galilee)

John 21:19-22

THIS is the question put by the Lord to sinful man when the latter manifests a disposition to supervise the religious conduct of his fellows. Jesus and His disciples were alone at the Sea of Galilee after His resurrection, and when they had eaten and Jesus had talked with them, He said to Peter,

John 21

¹⁹ Follow me.

²⁰ Then Peter, turning about, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following;...

²¹ Peter seeing him said to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

²² Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? Follow me.

This brief dialogue reveals very plainly the mind of the Lord in regard to the exercise of ecclesiastical authority among men. There was Peter, who held as high a position as any in the church, and to whom many people believe to have held the highest place, meeting with a pointed rebuke from the Lord for presuming to demand even a knowledge of the obligations which the Saviour had laid or would lay upon John.

Yet how many since that time who have neither held the station nor possessed the virtues of an apostle, have assumed the authority to dictate to their fellow-men what they must do to discharge their obligations to God, and even to punish them if they refused to obey!

This is the spirit that is embodied in all those laws which men have presumed to enact for the punishment of "offenses

against God and religion.”¹⁶⁰

Men have become so ostensibly zealous for the Lord that they have taken it upon themselves not only to know just what everybody else must do in order to meet the mind of God, but to execute upon them the penalty for transgression, as if the Lord were not able or competent to uphold the honor of His own law!

It is the zeal which Saul of Tarsus had, which was...

Romans 10

² ...not according to knowledge.

The zeal of Paul the apostle, and of every converted person, is to feed the flock with the living word, which is the bread and water of life. Would you enquire,

“Lord, and what shall this man do, who keeps not your commandments?”

or,

“Lord, here is one that does not worship You according to the way that I conceive to be right; what shall be done with him?”

The answer is,

John 21

²² What is that to you? follow me.

Give your attention to your own course, and leave all others free to do the same.

¹⁶ Feed my sheep;

and,

²² Follow me.

¹⁶⁰ The phrase comes from a section of William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, published in the 1770’s, and widely used in the early American colonies.

Thus did the Lord mark out the duty of Peter; and thus He has marked out the whole duty of all His followers, whether high or low.

He who will obey his Lord's words will find ample scope for the exercise of all his energies, without giving any attention to enforcing religious duties upon his neighbors.

22. The Risen Lord

Present Truth, June 9, 1898

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons, June 19

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Matthew 28:8-20

IN A former lesson¹⁶¹ we studied concerning the resurrection of Christ. In this lesson we are to consider of events which occurred after His resurrection.

The experience of the two women in meeting Jesus, and the instruction which He gave to them are full of Gospel teaching.

Matthew 28

⁹ Jesus met them.

They had come...

¹ ...to see the sepulcher,

—expecting to find their Lord in a tomb. Still it was their love for Jesus which brought them there, and the angel had said to them,

⁵ I know that you seek Jesus which was crucified.

But instead of finding a dead Saviour in Joseph's tomb, the living Saviour met them. Although their faith had not taken in the fact of His resurrection, yet in response to their thought of Him, such as it was,

⁹ Jesus met them.

And so it is with us. To the feebleness of our thought of Him, He responds with a mightiness of His grace. Though we may sometimes speak and act as though the Saviour was dead, yet even then He reveals himself to us as the living Saviour,

¹⁶¹ Waggoner is referring to an article titled, "The Resurrection of Jesus," from *Present Truth*, March 31, 1898. It is included as the 4th article in this section on "The Resurrection and Ascension."

Ephesians 3

²⁰ ...able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or a think.

Go and Tell

And the living Jesus, who met them, said,

Matthew 28

¹⁰ Go tell.

Having seen for themselves that He was not in the tomb, and having heard from the angel,

⁶ He is risen,

—and having themselves seen Him alive, they were to make known these things to others. Thus does the Lord use human instrumentalities to make known to others the glad news concerning himself.

My Brethren

The whole truth of the incarnation is taught in the way in which Jesus speaks of His disciples. He calls them,

¹⁰ ...my brethren.

It is not because of what they have done, but because of what He has done, that they are His brethren. It was only a few days before this, when the multitude came to take Jesus, that:

Matthew 26

⁵⁶ ...all the disciples forsook Him, and fled.

But,

Hebrews 2

¹¹ Both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

When God would assure us of His immutable counsel of

peace, He gives His only begotten Son to become one of the human family, for ever to retain His human nature as a pledge that God will fulfill His word.¹⁶²

John 1

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

John 1 [RV]

¹² As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God.

Romans 8

¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

1 John 4

¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.

And so even after human failure and desertion, still He says, “my brethren.” Jesus looks upon every member of the human family as a brother, although some are...

...estranged indeed from the Father’s house, but not forgotten by the Father’s heart.¹⁶³

O, soul lost in sin, however far you have wondered, into whatever depths of degradation and misery you have sunken, God recognizes you as His own, precious to His heart of love. Amid all the angels that surround the throne, He still yearns to recover you.¹⁶⁴

Blessed Jesus! would you know Him?

Oh, how He loves!

Give yourselves entirely to Him,

Oh, how He loves!¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, April 3, 1894.

¹⁶³ Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, Chapter 15: “This Man Receiveth Sinners,” p. 186.

¹⁶⁴ Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*, December 1, 1895, “Seeking the Lost.”

¹⁶⁵ Marianne Nunn (1778-1847), Hymn: *One There is Above All Others*.

The False and the True Testimony

Two reports of what had happened at the tomb were carried into the city. After this interview with Mary Magdalene,

Mark 16

¹⁰ She went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.

¹¹ And they, when they had heard that He is alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

At the same time,

Matthew 28

¹¹ Some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priest all the things that were done.

And after they...

¹² ...had taken counsel,

—but not of Him who...

Isaiah 28

²⁹ ...is wonderful in counsel,

—they put a lie into the mouths of the soldiers, and “large money” into their pockets, and sent them forth with a report which condemned themselves for unfaithfulness.

Matthew 28

¹³ Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.

¹⁵ And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

But the living Jesus was His witness. To His disciples,

Acts 1

³ He showed himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs.

And in His disciples after Pentecost, by His representative, the Holy Spirit, He showed himself to the world. And each

one who can say out of his own experience,

Galatians 2 [RV]

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me,

—is bearing witness to the fact that the body of Jesus was not stolen by His disciples, but that:

Romans 6

⁴ [He] was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.

Unbelief

If the disciples had believed what Jesus had told them, they would have known just where to look for Him after His resurrection, for He had said to them,

Matthew 26

³² After I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee.

But though they had been told once, yet the angel sends them word again,

Matthew 28

⁷ Behold, He goes before you into Galilee.

And so,

¹⁶ The eleven [one is now missing] disciples went away into Galilee...

¹⁷ And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him: but some doubted.

Wherever there is room for the exercise of faith, there is also the possibility of doubt; and even the bodily presence of Jesus did not prevent some from doubting. This is the very nature of the...

Hebrews 3

¹² ...evil heart of unbelief.

All Power in the Son of Man

It was the Son of man, after His resurrection, who said,

Matthew 28

¹⁸ All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.

As the Son of God He was, equally with God, the...

Genesis 14

¹⁹ ...possessor of heaven and earth,

—but giving up all, He became the Son of man, that as the Son of man and in behalf of the human family, He might win all things by His life and death and resurrection. And so the Scripture says,

1 Corinthians 3

²¹ All things are yours,

—and we are to be...

Colossians 1

¹¹ ...strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power.

These are the privileges of every believer in the risen Lord.

Go Therefore and Teach

Matthew 28

¹⁹ Go therefore...

²⁰ ...and I am with you always.

It is because He has all power and has promised His constant presence that the believers can carry to others the glad news of His power to save. And this they do, not simply in the words which they speak, but by the indwelling of that power. For salvation is after all wholly a question of power, as...

Romans 1

¹⁶ ...the Gospel...is the power of God unto salvation.

It requires the same power to save from sin as to create in

the first place, and...

Psalm 62

¹¹ ...power belongs unto God.

And this power is exercised through His Son, Jesus Christ, and therefore,

Acts 4

¹² There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

The Everlasting Gospel

The commission of Jesus was to teach all nations to observe...

Matthew 28

²⁰ ...all things whatsoever I commanded you.

But Jesus did not speak of himself.

John 12

⁴⁹ For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

John 7

¹⁶ My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.

And so the things which Jesus had commanded them were the things that the Lord had commanded from the beginning. He preached the Gospel, the same Gospel which was preached unto Abraham, but brought out in a clearer light, for:

John 7

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this Man.

He through whom God's holy law was spoken from Sinai had come to this earth to teach the principles of that same law, both in His words and in His life. In His sermon on the mount, and in all His teaching, He was simply presenting in the clearest manner the same principles of truth and right-

eousness which had been presented to Israel.

And this was the charge which He gave to all believers, that they should continue to proclaim those same principles in the earth,

Matthew 28

²⁰ ...even unto the end of the world.

And these are the principles of...

Revelation 14

⁶ ...the everlasting Gospel.

23. To Men, Not to Angels

Present Truth, January 18, 1894

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Mark 16:15

It was to men, and not the angels, that Christ said,

Mark 16

¹⁵ Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

CHRIST took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took the nature of man. Consequently only men can be sharers with Him in the work of saving souls.

The angels are sent forth to minister to all who are heirs of salvation, but to men alone is committed the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

The Lord sent an angel to Cornelius, but it was only to direct him to send for Peter, who should tell him what to do.

Acts 10

³ He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

⁴ And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Your prayers and your alms are come up for a memorial before God.

⁵ And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

⁶ He lodges with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell you what you ought to do.

What an exalted privilege this is, to be workers together with God! Only those can engage in it, who have felt the

power of sin, and the power of salvation.

24. The Secret of Power

Present Truth, May 18, 1899

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Mark 16:15

The commission to the disciples was,

Mark 16

¹⁵ Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

The Gospel is:

Romans 1

¹⁶ ...the power of God unto salvation.

So the one who is preaching the Gospel is really a minister of power. Of Christ it was said,

John 7

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this Man.

The reason is that no man ever lived as He did. The secret of His power was in His life.

There are many Gospel workers who are longing to see more fruit from their labors. Let such remember that the power to convert men depends not upon the information they impart, but the life they live.

The man that practices the truths which he preaches to others, carries with him the vitalizing power of God, working through him to convert others from the error of their ways.

But every ray of light must be cherished and walked in. Just as soon as we preach one thing and practice another, our words are...

1 Corinthians 13

¹ ...as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Like Samson shorn of his big locks, there will be no strength in the efforts we put forth.

25. What the Gospel Teaches

Signs of the Times, January 7, 1886

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Mark 16:15-16

Mark 16

¹⁵ And He said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

¹⁶ He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.

THESE words were spoken by our Saviour after His resurrection, and shortly before His ascension. They are perfectly in harmony with His words recorded in:

Matthew 24

¹⁴ This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations...

There is no mistaking the extent of territory in which the gospel must be preached—nothing less than the whole world. And how long must it be preached? Read the rest of the verse:

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Then the gospel is to be preached until the end. The end here referred to is the same that is mentioned in verse 3:

³ ...the end of the world.

That this “end of the world” is in connection with the coming of the Lord, is shown by the words of the disciples in the verse last mentioned,¹⁶⁶ and by the words of Christ in:

Matthew 13

⁴⁰ As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire;

¹⁶⁶ **Matthew 24** ³ And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?

so shall it be in the end of this world.

⁴¹ The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

⁴² And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

⁴³ Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 24

³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

³¹ And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The fact that by divine command the gospel is to be preached in all the world until the coming of the Lord and the end of the world, proves conclusively that until the Lord comes, a necessity for its being preached will exist in all the world.

