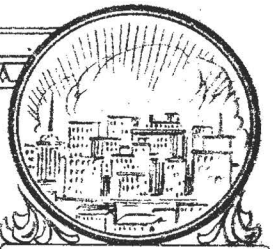
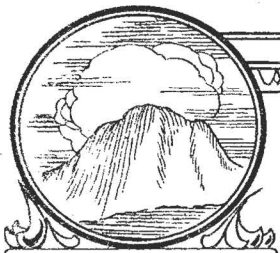


WEEK OF PRAYER EDITION

The Hammer

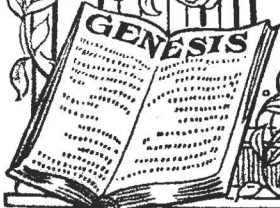
WORLD WIDE REFORMATION

"He that Winneeth Souls Is Wise"



THE
COMMANDMENTS
OF
GOD

AND
THE FAITH
OF
JESUS



Vol. VII Savannah, Ga., Dec., 1928 No. 10

Reading for Friday Night,
December 21, 1928.

THE APOSTASY FROM THE TRUTH OF GOD

The Apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, foretold the great apostasy which would result in the establishment of the papal power. He declared that the day of Christ should not come, "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he was God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." And furthermore, the apostle warns his brethren that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work." Even at that early date he saw, creeping into the church, errors that would prepare the way for the development of papacy.

Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, the mystery of iniquity carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and his apostles for the pomp and pride of Pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.

This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of the

"man of sin" foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power,—a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.

Satan once endeavored to form a compromise with Christ. He came to the Son of God in the wilderness of temptation, and, showing him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them offered to give all into his hands if he would but acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of Darkness. Christ rebuked the presumptuous tempter, and forced him to depart. But Satan meets with greater success in presenting the same temptations to man. To secure worldly gains and honors, the church was led to seek the favor and support of the great men of earth, and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance to the representative of Satan,—the bishop of Rome.

It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the Pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors arrogated the very titles of Deity. He styles himself "Lord God the Pope," assumes infallibility, and demands that all men pay him homage. Thus the same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him through the church of Rome, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage.

But those who fear and reverence God meet this Heaven-daring assumption as Christ met the solicitations of the wily foe: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." God has never given a hint in his word that he has appointed any man to be the head of the church. The doctrine of papal supremacy is directly opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures. The Pope can have no power over Christ's church except by usurpation.

Romanists have persisted in bringing against Protestants the charge of heresy, and willful separation from the true church. But these accusations apply rather to themselves. They are the ones who laid down the banner of Christ, and departed from "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power. It was by the Word that even the Saviour of the world had resisted his attacks. At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying, "It is written." To every suggestion of the adversary, he opposed the wisdom and power of the Word. In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God, and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses, and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions. Thus the Pope came to be almost universally acknowledged as the vice-regent of God on earth, endowed with authority over Church and State.

The detector of error having been removed, Satan worked according to his will. Prophecy had declared that the papacy was to "Think to change times and laws." This work it was not slow to attempt. To afford converts from heathenism a substitute for the worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship. The decree of a general council finally established this system of idolatry. To complete the sacrilegious work, Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment, forbidding image worship, and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number.

The spirit of concession to paganism opened the way for a still further disregard of Heaven's authority. Satan tampered with the fourth commandment also, and essayed to set aside the ancient Sabbath, the day which God had blessed and sanctified, and in its stead to exalt the festival observed by the heathen as "the venerable day of the sun." This change was not at first attempted openly. In the first

centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians. They were jealous for the honor of God, and believing that his law is immutable, they zealously guarded the sacredness of its precepts. But with great subtlety, Satan worked through his agents to bring about his object. That the attention of the people might be called to the Sunday, it was made a festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ. Religious services were held upon it; yet it was regarded as a day of recreation, the Sabbath being still sacredly observed.

To prepare the way for the work which he designed to accomplish, Satan had led the Jews, before the advent of Christ, to load down the Sabbath with the most rigorous exactions, making its observance a burden. Now, taking advantage of the false light in which he had thus caused it to be regarded, he cast contempt upon it as a Jewish institution. While Christians continued to observe the Sunday as a joyous festival, he led them, in order to show their hatred of Judaism, to make the Sabbath a fast, a day of sadness and gloom.

In the early part of the fourth century, the Emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival through the Roman Empire. The day of the sun was revered by his pagan subjects, and was honored by Christians; it was the emperor's policy to unite the conflicting interests of heathenism and Christianity. He was urged to do this by the bishops of the church, who, inspired by ambition, and thirst for power, perceived that if the same day was observed by both Christians and the heathen, it would promote the nominal acceptance of Christianity by pagans, and thus advance the power and glory of the Church. But while Christians were gradually led to regard Sunday as possessing a degree of sacredness, they still held the true Sabbath as the holy of the Lord, and observed it in obedience to the fourth commandment.

The arch-deceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the Christian world under his banner, and to exercise his power through his vice regent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ. Through

half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen, he accomplished his purpose. Vast councils were held from time to time, in which the dignitaries of the church were convened from all the world. In nearly every council the Sabbath which God had instituted was pressed down a little lower, while the Sunday was correspondingly exalted. Thus the pagan festival came finally to be honored as a divine institution, while the Bible Sabbath was pronounced a relic of Judaism, and its observers were declared to be accursed.

The great apostate had succeeded in exalting himself "above all that is called God, or that is worshiped." He had dared to change the only precept of the divine law that unmistakably points all mankind to the true and living God. In the fourth Commandment, God is revealed as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and is thereby distinguished from all false gods. It was as a memorial of the work of creation that the seventh day was sanctified as a rest day for man. It was designed to keep the living God ever before the minds of men as the source of being and the object of reverence and worship. Satan strives to turn men from their allegiance to God, and from rendering obedience to his law; therefore he directs his efforts especially against that commandment which points to God as the Creator.

Protestants now urge that the resurrection of Christ on Sunday made it the Christian Sabbath. But Scripture evidence is lacking. No such honor was given to the day by Christ or His apostles. The observance of Sunday as a Christian institution had its origin in that "mystery of lawlessness" which, even in Paul's day, had begun its work. Where and when did the Lord adopt this child of the Papacy? What valid reason can be given for a change which the Scriptures do not sanction?

In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the Bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to papacy. The dragon had

given to the beast "his power, and his seat, and great authority." And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Christians were forced to choose, either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsmen's ax. Now were fulfilled the words of Jesus, "Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battle-field. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity. Thus says the prophet: "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

G. C.

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth."
—2 Peter 1:12.

Reading for Sabbath, December 22, 1928.

MAN OF SIN

The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the dark ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the Pope of Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the Pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator, and that none could approach God except through him, and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them, and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed. A deviation from his requirements was sufficient cause for the severest punishment to be visited upon the

bodies and souls of the offenders. Thus the minds of the people were turned away from God to fallible, erring, and cruel men, nay more, to the prince of darkness himself, who exercised his power through them Sin was disguised in a garb of sanctity. When Scriptures are suppressed, and man comes to regard himself as supreme, we need look only for fraud, deception, and debasing iniquity. With the elevation of human laws and traditions, was manifest the corruption that ever results from setting aside the law of God.

Those were days of peril for the Church of Christ. The faithful standard-bearers were few indeed. Though the truth was not left without witnesses, yet at times it seemed that error and superstition would wholly prevail, and true religion would be banished from the earth. The Gospel was lost sight of, but the forms of religion were multiplied, and the people were burdened with rigorous exactions.

They were taught not only to look to the pope as their mediator, but to trust to works of their own to atone for sin. Long pilgrimages, acts of penance, the worship of relics, the erection of churches, shrines, and altars, the payment of large sums to the church,—these and many similar acts were enjoined to appease the wrath of God or to secure his favor; as if God were like men, to be angered at trifles, or pacified by gifts or acts of penance!

Notwithstanding that vice prevailed, even among the leaders of the Romish Church, her influence seemed steadily to increase. About the close of the eighth century, papists put forth the claim that in the first ages of the Church the bishops of Rome had possessed the same spiritual power which they now assumed. To establish this claim, some means must be employed to give it a show of authority; and this was readily suggested by the father of lies. Ancient writings were forged by monks. Decrees of councils before unheard of were discovered, establishing the universal supremacy of the pope from the earliest times. And a church that had rejected the truth, greedily accepted these deceptions.

The few faithful builders up-

on the true foundation were perplexed and hindered, as the rubbish of false doctrine, obstructed the work. Like the builders upon the wall of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day, some were ready to say, "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build." Wearied with the constant struggle against persecution, fraud, iniquity and every other obstacle that Satan could devise to hinder their progress, some who had been faithful builders became disheartened; and for the sake of peace and security for their property and their lives they turned away from the true foundation. Others, undaunted by the opposition of their enemies, fearlessly declared, "Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, which is great and terrible; and they proceeded with the work, every one with his sword girded by his side.

