

"Parables of Jesus"

# **CRYPTOLOGY**

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OF THE

# **KINGDOM**

The "Plan of the Ages" Revealed  
In the Parables of Jesus

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**HORACE E. HOLLISTER**

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*Unto You it is given to Know  
the Mysteries of the Kingdom  
of God.—Luke 8:10.*

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		Ante-diluvian Age	Patriarchal Age	Jewish Age	Harvest	Gospel Age	Millennial Age																									
C H A R T Of The		The Father	Creation	Subjection to Angels	Fall of Angels	Harvest Messenger - I	Harvest Messenger - II	Harvest Messenger - III	First Advent of Christ	Death of Christ	Resurrection & Exaltation	Church or KINGDOM of GOD	Character Requirements	Limited Number of Elect	Two Calls to Jews	Causes for Rejection	Calling of Gentiles	Four Classes of Hearers	Justification	Consecration	Begetting of the Spirit	Character Development	The 'Great Company'	The Counterfeit System	Growth of False Doctrine	Satan's Responsibility	Second Advent of Christ	Harvest Messenger - IV	Reward of the Church	Reward of Great Company	Millennial Kingdom	The Second Death
1	- The Householder's Vineyard																															
2	- The Hid Treasure																															
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SHADED SQUARES opposite each Parable indicate DIRECT references to the events or doctrines stated at the top of the column in which the shading appears.  
X MARKS similarly indicate INDIRECT or implied references.



# Cryptology of the Kingdom

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them." "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." Matthew 13:34; Mark 4: 11, 12.

The thought that associated with the religion of Jesus Christ are hidden mysteries, revealed, like the "mysteries" of pagan religions of old, only to a chosen inner circle of initiates, is in full accord with the statement of the Master that "strait (difficult) is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," and with the apostle's injunction, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

But the Master also said, "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Our success is only a question of the depth of our sincerity in seeking to know the Lord's will, and our willingness to do that will when its application to our own life and character is learned; for "if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally."

To the ones who "believe that God is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," the study of the hidden meaning of the Master's cryptic allegories proves not only intensely interesting but also a mine of priceless information concerning God's kingdom, its history, its future, the requirements for participation therein and its high rewards and honors to be gained "by patient continuance in well doing."

From whom could the earnest truth-seeker hope to obtain more exact and detailed information respecting the Kingdom than from the confidential instructions to his own adherents of Him who is destined by the will of the

Father to be its King, and who came into the world to bear witness to the truth concerning it?

Considering the parables of the Kingdom from this standpoint, then, we are not surprised to find that they fully confirm every detail of the 'Plan of the Ages,' and thus our faith is greatly strengthened, not only in the homogeneity of the Bible as the Divine revelation, but also in the reliability of the channel of instruction and the visible leadership that we have learned to trust and to look to with expectancy for the "meat in due season."

Viewed as a whole, the twenty parables of our Lord directly referring to the Kingdom, logically separate themselves into three groups. They may be likened to a portfolio of pictures of a great city, the scriptural symbol of a powerful government or seat of authority. Thus analyzed, the first group is properly a series of panoramas of the whole Kingdom, but from differing standpoints. The second group refers to various details respecting the laws and regulations of the Kingdom, conditions of admission, etc.; or the gates, walls, streets and buildings of the symbolic city. The third group is prophetic; it deals with events connected with the Kingdom, future at the time the parables were uttered; or they may be compared to views of the city at various stages of its history, showing its construction and growth.

It is in this logical order, then, that the parables of the Kingdom will be taken up in the succeeding pages. Like stones of a rich mosaic, long scattered and lost, each parable will be found to fit into its proper place perfectly; and when the restoration is complete, the 'Plan of the Ages' will spread out before our eyes as a masterpiece of word painting from the Divine Artist himself.

It is far from the writer's thought, however, that he has exhausted the possibilities or sounded the full depth of meaning of the Master's words. If the series of articles awakens some of the Lord's people to a deeper appreciation, and stirs them to a closer



study, of the Kingdom Cryptology, our object will have been accomplished.

In interpreting these and other parabolic and symbolic Scriptures, let us keep in mind the following rules:

1. In a parable the thing said is never the thing meant. It is a word-picture.

2. A type must not be used to teach a doctrine, but merely to illustrate one already taught in plain terms.

3. Symbols can be understood by the church only as an understanding of them becomes due.

4. When our Lord does not interpret a parable, any one has the right to seek to find and to make known an interpretation which will fit to all the various parts of the parable, and be reasonable, Scriptural and harmonious.

#### Parable I.

#### THE HOUSEHOLDER'S VINEYARD.

Matt. 21:33-44; Mark 12:1-12;

Luke 20:9-18.

This parable, identified as one concerning The Kingdom not only by the direct reference in verse 43 of Matthew's account, but also by the unmistakable significance of its symbolism when interpreted by the aid of other Scriptures, properly takes its place as first in our logical consideration of these marvelous word-pictures; for it represents, as in a panorama, The Kingdom from the standpoint of its Creator, Founder and Over-Lord, Jehovah, the All-Father.

With what fitting simplicity and grandeur are the statements made that bring out the salient points of the picture! What fine discrimination is shown in the disregard of unessential details, permitting the great facts presented to stand out clearly, as in bold relief!

"There was a certain Householder which planted a vineyard." The Greek word here rendered "Householder" is "oikodespotes," literally "house-despot;" this rendering more fully conveys to our Western minds the oriental force of the metaphor—the absolute character of the rule of a patriarch—his inherent and unquestionable position and power as father and head of his house. Thus fittingly is pictured the Heavenly Father's position as Head of His Household, the Universe; the Household to which

Jesus referred when he said (John 14:2) "In my Father's house are many mansions;" as also the Apostle (II Tim. 2:20). "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth: and some to honour, and some to dishonour (i. e. less honour)."

"How be it, the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet; 'Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hands made all these things?'"

Earth is but a small portion of his possessions; when we "consider his heavens, the works of his fingers, the moon and stars which he hath ordained," we are moved to inquire with the Psalmist, "What is man that thou are mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

The relative insignificance of Earth, then, is suggested in the figure; the Householder prepares a portion of his domain as a vineyard; after making all necessary provisions for its needs, he goes into a "far country for a long time" (vs. 20, Luke).

The story of the planting of this vineyard takes us far back to the beginning of man's history.

"The Earth is Jehovah's and the fullness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." The history of the preparation of the Vineyard of Earth for its planting, is related in the first verses of Genesis. Then came the planting of the Vine: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion . . . over all the earth. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And God planted a garden Eastward in Eden—and he put the man in the Garden."

What a wonderful being this first man, fresh from the hands of his Maker, must have been! In the mental image of his Creator—possessing, in distinction from the inferior animals, those highest powers of mind—reason, memory, judgment, will, or the power of free moral agency; pronounced "very good" by the God of Perfection; placed by that God on the throne of his earthly creation, he was indeed a King: Adam, by the grace of God, King of Self and Lord of Earth!



Well might that Creator say of him and his posterity, through the mouth of the prophet (Jer. 2:21): "I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed!"

Here, then, was the first setting up of the earthly Kingdom of Heaven. And nowhere in Scripture is the thought held out that The Kingdom is a territory or condition to which we are to go after death; invariably is the thought that of our Lord's prayer: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in (the Empire, the Universe, the Household of) Heaven." The word "Kingdom" in this connection has an application limited to Earth. "The Kingdom of Heaven shall be among you" (not "within you" scribes and Pharisees whom he was addressing, as translated in the authorized version). (Luke 17:20.)