This needs no further argument, for it is nowhere disputed. We will therefore turn our attention to a consideration of what the gospel is, and what creates the necessity for its being so long and so extensively preached.

The word “gospel” means, literally, “a good message;” Webster’s first definition is “glad tidings.” According to its derivation, it might be applied to any good news; but in the Bible it is used with exclusive reference to one thing; what that thing is, we may easily learn from the Bible itself.

In *Luke 2* we find these words, addressed by the angel of the Lord to the shepherds in the field:

Luke 2

¹⁰ Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings [a gospel] of

great joy, which shall be to all people.

The next verse tells what this gospel is:

¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Then the gospel which is to be preached to all people is the announcement of a Saviour. It is from this that Webster derives his specific definition of the gospel, as,

“especially, the good news concerning Christ and His salvation.”

But the simple heralding of Christ, without stating the nature and object of His work, would not be the preaching of the gospel. The “good news” consists in the fact that Christ the Lord is a Saviour. That Christ comes as a Saviour, necessarily implies that there are people to be saved, and something from which they must be saved. Turning to *Matthew 1*, we read the angel’s declaration before the birth of Christ:

Matthew 1

²¹ And you shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.

Paul says,

1 Timothy 1

¹⁵ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

So it is manifest that the preaching of the gospel consists in the announcement that Christ will save people from sin.

But while the gospel is the good news that Christ brings salvation from sin, it is evident that that simple announcement would not suffice to produce the desired results, viz., that men should believe and be baptized. For there are millions of people who virtually say that they are...

Revelation 3

¹⁷ ...rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,

–not knowing that they are...

¹⁷ ...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

No matter how destitute a man may be, it would be of no use to offer him money if he were ignorant of his necessities, and perfectly satisfied with his condition. So no man can feel any interest in the gospel as a means of salvation from sin, unless he:

1. Knows what sin is;
2. Is convinced that he is a sinner; and
3. Understands the nature and results of sin, so as to realize that it is something to be shunned.

Therefore the gospel, with its announcement of salvation from sin, must also make known what sin is. This it does, as we shall see.

John, the evangelist, so called because it is he who more than anyone else dwells on the love of God and Christ in the salvation of man, defines sin. He says:

1 John 3

⁴ Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.

In harmony with this, Paul says that:

Romans 4

¹⁵ Where no law is, there is no transgression.

And,

Romans 5

¹² Sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Volumes could not define sin more clearly than do these three texts. We have found out then, that:

1. "Gospel" means good news;
2. The gospel of the Bible is the good news of a Saviour—Christ the Lord (*Luke 2:10-11*);
3. Jesus saves from sin (*Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:15*); and
4. "Sin is the transgression of the law." *1 John 3:4*.

So that, in short, the gospel announces the way by which man may be saved from the transgression of the law, and from the consequences of such transgression. Sin is the disease; the gospel is the remedy. And since the gospel is to be preached in all the world, until the coming of the Lord, it follows that "all the world," yea, "every creature," has sinned. This we read:

Romans 3

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

It must also be true that sin will be in the world till the Lord comes. And this we verify by a comparison of:

Genesis 6

⁵ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;

and:

Genesis 13

¹³ But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly;

with:

Luke 17

²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

²⁷ They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

²⁸ Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat,

they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;

²⁹ But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

³⁰ Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

But since sin is the transgression of the law, it also necessarily follows that “the law” will be in full force in all the world until the coming of the Lord. In other words, sin is the disease, and it cannot exist where there is no law.

Romans 4

¹⁵ Because the law works wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

The disease, sin, does exist in “every creature” in “all the world;” for the remedy, the gospel, is to be thus extensively made known:

Mark 16

¹⁵ And He said unto them, Go into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*.

The great Physician would not send the remedy where it is not needed.

Matthew 9

¹² They that be whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

And therefore the law, by which alone “is the knowledge of sin”¹⁶⁷—the disease—is binding upon “every creature” “in all the world.”

¹⁶⁷ **Romans 3** ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

26. The Great Commission

Present Truth, May 2, 1901

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Matthew 28:16-20

BEFORE His crucifixion Jesus had told His disciples that after He had risen He would go before them into Galilee:

Matthew 26

³² But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

And when the disciples went to the tomb, on the morning of the third day, they found the angel of the Lord left, who said to them,

Matthew 28

⁷ Go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goes before you into Galilee.

For a short time, at least eight or nine days, the disciples remained in Jerusalem after the resurrection, and:

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

¹⁷ And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

Some Advice to Doubters

Whether it was some of the eleven that doubted, or some others besides the eleven, does not seem to be made clear; but that need not concern us. It is evident that if there were others present on that occasion, they were some who, like the eleven, went there to keep the appointment which Jesus had made; yet some doubted! Is it not most astonishing?

They doubted even at the time of worship, when the evidence that Jesus had risen was overwhelming and incontrovertible. They were all familiar with His person; how could they doubt that it was really He, and that He had risen from the dead?

Now, as in the days of Job, the sons of God do not come together without Satan coming also. He comes to sow doubt of the truth. He makes people doubt even when they see the Lord. Who is not familiar with the expression,

“Yes; I see that this is all true, but...”?

And with that word the faith that was coming through the Word fled. How sad that people will not always walk only in the light, refusing even to look at darkness. Nobody can see all the truth at once, and therefore everybody who accepts truth must do so with many things still unexplained, and some that are apparently unexplainable; but whoever firmly lays hold of every bit of truth that he sees, and refuses to give it up at the bidding of doubt, will surely come into possession of still greater treasures.

There is no blessing in doubt; doubt is of the devil. It is the poorest sort of husks to feed on. Doubt, denial, negation, is emptiness; it is the absence of anything; and whoever feeds on it will have nothing but leanness of soul.

No one should ever talk doubt, nor tell what he does not believe. Be positive, not negative. Talk what you know, and not what you do not know. There is enough truth that every man may perceive, to keep the most active mind busy, so that there will be no time to talk or think about doubts. He who truly believes the Word of the Lord may be very positive, for he has no room for doubt.

If there is a thing in the Bible that you cannot see clearly, and which seems to contradict some other truth, fix your mind steadfastly upon the truth which you do know, and are assured of, and go a little farther into that than you ever did before. You have not yet exhausted it, and when you have seen more in it than you ever did before, then to your surprise you will see the truth in that other thing that troubled you; for all truth is one.

All Seeing and Believing the Same Thing

Often we hear these words:

“We can’t all see alike, you know;”

or,

“It takes much more evidence to convince some than others.”

And it is not uncommon to hear even professed Christians say that they are so constituted by nature that they cannot believe. If this last were true, then the thing to do would be to get a new constitution by grace; but it is not true. There is nobody who cannot believe.

All men are created equal, in that all have an equal chance for salvation, which is by faith. And, moreover, no more evidence is really needed to convince one person than to convince another. That which is evidence enough for one is enough for all who do not allow something to blind their minds to it.

It takes more evidence to convince some than it does to convince others, because some hold it off as long as they possibly can. It is no credit to a man, that he is slow to accept evidence; for nothing is evidence except the truth, and the truth is that which is, which really exists. So the man is simply confessing that he is blind, and cannot readily discern the facts.

The smallest bit of evidence in any case should be sufficient to convince anybody, for if there be any real evidence at all in favor of a given case, there cannot be any evidence against it. So it is that faith as a grain of mustard seed is sufficient to remove mountains.

All can see alike, if they have eyesight, and if they have not that, they should anoint their eyes with the eyesalve which God provides, in order that they may see. All that were present in that mountain in Galilee saw Jesus, and He pre-

sented himself in exactly the same manner to all. They all saw the same thing, yet all did not believe.

In the future kingdom of God there will be no complaints that all cannot see alike; God will not look like the Almighty Creator, the loving Father, to some, and like the devil to others.

1 John 3

² We shall see Him as He is;

—and we may...

Psalms 27

⁴ ...behold the beauty of the Lord,

—now as well as at some future time. Everybody can see and know if there is a desire to.

Who Shall Be Baptized?

Matthew 28

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

¹⁹ Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

In this commission, the Lord defined the work of His servants. They are to go preaching and teaching the Gospel and they are to baptize those whom they teach, and none others.

But teaching implies somebody to be taught, and somebody capable of understanding. It matters not how young a person may be: if he can be taught the truth of the Gospel, and can understand it, he is old enough to be baptized; but not otherwise. A babe so young that it cannot be taught the truths of the Gospel, is too young to be baptized.

It is true enough that the commission provides for the teaching of all nations, and the baptizing must be as extensive as the teaching; but those who cannot possibly learn, cannot possibly be taught, until they come to years of understanding;

and so there is no warrant for baptizing them. Since they do not know enough to comprehend the truth, they do not know what sin is; and so they are not in condemnation, and do not need any baptism for the remission of sins.

Baptized into the Name

The *Revised Version*, literally rendering the Greek, has:

¹⁹ ...baptizing them *into the name* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Oh, it is a blessed thing to know the name of the Lord,—to know its length and breadth and depth and height, its tenderness, and its power,—for it is a strong tower of safety,¹⁶⁸ and they that know it will put their trust in God.

Psalm 9

¹⁰ And they that know your name will put their trust in You: for You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You.

Romans 10

¹⁸ Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The name of the Lord is the Lord himself—His personality. This is shown by the inspired words of Peter, concerning the lame man that had been healed:

Acts 4 [RV]

¹⁰ In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, even in Him, does this man stand here before you whole.

The name of Christ is not a mere charm, to conjure with, so the Jewish exorcists found to their cost (*Acts 19:13-16*), nor is it simply a sound, a title: it is the Lord Jesus himself: it is His everlasting life.

The word “baptize” means “immerse,” “dip.” It is a purely

¹⁶⁸ **Proverbs 18** ¹⁰ The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runs into it, and is safe.

Greek word, not translated, but, transferred, into English. The German and Scandinavian Bibles have it translated, so that the people who read those languages have it, “dipping them into the name.” There can be no more question about the mode of baptism than about the mode of dipping, for that is what baptism is.

The ancient as well as the modern Greek, used the word in his daily talk. The smith *baptized* the hot iron into the tub of water to cool it, or to temper it; the housewife *baptized* her dishes into the water, to cleanse them; and both, when they had finished their toil, would *baptize* their hands into water, to wash them. The school boy would *baptize* himself in the swimming pool, when he took a header.

You say that this was not Christian baptism; of course it is not; for Christian baptism means immersion into Christ. Note that the difference is not in the act, but in the object into which one is baptized. We are to recognize the life that is manifested,—the life that pervades the universe, filling all space and everything,—and consciously yield ourselves to be swallowed up and lost to sight in it.

For, let it be understood that when we are baptized into Christ we do not rise up again out of Him, but in Him.

Romans 6

³ Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

Galatians 3

²⁷ [We] put on Christ.

It is the death of the old man, the body of sin,—the laying off of the old way of living,—and the receiving of new life, the

eternal, sinless life in Christ. Here is the whole thing in a word:

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

We are baptized into His death, but He ever lives, although slain, and:

1 John 3

⁵ ...in Him is no sin;

So,

Romans 6

⁶ Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

It is a glorious thing, and there are glorious and infinite possibilities in it.

Go You Therefore

Jesus commanded His disciples, and He speaks to us as directly as to any people who ever lived; to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He says:

Matthew 28

¹⁹ Go you therefore, and teach.

Why “therefore?” Because of His saying,

¹⁸ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

And what of that? How can the fact that somebody else has power, be a reason why I should take up a work, and an encouragement in it? When the puny man sees Sandow lift heavy weights as though they were feathers, he becomes discouraged, and says,

“It is no use for me to try.”