The same spirit of hatred and opposition to the truth has inspired the enemies of God in every age, and the same vigilance and fidelity have been required in his servants. The words of Christ to the first disciples are applicable to his followers to the close of time: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

The darkness seemed to grow more dense. Image worship became more general. Candles were burned before images, and prayers were offered to them. The most absurd and superstitious customs prevailed. The minds of men were so completely controlled by superstition that reason itself seemed to have lost her sway. While priests and bishops were themselves pleasure-loving, sensual, and corrupt, it could only be expected that the people who looked to them for guidance would be sunken in ignorance and vice.

Another step in papal assumption was taken, when in the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII. proclaimed the perfection of the Romish Church. Among the propositions which he put forth, was one declaring that the church had never erred, nor would it ever err, according to the Scriptures. But the Scripture proofs did not accompany the assertion. The proud pontiff-

next claimed the power to depose emperors, and declared that no sentence which he pronounced could be reversed by any one, but that it was his prerogative to reverse the decisions of all others.

A striking illustration of the tyrannical character of this advocate of infallibility was given in his treatment of the German emperor, Henry IV. For presuming to disregard the pope's authority, this monarch was declared to be excommunicated and dethroned. Terrified by the desertion and threats of his own princes, who were encouraged in rebellion against him by the papal mandate, Henry felt the necessity of making his peace with Rome. In company with his wife and a faithful servant, he crossed the Alps in mid-winter, that he might humble himself before the pope. Upon reaching the castle whither Gregory had withdrawn, he was conducted, without his guards, into an outer court, and there, in the severe cold of winter, with uncovered head and naked feet, and in a miserable dress, he awaited the pope's permission to come into his presence. Not until he had continued three days fasting and making confession, did the pontiff condescend to grant him pardon. Even then it was only upon condition that the emperor should await the sanction of the pope before resuming the insignia or exercise the power of royalty. And Gregory, elated with his triumph, boasted that it was his duty "to pull down the pride of kings."

How striking the contrast between the over-bearing pride of this haughty pontiff and the meekness and gentleness of the Christ, who represents himself as pleading at the door of the heart for admittance, that he may come in to bring pardon and peace, and who taught his disciples, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

The advancing centuries witnessed a constant increase of error in the doctrines put forth from Rome. Even before the establishment of the papacy, the teachings of heathen philosophers had received attention and exerted an influence in the church. Many who professed conversion still clung to the ten-

ets of their pagan philosophy, and not only continued its study themselves, but urged it upon others as a means of extending their influence among the heathen. Serious errors were thus introduced into the Christian faith. Prominent among these was the belief in man's natural immortality and his consciousness in death. This doctrine laid the foundation upon which Rome established the invocation of saints and the adoration of the Virgin Mary. From this sprung also the heresy of eternal torment for the finally impenitent, which was early incorporated into the papal faith.

Then the way was prepared for the introduction of still another invention of paganism, which Rome named purgatory, and employed to terrify the credulous and superstitious multitudes. By this heresy is affirmed the existence of a place of torment, in which the souls of such as have not merited eternal damnation are to suffer punishment for their sins, and from which, when freed from impurity, they are admitted to Heaven.

Still another fabrication was needed to enable Rome to profit by the fears and the vices of her adherents. This was supplied by the doctrine of indulgences. Full remission of sins, past, present, and future and release from all the pains and penalties incurred, were promised to all who would enlist in the pontiff's wars to extend his temporal dominion, to punish his enemies, or to exterminate those who dared deny his spiritual supremacy. The people were also taught that by the payment of money to the church they might free themselves from sin, and also release the souls of their deceased friends who were confined in the tormenting flames. By such means did Rome fill her coffers, and sustain the magnificence, luxury, and vice of the pretended representatives of Him who had not where to lay his head.

The scriptural ordinance of the Lord's supper has been supplanted by the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass. Papist priests pretended, by their senseless mummery, to convert the simple bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ. With blasphemous presumption, they

openly claimed the power of "creating God, the Creator of all things." All Christians were required, on pain of death, to avow their faith in this horrible, heaven-insulting heresy. Multitudes who refused were given to the flames.

In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy,—the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils, Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees, and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes. "Babylon the great" was "drunken with the blood of the saints." The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power.

Popery had become the world's despot. Kings and emperors bowed to the decrees of the Roman pontiff. The destinies of men, both for time and for eternity, seemed under his control. For hundreds of years the doctrines of Rome had been extensively and implicitly received, its rites reverently performed, its festivals generally observed. Its clergy were honored and liberally sustained. Never since has the Roman Church attained to greater dignity, magnificence, or power.

The noontide of the papacy was the world's moral midnight. The Holy Scriptures were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papist leaders hated the light which would reveal their sins. God's law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit, and practiced vice without restraint. Fraud, avarice, and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position. The palaces of popes and prelates were scenes of the vilest debauchery. Some of the reigning pontiffs were guilty of crimes so revolting that secular rulers endeavored to depose these dignitaries of the church as monsters too vile to be tolerated. For centuries Europe had made no prog-

ress in learning, arts, or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom.

The condition of the world under the Romish power presented a fearful and striking fulfillment of the words of the prophet Hosea: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee; . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." "There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood." Such were the results of banishing the Word of God." (Great Controversy.)

Brethren, should we not pray during this week of prayer, that God will keep us from falling into these sins?

Let this be our prayer for the progress of the cause of God:

"Remember, Lord, the ancient days;
Renew Thy work, Thy grace restore;
And while to Thee our hearts we raise,
On us Thy Holy Spirit pour."

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CANVASSER

1. "A heart at peace with God and men."
2. "A greater burden for souls rather than for cash."
3. "Plain, open-faced honesty."
4. "Politeness, true courtesy; remember that true love for people is the basis of all true courtesy."
5. "A supreme love for service in the third angel's message."

Only a starved soul sees the worst side of people. If we find ourselves constantly noting the unworthiness of people we meet, we may well take alarm—not over their condition, but over our own. We need to remember that "the ability to recognize nobleness in others, indicates a measure of nobleness in one's self;" and if there seems to be very little nobleness in the world it is a bad symptom of our own condition.

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LEST YOU FORGET

Lest you forget, remember, you can urge the members in your church to be alive and take a part in making liberal offerings, when you, as elder, leader or teacher, will set the **EXAMPLE**. If you fail to do this, be a **CLAM** and **SHUT** your mouth. Silence is preferred.

"When God sends to men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, he requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message."

"The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love. But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms."

"Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His Word: they can honor him only as they have a right conception of his character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the

Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test, Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable Word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?"

"Notwithstanding the Bible is full of warnings against false teachers, many are ready thus to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy. There are today thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders. They pass by the Saviour's teachings almost unnoticed, and place implicit confidence in the words of the ministers. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God's word that they are light-bearers? A lack of moral courage to step aside from the beaten track of the world, leads many to follow in the steps of learned men; and by their reluctance to investigate for themselves, they are becoming hopelessly fastened in the chains of error."

"There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Ignorance is no excuse for error or sin, when there is every opportunity to know the will of God. A man is traveling, and comes to a place where there are several roads, and a guide-board indicating where each one leads. If he disregards the guide-board and takes whichever road seems to him to be right, he may be ever so sincere, but will in all probability find himself on the wrong road."

"Many are deceived as to their true condition before God. They congratulate themselves upon the wrong acts which they do not commit, and forget to enumerate the good and noble deeds which God requires of them, but which they have neglected to perform. It is not enough that they are trees in the garden of God. They are to answer his expectation by bearing fruit. He holds them accountable for their failure to accomplish all the good which they could have done,

through his grace strengthening them. In the books of Heaven they are registered as cumberers of the ground. Yet the case of even this class is not utterly hopeless. With those who have slighted God's mercy and abused his grace, the heart of long-suffering love yet pleads. "Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

When the testing time shall come, those who have made God's Word their rule of life will be revealed. In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage. So the false-hearted professor may not now be distinguished from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference will be apparent. Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the half-hearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity.

Says the psalmist: "Thy testimonies are my meditation," "Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom." "He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

It is a great thing when our Gethsemane hour comes; when the cup of bitterness is pressed to our lips, and we pray that it may pass away; to feel that it is not fate, not necessity, but a divine love for good ends working upon us.

I walk much in the pleasant fields of Holy Scripture in order that I may less perceive the bitterness of this miserable life.—Queen Elizabeth.

Reading for Sunday, December
23rd, 1928

WOES ON THE PHARISEES

"It was the last day of Christ's teaching in the temple. Of the vast throngs that were gathered at Jerusalem, the attention of all had been attracted to Him; the people had crowded the temple courts, watching the contest that had been in progress, and they eagerly caught every word that fell from His lips. Never before had such a scene been witnessed. There stood the young Galilean, bearing no earthly honor or royal badge. Surrounding Him were priests in their rich apparel, rulers with robes and badges significant of their exalted station, and scribes with scrolls in their hands, to which they made frequent reference. Jesus stood calmly before them, with the dignity of a king. As one invested with the authority of heaven, He looked unflinchingly upon His adversaries, who had rejected and despised His teachings, and who thirsted for His life. They had assailed Him in great numbers, but their schemes to ensnare and condemn Him had been in vain. Challenge after challenge He had met, presenting the pure, bright truth in contrast to the darkness and errors of the priests and Pharisees. He had set before these leaders their real condition, and the retribution sure to follow persistence in their evil deeds. The warnings had been faithfully given. Yet another work remained for Christ to do. Another purpose was still to be accomplished.