So the Kingdom was established with Adam as its King; to continue, alas, but a short time; for the King, by disobedience to his Over-Lord, forfeited his throne, and the Kingdom fell into abeyance.

Then it was, and because of this, that, as stated in our parable, the Householder 'let' the Vineyard out to husbandmen.

The word "let" here signifies a lease, which is the thought of the original Greek. It implies an agreement between two contracting parties, the lessor and the lessees, and has no thought of compulsion, as of master and servant.

Who could be so represented—beings competent to deal with the great Householder, and sufficiently interested to be desirous of leasing and cultivating the vineyard of Earth? Who are the "husbandmen" of the parable?

The answer to this question is the key that unlocks the hidden depths of meaning in this wonderful allegory. And the fact upon which our identification of these beings rests is the one plainly stated in each of the three versions of the parable, namely, the recognition of the Son as such, the Householder's heir, by the wicked husbandmen.

The statement that the chief priests "perceived that he had spoken these parables against them," does not identify them as the husbandmen referred to; for they do not fit the requirements noted. They did not believe his claim to be the Son of God, the Messiah, saying (John 7:

48, 49,): "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on him?" Moreover, the Apostle exonerates them from the charge of knowingly slaying the Messiah, saying (Acts 3:17) "Brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

Not so the "wicked husbandmen." Let the inspired record speak. "There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him . . . And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him." "And behold, they cried out saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" "And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ." (Mk. 1:22-27, 34; Matt 8:29; Lk. 4:41; etc.)

Having scripturally established the fact that the unclean spirits or devils alone recognized Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the Householder, we inquire, do they fit the other requirements? Were they ever in any sense husbandmen, having power or authority over man? And was that authority originally given them by Jehovah, the Householder?

The information vouchsafed in Scripture concerning the evil spirits, while fragmentary and disjointed, is harmonious and significant when taken together. Thus we read in Heb. 2:5: "Unto angels hath he (God) not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak." The Apostle is speaking of the coming reign of Christ, and his preparation therefor; the word he uses which is translated "world" means "the habitable," or inhabited earth, where men dwell. We are assured through the prophet (Isa. 45:18) that Jehovah created the earth "not in vain" (i. e. uselessly), but "formed it to be inhabited." We are told that "the earth abideth forever" (Eccl. 1:4). This "habitable earth," then, we infer from the statement of Heb. 2:5, was once placed in subjection to angels;



this inference is strengthened by the statement of verse 2 of this chapter, evidently a reference to the same period, that "the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward."

In Job 38:47 Jehovah tells of the time when he "laid the foundations of the earth . . . when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." These beings referred to as "morning stars" and "sons of God" were doubtless the ones who were afterward anxious to assist man when he fell, back to obedience and harmony with the Creator; and were the ones to whom the Creator as Householder "let" the vineyard, placing it "in subjection" to them—that they might also learn a needed lesson of their insufficiency without Him.

Jude tells us (vs. 6) that these angels "kept not their first estate" (that of innocence and purity); that they "left their own habitation." The history is more particularly related in Genesis 6; it is sufficient here to say that, though faithful for a time to their trust, they eventually abused the power which they possessed to assume human form (or "habitation"), and fell to man's level of disobedience and sensuality, instead of succeeding in restoring him to soundness of mind and harmony with God. Peter confirms Jude's statement (II Pet. 2:4), declaring that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell"—the latter six English words being used to translate the one Greek word "tartaroo," a verb, meaning "degraded;" confined, say the Apostles quoted, in "chains of darkness" unto a future judgment. Thus we find them today, in dark rooms, through "mediums," impersonating the dead to deceive the living. Degraded indeed!

Their activity is not confined to these manifestations, however. After being shorn of their legal status and privileges at the time of the flood, they determined as pictured by the "husbandmen" of the parable to seize and appropriate the vineyard to their own uses. In this they were apparently successful. The Apostle tells us (Eph. 6:12, literal) "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with the chiefs, with the potentates, with the world ("Kosmos" social order)—seizers (i. e. usurpers), with wicked spirits

in high places." Again, John says (I John 5:19.) "The whole world ('Kosmos'—order of society) lieth in (under) the wicked one." Again (II Cor. 4:4) "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them."

Has "humanity, betrayed, plundered, profaned and disinherited"—exploited by these malevolent beings of superior powers—has it no way of escape? Yes, thank God it has—two ways, indeed. And thanks are due the Great Householder, for He it was who provided them.

The first comes as an enemy—the Great Enemy—and yet to man in his condition of alienation from God, it is a friend in disguise—Death, the Grave. "There," says Job (3:17), "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master." No more do they feel the scourge of the three lashes—Ignorance, Superstition, Selfishness—Satanic inculcations. "The dead know not anything." "The day of a man's death is better than the day of his birth." (Eccl. 9:5; 7:1).

But there is a better way of escape than in the oblivion of death. The gracious provision of a loving Father is shown under the symbols of the Hedge, the Wine-vat and the Tower, in the first verse of our parable.

These figures, introduced in both Matthew's and Mark's accounts, are not again referred to and have no direct bearing on the rest of the parable other than to suggest that the Householder, in planting his vineyard, made every provision necessary for its well-being and fruitfulness—"he hath given us all things that pertain unto life and Godliness." There is a very interesting incidental or parenthetical symbolism connected with each of these provisions, however, that beautifully harmonizes with and supplements the rest of the story.

A hedge is both a means of protection and a restraint to that which it surrounds, and so it is a fitting symbol of God's laws, which both restrict and protect mankind, even though he is at present temporarily alienated from his Creator. This hedge may be the far-reaching and comparatively low one of God's general laws; or it may be the



high and close one around those with whom He is dealing individually. The latter is the kind that protected Job, when Satan said (Job 1:10) "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him and about all that he hath, on every side?"

The former would represent all the limitations placed upon mankind—seemingly irksome, but in reality blessings to him in his fallen condition. His shortness of life is one of these favorable provisions. "Man's days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" (Job 14:5). The necessity for labor, incumbent upon the majority of men, is another; the confusion of tongues at Babel a third. All these act as brakes upon man's downward course toward utter depravity. He does not become so hardened and callous to sin with an average of 30 odd years of life, as he would with 300 or 600. "Satan finds mischief still for idle hands to do;" therefore it is mercifully provided that man shall live by the sweat of his brow. And if every man was fully able to comprehend the evil imaginations of every other man's heart, "nothing would be restrained from them" (Gen. 11:6. It is evident that something more is meant here than the mere confusion of spoken language.)

One of the most valuable provisions of God's law applying to all mankind is that man's will may not be overriden by the fallen spirits. He cannot be obsessed except through the voluntary surrender of the citadel of his mind. Sir Oliver Lodge, who fancies he can "hear the pickaxes of those on the other side" of the barrier that separates the physical from the spirit world, working in his direction, would not be so eager to demolish the separating "hedge," did he know the true character of the beings with whom he is endeavoring to communicate. They are the same wicked husbandmen of the parable, still confined, as for the past 4,000 years, in God's penitentiary. Those who would associate with convicts must needs go to jail—in this case "under chains of darkness." But the Scriptures warn against this intercourse in no uncertain terms (see Lev. 20:27; Deut. 18:10-12; Isa. 8:19, 20).