But the fact that Jesus has all the power that there is in heaven and in earth, is our encouragement in the work. Why? Because He is with us. We are to go in His name: it is not we, but Christ in us doing the work. He goes not merely by our side, but fills us and transforms us.

Matthew 1

²³ His name [is] Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

He who is our refuge is also our strength.

Psalms 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Isaiah 12

² The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.

Oh, what power God has given to men, in giving them himself! All power means all might. He who has Christ, then, who has all might, has the power of the Almighty.

Colossians 1

¹¹ Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.

Just think of it! the man of God becomes almighty!

Mark 9

²³ All things are possible to him that believes.

I AM

Matthew 28

²⁰ I AM with you.

His name is I AM. From everlasting to everlasting He is. The goings forth of Christ have been...

Micah 5 [margin]

² ...from of old, from the days of eternity,

and,

Hebrews 7

²⁵ He ever lives.

John 1

¹⁸ [He] is in the bosom of the Father,

—and God...

Isaiah 57

¹⁵ ...inhabits eternity.

The Eternal One, the One who embraces eternity and infinity, is I AM. That is, in God we have all eternity condensed into every moment. He in whom God dwells by faith, has...

Hebrews 7

¹⁶ ...the power of an endless life.

May we not therefore gladly go in this our might?

27. With or Without Power?

Present Truth, June 26, 1902

Original title: Back Page

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Matthew 28:18

The charge that Jesus gives to His disciples is:

Mark 16

¹⁵ Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

It is “the Gospel of the kingdom,”¹⁶⁹ which He himself proclaimed, that they are commissioned to preach, and nothing else. But it is too often forgot, that this charge is based upon Christ’s statement:

Matthew 28

¹⁸ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Because of this, He says to us,

¹⁹ Go therefore,

—promising to be with us in every place that we go. This being the case, it is evident that nobody has any right to go without that power.

To go forth without the power of Christ,—the power by which He preached and worked,—is presumption; it is not obedience to the Divine command; and whoever does so cannot possibly preach Christ’s Gospel.

And why should it be thought a hard saying, that no one should presume to go forth without the “all power,” when Christ is so anxious that everybody should have the benefit of it?

¹⁶⁹ **Matthew 4** ²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

28. Baptism: Its Significance

Signs of the Times, February 2, 1891

Bible Student's Library, No. 79, March 1891

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-16

Matthew 28

¹⁹ Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Mark 16

¹⁵ And He said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

¹⁶ He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.

IN THESE two texts we have the importance of baptism sufficiently set forth. Let us learn from the Scriptures what it signifies, and in so doing we shall show its nature and the necessity for it.

Joined to Christ and the Church

That baptism does not consist merely in an outward form is indicated in:

1 Corinthians 12

¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

It is true here as elsewhere that:

Colossians 2

¹⁷ ...the body is of Christ;

—and that this is the body into which we are baptized, is positively stated in:

Galatians 3

²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Thus we are taught that baptism is that by which we become Christ's, and heirs according to the promise. It is that by which we get into Christ, who is the Door of salvation. Being baptized into His body is being joined to His church, for the church is the body of Christ.

Ephesians 1

²² And [He] has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church,

²³ Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

Colossians 1

¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.

And since it is by His Spirit that this union is effected, it is evident that baptism is something more than a mere form, and that only those are members of the true church of Christ who have the Spirit of Christ.

Romans 8

⁹ But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

This must not by any means be understood as depreciating literal baptism or union with the visible church. We only wish to emphasize the fact that the simple *form* is not all.

When Should it be Done?

Since it is by baptism that we become united to Christ, —“put on Christ,”—a very important question is:

“At what point do we come into contact with Christ?”

That is,

“At what stage in the ministry of Christ do we become united to Him?”

The answer to this gives the key to the entire subject of baptism. This question is answered in:

Romans 6

³ Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

The death of Christ, then, is that by which we become united to Him. It is, so to speak, the marriage ceremony, by which we declare our union with Christ. Paul says,

2 Corinthians 11

² I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Just as in ordinary marriage two persons are united, so that they are no longer two, but “one flesh,” so in putting on Christ we become one with Him. Paul, after declaring that a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh, adds,

Ephesians 5

³² This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

But in this union with Christ it is His personality that dominates; we yield ourselves to Him—become swallowed up in Him—so that the one person is, not us, but Christ.

Sharing His Death and Resurrection

Baptism signifies the death and resurrection of Christ; but it signifies more than a simple recognition of that fact; it signifies our acceptance of that sacrifice, and that we actually share His death and resurrection. If we ever are glorified with Christ, we must suffer with Him.

Romans 8

¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

We must share the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death, and must also know the power of His resurrection.

Philippians 3

¹⁰ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

The Steps in Conversion

Let us trace the course of this great transaction.

Romans 3

²³ All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Because all have sinned, judgment has come upon all men to condemnation. This condemnation is to death, for the wages of sin is death.

Romans 5

¹² Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

¹⁸ Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Romans 6

²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Every man that does not believe in Christ is condemned already:

John 3

¹⁸ He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that be-

believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Sentence of death has already gone forth upon us, and our life is forfeited. In yielding to Satan, we have sold ourselves to him, and have received nothing in exchange. The Scripture says,

Isaiah 52

³ You have sold yourselves for nought...

Therefore we really have no life. This life that men live does not belong to them; they have given it, with themselves, into the power of Satan. And because sinners are condemned to death,—have forfeited their life,—the Scripture says:

John 3

³⁶ He that believes not the Son shall not see life.

He never has any life of his own. But the same scripture that says, “You have sold yourselves for nought,” says also,

Isaiah 52

³ ...you shall be redeemed without money.

Christ is the Redeemer. And because...

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ ...the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to give life to those who had forfeited their life to Satan. He, the stronger than the strong,¹⁷⁰ came and entered into the

¹⁷⁰ **Luke 11** ²² But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils.

prison-house of Satan, that He might redeem His captives.

Isaiah 52

³ You shall be redeemed without money.

1 Peter 1 [RV]

¹⁸ Knowing that you were redeemed not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers;

¹⁹ But with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.

Money could not purchase a single life. Life must be given for life; and the only life that could redeem a forfeited life is the life of Christ. He could buy us back only by giving His life for ours. That means that He gave His life to us, if we accept Him.

He has life in himself:

John 5

²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in himself.

He could lay down His life and take it again:

John 10

¹⁸ No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

When He lay in the grave,

Acts 2

²⁴ ...it was not possible that He should be held of it.

Herein He differed from man. If man should give up his life in payment of the forfeit, he would have nothing left. But Christ, whose life is of greater worth than that of all created beings, can give up His life and still have as much life left. Having paid the forfeit, He can give life to us in place of ours. If we accept His life, we are sure of life, no matter what be-

comes of this life.

Trading the Old Life for the New

But in order to get His life, which is proof against the power of Satan, we must acknowledge that our life is lost, and that there is no righteousness in us, with which to give anything toward its redemption.

Knowing that this life is not ours anyway, we must be willing to surrender it into the hands of Christ, in order that we may receive His life in exchange. This is most reasonable. It is a question of whether we will give our life to Satan, and get nothing in exchange, or to Christ, and get His life instead.

It would seem as though everybody ought to decide without a moment's hesitation; yet it is a struggle for everyone to give up this forfeited life for Christ's. It is not pleasant to die, and they would fain put it off as long as possible, or even persuade themselves that they will not have to give up life at all. The reason for this is that giving up this life means giving up all that pertains to it. All that is of self must go with the life. Says the apostle Paul:

Galatians 5 [RV]

²⁴ They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

This giving up of our life in order to get Christ's life instead, is variously spoken of as yielding ourselves to become His servants, submitting ourselves to God, etc.

How to Submit

The question arises,

“How do we submit ourselves to God?”

It is simple. Look at your life: see what things pertain solely to the present, natural life, those things that you do by nature. Take a survey of the things that you are addicted to, which

you know are not Christlike, but which cause you condemnation, even by your own heart.

Now you have doubtless done this; you have also repeatedly tried to overcome them and put them away, but have not been able to do so. But you sincerely desire to be rid of them. You would rather have Christ than your own ways. Therefore you say,

“Here, Lord, take me as I am; I give myself into your hands, for You to do with me as You will; take all these evils from me by the power that rests in You alone.”

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.¹⁷¹

So at last the surrender is made. We give ourselves to the Lord, and take Him instead. How do we get Him? We cannot tell anything about the process; we only know that it is by faith.

Galatians 3

²⁶ You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Christ dwells in the heart by faith.

Ephesians 3

¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...rooted and grounded in love.

All that there is to do on our part is to give up, to yield ourselves fully to the Lord, desiring that His ways shall take the place of our ways, and believing that He will give himself to

¹⁷¹ Charlotte Elliott, Hymn: *Just As I Am*, 1835.

us, according to His promise.

Then we are buried with Him by baptism into His death, thus signifying the putting off of the old life, the crucifying of the old man, and the taking of Christ's life, in whom we rise to walk in newness of life.

Colossians 3

¹ If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

³ For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

1 Corinthians 15

¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Romans 6

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Ephesians 4

²² That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

²⁴ And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away;

¹⁸ Behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God.

An Exchange of Life

Do not these scriptures state as plainly as can be that in be-

coming Christ's we take His life in exchange for ours? It is not simply that Christ gave His life to purchase us, but that He gives His life to us; our life has been forfeited, and we are virtually dead,—dead in trespasses and sins, and He gives His life to us that we may actually have life.

Henceforth, then, it is to be the life of Christ that meets the temptations of Satan, and labors to do the Father's will. But,

Hebrews 13

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Therefore the life which is given to us will present the same characteristics that the life of Christ presented when He was on the earth in person; His life in us must be as strong to do and to resist as it was when He lived in Judea.

Living by Faith

How can we live this life? Just as we received it—by faith. Read carefully and remember the following texts:

Colossians 3

¹ If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

Romans 6

⁸ Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him;

⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him.

¹⁰ For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He lives, He lives unto God.

¹¹ Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Colossians 2

⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

¹⁰ And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power;

¹¹ In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

¹² Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead.

This is the order of the new life: Having accepted Christ's life, we remember that the future life is to be His, not ours. Then the same spirit of self-renunciation that led us to accept Christ must be ever present with us to lead us to hold Him.

We must pray not only for a clean heart to be created in us, but also for a steadfast spirit to be renewed within us. And how do we hold Him? Just the same as we accepted Him and were raised with Him; through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

That is, with an intense longing that His life shall be manifest in ours, we lay hold of it through our faith in the power that raised Christ from the dead. We know that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead can quicken us, for that is why Christ was raised from the dead.

Romans 4

²⁵ [He] was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

This is that which Paul means when he expresses the desire,

Philippians 3

¹⁰ ...that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection.

It is what he wishes for us when he prays,

Ephesians 1

¹⁸ ...that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and

what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,
²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.

There can be no greater exhibition of power than that which is required to raise the dead. It is creative power. And this is the power which is given to us in Christ, the acceptance of which we acknowledge when we are buried with Him by baptism into His death, and are raised in Him.

How true it is that...

2 Peter 1

³ ...His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

And it is the manifestation of the power of Christ's life in our lives that gives us a sure hope of eternal life with Him. For says the apostle:

1 Peter 1

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you,

⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The Age for Baptism

The statement is that:

Mark 16

¹⁶ He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Those only who believe, therefore, are proper subjects for baptism. This does not by any means imply that only grown

persons may be baptized, for very young children may have sincere and intelligent faith in Christ. The gray-haired man must believe as a little child. But however old or however young, belief is the prerequisite of baptism.