The interest of the people in Christ and His work had steadily increased. They were charmed with His teaching, but they were also greatly perplexed. They had respected the priests and rabbis for their intelligence and apparent piety. In all religious matters they had ever yielded implicit obedience to their authority. Yet they now saw these men trying to cast discredit upon Jesus, a teacher whose virtue and knowledge shone forth the brighter from every assault.

They looked upon the lowering countenances of the priests and elders, and there saw discomfiture and confusion. They marveled that the rulers would

not believe on Jesus, when His teachings were so plain and simple. They themselves knew not what course to take. With eager anxiety they watched the movements of those whose counsel they had always followed.

In the parables which Christ had spoken, it was His purpose both to warn the rulers and to instruct the people who were willing to be taught. But there was need to speak yet more plainly, through their reverence for tradition and their blind faith in a corrupt priesthood, the people were enslaved. These chains Christ must break. The character of the priests, rulers, and Pharisees must be more fully exposed.

"The scribes and the Pharisees," He said, "sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." The scribes and Pharisees claim to be invested with divine authority similar to that of Moses. They assumed to take his place as expounders of the law and judges of the people. As such they claimed from the people the utmost deference and obedience. Jesus bade His hearers do that which the rabbis taught according to the law, but not to follow their example. They themselves did not practise their own teaching.

And they taught much that was contrary to the Scriptures. Jesus said, "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." The Pharisees enjoined a multitude of regulations, having their foundation in tradition, and unreasonably restricting personal liberty. And certain portions of the law they so explained as to impose upon the people observances which they themselves secretly ignored, and from which, when it served their purpose, they actually claimed exemption.

To make a show of their piety was their constant aim. Nothing was held too sacred to serve this end. To Moses God had said concerning His commandments, "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." These words have a deep

meaning. As the word of God is meditated upon and practised, the whole man will be ennobled. In righteous and merciful dealing, the hands will reveal, as a signet, the principles of God's law. They will be kept clean from bribes, and from all that is corrupt and deceptive. They will be active in works of love and compassion. The eyes, directed toward a noble purpose, will be clear and true. The expressive countenance, the speaking eye, will testify to the blameless character of him who loves and honors the word of God. But by the Jews of Christ's day all this was undiscerned. The command given to Moses was construed into a direction that the precepts of Scripture should be worn upon the person. They were accordingly written upon strips of parchment, and bound in a conspicuous manner about the head and wrists. But this did not cause the law of God to take a firmer hold of the mind and heart. These parchments were worn merely as badges, to attract attention. They were thought to give the wearers an air of devotion which would command the reverence of the people. Jesus struck a blow at this vain pretense:

"But all their works they do for to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ." In such plain words the Saviour revealed the selfish ambition that was ever reaching for place and power, displaying a mock humility, while the heart was filled with avarice and envy. When persons were invited to a feast, the guests were seated according to their rank, and those who were given the most honorable place received the first attention and special favors. The Pharisees were ever scheming to secure these honors. This practise Jesus rebuked.

He also reproved the vanity shown in coveting the title of rabbi, or master. Such a title, He declared, belonged not to men, but to Christ. Priests, scribes, and rulers, expounders and administrators of the law, were all brethren, children of one Father. Jesus impressed upon the people that they were to give no man a title of honor indicating his control of their conscience of their faith.

If Christ were on earth today, surrounded by those who bear the title of "Reverend" or "Right Reverend," would He not repeat His saying, "Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ?" The Scripture declares of God, "Holy and reverend is His name." To what human being is such a title befitting? How little does man reveal of the wisdom and righteousness it indicates. How many of those who assume this title are misrepresenting the name and character of God. Alas, how often have worldly ambition, despotism, and the basest sins been hidden under the brodered garments of a high and holy office. The Saviour continued:

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Again and again Christ had taught that true greatness is measured by moral worth. In the estimation of Heaven, greatness of character consists in living for the welfare of our fellow-men, in doing works of love and mercy. Christ, the King of Glory, was a servant to fallen man.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," said Jesus; "for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." By perverting the Scriptures, the priests and lawyers blind the minds of those who would otherwise have received a knowledge of Christ's kingdom, and that inward, divine life which is essential to true holiness.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the

greater damnation." The Pharisees had great influence with the people, and of this they took advantage to serve their own interests. They gained the confidence of pious widows, and then represented it as a duty for them to devote their property to religious purposes. Having secured control of their money, the wily schemers used it for their own benefit. To cover their dishonesty, they offered long prayers in public, and made a great show of piety. This hypocrisy Christ declared would bring them the greater damnation. The same rebuke falls upon many in our day who make a high profession of piety. Their lives are stained by selfishness and avarice, yet they throw over it all a garment of seeming purity, and thus for a time deceive their fellow-men. But they cannot deceive God. He reads every purpose of the heart, and will judge every man according to his deeds.

Christ unsparingly condemned abuses, but He was careful not to lessen obligation. He rebuked the selfishness that extorted and misapplied the widow's gifts. At the same time He commended the widow who brought her offering for God's treasury. Man's abuse of the gift could not turn God's blessing from the giver.

Jesus was in the court where were the treasure chests, and He watched those who came to deposit their gifts. Many of the rich brought large sums, which they presented with great ostentation. Jesus looked upon them sadly, but made no comment on their liberal offerings. Presently His countenance lighted as He saw a poor widow approach hesitatingly, as though fearful of being observed. As the rich and haughty swept by, to deposit their offerings, she shrank back as if hardly daring to venture farther. And yet she longed to do something, little though it might be, for the cause she loved. She looked at the gift in her hand. It was very small in comparison with the gifts of those around her, yet it was her all. Watching her opportunity, she hurriedly threw in her two mites, and turned to hasten away. But in doing this she caught the eye of Jesus, which was fastened earnestly upon her.

The Saviour called His disciples to Him, and bade them mark the widow's poverty. Then His words of commendation fell upon her ear: "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all." Tears of joy filled her eyes as she felt that her act was understood and appreciated. Many would have advised her to keep her pittance for her own use; given into the hands of the well-fed priests, it would be lost sight of among the many costly gifts brought to the treasury. But Jesus understood her motive. She believed the service of the temple to be of God's appointment, and she was anxious to do her utmost to sustain it. She did what she could, and her act was to be a monument to her memory through all time, and her joy in eternity. Her heart went with her gift; its value was estimated, not by the worth of the coin, but by the love to God and the interest in His work that had prompted the deed.

Jesus said of the poor widow: She "hath cast in more than they all." The rich had bestowed from their abundance, many of them to be seen and honored by men. Their large donations had deprived them of no comfort, or even luxury; they had required no sacrifice, and could not be compared in value with the widow's mite.

It is the motive that gives character to our acts, stamping them with ignominy or with high moral worth. Not the great things which every eye sees and every tongue praises does God account most precious. The little duties cheerfully done, the little gifts which make no show, and which to human eyes may appear worthless, often stand highest in His sight. A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift. The poor widow gave her living to do the little that she did. She deprived herself of food in order to give those two mites to the cause she loved. And she did it in faith, believing that her Heavenly Father would not overlook her great need. It was this unselfish spirit and childlike faith that won the Saviour's commendation.

"Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are"

"But be ye doers of the Word."

—James 1:22-23.

"Is not Thy grace as mighty now
As when Elijah felt its power?
When glory beamed from Moses' brow,

Or Job endured the trying hour?"

Reading for Monday, December
24, 1928.

TRUE SACRIFICE FOR THE CAUSE OF GOD

"Among the poor there are many who long to show their gratitude to God for His grace and truth. They greatly desire to share with their more prosperous brethren in sustaining His service. These souls should not be repulsed. Let them lay up their mites in the bank of heaven. If given from a heart filled with love for God, these seeming trifles become consecrated gifts, priceless offerings, which God smiles upon and blesses.

When Jesus said of the widow, She "hath cast in more than they all," His words were true, not only of the motive, but of the results of her gift. The "two mites which make a farthing" have brought to God's treasury an amount of money far greater than the contributions of those rich Jews. The influence of that little gift has been like a stream, small in its beginning, but widening and deepening as it flowed down through the ages. In a thousand ways it has contributed to the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel. Her example of self-sacrifice has acted and reacted upon thousands of hearts in every land and in every age. It has appealed to both the rich and the poor, and their offerings have swelled the value of her gift. God's blessing upon the widow's mite has made it the source of great results. So with every gift bestowed and every act performed with a sincere desire for God's glory. It is linked with the purposes of Omnipotence. It results for good no man can measure.