The wine-vat, in the vineyards of Palestine, is a receptacle, usually underground, to receive the juice of the grape, trodden out in the wine-press

above. Wine, in Scripture figure is the "blood of the grape" (Deut. 32:14) and "the blood is the life" (Deut. 12:23); hence the wine is the life of the grape, and represents the life of what the grape stands for (e. g., see Isa. 63:3).

The individual grapes lose their identity in the wine-press; the wine flows down out of sight into the vat, there to remain in oblivion until drawn forth; then, in a renascence, the blood or life of the grapes performs its intended function of "making glad the heart of man" (Psa. 104:15).

In one aspect, the individual members of the race are the grapes on the vine of which Adam was the root. In death their individuality and consciousness are lost (Psa. 146:4; Eccl. 9:5, 10); they are hidden in the grave or 'hell' condition (Job 14:13; Dan. 12:2, 13; etc.). But "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth." "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust" (John 5:25, 28, 29; Acts 24:15). Then shall restored mankind fulfil his destiny, and make the heart of his Creator glad by his obedience, loyalty and adoration; for it is written (Isa. 26:9): "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Quite a different idea of the 'Judgment Day' from the one usually entertained!

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the "Tower of the flock," erected for the shelter and defense of all who take refuge in him; and is so referred to in many prophetic Scriptures. Through his sacrificial death and resurrection-power alone have each and all of mankind hope of a future life.

Thus we are reminded in the first words of the parable that man, though an outlaw, is still measurably protected and benefited by the Divine law; that His life, though forfeited, is not forever lost; and that Jesus, man's Saviour, protector and defender, was provided, in the Householder's plan, from the very beginning—the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).

Now we see the vineyard planted; every provision for its welfare made; it is leased to husbandmen, and the Householder goes "to a far country for a long time."

But at the harvest-times—"the time of the fruit"—he sends his servants



for that which he has a right to expect and demand. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Micah 6:8; Gal. 5:22, 23). We note there were three special harvest-messengers sent; hence three harvests; and since "the harvest is the end of the age" (Matt. 13:39, R. V.) then there were three 'ages' prior to the sending of the Son. We are familiar with the division of the time from the Creation to our Lord's first advent into three ages—the Angelic, Patriarchal and Jewish—but had hardly expected to find this division outlined by our Lord, himself; yet here it is.

In this connection an interesting question occurs—is it possible an agreement as to time entered into the original lease? Were the terms of the letting for, say, six thousand years? It would almost seem that this thought is suggested in the demons' query "Art thou come hither to torment (restrain—vex—disturb) us before the time?" (Matt. 8:29). Did they refer to the same period as our Lord when he said "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24)? "God made the world and all things therein . . . and hath determined the times before appointed," declares the Apostle Paul. "The gifts and calling of God are not repented of"—i. e., retracted. If the Householder, forseeing all things, nevertheless in the beginning told the lessee angels they should have a certain length of time in which to make their effort for man's recovery, they will not be dispossessed until their lease expires. Though they prove unworthy "yet he abideth faithful—he cannot deny himself." But "in his own times he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Until then—"have patience, brethren!" (Acts 17:26; Rom. 11:29; 1 Tim. 6:15).

Who were the three special harvest-messengers sent by the Householder? Were they angels or men?

It would seem at first thought that they should be angels, since their demand was addressed to those in possession,—the wicked husbandmen. But we have seen that the latter had chosen to "leave their own habitation"

—the spirit-nature—and assume man's form; moreover, man was as deeply interested in the matter as were they, and while the husbandmen could with equal facility receive a message through a man, man could not through a spirit-being—an angel, so naturally, familiarly and helpfully. (See Heb. 2:14-18). Hence the Householder chose men as his messengers to carry this thrice-repeated demand for fruit.

The first servant we have no difficulty in identifying as Noah, who, it is declared, was a "preacher (Greek, herald) of righteousness" and "condemned the world" by his faith and loyalty toward God as shown by His course in preparing the Ark.

What was the result of His message? According to the parable, "the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty." Concerning the harvest-time of the Ante-deluvian age or world, the record reads: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . . The earth (society) also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." (Gen. 6.) And they "sent him away empty." Not a single convert; not one repented as a result of his preaching, outside his own family. "And the flood came and destroyed them all"—save Noah and the few with him in the Ark.

A new age was ushered in; a new 'sowing' commenced. The seed of the covenants and promises sown in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bore fruitage in a deferred harvest-time—lapping over into the Jewish age—when Moses, the second harvest-messenger, led Israel out of Egypt toward the Promised Land. But that harvest proved to be of 'wild grapes'; "To Israel he saith, all day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Isa. 5:2; Rom. 10:21). Again the parable succinctly states the outcome: "They beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty." Certainly the treatment accorded Moses by Israel, throughout his association with them, could not be better described than as 'shameful.' 'At him they cast stones,' says Mark's version. Disloyalty, murmuring, ingratitude, characterized their attitude. Finally, 'they wounded him in the head'; their constant nagging wore down his self-control; he smote the rock, incurred the Divine displeasure, and, we believe as an



example, was denied admission to Canaan. Of all the host who followed him out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, but two adults survived to cross Jordan into the Land of Promise. The rest perished in the wilderness because they bore no acceptable fruit toward God. "With the majority God was not well pleased." "And him (Moses, the second harvest-messenger) they sent away empty."

The Jewish age commenced at the death of Jacob. The nation composed of his descendants became a specially chosen, fenced off and enriched portion of the Householder's Vineyard. The Psalmist congratulates Israel in these words: "He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise the Lord." Jehovah confirms this understanding, saying "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Psa. 147: 20; Amos 3:2). "What could have been done more to my vineyard," asks the great Householder, "that I have not done in it?" (Isa. 5:4).

Yet when the harvest of the Jewish age came, how pitifully small was the fruitage! The promised messenger, Messiah's herald, the third harvest-servant of the parable, came with the thrilling proclamation 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Of him our Lord said "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist;" but two of the fallen race of men before him had occupied so high and honorable an office as special messenger of Jehovah to a world; but of him, continues Jesus, "ye (Jews) say, he hath a devil."

And the evil husbandmen, who dominated the minds and hearts of the Jewish rulers, succeeded eventually in accomplishing the death of the messenger, as stated in the parable. "What shall I do," said the Householder—"I will send my beloved Son—it may be they will reverence Him, when they see Him." A reasonable expectation; but no, "When the Husbandmen saw Him they reasoned among themselves. This is the heir"; for the first time we have Him in our power—He comes as a man, subject to possible death; "come let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours." A rather surprising conclusion for the evil spirits to arrive at, and one that would indicate a fatal ignorance on their part of Jehovah's plans and power. Their activity in inciting

and directing the execution of the plot against Jesus is plainly stated, however: "Then entered Satan into Judas Iscariot . . . and he communed with the chief priests and captains how he might betray Jesus unto them" (Luke 22:3, 4; John 13:27). Can we doubt that our Lord recognized, back of the malevolence and hatred of the Jews, the hosts of "wicked spirits in the Heavenlies?" And to the words of the parable which foretold his own death and the seeming success of the plot formed against him, did he not join a warning of his ultimate triumph, and the destruction that would eventually come upon them—both wicked spirits and wicked men?