The Mode of Baptism

Is it necessary to devote any space to the discussion of the subjects and the “mode of baptism”? Baptism is a burial. It is an expressive symbol of the complete hiding of self in Christ. The expression is,

Romans 6

⁴ ...buried with Him by baptism into death.

This would mean nothing if sprinkling were baptism. When baptism is declared to be a burial, that is really all that need be said about it. That word describes it exactly, but it does not in any sense describe sprinkling.

But there is certainly no need of discussing the “mode” of baptism with one who is not a fit subject for the ordinance. What he wants is to be shown his need of Christ; and when one has come to the point where he is wholly submissive to the will of Christ, when he fully surrenders to Him, then there is no necessity for any such discussion. He will gladly accept Christ in the divinely-appointed way.

May God grant that all who read may know, not simply the fact, but the power of Christ’s resurrection.

Jude 1

²⁴ Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

²⁵ To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

29. I Am With You (1893)

Present Truth, December 14, 1893

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Matthew 28:20

THESE are the words left by Jesus Christ with His disciples for their comfort amidst the trials and temptations which beset their pathway here. And how well adapted they are to cheer and sustain His followers through the vicissitudes of their earthly pilgrimage.

Matthew 28

²⁰ I am with you always,

—I, who have all power in heaven and in earth—I, who...

John 14

⁶ ...am the way, the truth, and the life,

—the embodiment of perfect wisdom and grace and righteousness. How full of comfort are such words if we will but believe them and keep them with us.

Is your place in life a very humble one, so that you seem altogether beneath the notice of men? The word of Christ to you is,

“I am with you.”

Is your lot a hard and painful one? Still the assurance comes,

“I am with you.”

The Saviour condescends to occupy any place, no matter what, that can be filled by one of His disciples. No station is too humble for Him; no lot too trying.

- Do you suffer for the necessities of life? Christ knows what it is to feel the pangs of hunger.
- Are you without friends? He knows what it is to be

friendless; in the very hour of His trial, “all the disciples forsook Him and fled.” *Matthew* 26:56.

- Are you without a home? The Son of man had not where to lay His head.

Wherever you have been as His followers, there He has been; wherever you are, there He is.

Christ has passed through lower depths and darker trials than any that ever have been or can be experienced by His earthly children. He did this that He might...

Hebrews 7

²⁵ ...save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

He descended to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might reach and save those who were sunken therein, as well as those who had fallen less low.

And not only has the Son of God been through all these dark places, but He is in each one of them with you. When you feel, He feels. He identifies himself with you in all your trials and sufferings. And thus it is that He will say to those who have clothed the naked, and visited the sick, fed the hungry, and in other ways ministered to the necessities of the needy,

Matthew 25 [RV]

⁴⁰ Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me.

The Apostle Paul tells us that:

Philippians 1

²⁹ Unto you is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

But, we are further told,

2 Corinthians 1

⁵ As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.

2 Corinthians 7

⁴ In all our tribulation, [said the apostle,] we are exceeding joyful.

In suffering, we have fellowship with Him.

Philippians 3

¹⁰ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

And therefore we may...

1 Peter 4

¹² Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial [that comes upon us]...

¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as we are [made] partakers of Christ's sufferings.

And when the hour of darkness comes,

¹⁹ ...commit the keeping of our souls to Him, as unto a faithful Creator.

30. I Am With You (1894)

Present Truth, January 18, 1894

Timeline: VIII-6 (Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee)

Matthew 28:20

To His disciples Jesus said,

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

But the question often arises,

“What shows that He is with us?”

And it receives various answers. Some say,

“The number of our converts shows it.”

Others say,

“Our zeal and works show it.”

But those who trust in these or other outward signs as an evidence of God’s presence, are deceived. Christ’s word is enough:

“I am with you.”

Those who come up in the Judgment day pointing to their numerous converts and their wonderful works, will hear the voice of their professed Master say to them,

Matthew 7

²³ I never knew you.

Those who do not take Christ at His word, cannot have Him with them. Faith constitutes the simplest and best evidence of spiritual truths that can be had.

Let us look to Christ for our evidence, and not to external signs.

31. The Ascension of Christ

Present Truth, May 9, 1901

International Sunday-school Lesson for May 19

Timeline: VIII-7 (The Ascension)

Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-11

FORTY days after His ascension Jesus led His disciples out as far as to Bethany,

Luke 24

⁵⁰ And He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

⁵¹ And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

⁵² And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

When Jesus told the disciples that He was about to go away and leave them, their hearts were filled with sorrow; how then did it come to pass that when He actually went away, they were filled with joy? Part of the answer is found in *Acts* 1, where we read that two angels stood by them as they were steadfastly gazing up into the space where they had seen Jesus disappear,

Acts 1

¹¹ Which also said, You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

The Blessed Hope

The promise of Christ's coming is the...

Titus 2

¹³ ...blessed hope

—that cheers and strengthens God's people. It is one of the...

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...exceeding great and precious promises

–by which we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and fitted for the society of God throughout eternity.

Titus 2 [RV]

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

¹² Instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world,

¹³ Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,

¹⁴ Who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for God's own possession, zealous of good works.

1 John 3

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

³ And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure.

The Assurance of Christ's Second Coming

The ascension of Jesus to heaven is the assurance of His second coming. He said,

John 14

³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Christ crucified is Christ risen again; for the resurrection is inseparable from the crucifixion. When Jesus was laid in the tomb, it was a certainty that He would rise again. God loosed the pains of death,

Acts 2

²⁴ ...because it was not possible that He should be held of it.

Even so the crucifixion and resurrection embrace the ascen-

sion to heaven; for the mighty power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, lifted Him up to the heavens, to a place at the right hand of God,

Ephesians 1

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.

And, still further, the ascension of Christ makes certain and necessary His coming again. The second coming of Christ is but the culmination of the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension. Of the Lord's Supper, the Apostle Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come.

The death of Christ, therefore, embraces everything that follows it in Christ's work,—the resurrection, the ascension, and the coming again. No one can perfectly preach...

1 Corinthians 2

² ...Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,

—without preaching the second coming of Christ.

This Manner of Christ's Coming

The ascension of Jesus shows the manner of His second coming. While the disciples beheld Him, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. But we are assured that this same Jesus shall come in like manner as He went into heaven; therefore,

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold, He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him.

As He went up, He would gradually recede from the gaze of the disciples, then the cloud alone would be seen, and lastly that would fade from view. So when He comes again, the first thing to be seen will be a white aloud, and after that Christ

himself will be recognized on it.

Revelation 14

¹⁴ I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

This is at the time of the harvest—the end of the world. First, the people will see...

Matthew 24

³⁰ ...the sign of the Son of man in heaven,...

—namely, the great white cloud,

³⁰ ...and then...they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The Promise of the Spirit

The other reason why the disciples returned from seeing the ascension of Jesus, with great joy, was that they had received a most wonderful and blessed promise. Jesus said,

Luke 24

⁴⁹ Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high.

At the same time He told them that they would not need to tarry long, for He also said:

Acts 1

⁵ You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

And then He added,

⁸ You shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Whoever has any sense of the meaning of this promise can-

not help rejoicing, even in death itself; for the resurrection of the dead is...

Romans 1

⁴ ...with power, according to the Spirit of holiness;

—and that is the power which makes us sons of God. So the joy that comes to all who are still looking up into heaven, where their Lord has gone, is the knowledge of the fact that the power of the coming of the Lord is the power of His personal presence in their hearts by His Holy Spirit.

Overview and Reflections

*Here are miscellaneous articles,
arranged by date,
which reflect on the meaning and significance
of the Life and Death of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.*

1. The Suffering of Christ

Present Truth, July 20, 1893

The prophet says:

Isaiah 53

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

⁵ He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

NOTE that the healing is present; but present healing means a present remedy, therefore Christ suffers from the stripes even now.

⁵ With His stripes we *are* healed.

The sufferings of Christ for us were not all confined to the cross.

Hebrews 2

¹⁸ For in that He himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are attempted.

Hebrews 4

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our profession.

¹⁵ For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

It was the sins of men that nailed Christ to the cross.

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 2

²⁴ Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we are healed.

Galatians 3

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.

The suffering, therefore, that Jesus endured for us, was not simply the pain of the nails through His hands and feet. Many men have endured that physical suffering. At that very time there were two thieves undergoing the torture of crucifixion; and many men have been tortured in body to the fullest extent that fiendish cruelty could invent; yet no man has ever suffered as Jesus did. And why? Because no one but He has ever suffered the sins of the world.

Isaiah 53

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

It was human weaknesses and frailties that caused the suffering of the Son of God. Now the apostle says that although He is in the heavens, He is still...

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ ...touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

That is, the same things that caused Him pain when He was on earth, cause Him pain now. And this is still further shown by the statement that those who turn away from the Lord, and go deliberately into sin,

Hebrews 6

⁶ ...crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.

Surely in this there is something to hold us back from sin. We cannot keep the Son of God from suffering, for in all our affliction He is afflicted, and He suffers in all the temptations

that beset us; but we can keep from putting Him to open shame.

The thought that our sins cause grief and pain even now to the Son of God, and also that in our temptations He has the sympathy that comes from actual common suffering, must draw us to Him. It must bind us to Him, so that, as He shares our suffering, we may share His strength that is able to bear it.

1 Peter 4

¹⁹ Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

2. Christian Experience

Present Truth, August 17, 1893

The apostle Peter testified of Christ, that:

Acts 10

³⁸ He went about doing good.

NO MAN ever led a busier life than did our Saviour. The narrative of His ministry on earth contains no record of weeks or months passed in seclusion or inactivity. It is a narrative of continual travel and labor among the inhabitants of the cities and towns of Palestine,—the fields that were white for the heavenly harvest. It is a narrative of constant work for the physical and mental uplifting of those around Him.

He healed the sick, He raised the dead, He cleansed the lepers, restored the crippled, gave sight to the blind, cast out devils, fed the multitudes, and to all He preached the Gospel. He was found amidst the throng and press of the multitudes, out in the common daily walks of life, ministering and bringing relief wherever there was suffering and need.

This is the example that is set before the Christian, the follower of Christ. This is to be the basis of his Christian experience. His life must be a life of work, and such work as centers not upon himself, but upon his fellows.

Here is one contrast between heathen religions and the religion of Christ. The former makes self the object of all religious activity in devotions, while in the latter the object is not self, but our fellow men.

Philippians 2

⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Christ left His seat upon the throne of His glory, to come to this dark world where He would have neither wealth nor position, and He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister

to others. This was the mind of Christ, and this is to be the mind of His followers.

Philippians 2

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

But there are very many whose religious experience bears a resemblance to that of the heathen devotee. Their Christian life is lacking in real work done for the uplifting of others. They may be very devout, be seldom absent from religious service, pray long and earnestly, and read and meditate much upon religious themes; but all this does not make a true Christian life.

They themselves realize, perhaps, in their inmost souls, that there is a lack somewhere,—some essential feature of Christian living that their lives do not show, yet they cannot see that all this should not make them good Christians. Ah, it cannot be said of them that they go about doing good. Their experience rests upon no solid foundation. They do not do as did the Saviour.

Christ prayed much, but His time was not all spent in prayer. Nor was it all passed in religious reading and meditation, nor in other acts of public or private devotion. His life was spent in contact with others, in ministering to their needs, relieving their distress, and pointing them to the way of life.

And this example is to be copied by His followers. Christian labor is essential to Christian life. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray with devotion; and he who does

nothing but read the Scriptures will soon cease to read them with interest, or to get from them their precious lessons of truth.