The Saviour continued His denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees: "Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple,

it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind, for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? and, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" The priests interpreted God's requirements according to their own false and narrow standard. They presumed to make nice distinctions as to the comparative guilt of various sins, passing over some lightly and treating others of perhaps less consequence as unpardonable. For a money consideration they excused persons from their vows. And for large sums of money they sometimes passed over aggravated crimes. At the same time these priests and rulers would in other cases pronounce severe judgment for trivial offenses.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." In these words Christ again condemns the abuse of sacred obligation. The obligation itself He does not set aside. The tithing system was ordained by God, and it had been observed from the earliest times. Abraham, the father of the faithful, paid tithes of all that he possessed. The Jewish rulers recognized the obligation of tithing, and this was right; but they did not leave the people to carry out their own convictions of duty. Arbitrary rules were laid down for every case; the requirements had become so complicated that it was impossible for them to be fulfilled. None knew when their obligations were met. As God gave it, the system was just and reasonable; but the priests and rabbis had made it a wearisome burden.

All that God commands is of consequence. Christ recognized the payment of tithes as a duty; but He showed that this could not excuse the neglect of other duties. The Pharisees were very exact in tithing garden herbs,

such as mint, anise, and rue; this cost them little, and it gave them a reputation for exactness and sanctity. At the same time their useless restrictions oppressed the people and destroyed respect for the sacred system of God's own appointing. They occupied men's minds with trifling distinctions, and turned their attention from essential truths. The weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and truth, were neglected. "These," Christ said, "ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Other laws had been perverted by the rabbis in like manner. In the directions given through Moses, it was forbidden to eat any unclean thing. The use of swine's flesh, and the flesh of certain animals, was prohibited, as likely to fill the blood with impurities, and to shorten life. But the Pharisees did not leave these restrictions as God had given them. They went to unwarranted extremes. Among other things the people were required to strain all the water used, lest it should contain the smallest insect, which might be classed with the unclean animals. Jesus, contrasting these trivial exactions with the magnitude of their actual sins, said to the Pharisees, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." As the whited or beautifully decorated tombs, concealed the putrefying remains within, so the outward holiness of the priests and rulers concealed iniquity. Jesus continued:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets." To show their esteem for the dead prophets, the Jews were very zealous in beautifying their tombs; but they did not profit

by their teachings, nor give heed to their reproofs.

In the days of Christ a superstitious regard was cherished for the resting-places of the dead, and vast sums of money were lavished upon their decoration. In the sight of God this was idolatry. In their undue regard for the dead, men showed that they did not love God supremely, nor their neighbor as themselves. The same idolatry is carried to great lengths today. Many are guilty of neglecting the widow and the fatherless, the sick and the poor, in order to build expensive monuments for the dead. Time, money, and labor are freely spent for this purpose, while duties to the living—duties which Christ has plainly enjoined—are left undone.

The Pharisees built the tombs of the prophets, and adorned their sepulchers, and said one to another, If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have united with them in shedding the blood of God's servants. At the same time they were planning to take the life of His Son. This should be a lesson to us. It should open our eyes to the power of Satan to deceive the mind that turns from the light of truth. Many follow in the track of the Pharisees. They reverse those who have died for their faith. They wonder at the blindness of the Jews in rejecting Christ. Had we lived in His day, they declare, we would gladly have received His teaching; we would never have been partakers in the guilt of those who rejected the Saviour. But when obedience to God requires self-denial and humiliation, these very persons stifle their convictions, and refuse obedience. Thus they manifest the same spirit as did the Pharisees whom Christ condemned.

Little did the Jews realize the terrible responsibility involved in rejecting Christ. From the time when the first innocent blood was shed, when righteous Abel fell by the hand of Cain, the same history had been repeated, with increasing guilt. In every age prophets had lifted up their voices against the sins of kings, rulers, and people, speaking the words which God gave them, and obeying His will at

the peril of their lives. From generation to generation there had been heaping up a terrible punishment for the rejecters of light and truth. This the enemies of Christ were now drawing down upon their own heads. The sin of the priests and rulers was greater than that of any preceding generation. By their rejection of the Saviour, they were making themselves responsible for the blood of all the righteous men slain from Abel to Christ. They were about to fill to overflowing their cup of iniquity. And soon it was to be poured upon their heads in retributive justice. Of this, Jesus warned them:

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."

The scribes and Pharisees who listened to Jesus knew that His words were true. They knew how the Prophet Zacharias had been slain. While the words of warning from God were upon his lips, a Satanic fury seized the apostate king, and at his command the prophet was put to death. His blood had imprinted itself upon the very stones of the temple court, and could not be erased; it remained to bear testimony against apostate Israel. As long as the temple should stand, there would be the stain of that righteous blood, crying to God to be avenged. As Jesus referred to these fearful sins, a thrill of horror ran through the multitude.

Looking forward, Jesus declared that the impenitence of the Jews and their intolerance of God's servants would be the same in the future as it had been in the past:

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city." Prophets and wise men, full of faith and the Holy Ghost,—Stephen, James, and many others,—would be condemned and slain. With hand uplifted to heaven, and a

divine light enshrouding His person, Christ spoke as a judge to those before Him. His voice, that had so often been heard in gentleness and entreaty, was now heard in rebuke and condemnation. The listeners shuddered. Never was the impression made by His words and His look to be effaced.

Christ's indignation was directed against the hypocrisy, the gross sins, by which men were destroying their own souls, deceiving the people, and dishonoring God. In the specious, deceptive reasoning of the priests and rulers, He discerned the working of Satanic agencies. Keen and searching had been His denunciation of sin; but He spoke no words of retaliation. He had a holy wrath against the prince of darkness; but He manifested no irritated temper. So the Christian who lives in harmony with God, possessing the sweet attributes of love and mercy, will feel a righteous indignation against sin; but he will not be roused by passion to revile those who revile him. Even in meeting those who are moved by a power from beneath to maintain falsehood, in Christ he will still preserve calmness and self-possession.

Divine pity marked the countenance of the Son of God as He cast one lingering look upon the temple and then upon His hearers. In a voice choked by deep anguish of heart and bitter tears He exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" This is the separation struggle. In the lamentation of Christ the very heart of God is pouring itself forth. It is the mysterious farewell of the longsuffering love of the Deity.

Pharisees and Sadducees were alike silenced. Jesus summoned His disciples, and prepared to leave the temple, not as one defeated and forced from the presence of His adversaries, but as one whose work was accomplished. He retired a victor from the contest.

The gems of truth that fell from Christ's lips on that eventful day were treasured in many

hearts. For them new thoughts started into life, new aspirations were awakened, and a new history began. After the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, these persons came to the front, to the greatness of the work. They bore a message that appealed to the hearts of men, weakening the old superstitions that had long dwarfed the lives of thousands. Before their testimony human theories and philosophies became as idle fables. Mighty were the results flowing from the words of the Saviour to that wondering, awestruck crowd in the temple at Jerusalem.

But Israel as a nation had divorced herself from God. The natural branches of the olive tree were broken off. Looking for the last time upon the interior of the temple, Jesus said with mournful pathos, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Hitherto He had called the temple His Father's house; but now, as the Son of God should pass out from those walls, God's presence would be withdrawn forever from the temple built to His glory. Henceforth its ceremonies would be meaningless, its services a mockery." D. A.

With our means let us remember the cause of God which we love. "And none shall appear before Me empty." Ex. 23:15. Bring an offering and come into His courts. Ps. 96:8.

Reading for Tuesday, December 25, 1928.

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

On returning to Capernaum, Jesus did not repair to the well-known resorts where He had taught the people, but with His disciples quietly sought the house that was to be His temporary home. During the remainder of His stay in Galilee it was His object to instruct the disciples rather than to labor for the multitudes.

On the journey through Galilee, Christ had again tried to prepare the minds of His disciples for the scenes before Him. He told them that He was to go

up to Jerusalem to be put to death and to rise again. And He added the strange and solemn announcement that He was to be betrayed into the hands of His enemies. The disciples did not even now comprehend His words. Although the shadow of a great sorrow fell upon them, a spirit of rivalry found a place in their hearts. They disputed among themselves which should be accounted greatest in the kingdom. This strife they thought to conceal from Jesus, and they did not, as usual, press close to His side, but loitered behind, so that He was in advance of them as they entered Capernaum. Jesus read their thoughts, and He longed to counsel and instruct them. But for this He awaited a quiet hour when their hearts should be open to receive His words.

Soon after they reached the town, the collector of the temple revenue came to Peter with the question, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" This tribute was not a civil tax, but a religious contribution, which every Jew was required to pay annually for the support of the temple. A refusal to pay the tribute would be regarded as disloyalty to the temple,—in the estimation of the rabbis a most grievous sin. The Saviour's attitude toward the rabbinical laws, and is plain reproofs to the defenders of tradition, afforded a pretext for the charge that He was seeking to overthrow the temple service. Now His enemies saw an opportunity of casting discredit upon Him. In the collector of the tribute they found a ready ally.

Peter saw in the collector's question an insinuation touching Christ's loyalty to the temple. Zealous for his Master's honor, he hastily answered, without consulting Him, that Jesus would pay the tribute.