Upon what foundation was His sublime and unwavering faith built? Upon the promises of his Father's word—the holy Scriptures. "**Have ye not read this Scripture;** the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes?"

The wicked spirits were builders—so were the Jewish rulers—seeking to build up a governmental structure for their own aggrandizement. As builders they rejected Jesus—he would not be subservient to their plans, they would not adopt his. But in Jehovah's plan, foretold by the prophet-psalmist, the rejected and murdered Son is yet to occupy the chief place.

Thus abruptly, yet suitably, the story ends. The Father's word is passed—that is sufficient. It is the end of all controversy. Nothing shall prevent its accomplishment—whether principalities or powers, things present or things to come, life or death. "**For the Lord God will help me; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be confounded**"—(Isa. 50:7).

Let this be the resolution that nerves the heart of each one who strives to follow in the footsteps of the King, through suffering to glory.

#### Parable 2.

#### THE HID TREASURE.

Matthew 13:44.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth and for joy thereof, goeth, and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field."



Mathew 13:44: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field."

The word 'kingdom' as used in this and other passages of the New Testament has the significance in the original Greek of 'royalty' or 'royal majesty,' thus referring to a ruling class, rather than to a dominion as does our English word. The thought then, of the expression 'kingdom of heaven' or 'kingdom of God' is that of a royalty deriving its authority from God or from heaven. When the statement is made "The kingdom of heaven is like unto," etc., it should be understood to mean 'the royalty of heaven in some of its aspects or relationships is like unto—the following story.' Thus, in the parable we are considering, the kingdom is not merely compared to the treasure hid in the field, but, as we shall see, the kingdom or royalty really is the 'man' who found the treasure.

It was the same individual or personality who found, sold and bought in the story and now possesses; but this individual was not always, nor is he now, a human being; for the range of this simple allegory covers the three, separate and successive existences or beings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Concerning him we read in Revelations 3:14, that he was "the beginning of the creation of God;" and in Colossians 1:15 he is referred to as "The image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." He declares of himself, "I proceeded forth and came from God;" "Before Abraham was, I am;" "I am the living bread which came down from heaven;" "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before." He prayed "Glorify me with the glory that I had with thee before the world was." (John 8:42, 58; 6:33, 35, 62; 17:5.)

The significance of the Apostle John's statement in the first verses of his Epistle concerning our Lord's pre-existence is obscured by the rather inaccurate translation of the Authorized version. A more literal rendering of the Greek would read: "In a beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with the God, and a god was the Logos. This was in a beginning with the God. Through him everything was done: and without him

not even one thing was done which has been done."

In the light of these plain statements of Scripture it is difficult to see how any Bible student is able to deny the pre-human existence of the Lord. These passages, however, do not prove the identity of the Son with the Father. In the passage last quoted it will be noted that a careful distinction is made between the two; the Father referred to as The God, the Logos declared to have been a god. The scriptural significance of the word 'god' is, a mighty one. The God signifies the Almighty. Many other mighty beings are referred to as gods: Satan as the god of this world; the members of the church are referred to as gods; the Hebrew judges were called gods, and the Apostle declares that "There are gods many and lords many." (II Corinthians 4:4; Psalms 82:1,6; I Corinthians 8:5.)

The relationship between Father and Son is distinctly implied by these very terms. It is impossible for one to be his own father or his own son. The word 'father' signifies one who has given life to another; the word 'son' one who has received life from another. Our Lord stated plainly "The Father is greater than I," while his statement that "The Father and I are one" should not be understood to mean a oneness of identity, but of purpose, interests and affection. This is clearly seen by comparing the prayer of Jesus for his disciples: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." As is well known to critical Bible students the only passage in the Bible which seems to plainly teach the doctrine of the Trinity, I John 5:7, is palpably spurious, being omitted from all the older Greek MSS. The Revised Version omits the passage without comment. (John 10:30; 14:28; 17:21).

The 'man' of the parable represents the Logos. He it was who discovered the possibility, in the Father's plan, of regaining the treasure. Christ declares in Luke 19:10 "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." This would seem to be an expression of his intention in entering upon the human plane and into the world of mankind. What was lost? Paul answers, I Corinthians 15:21, "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."



Life was lost; life and a kingdom, as we noted in our study of "The Householder's Vineyard." The Apostle argues the matter at greater length in Romans 5, which we will not take space to quote. But one may ask, does not man possess life? We reply, No, not in the scriptural meaning of the word; not in the estimation of his Creator. It is written "Ye are dead in trespasses and sins." Of the world our Lord said, "Let the dead bury their dead." It was the life and dominion of man, lost by Father Adam, that was the treasure hid in the field.

As buried treasure becomes tarnished and soiled, so man's life has become degraded, his glory dimmed, his righteousness as filthy rags. It requires the eye of one who understands man's nature and possibilities, as a metallurgist knows the precious ore, to perceive the possibilities of his restoration to pristine glory and perfection, and thus to appreciate as a treasure that which was lost. That which is valuable in mankind in the sight of the Lord, is what he sees in the possibility of his future restoration, not what He sees in the race in its present condition. Even those most devoted in the service of God are told to consider themselves at present unprofitable servants. (Luke 17:10.)

In Matthew 13:38 our Lord explains that "the field is the world" the word world' being a translation of the Greek word 'kosmos,' the order or arrangement of a thing. Man's life, his kingdom and his possibilities are all hidden or obscured in the present kosmos, of which, as we have seen in our previous study, Satan, the great adversary, is the God or Prince.

In order to obtain the right and title to man and his possessions, and the privilege of doing with them as he pleased, a certain price must be paid. What was it? According to the law of God, a perfect human life was forfeited and a perfect human life must be paid to redeem it. This is the scriptural doctrine of the Ransom, the hub and center of the divine plan. To reject it is to make void and meaningless a large portion of the Bible. 'But,' argues the Higher Critic, 'such a belief makes God a tyrant, blood-thirsty, a being who would sacrifice his own Son to his cruel law;' but this is not the language of faith, nor of reverence. God's law as given to Adam was purposely made extreme and inflexible in order that a perfect

and striking exhibition of one of the primary attributes of the Almighty might be once and forever impressed upon the minds of all of his intelligent creatures, both on the human and on the spirit planes. Upon the completion of this exhibition of divine Justice, all the intelligent universe will recognize that exact justice is indeed "the foundation of his throne;" that nothing, not even personal affection in the highest degree, will operate against this principle of divine action. Thus is the stability of Jehovah's government forever assured. Furthermore, this plan made possible the extreme test of the loyalty and obedience of that Son whom the Father designed to be the heir of all things, his testing even unto death; and through the test his demonstration of his worthiness "to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