He who merely goes through the forms of Christian service must soon cease to feel the sacred impressions of Christian worship, or to see beyond the mere round of formalities which he observes. The Master does not reveal himself to the idlers in His vineyard, but to the workers. His lessons of truth become vital principles in the soul only by coming in contact with the spirit of earnest labor for His sake.

The great commission from Christ's lips says, "Go!"

Mark 16

¹⁵ Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

And His promise is,

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

But He left no promise to be lookers-on. True Christian experience must have a basis of earnest Christian labor. The successful aspirant for a heavenly crown will be the one who has unselfishly labored to relieve the wants and uplift the souls of his fellows; for to him will be spoken the words, in the day of his Lord's appearing,

Matthew 25

³⁴ Come, you blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

3. Suffering with Christ

Present Truth, September 14, 1893

1 Peter 4

¹ Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

THERE are various kinds of suffering, and the severest kind is not that which is of the body alone. The suffering of Christ for us in the flesh was during His whole earthly ministry, and not alone while He was being buffeted by the rude soldiers, scourged before Pilate, and nailed to the cross. In *1 Peter 3* we read that:

1 Peter 3

¹⁸ Christ...suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.

The sins were not His own, but ours.

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ He who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us.

Isaiah 53

⁵ He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Since He suffered because of our sins, and was bruised for our iniquities, it must be that His suffering in the flesh was all the time that our sins were on Him. But that was from the first, for He was made to be sin for us;

Galatians 4

⁴ [He was] made under the law,

—literally, “born under the law,” as we read in *Revised Version*. He was sent...

Romans 8

³ ...in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,

–being in all things made...

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ ...like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

So during the whole of His earthly life Christ was bearing our infirmities, and suffering for us in the flesh.

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 2

¹⁸ For in that He himself has *suffered being tempted*, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

This is how Christ suffered for us in the flesh. His suffering was in the resisting of temptation. The first recorded temptation was the forty days' temptation in the wilderness. The last was in the Garden of Gethsemane. In both these instances He most emphatically "suffered, being tempted." He kneeled down and prayed, saying,

Luke 22

⁴² Father, if You be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done.

⁴³ And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

⁴⁴ And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

This was a most powerful temptation of Satan, as is shown by the fact that when Jesus had foretold His sufferings and death, and Peter had said,

Matthew 16 [margin]

²² Be it far from You, Lord [pity yourself]; this shall not be unto You,

He replied,

²³ Get behind me, Satan; you are an offense unto me; for you do not savor the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

The same spirit that was seeking, through Peter, to induce Jesus to shun the cross, was working with inconceivably greater force in the garden, for the same purpose. But in this crowning temptation Jesus was steadfast, as in all others. He was perfectly submissive to the will of God. In that temptation Satan exhausted his power upon the Son of God, but without effect.

When that trial was over, the great victory was won. No more temptation came to Him, for there was nothing more that could come. The final victory for man was gained in that night struggle in Gethsemane. Therefore it is to that time that the Apostle Paul directs our minds in the following exhortation:

Hebrews 12

¹ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

² Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.

⁴ You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Christ did that very thing. In the greatest trial that any be-

ing ever passed through, He resisted unto blood.

Isaiah 53

⁵ With His stripes we are healed.

Through His suffering,

Hebrews 9

¹² He...obtained eternal redemption for us.

The victory over sin is to be obtained by us through our Lord Jesus Christ. So we come back to the words,

1 Peter 4

¹ Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

What suffering, and what kind of suffering is here referred to? Evidently to the suffering that Christ endured. Christ suffered for sin; we are to arm ourselves with the same mind; and having done that, His sufferings will be borne in us, and they will prove as effectual in us as they were in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

It is no fancy that the sufferings of Christ are to be experienced by men who shall overcome. The Apostle Paul expressed this as his desire,

Philippians 3

¹⁰ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

And again,

2 Corinthians 1

⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.

There can be no question but that the man who resists sin as Christ did, will not sin. But the only way in which this can

be done, is to have Christ himself living in us His own life of resistance to sin. He alone of all those who have lived on earth, committed no sin.

1 John 3

⁵ You know that He was manifested to take away our sin; and in Him is no sin.

God was manifest in the flesh in order to demonstrate His ability to live in the flesh of man. He stands at the door of every heart and knocks, craving admittance. If He is given full permission to come in and take up His abode in any heart, He will resist sin with the same strength that He did eighteen hundred years ago, for:

Hebrews 13

⁸ [He is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁷ Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Not Discouraged

Present Truth, January 11, 1894

Of Christ it is said,

Isaiah 42

⁴ He shall not fail or be discouraged, till He has set judgment in the earth.

HE WILL set judgment in the earth, not as an abstract thing, but by putting righteousness into human hearts.

That means in my heart, if I will let Him. He has undertaken my case, and knows all about me. He knows more of the evil of my heart than I have ever dreamed of. And yet He is not discouraged.

Surely if Christ with all His knowledge of the sinfulness of my heart, and of the weakness of the flesh, is not discouraged, I have every reason to be of good courage, knowing that:

Philippians 1

⁶ He who has begun a good work in me will perfect it against the day of His coming.

5. Let This Mind Be in You

Present Truth, February 22, 1894

THE Creator of heaven and earth in a stable! The King of glory in a manger! How came He there? Ah! that is the wonder. He never would have been there if His mind had been like Satan's mind, like the mind that you and I so often have.

We sometimes think that because God is the King of all kings, and is so wise and powerful, that He must be proud and selfish like many of the kings of earth. But this is a great mistake, as you will see when you become better acquainted with the babe in the manger.

God is unselfish and altogether lovely. He is not in the habit of looking upon His own things and forgetting whether those around Him have anything or not. But He is always looking upon others to see if they have all that they need. If they have not, His greatest joy is, not to please himself, but to do something for them, going without himself if necessary, in order that they may have what they need. Notice carefully and you will see that this is true.

Man, who had been created pure and good in the image of God, had given up his life and purity and all that he had to Satan, the enemy of God and man. The Lord knew that this meant sin, and sorrow, and eternal death for every one of us. For Satan was a hard and cruel master and much stronger than we, so that he would never allow one of us to go free.

It was all man's fault, to be sure, but God loved us so that in spite of all that, His heart was overflowing with grief when He saw our helpless condition. His heart yearned over us as a mother's heart yearns over her dying child. The riches and glories of heaven were nothing to Him compared with His love for us. He could not be happy and enjoy them alone; He must have us to share them with Him.

Why did He not send someone to overcome Satan, then, and break his fetters and give man back his freedom and his life of purity? Ah, who could He send? No man could do it, for Satan was stronger than any man. Not even the angels could do it, for they had no more life for purity than they needed for themselves; all they had was given them by God.

God only was stronger than Satan. And with Him alone was the fountain of purity and life.

- Nothing could drive out the darkness of sin but the light of His life.
- Nothing could break the chords of sin with which Satan had bound us, but the righteousness of His life.
- Nothing could take away the keys of the grave but the power of His marvelous life which could go down into the grave, and pass through the grave, and carry the keys away with it.

But this would mean a life of pain and temptation in sinful flesh, and a cruel death upon the cross—for God! Oh, did He love us enough to give up His glorious home and all His riches and joys in heaven, and come down to earth as the poorest of the poor, and the weakest of the weak, and pass through every pain and temptation of sinful flesh, even to death's dark door? Yes, He did! God came in His Son to reconcile the world unto himself.

- Look at Him there in the rude manger of Bethlehem.
- Look at Him in the lowly home of Nazareth, subject to His parents in all things and sharing all the homely burdens and labors of His father—as the carpenter.
- Look at Him in the wilderness without food for forty days and forty nights, and tempted by the devil.
- Look at Him thrust out of the synagogues and cities and hunted to the death by those whom He came to save.
- Look at Him going about without a home or friends

with no place to lay His head, yet with never a murmur, and with always a kind word and a helping hand.

- Look at Him in Gethsemane sweating as it were great drops of blood.
- Look at Him betrayed by the kiss of one of His professed followers.
- Look at Him in the judgment hall mocked, scourged, spit upon, dressed in an old purple robe, and crowned with a crown of thorns.
- Look at Him fainting by the way, and oh, look at Him hanging on the cursed cross with His tender hands and feet still quivering from the cruel nails!
- Look at Him dying of a broken heart because of your sins and mine! “Behold your God!”

Oh, can you longer doubt His love for you? Can you doubt His willingness to accept you as His child? Can you ever doubt His unselfishness?

Follow Him to Joseph’s new tomb, and see Him laid away with a great stone before the door. But look once more. The stone is rolled away. The grave clothes lie there, but our Lord is risen!

Death could not hold Him. The glorious work is finished. He has bought us back and has broken the last fetter and unlocked the last door that shut us in with Satan! HE HAS SET US FREE! He has proclaimed liberty to every captive,

Isaiah 61

¹ ...and the opening of the prison to them that are bound!

In the name of Jesus we may walk out into all the liberty of the sons of God. Satan cannot overcome us or cause us to sin once more if we believe in Jesus and stand fast and rejoice...

Galatians 5

¹ ...in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

As long as we believe that He has made us free and yield to Him in everything, letting His mind be in us, Satan cannot touch us.

We, today then, are called upon to make the same decision that the angels of heaven made so long ago.

Exodus 32

²⁶ Who is on the Lord's side?

Matthew 12

³⁰ He that is not for me is against me.

We, as they were, are left perfectly free to choose for ourselves. We need not be on the Lord's side unless we wish. But, oh, do we not wish to be? Has He not proved himself to be...

Song 5

¹⁰ ...the chiefest among ten thousand,

¹⁶ [and the One] altogether lovely?

Has He not shown himself worthy of our confidence? What more could He do to show His love for us than He has done?

Hebrews 2

¹⁸ Having suffered himself being tempted, He is able to help them that are tempted.

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ He is still touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Psalms 103

¹⁴ He knows our frame and remembers that we are dust.

Although we are so poor and wicked, yet He thinks upon us, and His thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace.

Jeremiah 29

¹¹ I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Oh, then, shall we not choose Him for our Master, and let

this mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus?

Philippians 2

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

6. Christ's Humiliation His Glory

Present Truth, March 8, 1894

Philippians 2

⁸ He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.

THE exaltation of Christ, that which is and will be His highest glory, and which makes angels bow before Him, is due to that which He has done and suffered for us.

The prints in His hands, and the wound in the side will be throughout all eternity the tokens of His exaltation and power.

Zechariah 13

⁶ And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in your hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

When the Lord comes from heaven in glory, it will shine brightest from the side that was pierced.

Habakkuk 3 [margin]

³ His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.

⁴ And His brightness was as the light; He had bright beams out of His side; and there was the hiding of His power.

Thus as every eye sees Him in the clouds of heaven, and they also that pierced Him,¹⁷² the marks of His humiliation when on earth will be the highest glory.

¹⁷² **Revelation 1** ⁷ Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

7. The Promise Fulfilled

Present Truth, April 19, 1894

Acts 13

²³ Of this man's seed has God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.

MEN often make promises that they cannot or do not fulfill. But God's promises are as much better than man's promises as the heavens are higher than the earth. He never promises anything that He cannot do; and He never forgets; and He cannot lie.

Therefore when God promises anything, it is just as sure as though it were already done. He may not do it just when we think He will, or in just the way that we suppose He will, but we may be certain that it will be done at the right time, and in the very best way, and exactly as He promised.

So do not be afraid to trust Him, though He seem to wait long sometimes; He has not forgotten, and He will surely keep His promise.