But Peter only partially comprehended the purpose of his questioner. There were some classes who were held to be exempt from the payment of the tribute. In the time of Moses, when the Levites were set apart for the service of the sanctuary, they were given no inheritance among the people. The Lord said, "Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance." In the

days of Christ the priests and Levites were still regarded as especially devoted to the temple, and were not required to make the annual contribution for its support. Prophets also were exempted from this payment. In requiring the tribute from Jesus, the rabbis were setting aside His claim as a prophet and teacher, and were dealing with Him as with any commonplace person. A refusal on His part to pay the tribute would be represented as disloyalty to the temple; while, on the other hand, the payment of it would be taken as justifying their rejection of Him as a prophet.

Only a little before, Peter had acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God; but he now missed an opportunity of setting forth the character of His Master. By his answer to the collector, that Jesus would pay the tribute, he had virtually sanctioned the false conception of Him to which the priests and rulers were trying to give currency.

When Peter entered the house, the Saviour made no reference to what had taken place, but inquired, "What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers?" Peter answered, "Of strangers." And Jesus said, "Then are the children free." While the people of a country are taxed for the maintenance of their king, the monarch's own children are exempt. So Israel, the professed people of God were required to maintain His service; but Jesus, the Son of God, was under no such obligation. If priests and Levites were exempt because of their connection with the temple, how much more He to whom the temple was His Father's house.

If Jesus had paid the tribute without protest, He would virtually have acknowledged the justice of the claim, and would thus have denied His divinity. But while He saw good to meet the demand, He denied the claim upon which it was based. In providing for the payment of the tribute He gave evidence of His divine character. It was made manifest that He was one with God, and therefore was not under tribute as a mere subject of the kingdom.

"Go thou to the sea," He directed Peter, "and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee."

Though He had clothed His divinity with humanity, in this miracle He revealed His glory. It was evident that this was He who through David had declared, "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof."

While Jesus made it plain that He was under no obligation to pay the tribute, He entered into no controversy with the Jews in regard to the matter; for they would have misinterpreted His words, and turned them against Him. Lest He should give offense by withholding the tribute, He did that which He could not justly be required to do. This lesson would be of great value to His disciples. Marked changes were soon to take place in their relation to the temple service, and Christ taught them not to place themselves needlessly in antagonism to established order. So far as possible, they were to avoid giving occasion for misinterpretation of their faith. While Christians are not to sacrifice one principle of truth, they should avoid controversy whenever it is possible to do so.

When Christ and the disciples were alone in the house, while Peter was gone to the sea, Jesus called the others to Him, and asked, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" The presence of Jesus, and His question, put the matter entirely different light from that in which it had appeared to them while they were contending by the way. Shame and self-condemnation kept them silent. Jesus had told them that He was to die for their sake, and their selfish ambition was in painful contrast to His unselfish love.

When Jesus told them that He was to be put to death and to rise again He was trying to draw them into conversation in regard to the great test of their

faith. Had they been ready to receive what He desired to make known to them, they would have been saved bitter anguish and despair. His words would have brought consolation in the hour of bereavement and disappointment. But although He had spoken so plainly of what awaited Him, His mention of the fact that He was soon to go to Jerusalem, again kindled their hope that the kingdom was about to be set up. This had led to questioning as to who should fill the highest offices. On Peter's return from the sea, the disciples told him of the Saviour's question, and at last one ventured to ask Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?"

The Saviour gathered His disciples about Him, and said to them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." There was in these words a solemnity and impressiveness which the disciples were far from comprehending. That which Christ discerned, they could not see. They did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and this ignorance was the apparent cause of their contention. But the real cause lay deeper. By explaining the nature of the kingdom, Christ might for the time have quelled their strife; but this would not have touched the underlying cause. Even after they had received the fullest knowledge, any question of precedence might have renewed the trouble. Thus disaster would have been brought to the church after Christ's departure. The strife for the highest place was the outworking of that same spirit which was the beginning of the great controversy in the worlds above, and which had brought Christ from heaven to die. There rose up before Him a vision of Lucifer, the "son of the morning," in glory surpassing all the angels that surrounded the throne, and united in closest ties to the Son of God. Lucifer had said, "I will be like the Most High;" and the desire for self-exaltation had brought strife into the heavenly courts, and had banished a multitude of the hosts of God. Had Lucifer really desired to be like the Most High, he would never have deserted his appointed place in

heaven; for the spirit of the Most High is manifested in unselfish ministry. Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a stepping-stone on which he himself may climb to a higher place.

While Lucifer counted it a thing to be grasped to be equal with God, Christ, the Exalted One, "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Now the cross was just before Him: and His own disciples were so filled with self-seeking—the very principle of Satan's kingdom—that they could not enter into sympathy with their Lord or even understand Him as He spoke of His humiliation for them.

Very tenderly, yet with solemn emphasis, Jesus tried to correct the evil. He showed what is the principle that bears sway in the kingdom of heaven, and in what true greatness consists, as estimated by the standard of the courts above. Those who were actuated by pride and love of distinction, were thinking of themselves, and of the rewards they were to have, rather than how they were to render back to God the gifts they had received. They would have no place in the kingdom of heaven, for they were identified with the ranks of Satan.

Before honor is humility. To fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. The most childlike disciple is the most efficient in labor for God. The heavenly intelligences can co-operate with him who is seeking, not to exalt self, but to save souls. He who feels most deeply his need of divine aid will plead for it; and the Holy Spirit

will give unto him glimpses of Jesus that will strengthen and uplift the soul. From communion with Christ he will go forth to work for those who are perishing in their sins. He is anointed for his mission; and he succeeds where many of the learned and intellectually wise would fail.

But when men exalt themselves, feeling that they are a necessity for the success of God's great plan, the Lord causes them to be set aside. It is made evident that the Lord is not dependent upon them. The work does not stop because of their removal from it, but goes forward with greater power.

It was not enough for the disciples of Jesus to be instructed as to the nature of His kingdom. What they needed was a change of heart that would bring them into harmony with its principles. Calling a little child to Him, Jesus set him in the midst of them; then tenderly folding the little one in His arms He said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The simplicity, the self-forgetfulness, and the confiding love of a little child are the attributes that Heaven values. These are the characteristics of real greatness.

Again Jesus explained to the disciples that His kingdom is not characterized by earthly dignity and display. At the feet of Jesus all these distinctions are forgotten. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, meet together, with no thought of caste or worldly pre-eminence. All meet as blood-bought souls, alike dependent upon One who has redeemed them to God.

The sincere, contrite soul is precious in the sight of God. He places His own signet upon men, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by their intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The Lord of glory is satisfied with those who are meek and lowly in heart. "Thou hast also given me," said David, "the shield of thy Salvation: . . . and Thy gentleness"—as an element in the human character—"hath made me great."

"Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name,"

said Jesus, "receiveth Me. And whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me." "Thus saith the Lord: The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool; . . . but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word."

"Learn not the way of the heathen."

"At this time—a time of overwhelming iniquity—a new life, coming from the Source of all life (Christ) is to take possession of those who have the love of God in their hearts."

(DESIRE OF AGES.)

Reading Wednesday, Dec. 26,
1928.

FORBID HIM NOT

The Saviour's words awakened in the disciples a feeling of self-distrust. No one had been specially pointed out in the reply; but John was led to question whether in one case his action had been right. With the spirit of a child he laid the matter before Jesus. "Master," he said, "we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us."

James and John had thought that in checking this man they had had in view their Lord's honor; they began to see that they were jealous for their own. They acknowledged their error, and accepted the reproof of Jesus, "Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me." None who showed themselves in any way friendly to Christ were to be repulsed. There were many who had been deeply moved by the character and work of Christ, and whose hearts were opening to Him in faith; and the disciples, who could not read motives, must be careful not to discourage these souls. When Jesus was no longer personally among them, and the work was left in their hands they must not indulge a narrow, exclusive spirit, but manifest the same far-reaching sympathy which they had seen in their Master.

The fact that one does not in all things conform to our personal ideas or opinions will not

justify us in forbidding to labor for God. Christ is the great Teacher; we are not to judge or to command, but in humility each is to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. Every soul whom God has made willing, is a channel through which Christ will reveal His pardoning love. How careful we should be lest we discourage one of God's light-bearers, and thus intercept the rays that He would have shine to the world.

Harshness or coldness shown by a disciple toward one whom Christ was drawing,—such an act as that of John in forbidding one to work miracles in Christ's name,—might result in turning the feet into the path of the enemy, and causing the loss of a soul. Rather than for one to do this, said Jesus, "It is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." And He added, "If thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell."

Why this earnest language, than which none can be stronger? Because "the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Shall His disciples show less regard for the souls of their fellow-men than the Majesty of heaven has shown? Every soul has cost an infinite price, and how terrible is the sin of turning one soul away from Christ, so that for him the Saviour's love and humiliation and agony shall have been in vain.

"Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come." The world, inspired by Satan, will surely oppose the followers of Christ, and seek to destroy their faith; But woe to him who has taken Christ's name, and yet is found doing this work. Our Lord is put to shame by those who claim to serve Him, but who misrepresent His character; and multitudes are deceived, and led into false paths.

In the ritual service, salt was added to every sacrifice. This,

like the offering of incense, signified that only the righteousness of Christ could make the service acceptable to God. Referring to this practise, Jesus said, "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." All who would present themselves "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," must receive the saving salt, the righteousness of our Saviour. Then they become "the salt of the earth," restraining evil among men, as salt preserves from corruption. But if the salt has lost its savor; if there is only a profession of godliness, without the love of Christ, there is no power for good. The life can exert no saving influence upon the world. Your energy and efficiency in the upbuilding of My kingdom, Jesus says, depend upon your receiving My Spirit. You must be partakers of My grace, in order to be a savor of life unto life. Then there will be no rivalry, no self-seeking, no desire for the highest place. You will have that love which seeks not her own, but another's wealth.

Let the repenting sinner fix his eyes upon "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" and by beholding, he becomes changed. His fear is turned to joy, his doubts to hope. Gratitude springs up. The stony heart is broken. A tide of love sweeps into the life. When we see Jesus, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, working to save the lost, slighted, scorned, derided, driven from city to city till His mission was accomplished; when we behold Him in Gethsemane, sweating great drops of blood, and on the cross dying in agony,—when we see this, self will no longer clamor to be recognized. Looking unto Jesus, we shall be ashamed of our coldness, our lethargy, our self-seeking. We shall be willing to be anything or nothing, so that we may do heart-service for the Master. We shall rejoice to bear the cross after Jesus, to endure trial, shame, or persecution for His dear sake.

"We then that are strong ought to bear infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves." No soul who believes in Christ, though his faith may

be weak, and his steps wavering as those of a little child, is to be lightly esteemed. By all that has given us advantage over another,—be it education and refinement, nobility of character, Christian training, religious experience,—we are in debt to those less favored; and, so far as lies in our power, we are to minister unto them. If we are strong, we are to stay up the hands of the weak. Angels of glory, that do always behold the face of the Father in heaven, joy in ministering to His little ones. Trembling souls, who have many objectionable traits of character, are their special charge. Angels are ever present where they are most needed, with those who have the hardest battle with self to fight, and whose surroundings are the most discouraging. And in this ministry Christ's true followers will co-operate.

If one of these little ones shall be overcome, and commit a wrong against you, then it is your work to seek his restoration. Do not wait for him to make the first effort for reconciliation. "How think ye?" said Jesus; "if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

In the spirit of meekness, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," go to the erring one, and "tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Do not put him to shame by exposing his fault to others, nor bring dishonor upon Christ by making public the sin or error of one who bears His name. Often the truth must be plainly spoken to the erring, he must be let to see his error, that he may reform. But you are not to judge or to condemn. Make no attempt at self-justification. Let all your effort be for his recovery. In treating the wounds of the soul, there is need of the most delicate touch, the finest sensibility. Only the love that flows from the suffering One of Calvary can

avail here. With pitying tenderness, let brother deal with brother, knowing that if you succeed, you will "save a soul from death," and "hide a multitude of sins."

But even this effort may be unavailing. Then, said Jesus, "take with thee one or two more." It may be that their united influence will prevail where that of the first was unsuccessful. Not being parties to the trouble, they will be more likely to act impartially, and this fact will give their counsel greater weight with the erring one.

If he will not hear them, then, and not till then, the matter is to be brought before the whole body of believers. Let the members of the church as the representatives of Christ, unite in prayer and loving entreaty that the offender may be restored. The Holy Spirit will speak through His servants, pleading with the wanderer to return to God. Paul the apostle, speaking by inspiration, says, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." He who rejects this united overture, has broken the tie that binds him to Christ, and thus has severed himself from the fellowship of the church. Henceforth, said Jesus, "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." But he is not to be regarded as cut off from the mercy of God. Let him not be despised or neglected by his former brethren, but be treated with tenderness and compassion, as one of the lost sheep that Christ is still seeking to bring to His fold.

Christ's instruction as to the treatment of the erring repeats in more specific form the teaching given to Israel through Moses: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt not in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, that thou bear not sin for him." That is, if one neglects the duty Christ has enjoined, of trying to restore those who are in error and sin, he becomes a partaker in sin. For evils that we might have checked, we are just as responsible as if we were guilty of the acts ourselves.

But it is to the wrong-doer himself that we are to present the wrong. We are not to make

it a matter of comment and criticism among ourselves; nor even after it is told to the church, are we at liberty to repeat it to others. A knowledge of the faults of Christians will be only a cause of stumbling to the unbelieving world; and by dwelling upon these things, we ourselves can receive only harm; for it is by beholding that we become changed. While we seek to correct the errors of a brother, the spirit of Christ will lead us to shield him, as far as possible, from the criticism of even his own brethren, and how much more from the censure of the unbelieving world. We ourselves are erring, and need Christ's pity and forgiveness, and just as we wish Him to deal with us, He bids us deal with one another.

Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. you are acting as the ambassadors of heaven, and the issues of your work are for eternity.

But we are not to bear this great responsibility alone. Wherever His word is obeyed with a sincere heart, there Christ abides. Not only is He present in the assemblies of the church, but wherever disciples, however few, meet in His name, there also He will be. And He says, "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."

Jesus says, "My Father which is in heaven," as reminding His disciples that while by His humanity He is linked with them, a sharer in their trials, and sympathizing with them in their sufferings, by His divinity He is connected with the throne of the Infinite. Wonderful assurance! The heavenly intelligences unite with men in sympathy and labor for the saving of that which was lost. And all the power of heaven is brought to combine with human ability in drawing souls to Christ.

DESIRE OF AGES.

"Love one another."
"God is Love."

Intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being vulgar in point of style.—S. T. Coleridge.

Reading for Sabbath, Dec. 29, 1928.

Think and Pray as you read. FASHION AN IDOL

"Fashion is an idol. Here there is an ever-changing pantheon where millions worship. And this idolatry becomes a disease.

"The idolatry of dress is a moral disease."—"Testimonies," Vol. VI, p. 96.

This disease is eating out the vitals of thousands in our ranks. We stress this matter with several references to the Bible and the "Testimonies." Says Paul, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." 1 Tim. 2:9. The Twentieth Century New Testament of this text reads: "I also desire that women adorn themselves with appropriate dress, worn quietly and modestly."

From the spirit of prophecy we quote the following impressive and important statement:

"Simplicity of dress will make a sensible woman appear to the best advantage. We judge of a person's character by the style of dress worn. Gaudy apparel betrays vanity and weakness. A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire."—"Testimonies," Vol. IV, page 643.

"Fashion is deteriorating the intellect and eating out the spirituality of our people. Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God." Id., page 647.

Fashionable Dress Endangers Morals.

"The love of dress endangers the morals, and makes women the opposite of the Christian lady, characterized by modesty and sobriety. Showy, extravagant dress too often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer, and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder. God sees that the ruin of the character is frequently preceded by the indulgence of pride and vanity in dress."—Id., p. 645.

"Their dress says, Look at me."—Ibid.

On this point let us read outside authorities. The testimony of the Chicago Juvenile Protective Association is as follows:

"Dress causes the downfall of the majority of girls who go astray."

Another authority says:

"The bared arms, the 'peekaboo front,' and decollete waist, exposing charms sacred to womanhood, appeal directly to man's sexual instinct. In consequence many men are weakened in moral restraint, and led into low ideals of womanhood. Knowingly to exert such influence is declared by Professor Gregory to be downright immorality. 'It is evident from the importance of man's higher nature, that the one who attempts to weaken the moral and religious restraints which keep men from moral evil, is guilty of a most atrocious vice, and is one of the worst enemies of mankind.'"

The susceptibility of men to the influence of enticingly attired women appears in the testimony of Prof. T. W. Shannon, A. M.:

"I have lived a continent life. . . . As a husband, father, educator, and minister, I pledge you my honor that the greatest trials, the sorest temptations, I have ever met have come from improperly dressed women."

"Satan is constantly devising some new style of dress that shall prove an injury to physical and moral health; and he exults when he sees professed Christians eagerly accepting the fashions that he has invented. . . .

"Many a style of dress that was inappropriate and even ridiculous has been generally adopted because it was the fashion. Among these pernicious fashions were the large hoops, which frequently caused indecent exposure of the person."—"Testimonies," Vol. IV, pp. 634, 635.

And does not the present style of short skirts do the same? It surely does.

Immodesty in Dress.

"Were it not for fashion, those who thus immodestly expose themselves would be hissed at; but modesty and decency must be sacrificed to the god of fashion. May the Lord deliver His people from this grievous sin!

God will not pity those who will be slaves to fashion." Id., Vol. I, page 278.

"My views were calculated to correct the present fashion, the extreme long dress, trailing upon the ground, and also to correct the extreme short dress, reaching about to the knees, which is worn by a certain class. I was shown that we should shun both extremes." Id., p. 464.