How then did the great and mighty Logos, whose life was much richer and more valuable in the divine scale than man's, acquire the necessary price of the human life? The parable answers, he sold all that he had. We know that he did not trade what he had for what he desired to possess, but that it was necessary for him to sell all that he had to get the price; and that then the price was paid for the treasure. In carrying out this design the life and individuality or personality of the Logos was in some mysterious fashion, by the power of God, transferred from its spirit body to that of Mary's unborn babe. The experience and knowledge of the Logos, in some way included in that infant organism, did not immediately become active or available upon its birth; nor could the mental records of the Logos survive the change of nature with clear-cut distinctness, but with physical development gradually became to some extent realized by the child and man, Jesus; though doubtless ever as a hazy and misty recollection. The moral qualities of character and the complete reliance upon and devotion of the Logos to the Father seem to have been that which was especially necessary to transfer to Jesus. So the Apostle declares "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). Again, "Let this



mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God, a thing to be grasped; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8, R. V.). Thus, as stated, he paid the price, the life for a life, when he cried "It is finished," and expired on Calvary. And let us realize that in so doing he actually died, and that the price so paid was never taken back. To hold any other view is to question the divine sincerity and the divine justice. If Jesus was one member of a triune Godhead he could not die, and the great sacrifice on Calvary was a farce. If, as a perfect man, he died, paying his life a ransom for the perfect life forfeited by Father Adam, but was afterward resurrected a man, then the ransom was taken back and justice is yet unsatisfied. Neither of these theological hypotheses are scriptural. He was "put to death flesh, but made alive spirit;" "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven; the first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life giving spirit." "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." "My flesh I give for the life of the world." (I Peter 3:18; I Corinthians 15:47 and 45. II Cor. 5:16; John 6:51.) "Wherefore," continues the Apostle in Philippians 2, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, to the glory of the Father." No more in the flesh will he be seen of men; but "to them who wait for him shall he appear a second time, without a sin-offering, unto salvation." (Heb. 9:28.)

The incidental statements of the parable are significant and interesting "He hideth it." What did he hide? Not the treasure—that was already hidden. It was the plan of God, which our Lord is working out. On this point we read, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently. . . . Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you . . . which things the angels desired to look into." (I Corinthians 2:9 and 14; I Peter 1:10-12). Why did he hide it? Why so mysterious? The disciples came and said unto him, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" He answered and said unto them, "Because it is given unto you to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables. . . . Lest at any time they should be converted and their sins be forgiven them." (Mathew 13:3, 10-13; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10).

But why should our Lord seek to prevent the conversion of his hearers and the forgiveness of their sins? The answer is, because it was not yet due time "for the knowledge of the Lord to cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep." The Apostle states that "Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" that "He gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." These statements indicate an order and a progression in the divine program, and that is what we understand the Apostle refers to as "the Plan of the Ages," which is a literal translation of the Greek rendered "the eternal purpose" in Ephesians 3:11, by the Authorized Version.

"God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name. After this, I will return," that Israel may receive the promised blessings and "the residue of mankind may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles." (Acts 15:13-18). Now the church is being selected, as a 'chaste virgin' betrothed unto Christ. Not until the Spirit and the Bride are united will the invitation go forth to all mankind to "Come and partake of the water of life freely." So when our Lord returns, his 'reward' for his faithful servants will indeed be 'with Him,' but His great 'work' of saving mankind from the consequences of the fall will yet be 'before Him' in its largest sense. (Isa. 40:10; 62:11.) And so, with the Jews of our Lord's day and the great mass



of mankind, before and since, it is as the Apostle states, (Romans 11:32) "God hath concluded (or shut up) them all in unbelief"—not that he might damn them all, but—"that He might have mercy upon all." "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out"—certainly past the discovery of modern Systematic Theology—"science falsely so called."

The shortsightedness of many of God's dear people has limited His work to the Gospel Age and invented Eternal Torment and Purgatory to try and help Him out; but He has gone right ahead "working all things agreeable to the counsel of his own will." Not only did our Lord, in harmony with the will of the Father, hide his plan concerning man's salvation for man's own good, but also that evilly disposed men and demons might not interfere. The Apostle explains (I Corinthians 2:7-8) "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

The motive given by the parable as that which animates the purchaser of the field and its treasure, is joy. "For joy he goeth." What was that joy? We believe that it was four-fold. First, the joy of the dutiful and affectionate Son in doing the Father's will: Psalm 40:8: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." Second, the joy of obtaining a Bride; that is, a company of companions or associates so close, so intimate, so fond in their relationship as that it should be best comparable to that most tender of earthly ties. Third, the altruistic joy of saving and restoring a lost and ruined world; to wipe the tears from off all faces, to heal all the broken-hearted, to make possible the coming of that time when "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain." Fourth, the promised joy of personal exaltation, or ambition exercised in a lawful and unselfish manner.

Thus is pictured by the King himself his personal attitude toward and relationship to the kingdom of God his Father, which is to be re-established upon earth "in due time."

### Parable 3.

#### THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

Matt. 13:45, 46.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

This picture of our Lord's, presenting a third great panoramic view of the Kingdom, is quite similar in its general outlines to the one just preceding—"The Hid Treasure." Thus, the man in the former corresponds with the merchantman in the latter; the treasure, with the pearl of great price. In both parables the finder sells all to obtain the price of his discovery, and having obtained the necessary price, gladly exchanges it for the object of his desire. But let no one conclude from this parallel that our Lord designed to teach the same truths in each story, and that one is merely a repetition of the other in a little different setting. Repetition and redundancy are not characteristic of our Lord's teaching. A careful consideration of this, as well as all other instances of parables of general similarity to each other, convinces us that the lesson contained is quite distinct in every case. As we have seen, The Hid Treasure clearly presents the Kingdom from the standpoint of the King himself; The Pearl of Great Price shows us the kingdom as viewed by the 'joint heirs,' the King's 'fellows,' the 'little flock' of associates, to whom 'it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom' jointly with their Head. The character representing each individual of the latter class is described as a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls; and we pause to remark that this characterization of our Lord would not be proper. Neither as the Logos nor as a man was He "seeking goodly pearls." As the Logos, his life was full and complete, nor did he desire nor have ambition for that which he did not possess. To be sure, he sought the treasure when its value and the possibility of obtaining it was brought to his attention, but he would not be properly represented as being habitually or continually seeking. Of man, however, it is said, "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). The poet declares,



"Hope springs eternal in the human breast; man never is but always will be blessed."

The word translated 'goodly' in the parable, signifies 'beautiful' or 'showy' in the Greek. Such are the things that men seek; pleasure, earthly wisdom, power, fame. The Apostle analyzes the three general directions of man's seeking, in the expression "lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life." (I Jo n 2:16). The first refers to the higher desires of men's minds; that is, those desires which are not shared by the lower animals, such as lust for fame, for power, for knowledge. The second class, 'lust of the flesh,' includes all the purely physical desires common also to most of the lower animals, such as the desires for food and warmth, for mate and young. The third is the most subtly deceptive of all, for it appeals to the religious tendencies of man's nature.

Religious error and the false religious systems inculcating it have ever been the great Adversary's special handiwork. By means of these he has deceived the best minds and misdirected the best intentioned of men in all ages. It was no idle warning given by the apostle (II Cor. 11:14) that "Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light"; indeed that is his favorite garb—he seldom appears with visible hoofs and horns. It has been literally true, as prophesied by our Lord, that those who have killed his followers have thought they did God service (John 16:2). Nor can we doubt that those who today are so malignantly and viciously assaulting, by tongue and pen, the heralds of the Harvest message—the present truth—are animated by the same erroneous idea of doing God service thereby—and we know that their energies are misdirected by the same Arch-deceiver.

One error in particular is characteristic of Satanic propaganda—the Eden-old falsehood that "ye shalt not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). It is to this fundamental and particularly destructive belief that we understand the Apostle refers in the expression "the pride of life." The Greek word translated 'pride' is *alazoneia*, literally, braggadocio, boasting. The doctrine of man's immortality is precisely that—a boasting of life not really possessed, for "God only hath immortality" (I Tim. 6:16).