Last week we learned of the wonderful promise concerning the "Lamb of God:"¹⁷³ God so loved lost and dying man that He promised to send His only begotten Son to die for them,

John 3

¹⁶ ...that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Thousands of years passed by and God had not yet fulfilled His promise. The Lamb of God had not yet been slain. Had God forgotten His promise? Could it be possible that God would not keep His word? No, never.

¹⁷³ This article, and the "Lamb of God" article (from *Present Truth*, April 12, 1894) that Waggoner is referring to, were written for children, as part of a series. They are contained in the collection, *The Everlasting Gospel for Children*, in the section, "The Story of Creation and the Fall."

Many thought He would never keep His word, and they stopped looking for Him. But a few faithful ones still believed and watched and longed for the Saviour.

And were they disappointed? Oh, no. God never disappoints those who trust in His word. God had for a long time been quietly preparing the way for His coming Son. It was then time for Him to appear.

Suddenly a glorious light appeared in the sky one night. Bethlehem's plains were lighted up with multitudes of heavenly beings. An angel's voice was heard speaking to the believing shepherds. Listen! What did he say?

Luke 2

¹⁰ Fear not: for, behold, I bring you GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, which shall be to all people.

¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord!

¹² And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Ah, the long-looked-for day had really come. The promise was to be fulfilled. The innocent Lamb of God was about to be slain. He was already lying a helpless babe, in the manger at Bethlehem!

Luke 2

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest,

—was sung by the angels, and echoed in the hearts of the shepherds; for was not that the best news that could ever come to a fallen world? Man was to be redeemed from the power of Satan and from his cords of sin!

Do you wonder that the shepherds left their sheep and went with haste to Bethlehem? We read that they stopped not until they had found Mary and Joseph, and had seen with their own eyes, their Saviour, the Creator of heaven and earth,

¹⁶ ...lying in a manger!

And they returned glorifying and praising God and telling everyone they saw of the glad, glad news which the angel brought.

And the blessed babe grew,—just as other babies grow. And when He was eight days old, His name was called “Jesus,” because He was to save His people from their sins.

We should be glad to tell you of the joy of Simeon and Anna when they saw Him in the temple of Jerusalem, and of the wise men who came from the far east to worship Him and give Him presents, but you must read that for yourself in your Bible.

Although the few who had believed the promise were filled with unspeakable joy when He came, the many who had not believed the promise, were not glad to see Him; and their hearts were filled with hatred toward the One who had come to save them! King Herod sent his soldiers and tried to kill Him, but Joseph had been warned in a dream and had taken Jesus and His mother and fled by night into Egypt.

After the king’s death they returned and lived in a town called Nazareth,

Luke 2

⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

But He never thought that He knew too much to help and obey His parents. He helped His father at the carpenters’ trade, and was subject unto them both in everything.

He came as a little child that He might know all the trials and temptations of a child, so that He might know how to comfort and help you as well as older people. He made it possible for you to be as kind and lovely and perfect a child as He was, if you yield to God’s Spirit as completely as He did.

Satan tempted Him to be naughty in the same ways that he

tempts you, but Jesus never yielded to him once, because He allowed God, His mighty Helper, to stay with Him every minute.

He was so perfect that at His baptism, when He was about thirty years old, the voice of God sounded out of heaven and said,

Matthew 3

¹⁷ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

After His baptism, He was in the wilderness among the wild beasts, without food, for forty days and forty nights tempted of the devil. But though so weak and hungry and tired, His heart was so filled with the precious words of God that He could drive Satan away with them every time. And that shows how we also may drive him away.

And Jesus began to preach, and He went from city to city healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, giving sight to the blind and life to the dead, and doing good to all.

But He was hated and rejected, and cast out of the synagogues, betrayed by one of His own disciples, crowned with thorns, and finally crucified between two thieves! No wonder that the sun hid its face, and the earth shook, and the rocks were rent.

But the fearful price was paid. The Lamb of God had shed His precious blood to redeem us from the power of Satan. A “way” had been opened through the wall of sin back to God.

Acts 13

²³ God [had] according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.

And the joy of it is that this way back to God is a “living way,”—not a dead way. Jesus lives again!

On the third day, angels rolled the stone away from the tomb and Jesus rose triumphant with the keys of death and

the grave; and after forty days He was taken up in a cloud to heaven where He still lives to help and lead us along, like a shepherd, in the right way.

And we have the promise that in the same manner in which He was taken up into heaven, He will come again, to take those who have accepted Him as their Saviour to reign with Him for ever.

Then will He welcome them back to God, back to Eden, and back to everything that they had lost by sin.

When you are tempted to sin, think of the price that Divine love has paid for you, and yield to Him His own, and let Him save you.

8. Of No Reputation

Present Truth, December 6, 1894

THE amazing condescension of the Son of God in taking upon himself the nature of humanity and becoming a babe of flesh and blood, is set forth in the declaration that:

Philippians 2

⁷ [He] made himself of no reputation.

In heaven His reputation was great, for He was the Son of God, and Creator of all things. But when He came to earth He left all,—His power, His glory, His riches, and His reputation. He began His life again, at the point where each one of us began ours; and the same path in which He walked, and in which He attained to wisdom and a place at God's right hand, is open to us.

As a child, He grew and...

Luke 2

⁵² ...increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Each of us had, as a child, the same opportunities. His wisdom was the wisdom contained in God's word, which is open to us; His strength was the strength of God dwelling in Him, which is also our strength by the power of His word abiding in us.

When He was raised from the dead, it was not a taking back of what He had relinquished in heaven; but God declared,

Hebrews 5 [Psalm 2:7]

⁵ You are my Son, this day have I begotten You.

In all points He was identified with us, save that...

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ He...knew no sin.

And this identity continues, for He is today:

1 Timothy 2

⁵ ...the man Christ Jesus.

And that He might be identified with us in all things, He took our sins upon himself,¹⁷⁴ died, and rose again, thus raising man to His own level in the one point where that identity was not complete.

¹⁷⁴ **1 Peter 2** ²⁴ Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed.

9. The Primitive Faith

Present Truth, June 24, 1897

Original title: Front Page

THERE is much controversy about the “primitive faith,” and the writings of the “Fathers” and the declarations of the councils are freely quoted to establish this or that doctrine or practice as of the primitive faith.

Nothing is simpler than finding what the primitive faith was. The Scripture says that there is but “one Lord” there is also but “one faith.” Anything other than that must be no faith at all.

Ephesians 4

⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

The trouble is men want human definitions of the faith instead of the faith itself. But nothing human can enter into the composition of the faith. It is not what any man or body of men may think about the Lord. It is what He himself says, and the life that He lives. “The faith of Jesus,” is the one faith.

Jesus, who was the Word, as our example of life and teaching lived...

Matthew 4

⁴ ...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

His faith came by...

Romans 10

¹⁷ ...hearing...the Word of God.

Isaiah 50

⁴ Morning by morning, He awakens my ear to hear...

⁵ ...and I was not rebellious.

John 14

²⁴ The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.

John 6

³⁸ I came...not to do my own will.

Psalms 40

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God; yea, your law is within my heart.

John 15

¹⁰ I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

John 14

¹⁰ The Father that dwells in me, He does the works.

This is the primitive faith. It is a life of obedience that Jesus now lives over again in every one that accepts Him.

10. The Eternal Present

Present Truth, November 18, 1897

THERE is a common complaint that unbelievers have against believers in the religion of Christ, and that is that they live too much in the future, and not in the present; that religion concerns itself only with promises that are to be fulfilled at some indefinite future time, and leaves the things of the present entirely alone.

Now so far as this complaint is directed against many professed Christians, it is all too applicable, but it is altogether wrong as regards Christianity itself. He from whom Christianity springs,

Acts 10

³⁸ ...went about doing good.

His thought was of the poor and the suffering, and they received the most of His attention. To relieve present necessity, occupied His whole time and care. His appearance in this world was made known by the proclamation:

Luke 2

¹⁴ On earth peace, good will toward men.

The “glory to God in the highest” (*Luke 2:14*), was revealed in “grace and truth” (*John 1:14, 17*) bringing salvation to mankind. This salvation is indeed “eternal salvation” (*Hebrews 5:9*), including therefore the most distant future, but it is also, because it is eternal, a present salvation.

1 Timothy 4

⁸ Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Many people always conclude their prayers with a request to be “saved at last.” The future seems to be their only anxiety, and often they stumble because of their continual looking to

the distant scene.

But this is not according to the teaching of the Gospel. “Now,”¹⁷⁵ “today,”¹⁷⁶ are the words which it most employs. It is quite true that it promises much for the future, but the only assurance of future salvation is present salvation. He who is saved today, has no fear for tomorrow.

The Gospel does not consist in theories or dogmas, but in actual life. It does not present to men and women abstruse problems to puzzle their brains over, or questions for speculative discussion, but present help for daily need.

Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Real Gospel teaching consists in giving the people such instruction as will help them to live the right kind of life from day to day. It is to the laboring and the oppressed classes that the Gospel appeals. All that labor and are heavy laden are offered rest.

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.

³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

When the Lord says, “Come,” He means come now, and whoever comes finds rest at once. He does not disappoint anybody. This is just what the 4th chapter of *Hebrews* presents, in the statement,

¹⁷⁵ **2 Corinthians 6** ² For He said, I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored you: behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.

¹⁷⁶ **Hebrews 4** ⁷ *Today* if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

Hebrews 4

⁹ There remains therefore a rest to the people of God.

This verse has been strangely misread, and made to refer only to the future, when it means now. That which remains is not that which is yet to come, but that which has already been, and is still in existence. The remnant of a piece of goods is the portion that has not yet been disposed of. So the “rest that remains” is the rest that God prepared from the foundation of the earth, and which is still open for weary souls to accept.

The Christian life is a life of rest even in toil:

John 16

³³ These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

This rest is found in Christ,—in His life. But His life is eternal life, which He gives to as many as receive Him.

1 John 5 [RV]

¹³ These things have I written unto you, that you may know that you have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.

So it is that the Gospel has to do with eternal things, but eternal things *in the present time*. The trouble with people is that they regard eternity as only future, whereas eternity is past, present, and future. It has been, is, and is to be. But specially is it now.

Isaiah 57

¹⁵ [God] inhabits eternity.

But His name is I AM.¹⁷⁷ Eternity with Him is always

¹⁷⁷ **Exodus 3** ¹³ And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers has sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? ¹⁴ And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He

present. Likewise He desires us to live the life eternal, but always in the present. He who truly believes in Christ, passes from death unto life, from the temporal to the eternal, from the unreal to the real. And thus it is in a sense true that the Gospel has to do with the next world, rather than with this.

Galatians 1

⁴ [Christ] gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

But He delivers us from this present world only by saving us from the evil of it. He gives us rest in righteousness. But this rest in righteousness—the rest that remains—is the rest that was ready for man from the foundation of the world.

Hebrews 4

³ For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

⁴ For He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.

⁵ And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

As we learned in the 2nd chapter of *Hebrews*,¹⁷⁸ God has put “the world to come” in subjection to man, not to angels. Do not forget that “the world to come” *has been* put in subjection to man, not *is to be* put in subjection to him.

That world to come is the new earth, the same that God created and gave to man in the beginning. Its rest and peace and power are to be enjoyed in this present time, thus bringing heaven upon earth, and giving men a heaven in which to live, while going to heaven. While the redeemed are to sing a new

said, Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you.

¹⁷⁸ See *Lessons from the Book of Hebrews*, 1897, especially Study #6, “Subjection to the World to Come.”

song on Mount Zion, they are to...

Isaiah 51

¹¹ ...come with singing unto Zion.

Hebrews 4

⁴ God did rest the seventh day from all His work.

³ The works were finished from the foundation of the world.