"Many will exclaim, 'Why, such a style of dress would be old-fashioned.' What if it is? I wish we could be old-fashioned in many respects."—Id., p. 461.

"Chaste simplicity in dress, when united with modesty of demeanor, will go far toward surrounding a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils." "Education," p. 248.

"They will not imitate its pride, fashions, or customs. The noble object will be ever before them, to glorify God, and gain the immortal inheritance. This prospect will swallow up all beside of an earthly nature. God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. As soon as any have a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children."—"Testimonies," Vol. I, p. 137.

"We are strangers and pilgrims in this world. We are to wait, watch, pray, and work. The whole mind, the whole soul, the whole heart, and the whole strength are purchased by the blood of the Son of God. We are not to feel it our duty to wear pilgrim's dress of just such a color, just such a shape, but neat, modest, apparel, that the word of inspiration teaches us we should wear. If our hearts are united with Christ's heart, we shall have a most intense desire to be clothed with His righteousness. Nothing will be put upon the person to attract attention or to create controversy."—"Testimonies to Ministers," pp. 130, 131.

If a woman dresses with becoming modesty in skirts that fall well below the knees, say, not shorter than one-third length from the knees to the floor, there is no controversy, and unkind or curious attention

is not called to her. But dresses at or about the knees are thought by many to be immodest, and controversy and criticism is provoked. The testimony tells us to dress so as to avoid attracting attention or creating controversy.

Bobbing the Hair.

Now upon this rather delicate subject may I set forth a few reasons why we feel that this is a worldly practice which all our sisters should avoid. Peter speaks of appropriate dress as follows:

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel." 1 Peter 3:3.

The Twentieth Century Testament renders this text thus: Yours should be, not the external adornment of the arrangement of the hair, etc."

God has, we believe, given woman her long hair to distinctly mark her sex, and to this end the scripture speaks.

"If a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him; but if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering." 1 Cor. 11:14, 15.

Still another rendering is:

"It would be reckoned effeminate in a man to wear his hair in length and form of a woman's, yet, on the other hand, it is an honor for a woman to distinguish herself from the opposite sex by the length and form of her hair, as it was given her by God for this very end."

Reference has already been made to the American costume of over a half century ago, and that was a short skirt worn about to the knee and often the hair bobbed. Elder J. N. Loughborough refers to this in his book, "Rise and Progress," pp. 254 and 258. He refers to walking behind two persons, and as they came near one was recognized as a woman, and they thought for a time she was accompanied by a gentleman, for the person had on this American costume and wore the hair short. When she turned, they saw that the person thought to be a gentleman was a woman. Sister White refers to this American costume and has written down what God showed her

about it. She says:

"I saw that God's order has been reversed, and His special directions disregarded, by those who adopt the American costume. I was referred to Deuteronomy 22:5: 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garments, for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.' God would not have His people adopt the so-called reform dress. It is immodest apparel, wholly unfitted for the modest, humble followers of Christ.

"There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination. 'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety'."—"Testimonies," Vol. 1, p. 421."

"THE REVIEW."

To the Christian women of our church, are you the daughters of God, or of that wicked Jezebel? Study these texts: Rev. 12:1; 1 Peter 3:1-6; 1 Peter 4:3-4; Rev. 17:1-5; 2 Kings 9:30-37; Jer. 4:30, 31; Eze. 23:35-49; Isa. 3:16-23.

SUCCESS

It is not enough to get on in life—we must get on in a way that will please God, in a righteous way. When we see a man rising to prominence, growing rich, achieving power or fame, before we can commend him as worthily successful we must know by what steps he has climbed to his high eminence. There are those who, in making a living, or in winning worldly success, wreck and lose their life.

Our first aim should ever be to build a life that will appear spotless and beautiful before God. No other success is worth achieving. A man may make a splendid living, robing himself in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day; but if meanwhile he is not making within himself a noble and Christlike manhood, he is losing all that is worth while.

THE WEEK OF PRAYER

December 22-29, 1928.

Another year has all but passed away. Some of us who were here one year ago have passed away with it. We who are here come together in this season of prayer should be thankful to God because He has given us courage to break away from the world, at this time of the year, when it is mad with its love and all kinds of pleasure seeking and pleasure making.

For what have we separated from the world? Why have we come together to seek God? Why give up the pleasure of the world at this time of the year? Is it not that we are seeking our God for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit that we may be fitted to do the great work committed to our trust?

How are we to reach the pleasure mad multitudes with the light of Gospel truth? Answer.

"The special work for this time must be done in reaching the people through personal efforts."

Let all who believe the truth begin to work. Do the work that lies nearest you. . . . If the lay members of the church will arouse to do the work that they can do . . . each seeing how much he can accomplish in winning souls to Jesus, we shall see many leaving the ranks of Satan to stand under the Banner of Christ. Wonderful revivals will follow. Sinners will be converted, and many souls will be added to the church.

In this Week of Prayer, which seems to have come so quickly since the close of the last, let us seek God for a most thorough reformation in our own lives and then, will such a revival take place among us. The spirit of prayer will actuate every believer, and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife.

God calls upon those who are willing to be controlled by His Holy Spirit to lead out in a work of a thorough reformation. Shall we do it? May God help us to be drawn closer to Him during this season of prayer.

Remember the work by praying for its success, and by making liberal offerings for its sup-

port. May God send his rich blessings to all of His children, is my prayer.

J. W. M.

BIENNIAL SESSION
AND TRIP

The fourth Biennial Session of the "Free Seventh-day Adventists" is now in the past. It is an added achievement to the history of this infant denomination. The greatest assembly ever held among "Seventh-day Adventists" Negroes. I am sure every one who attended this session has enjoyed it. The very thought that, in our association (though it may be with men and women in different walks of life) there was no necessity for the one to fawn and the other to condescend. It was not necessary for one to sacrifice his manhood and the principles of self-respect, so as to be tolerated by his supposed superior. I say that that in itself was sufficient greatly to have enhanced the joy, and creates a freedom for which every man with blood should crave. For truly no self-respecting and intelligent Negro can feel other than insulted by that statement found in Vol. 9, page 206, that it is unwise to encourage equal association of black and white people. Such a teaching is plainly calculated to destroy every spark of manly qualities in the Negroes. And with the knowledge of such a statement or teaching no Negro with good sense and proper breeding can really feel free to associate with the white brethren until they become Christians, which will necessitate a change of idea.

The Truth of Religion.

The truth of religion can never be represented by such teachings. "Freedom to think and act," said one, "is the first prerogative of man. He only is free whose body is the servant of his mind and whose mind untrammelled is the servant of God. In the state, the church and social order, the rights and duties of the members are founded in the principle of absolute equality among themselves."

The scripture teaches that God does not differentiate. In John 17:23 we read, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one; And that the world may know that thou hast

sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." There is no discrimination made or even intimated between His begotten Son and His adopted sons in the text. "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:6. According to that statement of the Holy Scripture we are made to share His (Christ's) honor with Him. And in the following is shown the same mind in Christ and we are admonished to let that same mind be in us.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:5-7.

Surely no one is disposed to think this making Himself of no "reputation," to come to earth and associate Himself with men in the lowest walks of life, and to regard His servants as His most intimate associates, was unwise. And if it was not unwise for the King of Glory how is it unwise for men who claim that He is their example only because of their complexion? I believe the arch deceiver (Satan) has the greater advantage in this conclusion.

But according to John 17:23 no man or company of men, black or white, rich or poor, no matter what may be their influence and how large their army, will be able to evangelize the world until all feeling of caste, color, and nationalities be put down, and that union of feeling and action takes place.

The reunion of friends and acquaintances long parted, the meeting of new acquaintances, and making of new friends, the demonstration of the Spirit's presence in the weeping and strong crying and confession of sin and unfaithfulness especially among those that had backslidden. The devotional services in the early mornings, the clarified vision on the scriptures, the tent life which had brought us so close to nature, reminding us of the life of our father Abraham. All these and more contributed to the success of the Session. Eleven days Conference brought this session to a

close. Home-delegates all animated returned to their respective places with new ideas and fresh courage. While the foreign delegates prepared for a trip north. The Assembly's big travelling car of the Nash type was used for this purpose. Then another joyous time commenced among four Elders and one local Elder, Brother Henry Williams, the Elder for the New York Church. Travelling from Georgia (South) to New York City. Passing through cities, towns, and villages covering in the round trip a distance of over 2,000 miles of interstate and state highway. Passing through various states such as South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, New York. Viewing the beauty of nature. In fact everything on the way seemed to have been prepared with new charm to subscribe their individual part to reanimate. Hills, valleys, lakes, streams, woodland, fields, groves—all seem anxious to welcome. Hundreds of miles of hard concrete and asphalt road which in many places can be seen lying for long distances descending before us. This adds so much more to the soft drive with Elder Manns at the wheel, cautious and painstaking. Then the architectural made their round of display, when we reached the capitals and leading cities of the different States, such as Columbia, Raleigh, Richmond, Petersburg, Apex City, Eary, Hamlet City, Henderson City, Buckinom City, Washington, D. C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, Wilmington, with its population of 226,000, Newark, N. J., New York. Arriving in the big city of New York, we spent eighteen precious days with the believers doing the best we could for the Master.