These three motives sway all mankind. Unholy ambition, uncontrolled

sensuality, and religious error, contain the beautiful and showy things, the 'goodly pearls' for which the merchantman of the parable was seeking when he discovered the Pearl of Great Price, a share in the glorious coming Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Few, indeed, of mankind ever come to an appreciation of the great intrinsic value of this pearl. In fact, in order that one may be able to appreciate its beauty it is necessary that his eyes be anointed with the 'eye salve' spoken of in scripture—the holy Spirit of God;—yet, in value, all the other pearls, offered by the fallen world, are of paltry insignificance. Only in the Plan of God as revealed in His word is this precious pearl to be found. Concerning it the Apostle Peter writes: "The divine power of God hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these, ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:3, 4). Those who have obtained like precious faith to that expressed by the Apostle are fortunate indeed; they have found the pearl of price.

What is the divine nature? We reply, it is the crown of life, the highest plane of existence in the universe; it is immortality, deathlessness. Possessed in the beginning by the Creator only, it was in the resurrection bestowed upon the Saviour as a supreme reward for his successfully accomplished enterprise of paying man's ransom price. This tremendous gift, a share in the same divine nature that our Lord has acquired, is the prize held out as possible of attainment, to the members of the Church of the Gospel Age, the 'Bride,' the 'little flock.'

What are the terms of membership in this elect body—the terms upon which may be acquired this pearl of great price? Does Jehovah say, "Come around in your spare time; go to church on Sunday and occasionally to prayer meeting on Wednesday night; be sure and put a contribution in the basket; perhaps go to Sunday school and learn a few passages from the scripture; have a Bible in your house into which you need never look; the rest of the time do as you please, except be good, at least good enough to keep out of jail, and if you will do this, when you die I will translate you



right to heaven and give you a seat next myself on the throne of the universe?" As a business proposition an out-spoken and unbiased man would characterize this as foolishness. God is not foolish, but the man who believes that he is going to get the prize of all eternity by the kind of religion we have just described is certainly indulging himself in an extreme of fatuous folly.

What does it cost the followers of Christ who will share His glory and His throne, who will obtain the Pearl of Great price? The parable answers it will cost each and every one precisely what it cost their Lord—all. "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." "Go sell all that thou hast." (Luke 14:26, 27; 18:22).

But how shall we sell that which we have to obtain the necessary price? If we spend our time in a good work of some kind is that what is required? Or must our payment be made in a certain way? We reply our Lord said, "Follow me." He neither engaged in political or social reform, nor did he leave instructions for his disciples to do so. "I have chosen you," said he, "and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit." (John 15:16). This fruit is elsewhere described as the 'fruits of the Spirit,' love, joy, peace, long-suffering, etc.; the character-likeness of our Lord. We know that the same process must be gone through by the joint-sacrificers as was gone through by their Lord. He possessed a life, joys and honors which He relinquished to obtain the necessary price, a perfect human life. This life he then offered in sacrifice, commencing at his consecration at thirty years of age and ending on Calvary three and a half years later, for the purchase of the treasure. His followers possess in the beginning their human lives, relationships, enjoyments and prospects. To them these are 'goodly pearls'; but in God's estimation they are impaired, fallen, imperfect—hypothecated to sin and death. As such they are not acceptable to God as a sacrificial offering, they cannot be traded for the Pearl of Price. But one thing does He ask of us; naught else will He accept: "My son, give me thy heart"—thy will.

Laid on thine altar, O my Lord divine,  
Accept this gift to-day, for Jesus' sake.

I have no jewels to adorn thy shrine,  
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make,

But here I bring, within my trembling hand,

This will of mine—a thing that seemeth small;

And thou alone, O Lord, canst understand

How, when I yield thee this, I yield mine all.

Hidden therein thy searching gaze  
canst see

Struggles of passions, visions of delight,

All that I have, or am, or fain would be—

Deep loves, fond hopes, and longings infinite.

It hath been wet with tears, and dimmed with sighs,

Clenched in my grasp till beauty hath it none.

Now, from thy footstool, where it vanquished lies,

The prayer ascendeth—"May thy will be done!"

The philosophy of the matter is thus explained by the Apostle: "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 5: 1, 2; 12:1).

Covered by the "robe of Christ's righteousness"—his imputed merit—our humanity is reckoned perfect, and is acceptable as a sacrifice in the eyes of the Almighty. We are figuratively released from our sin and death condition, on a surety bond signed by Jesus in his own blood. He guarantees that the one so released from Adamic penalty shall eventually measure up to the requirements of the Divine law, or be returned to Justice to suffer the full penalty for sin.

But this release to reckoned human perfection is only in expectation that we will use the gift to obtain the Pearl the Bridegroom would have us wear—by sacrificing our human lives with him. John tells us (1 John 3:16): "Hereby perceive we love in that he



died for us; and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." And Paul testifies: "I protest, I die daily."

Having so presented our little all in imitation of our Head, we commence the sacrificial process by daily renouncing our desires, pleasures, pursuits and interests, which in themselves may be innocent enough, but which do not assist us in the service of others and the growth in character-likeness of our Exemplar. Against us are arrayed the invisible, malignant powers of evil,—foes of all righteousness—'wicked spirits in the heavens'; as well as the lethargy and love of pleasure and ease of our own flesh, and the general current of the 'present evil world.' To oppose these forces, the Apostle tells us, means a fight. Says Paul, in I Cor. 9:24-27: "We strive for an incorruptible crown. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

Only to those who overcome in this conflict to the death is the promise made "I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father in His throne." (Rev. 3:21). "Blessed is the man that endureth trial, for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (James 1:12).

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In the three parables which we have considered, we have found three impressionistic pictures of the coming Kingdom or Royalty as a whole—painted in broad outlines, with comparatively little attention to detail. In the next five to be taken up, the particulars regarding the requirements for membership in the Royalty are examined in detail.

#### Parable 4.

#### THE BUILDER'S TEMPLE—TOWER. Luke 14:25-30.

"Now there went great multitudes with him." Some were friends and followers; more were enemies who sought an occasion to do him injury; most, mere curiosity-seekers or place-hunters. Upon this mixed assembly the Master turns, and in a few words lays down the primary requirements for discipleship. Listen, O easy-go-

ing, lukewarm professor of Christianity: full consecration—complete devotion—a daily cross-bearing, even unto death—these things are required of all who would become his disciples, who would learn of him. He must have first place in the hearts of his followers—he will brook no rivals. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

At this radical and sweeping pronouncement, the Master no doubt read in the faces of his hearers varying emotions of astonishment, dismay, sorrow and ridicule. Then, for the instruction of the earnest truth-seekers—he cared little for the crowd of the curious and luke-warm—he gave the two short parables of The Builder's Tower and The King's Soldiers. These illustrations, let us note, are in explanation of his extreme demands upon his followers—his disciples.

In the first we understand he represents himself as planning the building of a vast structure—a tower, or stronghold. Elsewhere he has stated his intention—"I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18). At the time he speaks he is himself engaged in laying the foundation, by the sacrifice of himself as the ransom price. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11). Upon this foundation—the ransom—is to be built the superstructure—variously referred to in Scripture as a tower, a refuge from the Enemy; a temple, meeting place for God and men; a city, the New Jerusalem, symbolic of the government or Kingdom of God, to be erected by the Christ, on earth, at his glorious appearing. These three figures are essentially the same; it is the same structure to be used for all these various purposes.