That rest God gave to man, and the rest still remains, for on the cross, Christ, in whom all things are created, said,

John 19

³⁰ It is finished.

The same rest which is now given, is to be enjoyed in the ages to come, for:

Revelation 21

⁵ He that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write; for these things are true and faithful.

⁶ And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

The finished work of creation in the beginning, and the finished work of the new creation, are found in the cross of Christ. Oh, come to Christ, believe His word, and find rest now.

11. He Gave Himself

Present Truth, August 4, 1898

Original title: Back Page

Galatians 1

⁴ [Christ] gave himself for our sins.

Titus 2

¹⁴ [He] gave himself for us.

Galatians 2

²⁰ [He] loved me, and gave himself for me.

THE Gospel consists in giving. The Christian life is a life of service, of giving to others.

Matthew 10

⁸ Freely you have received, freely give.

The living waters flow from the throne:

Revelation 22

¹ And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

And he who believes and receives, from him shall flow rivers of living water:

John 7

³⁸ He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

What shall we give? There is only one thing to give, namely, ourselves. First of all give ourselves to the Lord; and since He gives away everything He has, it follows that we must give ourselves to our fellowmen.

1 John 3

¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

So-called Christian work that is not the giving of self, is not Christian work at all, Mere talk will never suffice to convert anybody; the life must be given.

It was not merely when Jesus hung on the cross of Calvary that He gave himself. His whole life was a gift. He gave His life all His life long, and still He gives us himself. When He healed disease, it was His Divine life that gave the renewing. When He spoke, His own life was in the words.

John 1

¹⁴ The Word was made flesh.

He was what He spoke, and therein lay the power of His words. Jesus spoke with authority, because He spoke from His life. Whatever one says, that is not fresh from his own experience, that is not his own life in articulate form, is of no value.

You wish to help somebody? Good! give him yourself, and the thing is done. You may say that you are of not enough importance or value to do anybody any good. That is all right; Christ gives us himself, that it may be no more ourselves but himself. Receive Him; then give yourself; and His presence will make the gift valuable and helpful.

12. A Good Steward

Present Truth, April 13, 1899

Original title: Back Page

THAT which keeps men from receiving God's blessings in larger measure is the selfish use they make of those they do receive. Not passing on to others what they receive, they cannot develop in Christian experience, and are content to be ministered unto instead of being ministers.

Christ was faithful in all things, as a good steward of the manifold grace of God. No good that He enjoys is retained to minister to His own pleasure, or uphold His own dignity, but is given freely to all. He had everything that heart could wish, yet He emptied himself, and, taking the form of a servant, became obedient unto death, even the, death of the cross. It was His joy to serve others, and it is when He sees others saved that His soul is satisfied.

Because this mind was in Christ, God could safely commit everything into His hands, knowing that the power would be used to bless others. So God has given to Him a name which is above every name.

But this is not the end. We are not to think of Christ as having gained the position He coveted, and to secure which He suffered himself to be humiliated for awhile. He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. Therefore He remains a servant in heart still.

Acts 5

³¹ Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel.

But it is the goodness of God that leads man to repentance (*Romans 2:4*), therefore the more highly Christ is exalted, the more will He continue to show forth the goodness of God in His dealings with us.

13. What Would Jesus Do?

Present Truth, October 19, 1899

“What would Jesus do?”

THIS is a question that has been given quite a prominent place of late. There is a much more important question, one more easily answered, and one which should take the place of this; and that question is,

“What *did* Jesus do?”

1 Peter 2

²¹ [He] suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.

Instead of speculating about what Jesus would do under certain circumstances, and coming to wrong conclusions because we decide according to what we think or have been taught, we have only to go to the Bible to find out exactly what He actually did, and then follow it.

14. In the Footsteps of Jesus

Present Truth, February 8, 1900

MANY have a great ambition to visit the Holy Land, walk up and down the streets of Jerusalem and Nazareth and Bethlehem and Cana, sit beside Jacob's well, and gaze upon the blue waters of Galilee, because it is there that Jesus walked and talked with the people when He was upon earth.

Interesting as that would be as a matter of curiosity, it could have no virtue. It would have been far more grand to be present and to walk with Him when He was upon earth. But even then His words were,

John 4

²¹ The hour comes when you shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.

²² But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him.

²⁴ God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Wherever men worship in Spirit and in truth, they are in the personal presence of God.

It is a blessed thing that one does not have to go to Jerusalem to walk in the footsteps of Christ he can do it right where he is; and even more, he can walk side by side with the Saviour, all the time, for the promise is:

Hebrews 13

⁵ I will never leave you nor forsake you.

15. Walking in Christ's Steps

Present Truth, February 21, 1901

HOW many there are who long to visit Palestine and old Jerusalem, in order to stand in the places where Christ was, and to walk over the ground that He trod upon.

Yet those who go there cannot touch the identical spots that Jesus touched, for time and weather have buried some of them deep in the sand, or have carried this soil to other places. There is no certainty concerning even the place of His crucifixion and burial, so that at best there is sure to be an element of dissatisfaction in such a visit.

But we may walk where Jesus has walked;

1 Peter 2

²¹ ...because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow His steps.

We may not merely walk where He walked centuries ago, but we may walk with Him now, and may know that we are treading exactly in His steps. Jerusalem which now is, is in bondage, but...

Galatians 4

²⁶ Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

It is there that we are to come to meet with Jesus:

Hebrews 12

²² But you are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

²³ To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

²⁴ And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of

Abel.

And we may not only walk with Him, but “in Him,” so that our feet will step in His footprints evenly with Him; and still more, we may...

Ephesians 2

⁸ ...sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

It is far better to be precisely where Christ is today, than to be near where He was eighteen or nineteen hundred years ago.

16. What Has Jesus Done?

Present Truth, November 15, 1900

THE question, “What would Jesus do?” seems to have passed out of common use, having had its brief run; but the question, “What has Jesus done?” ought to take its place, and never be allowed to fall into disuse.

To know what He has done, is to know what we ought to do, because:

1 Peter 2

²¹ He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps;

and,

1 John 2

⁶ He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.

Therefore it is most important for us to know what Jesus did here on the earth. Knowing that, we know how to yield ourselves to Him, how to cooperate with Him, for we are...

Romans 5

¹⁰ ...saved by His life.

Hebrews 13

⁸ [He is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

And so what He did is what He still does, and what He will do in us if we allow Him to live in us.

Romans 5

¹⁹ By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.

Nor is this all. Just because people do not grasp what Jesus has done, they do not know what it is their privilege to enjoy. What has He done?

2 Timothy 1

¹⁰ [He has] abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

By the power by which He abolished death,

Titus 2

¹⁴ [He] gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.

He has overcome the world.

Colossians 2

¹⁵ [He] has spoiled principalities and powers,

–the same ones with which we have to fight, and has taken from them all their armor, triumphing over them.¹⁷⁹ Yea,

Revelation 1

⁵ [He] loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

⁶ And has made us kings and priests unto God.

What more could we ask to have done? Therefore we pray...

Ephesians 1

¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him;

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

¹⁷⁹ **Luke 11** ²² But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils.

17. The Son of the Highest

Present Truth, December 27, 1900

It is plain that the Son of the Highest must himself...

Isaiah 52

¹³ ...be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

So God has...

Ephesians 1

²⁰ ...raised Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;

²² And has put all things under His feet.

Nevertheless Christ, the Son of the Highest, is the Son of David, and He has been raised to His exalted position, in fulfillment of God's oath to David,

Acts 2

³⁰ ...that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.

Luke 1

³² The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.

Galatians 4 [RV]

⁴ God sent forth His Son, born of a woman,

—that in Him He might show the position to which He has called “the seed of the woman,” that is, every person descended from Eve. Christ is the Son of God's love, and:

1 John 3

¹ Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall

appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

³ And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure.

Colossians 2

⁹ In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

¹⁰ And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Christ is to dwell in our hearts by faith, to the end that we may...

Ephesians 3

¹⁹ ...be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 2

⁴ God...

⁵ ...has quickened us together with Christ,...

⁶ And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Christ as Son of the Highest is but...

Romans 8

²⁹ ...the firstborn among many brethren,

—and therefore we in Him are all sons of the Highest;

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Do not get the idea that this is mere theological dogma. It is vital, practical truth. Here is the application of it in Scripture language:

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will re-

ceive you,

¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

2 Corinthians 7

¹ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Everything that tends to lower and debase us must be cleansed from us by the life of the Lord. As the son of the Highest, every man ought to be living the highest possible life. Having been raised to sit in the heavenly places with the highest, we should live as does the Highest. Thus through man will come the restoration of the earth to the heavenly condition from which man's fall cast it down.

There is inspiration in this truth. Every one who appreciates...

Philippians 3

¹⁴ ...the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,

—will know by the Spirit through the Word what becomes such a position, and what habits are wholly inconsistent with it, and, knowing this, will yield to the Word which is able fully to make him a partaker of the Divine nature. Take heed to the exhortation to...

Ephesians 4 [RV]

¹ ...walk worthy of the calling wherewith you are called.

18. Justified and Glorified

Present Truth, May 29, 1902

JESUS CHRIST in the flesh was the representative of the human family, a sample of what all humanity might become through union with Him. All that He did as man, He did for us, as our representative, and each individual may by faith receive the full virtue of every act of His life, just as though he himself had wrought it.

Take, for example, His baptism.

Isaiah 53

⁶ The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all,

—that He, the Lamb of God, might take away...

John 1

²⁹ ...the sins of the world.

So when the multitudes came to be baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins,

Matthew 3

¹³ Then came Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him.

And as by faith He witnessed in this act to the power of His sacrifice to cleanse the whole world of sin, the Spirit also bore witness to the acceptance of that cleansed humanity with God. Jesus was baptized as our representative, confessing our sins; therefore the words,

¹⁷ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,

—are for us, who are...

Ephesians 1

⁶ ...accepted in the Beloved.

The opened heavens, the descending Spirit, the approval of the Father, all are ours in Him who...

Hebrews 1

³ ...by himself purged our sins,

–and justified humanity. This glorious fact even the apostles were slow to accept, and a special vision was given to Peter in which the truth that in Christ all men were justified and cleansed was most emphatically taught.

Acts 10

¹⁵ What God has cleansed, do not call common,

–were the words thrice repeated in the vision; and in relating it Peter said,

²⁸ God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean,

–thereby showing that in Christ, God has cleansed every man. Hence the yearning call to those who have not experienced the blessing of the man...

Psalms 32

¹ ...whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered,

–because they are ignorant of that blessed fact:

Isaiah 44

²² I have blotted out as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and as a cloud, your sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed you.

Romans 8

³⁰ Whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.

At His baptism Christ revealed man justified and accepted. Later, towards the close of His life on earth, He revealed man glorified. For a little while the veil was removed, and the beauty and glory of the Divine image shone forth and proclaimed Him the Son of God. A chosen few of His disciples were...

2 Peter 1

¹⁶ ...eye-witnesses of His majesty.

¹⁷ When He received from God the Father honor and glory.

And this He received as Man for men; He was still our representative.

Therefore seeing Jesus crowned with glory and honor, the whole creation waits in hope for the manifestation of all the sons of God, when all whom He has justified shall be likewise glorified, when the righteousness wrought for them and in them by the Divine Son of man, shall clothe them with raiment white and glistening, fine linen clean and bright, and crown them with unfading glory.

1 John 3

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him and He is.

Then He shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto himself.

19. The Gospel of the Kingdom

Present Truth, June 5, 1902

CHRIST himself is the embodiment, the personification, of the kingdom of God.