Returning South.

Returning South we completed a very enjoyable trip. The evening preceding the day we had planned to leave the States for our homes, we were entertained by the Sabbath School with a program, the most appropriate, instructive, and ennobling. The impressive dialogues, illustrated by examples the most natural and striking. The music rich and appealing, seems to give new life and vigour. Much praise is to be awarded the su-

perintendent of the Sabbath School, Brother Cummings, and his colleagues for this program. Such are the privileges which the Gospel offers which Negroes very seldom are allowed to enjoy.

C. A. EDWARDS,
Calle Marina 20, Moron,
Cam., Cuba.

SYNOPSIS OF ELDER EDWARDS' REPORT

Our work in the Cuban field is now five years old. It was started in the Spring of 1923 when Elder Manns visited Cuba at the request of the Cuban brethren, and organized the work there. Like all other religious movements it had many enemies, even many of those who joined themselves with the movement proved to be its most deadly foes. So we had enemies within and without. The bitterest enemies, however, we happen to encounter without are our former brethren, the Seventh-day Adventists. By means that would make the devil blush they seek to destroy our influence, and our work. Nevertheless we have weathered all the storms, and the blast, and our delegates are privileged to cross the briny deep to attend the fourth Biennial Session of the General Assembly.

Many, many discouraging features we encountered during these five years, but we have often been cheered by the experience of our Saviour, as stated by Isaiah when he said, "Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain: Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." Isaiah 49:4, 5. Therefore these experiences have left us far more courageous than ever before.

Some of those with whom we have started have left us, as it is with all other movements of its kind; for instance our Saviour had 82 followers and 70 got offended with Him and left Him at once; and as the record said

walk no more with Him. We are told that they went back to the big church; they disdained Him, and told the Pharisees that Jesus told them with His own lips that He was not the Messiah.

But our former brethren, the Seventh-day Adventists, especially those in Moron, where our headquarters is located, maliciously use this experience to upset the unstable and unlearned. But our work goes on. The Lord is certainly doing for us miraculous things. For among the many things which we have noticed is the financing of our work. Our constituents are among the English-speaking elements and at that, the poorer ones: having to stem all the disadvantages to which this class of mankind is always exposed in every land. In addition to this, financial strain which was felt by every class in the Island during 1927 was marked. Yet in this year 1927 our offerings has reached a high proportion surpassing all the years of our operation in Cuba. In last meeting of our Executive Committee when this report was rendered by our secretary we really discerned the Lord's leading. Another thing for which we are especially thankful to our Heavenly Father is the unity that is now existing among us as a people. And this has something to say of the present spirituality. The essentials which constitute the Third Angel's Message, such as Dress, Health, and Sabbath Reform, we teach and strictly observe, especially so at the headquarters of our work. This of course is not very inviting to those not of our faith, and it does not appeal either to the insincere among us; hence many of this class have left us and the natural consequences are we are despised in their eyes. But the experience that we are having with the few converts that are being made under these circumstances are very interesting and encouraging. This attitude of ours naturally gives our former brethren, the Seventh-day Adventists, much scope for numerical advancement, because they are not particular; all they are seeking in the field is a large numerical report. And as this condition is more suitable to the mass, their ranks are swollen.

But we are not at all keen on that as we know where it will all end.

They use this circumstance against us to prove that the Lord is with them and not with us. Hence those who cannot understand are upset.

Banner Fund

We handled 5,069 copies of the Banner plus subscriptions taken amounting to over one hundred.

C. A. EDWARDS.

DID CHRIST EXIST BEFORE HIS BIRTH?

While this question is answered in the negative by many, God's word gives assurance that the One Who, under counsel of the Father, created us in the beginning, is the same who creates us anew—the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Micah 5:2, we read: "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Margin, "From the days of eternity.")

This was spoken of Christ, as may be seen from Matthew 2: 4-6: "When he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: For out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule My people Israel."

"Whose goings forth have been from of old," agrees with Collosians 1:16, 17: "By 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: all things were created by Him: and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

That the One who created in the beginning, was made flesh, is clearly stated. Isaiah 54:5: "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel."

Notice the statement that our

"Maker" is our "Redeemer," "The Holy One of Israel;" also that He is our "husband." Paul says, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." II. Corinthians 11:2.

The opening of the apostle John's Gospel bears this testimony: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1.

Before reading farther, let us read verse 14, so that we may know of whom this is speaking: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father)." This, then, is speaking of Christ. Now read verses 2 and 3 "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Verse 10: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him." Again: "God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Ephesians 3:9, last part.

"God, what at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." Hebrews 1:1, 2.

Continuing, the Father addresses the Son. "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands." Hebrews 1:8-10. How can language be plainer?

In summing up the relation of man to God and His son, Paul says, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him: And one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." I. Corinthians 8:6.

An Archangel The Rock.

"He is the Rock." Deuteronomy 32:4. They drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed

them: and that Rock was Christ." I. Corinthians 10:4.

"Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." John 8:57, 58.

At another time, Jesus said to His Disciples, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" John 6:62. A short time afterward, they saw the wonderful sight of Christ ascending to heaven from the Mount of Olives.

When Gabriel was commissioned to explain the vision given to Daniel, he said: "I will show thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince." Daniel 10:21.

The question at once arises, Who is Michael our Prince? He was there to aid His people in the days of Daniel. He is called "the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people." Daniel 12:1.

In Jude, verse 9, we read: "Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses." This verse says that Michael is the Archangel. Now we wish to know who the Archangel is. I. Thessalonians 4:16, says: "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."

Speaking of this event, Jesus says in John 5:25, 28: "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." "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth."

From these Scriptures, it is evident that Michael is the Archangel, and that the Archangel is Christ. Then Michael, who is our Prince, and who was with Gabriel as he came to Daniel, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

To review the foregoing: in Creation, Christ was the active agent by whom all things were made. He was our "Maker" and our "Redeemer." He was with

the children of Israel as their "Rock;" and it is emphatically stated, "That Rock was Christ." He was there when Moses died. He was before Abraham. Under His name "Michael," He was with the Angel who visited Daniel. The meaning of the Hebrew name Michael is, "One who is like God." This name can be applied to Christ only. The worlds were framed by Him: man was created by Him; when man fell, the plan of salvation was laid by Him; at the resurrection, man will be raised from the dead by His voice; and when Christ came to bear man's load of guilt, "God was manifest in the flesh." I. Timothy 3:16.

In His prayer, recorded in John 17, He said: "O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Verse 5.

Proverbs 8:22-30 pictures that glory: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

True "the mystery of godliness" is great. Man cannot fathom it. But faith lays hold of it; and in the coming day, when men shall share in the glory of which Christ speaks, and comprehend infinitely more than we can now, we shall still join with the angels in the study of new unfathomed depths of God's unchanging love.

"WHAT MAN CAN- NOT REVERSE"

When Balaam was called upon to curse Israel, instead of cursing, he blessed them. He uttered a great truth to Balak when he said, "God hath blessed and I cannot reverse it." Num. 23:20. And in I. Chron. 17:27, we read, "For thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever." So we see that God's blessings are as permanent as ages: and man

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can neither reverse nor literate them.

We read in Gen. 2:3, that "God bless the seventh day." It was the day He blessed. "The seventh" is a definite statement. So after God blesses a thing, "it shall be forever," and He blessed the seventh day, therefore it will forever be His blessed day. And what He blesses man cannot reverse, therefore man can never change the blessing from the seventh day to a day God never blessed. No, not even the "man of sin," although he exalts himself above God, and thinks himself able to change the time in God's law. The fact remains, "That what God has blessed man cannot reverse."

Again God says, "Blessed are they that do His commandments." Rev. 22:14. Man cannot reverse this blessing. The faithful commandment-keepers of past ages, have been followed and persecuted by the "sleuth-hounds" of the "man of sin," but they have never been able to reverse the blessing pronounced and enjoyed by those that keep the commandments of God. And what God blesses it shall be forever, therefore, man will everlastingly enjoy a blessing by observing God's blessed Sabbath day. Therefore, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Ex. 20:8.

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The office of the Holy Spirit is to so change the heart that it may bear fruit of a different na-

ture than that born by the un-renewed heart. "I will make with them a covenant of peace * * * they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing: and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing." Eze. 34:25, 26. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Eze. 36:25-27. This is what the Spirit of God does for a man who accepts it and receives it.

Having received the Holy Spirit, it bears fruit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Gal. 5:22-24. Often the first manifestation of the Holy Spirit is to cleanse the temple. So it comes as a reprover, of righteousness, and of judgment. It is also a comforter, but it does not comfort in any wrong doing. Let us welcome the Holy Spirit.

Believer, Christ Jesus Himself presents thee with thy crosses, and they are no mean gifts; for there are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers on earth.