Jesus was himself about to complete the foundation when he gave this parable; and through it he tells us that he had counted the cost for completing the building. What did his reckoning show would be required? We reply, naturally, a certain quantity of a peculiar quality of "living stones"—to use a figure supplied by two of the Apostles—Peter and Paul. "The Lord is gracious, unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God, elect, precious, ye also



as living stones are built up a spiritual house. . . . Because it is contained in scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame." "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." (1 Pet. 2:4-6; Eph. 2:19-22).

But what an extraordinary simile—"living stones!" A reference of course, to the characters of those composing the symbolic structure—hard, unyielding to outside influences as stones, yet as submissive and unresisting as stones to the mason. The more we consider this peculiar and almost paradoxical character-combination, the less surprised are we that it has required nearly nineteen hundred years to obtain the requisite number. Yet how foolish it would be to attempt to build a tower with stones that refused to submit themselves to the mason's hand! Stones that, placed in position in the daytime, jumped down and ran away at night! The Master declines to build his wonderful living Temple-Tower for his Father's occupancy with any such flimsy and crumbling material. "If any man come to me and hate not" all else, "he cannot be my disciple."

We begin to see now the reason from the Lord's standpoint, for his rigid requirements.

One peculiarity of the Building under construction is the fact that its corner stone and cap stone and foundation are all one and the same. In an earthly building the attraction of gravitation holds the structure together upon the foundation which is interposed between the structure and the source of attraction—the earth. The Temple-Tower of the great Master-Builder, however, is a heavenly building; hence, the attractive force holding it together is heavenly, and its foundation is therefore properly represented as farthest from the earth and nearest heaven. The Revelator, who had a prophetic view of the completed structure, tells us that the length and breadth and height are

equal—the shape and proportions of a perfect pyramid, the symbol for God's four-sided character of Wisdom, Love, Justice and Power. This is merely a mystical way of saying that the new government of earth, under Jesus Christ and his Church, shall perfectly exemplify the Divine Character.—"Show forth his praises" to all mankind. For the Revelator, viewing prophetically the Temple-Tower, erected in heaven but coming down to earth, "heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. 21:3).

We may not be surprised, then, neither consider unreasonable or unjust, the rigid initial requirements, nor the severe process of preparation and incidental elimination of the unfit, through which the prospective Temple-stones are put.

"God's hand that saves, though kind,  
seems rough;

His methods sometimes rude;  
Frail, shrinking nature cries 'Enough!'  
Yet proves the Lord is good.

"The temple stones God now prepares  
Oft cry, 'You hurt me sore;'  
The Sculptor seeks their perfectness,  
And trims them more and more—

"Until, by dint of strokes and blows,  
The shapeless mass appears  
Symmetric, polished, beautiful,  
To stand th' eternal years."

#### Parable 5.

#### THE KING'S SOLDIERS.

Luke 14:31-35.

Certain qualifications essential to discipleship and prospective joint-heirship with Jesus are illustrated in the Army picture which could not be shown in the Building.

In this parable the disguise is very slight—the metaphor is transparent. A King plans a campaign against his enemy—who else could this represent than Jesus himself, in his warfare upon Satan and the powers of evil, with the human race and the Kingdom of Earth as the prizes of victory?

But the King's forces are outnumbered by his enemy's—the story represents the disparity as two to one.



Is this a true statement of the facts? We would so understand. Upon the great Adversary's side are numbered the multitude of the fallen angels, so numerous that a legion obsessed one poor demoniac who was healed by Jesus (Luke 8:30); and to be counted as on his side also is the mass of humanity—as the Apostle declares: "The whole world lieth in the Evil One" (1 John 5:19 R. V.). To oppose these the Lord's prophetic vision beheld the comparatively few "called and chosen and faithful" of the Gospel Age, who, with the handful of worthy ones of preceding periods, are to constitute his Army.

But, some one reminds us, are not the myriads of holy angels on the Lord's side? And we reply, yes, but he declines to use them save as "ministering spirits sent forth to do service for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1:14). "Thinkest thou," said the King as he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and they were about to lead him away to mock trial and cruel death, "that I cannot pray to my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions (72,000) of angels?" Did he? No—hear his explanation:—(If I should pray for and receive angelic assistance) "how then should the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26:53, 54). The Father's Plan—the Father's instructions—these must be carried out. And so, as the Apostle tells us, "Verily, not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham." Not the seed of Abraham after the flesh but after the spirit. Not on twelve legions of angels nor twelve tribes of Israel, but on twelve spiritual tribes of Jehovah doth the Captain of our Salvation take hold, to lead them against the "hosts of wicked spirits in the heavenlies." (Heb. 2:16, literal; Gal. 3:29; Rev. 7; Psa. 122:4; Eph. 6:12, literal.)

Outnumbered, then, by a foe fortified for four thousand years in human hearts and earthly institutions; ambushed along every highway and byway of the present evil Kosmos; limited, for the main part of his Army, by his Father's commission, to the forces he could enlist from among the rebellious race itself; under these difficult conditions, shall the King give up the emprise as hopeless and retire from the field, leaving the Adversary in full possession? Shall he send an

ambassage to his Enemy, desiring terms of peace—if perchance he may escape with his own life?

God forbid! Not only is his loyalty to his Father involved, but he has "seen the multitude" of mankind, and by personal contact and suffering with them, he has been "moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd." "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." He cannot desert them to the wolves. Moreover, his personal honor is engaged; he has thrown down the gage of battle to his foe—his "full defiance," sent through his prophet more than seven hundred years before declared "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance (turning back) shall be hid from my eyes." (Hosea 13:14.) Never would he turn back.

The parable thus states the problem; it is a problem in military strategy; under the given conditions, upon what could he base a hope of a successful campaign? The answer is, only upon his own generalship and the personnel of his troops; they must be braver, better organized and disciplined, more loyal and determined,—in brief, better soldiers than those they are to oppose. Only with such could he hope to be conqueror.

Is it surprising, then, that he makes the examination rigid, the requirements extreme, along the essential lines laid down; both for probationary enlistments and for final acceptance?

Let no one suppose that this is a fanciful and unreal presentation of the matter; it is the King's own means of making real and vivid to our minds the actual facts and conditions of his warfare—and ours. The scriptures give us to understand that nearly three thousand years, as men reckon time, but a scant three days in God's almanac, will this holy war be prosecuted before final and complete victory shall be attained. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Then cometh the end." (1 Cor. 15:24-28). And two-thirds of this time has already been spent in enlisting, drilling and equipping his army, in preparation for the actual "sending forth of judgment unto victory."

During this preparatory time, while in the flesh, each soldier of the King is required to prove his metal—to



demonstrate his worthiness of a place in the King's glorious Army organizing for future service in the spirit realm. He must prove himself a conqueror, even as did his Commander. Upon the subject of the Christian's warfare in the flesh, Jacques Saurin, an eloquent sixteenth century preacher, has well said:

"The enemy whom the Christian combats is his own heart, for he is required to turn his arms against himself. It is sad to find in one's own constitution, an opposition to virtues so lovely as those of submission, charity, sweetness and patience. Groan under this evil, but do not despair. Undertake the conquest of yourself. Carry fire and sword into the most sensitive part of your soul; enter the lists with your darling sin; mortify your members which are upon the earth; rise above flesh and blood, nature and self-love. To say all in one word, determine to rule your spirit. To this point direct all your attention, all your strength, and all your courage. Say to yourself, this is the post which my general intends I should force; this is the enemy I am to fight with. And be you fully convinced that one of the principal views which God hath in preserving your life, is that you should become master of yourself. Be not dismayed at the greatness of the task, because greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world."