The Gospel or good news of the kingdom is the demonstration of all the power of God in human flesh. Men are to be taught that the Spirit is stronger than the flesh, and can rule it; and that the flesh of weak, sinful man, even in what are supposed to be the most debased, savage races of the earth, can be used to show forth the mighty works of God.

And this will be the case with every one who completely recognizes the fact that he has but one debt, namely, that he owes himself to God, and thus to the world, since God lives for the benefit of His creation.

The debt that we owe to the world is love, and:

1 John 4

⁸ God is love.

Therefore we owe it to the world—to all our fellow men—to allow God to reveal himself to them in us. We owe it to everyone to cease holding down the truth in unrighteousness, so that all that may be known of God may be manifest in us.

There is altogether too low a conception in the world of what a man ought to be. The standard of manhood is too low. The possibilities that are wrapped up in the human body are not grasped; but there are men now in the world who will allow God to use them to demonstrate that with Him nothing is impossible. Who will be one of them?

The men who will compose this glorious band will not be making excuses for not obeying God's law either in letter or in spirit. The righteousness of the law—every commandment to the full—will be fulfilled in them; for love, the manifesta-

tion of God, is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13

¹⁰ Love works no ill to his neighbor.

But love must be at work; therefore love does good to his neighbor. Even so,

Acts 10

³⁸ [Christ] went about doing good.

In the kingdom of God the Spirit rules, but:

2 Corinthians 3

¹⁷ ...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Therefore the absolute reign of the Spirit means the complete freedom of the body from all...

1 Peter 2

¹¹ ...fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

The desires of the flesh will be present in the flesh; but only the mind of the Spirit will be fulfilled.

What a glorious thing it is that this Gospel comes to us, and that all this freedom—the freedom of the universe—is for us if we are willing to pay the price, namely, the absolute, constant and eternal surrender of ourselves to God.

20. The Manger and the Cross

Present Truth, December 18, 1902

The old, old story is ever knew,
Tell me more about Jesus.¹⁸⁰

FOR hundreds of years men have been talking about Him, and the story of His life has been proclaimed in thousands of pulpits, and repeated in millions of homes; yet it is not worn out. It is as fresh and new as when first told, not only because man's needs are the same now as then, and because

...some have never heard
The message of salvation,
From God's own Holy Word;¹⁸¹

—but because however familiar it is to us, we are always finding in it greater depths and heights than we ever dreamed of. Our intellect and understanding enlarge with our growth; but the story of Jesus and His love, which we heard as little children, has unfolded and expanded faster than our minds, so that still it must be told to us simply,

As to a little child.¹⁸²

The Manger and the Cross are the revelation of the eternal, infinite God, with whom we never cease to be children. Even to old age and gray hairs He carries us in His arms,¹⁸³ and soothes us with His...

1 Kings 19

¹² ...still small voice,

—comforting us...

¹⁸⁰ P. P. Bliss, Hymn: *Tell me More About Jesus*.

¹⁸¹ Katherine Hankey, Hymn: *I Love to Tell the Story*.

¹⁸² Katherine Hankey, Hymn: *Tell Me the Old, Old Story*, 1866.

¹⁸³ **Isaiah 46** ⁴ And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and will bear, even I will carry, and will delivery you.

Isaiah 66

¹³ ...as one whom his mother comforts.

The gray-haired sage is to God but the lisping infant; and he who would excel in science must come as an artless child, and listen with attentive ear to the voice of Him,

Colossians 2

³ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Glory to God in the Highest

Jeremiah 9

²³ Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches;

²⁴ But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me.

Yet,

Galatians 6

¹⁴ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are to glory only in the knowledge of God, and only in the cross. So we see that the cross is that which by revealing His glory, teaches us to know God; and since the announcement of the birth of Christ was:

Luke 2

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest,

—it is evident that the Manger was identical with the Cross, which is the revelation of the glory of God to man.

Infinite Strength in Absolute Helplessness

What is the evidence that even the professed Christian world has not yet learned the full meaning of the story of the birth of Christ? This: That it is no uncommon thing for Chris-

tians to become discouraged because of their weakness and the difficulties they have to contend with. In the birth of Christ God has shown us that there is no ground for discouragement. If we rightly read the story, we shall know without referring to *Romans* 8:35-47, that in tribulation, and distress, and persecution, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword,

Romans 8

³⁷ ...we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

In Christ all extremes meet—the height and depth, the length and breadth.

- Infinite strength in absolute helplessness;
- Eternal glory in shame and disgrace;
- Perfect peace in raging conflicts;
- The day-star and the sun of righteousness and the mid-night darkness of sin;
- Life springing from the pit of corruption,

—all these appear in Him, and inspire the believer with lively hope and courage.

No king riding in pomp at the head of victorious legions ever had such heralds as proclaimed the coming of the Prince of peace; yet when shepherds and wise men sought Him, they found only a tiny, helpless infant, unconscious of the adoration which they paid Him. That Babe resting in the manger, or in its mother's arms, careless and unconscious of the turmoil of earth, and of the plots to take its life, represents the peace which God gives His trusting children on this earth.

Deuteronomy 33

¹² The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him.

As safe as Jesus was from the murderous Herod, so safe from sin that crouches at the door, and from all assaults, are those who put their trust in Him.

Ephesians 2

¹⁴ He is our peace,

–and therefore we may rest in peace, not knowing or caring to know what dangers may threaten us, or what troubles and difficulties lie in wait for us.

The Revelation of the Glory

Jesus Christ in the manger with the cattle for His companions, was as surely...

1 Corinthians 1

²⁴ ...the power of God and the wisdom of God,

–as He will be...

Mark 8

³⁸ ...when He comes in the glory of His Father, [attended by all] the holy angels.

He had the same angel attendants then, and was the revelation of the same glory to all who had spiritual eyesight.

John 1 [RV]

¹⁴ The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

What could be weaker than a helpless babe, made still more helpless by being bound in swaddling clothes? Yet that represented the measure of the power which He had in himself when He performed the mightiest miracles. Faint with fasting, He resisted the temptations of the devil; and by the same power He cast out devils. He said,

John 5

³⁰ I can of my own self do nothing.

It was...

Colossians 2

⁹ ...the fullness of the Godhead bodily

—dwelling in Him, and not His human flesh, that did the works. His name is...

Matthew 1

²³ ...God with us,

and,

Hebrews 13

⁸ [He is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

And therefore the weakness of our flesh is no bar to the manifestation of His strength in us. The power that does...

Ephesians 3

²⁰ ...exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
[is] the power that works in us.

The trouble is that we do not get our eyes open to know what is...

Ephesians 1

¹⁸ ...the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

The Light of the Knowledge of the Glory

John 1

⁹ That was the true Light which lights every man that comes into the world.

2 Corinthians 4

⁶ For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Why walk in darkness, when Christ is “God with us,” and:

1 John 1

⁵ ...in Him is no darkness at all?

Psalms 139

¹² The night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to Him.

From the Manger in Bethlehem shined the rays that shall fill the earth with the glory of the Lord; and that coming glory will be hastened as the Manger is multiplied by the repetition of the mystery of the birth of Christ in all who receive Him.

21. The Christ of the Ages

Present Truth, December 22, 1904¹⁸⁴

2 Corinthians 4

⁵ We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

AND who is this whom we preach? What claims has He upon the world,

Philippians 2

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth;

¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord?

He is the...

Revelation 1

⁸ Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...

Revelation 4

⁸ ...which was, and is, and is to come,

Revelation 1

⁸ ...the Almighty.

And it is as the One possessing this three-fold fullness that we worship Him and proclaim Him as...

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy...to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

To preach the perfect Christ is to present Him as the One who...

Revelation 4

⁸ ...was, and is, and is to come;

¹⁸⁴ This article, the final in this collection, was also the last article Waggoner ever wrote for *The Present Truth*. It was reprinted in *Signs of the Times*, January 8, 1906.

–and we fail to take all that we should from Him, if we think of Him as any less than this.

The One Who Was

And who was He? He was the Word that was in the beginning with God, and who was God.

John 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² The same was in the beginning with God.

He was glorified with the Father before the world was¹⁸⁵; for:

Micah 5

² [His] goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.

He was...

1 John 1

² ...that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

Colossians 1

¹⁶ In Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers.

And apart from Him was not one thing made.¹⁸⁶

He is the One...

1 Peter 1

²⁰ Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

²¹ Who by Him do believe in God.

¹⁸⁵ **John 17** ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify me with your own self with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

¹⁸⁶ **John 1** ³ All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

Revelation 13

⁸ [He was] slain from the foundation of the world.

And so however far back in the past we discern Him, we recognize Him only as the crucified One. As the Crucified One He was with...

Acts 7

³⁸ ...the church in the wilderness;

1 Corinthians 10

⁴ For they drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them, and that Rock was Christ.

But since He was from the beginning, and was the beginning, time would fail to tell all that He was, and so we pass to consider Him for a moment as...

The One Who Is

Hebrews 11

⁶ He that comes to God must believe that He is.

And no man comes to the Father but by Jesus Christ.¹⁸⁷ And His name also is I AM.

John 8

⁵⁸ Before Abraham was, I AM.

In His birth in Bethlehem He was, as He still is,

Matthew 1

²³ ...Immanuel—God with us.

This “I AM” brings Him to view as the eternal presence, for it embraces both the past and the future. It is only by believing on Him as the eternal I AM, that we are saved from sin;¹⁸⁸ for it is only when we see Him “lifted up” on the cross that we

¹⁸⁷ **John 14** ⁶ Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.

¹⁸⁸ **John 8** ²⁴ I said therefore unto you, that you shall die in your sins: for if you believe not that I AM, you shall die in your sins.

know Him as the I AM.

When the disciples struggled in vain against contrary winds and boisterous waves, Jesus came walking to them on the sea; and when the strange sight only increased their terror, He said,

John 6

²⁰ I AM; be not afraid.

Jesus, the name that calms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life and health, and peace.¹⁸⁹

His presence with us, when recognized, gives rest, and therefore He comforts us in our loneliness and tribulation with the assurance,

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I AM with you always.

All that He was He still is—the mighty God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, the Son of man in the cradle and on the cross, and the One...

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ ...touched with the feeling of our infirmity,

—and moved to compassion at the sight of suffering. He is,

Colossians 1 [RV]

¹⁷ ...and in Him all things consist.

And this...

Romans 1

⁴ ...Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness,

is—

¹⁸⁹ Charles Wesley, Hymn: *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*, 1739.

The One Who Is to Come

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold, He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him.

Psalm 50

³ Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

When we eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine we show the Lord's death, but it is...

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ ...till He come.

The present communion looks forward as well as backward.

He comes not merely to command reverence from those who once mocked Him. He died for others; He ascended into the heavens,

Hebrews 9

²⁴ ...now to appear in the presence of God for us;

and,

2 Thessalonians 1

¹⁰ He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

Note the words: not to be admired *by them* that believe, but *in them*. And this shows that before He can be again manifest on this earth, a great work must be accomplished, not *by men*, but *in them*; for He will not appear in the clouds of heaven until He appears *in* those who bear His name.

1 John 3

² When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is;

–and we shall be able to see Him as He is, only because we shall be like Him. They who do not bear His image will not be able to look upon Him. Only the good can know the good.

Matthew 5

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

It is...

2 Timothy 4

⁸ ...all them that love His appearing,

–to whom “a crown of righteousness” will be given; and we show our love for His appearing only by such acceptance of Him as the One who is, as will enable us to...

1 Peter 2 [RV]

⁹ ...show forth the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Thus can we hasten His appearing. May our lives, then, be but the repetition of the cry of the prophet of old,

Revelation 22

²⁰ Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