Our warfare, however, must be conducted along the same lines as our Captain's; and with the same careful attention to every detail of the instructions given us—the "Articles of War" and the "Drill Regulations"—in order that the same character-development may be accomplished in us that was in him. Our Commander has assigned to each one of us our own particular place and duty and to him alone is each soldier finally accountable—"to his own master he standeth or falleth."

This being the case we readily perceive why, in all the Scriptures bearing on this subject, the necessity is emphasized of the complete subordination of every member of the Army to its Commander. The soldier who is insubordinate—disobedient—or the member of the body that is uncontrollable, is of no value to the body as a whole. It is axiomatic in military circles that he who has not learned to obey—promptly, willingly, cheer-

fully—is not fit to command. As the members of the Church are being selected, tried, educated, drilled for positions of responsibility and power in the future life (Rev. 1:6), how essential that they acquire this most important of all soldierly virtues—subordination, or "holding the head."

To this end we are exhorted to practice subordination—the words submit, submitting and subject, in the following quotations from the Epistles, being a translation in each case of the Greek word "hupotasso"—literally to subordinate: "Submit yourselves therefore to God;" "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man;" "Servants, be subject unto your masters;" "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder;" "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord;" "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves;" "Yea all of you be subject one to another;" "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

Why is this exhortation so often and urgently repeated? For our own good that through constant practice we may acquire the fixity of habit, or character, of recognition and submission to constituted authority, without which we cannot possibly become members of the Body—the Army—of Jesus Christ.

Next in importance as a necessary pre-requisite to membership in the Army, is the development of what the French call "Esprit de Corps"—the spirit or life of the body—which makes a soldier forget self in his devotion to his military organization; the spirit that welds a number of individuals into one coherent whole, so that they think and move and act in unison at the word of their Commander. This Spirit, or company life, is developed by close association, living, eating, drinking, marching, fighting together—with one common object in view and a common and united effort to attain it; and precisely so is it developed in the soldiers of Jesus Christ. As Israel of old, all those who are Christ's eat of the same manna, and drink of the same spiritual Rock, and are all baptised in the same baptism, and so are animated and actuated by one spirit—the spirit of our Head, the spirit of his Body, the "Esprit de Corps" of the Army of Jesus Christ. Thus "God hath tempered the body together \* \* \* that there should



be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Furthermore, as a soldier who absents himself from the body of troops to which he belongs is liable to dishonorable discharge or death as a deserter, and as the member of the human body severed from the other member ceases to be a member and passes into corruption, even so the Christian soldier who allows himself to continue in a position or spirit of separation or antagonism toward his fellow-soldier or soldiers will surely eventually lose his standing and membership in the Army. This the Apostle, one of our "superior officers," tells us: "The works of the flesh are manifest \* \* \* hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies (divisions), envyings, \* \* \* of the which I tell you that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

So, dear Comrade-in-Arms in "the good fight," let us be of those who "gather with" him, not "scatter abroad"—one who builds up, not who tears down. Let us neglect no opportunity to "assemble ourselves together" with others of "like precious faith," joining them in spirit and heart-sympathy even if we cannot in the flesh.

Of all those who are finally gazetted to the Army of the King in glory as a reward for "patient continuance in well doing" here below, there will not be found one who has not learned the soldierly virtue of **subordination**—prompt and implicit obedience to his Head and submission to all his arrangements; nor one who is not possessed of a consuming love and devotion to the Body as a whole—the "Esprit de Corps" of the Army of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

"Though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh; (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds) casting down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all

disobedience when your obedience is made full." Here (II Cor. 10:3-6) Brother Paul passes to us from the King the assurance of final victory. When the twelve tribes or Brigades of the King's Army have all been mustered in, having proved their willingness and determination to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," even unto death—"when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass (by the King and his Army) the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory. O Death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory?"

"The danger and pain of battle vanish when the eye gets sight of conquest. How inconceivably beautiful is victory then! God grant we may attain it!"

#### Parable 6.

#### THE KING'S MERCY.

Matt. 18:21-35.

The Bible presents the conception that the character or personality of Jehovah, the Creator and supreme head of the Universe, has four aspects or attributes. The four English words which best (though necessarily inadequately) express these attributes are: Wisdom, Power, Love and Justice. All the characteristics, virtues, or elements of God's character may be classified under one or another of these heads.

The parable of the Builder's Temple-Tower particularly suggests the attribute of Wisdom—both as possessed by the Builder, representing Jesus, the King, and also as necessary on the part of his followers. The Builder counted the cost—the evidence of his possession of wisdom. The living stones must submit themselves wholly to him—the evidence of wisdom on their part, since "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psa. 111:10). Finally, the structure itself symbolizes the attribute of Wisdom—a Tower: (a) because of its loftiness—altitude being ever a thought associated with Wisdom, the lofty flight of the Eagle being one of the reasons it also is used as a symbol of this attribute; (b) associated with the preceding, the use for which the lofty tower was especially designed—namely, a place for a lookout—piercing vision being another thought associated with Wisdom as well as with the Eagle, its symbol;



and (c) the fact that the tower was built up stone by stone—a process requiring time and patience—well illustrating the necessary process for acquiring wisdom.

The parable of the King's Army illustrates the attribute of Power. An Army is particularly the expression of Power—of Force; since Jesus Christ is carrying out the plan of God he has the Power of God behind and in him. For his followers to lay hold upon and appropriate to themselves the Father's Power, it was (and is) only necessary for them to intelligently and voluntarily submit their wills to the will of their Head. To the consecrated child of God nothing is impossible—"for he is Christ's and Christ is God's."

The Third attribute—Love—is illustrated in one of its highest manifestations by the parable of "The King's Mercy."

This parable is peculiar and unique in the expression in verse 23, translated "therefore" in the Common Version, but which in the Greek carries the significance of "in this." Peter had just asked the Lord how often he should forgive his brother's trespasses against him. The Master replied, "Until seventy times seven"—without end, if your brother desires your forgiveness. Then the Lord used the expression noted: "In this respect, the kingdom of heaven is like unto—." We understand that we are not to seek in this, as we do in the other parables, a significance in every statement and feature of the story, but to understand that only "in this" respect—the forgiveness of our brothers, of those who trespass against us—are we to look for a parallel, an illustration, in this parable.

Note first in the story the disparity in the two debts mentioned. The servant owed his master an immense debt—in modern purchasing power, say one hundred million dollars. His fellow-servant owed him a sum about equivalent to fifteen dollars.

Our debt to the Father and to his Son our Lord for their sacrifice on our behalf—in suffering, in grief, in heart aches, in the final laying down of Jesus' life on behalf of each of us individually as our ransom-price—this consideration lays us under a debt comparable to the vast sum the parable represents the servant as owing his Lord.

Compared to this debt, all that any of our fellow-servants can owe us, in the way of debt, or for injuries done,

sinks into paltry insignificance. Because we have not the wherewithal to pay our debt to our God, He freely forgives us all. Now he says to us, in the words of the parable (verse 33, literal): "Is it not binding on thee to have mercy" on thy brother?

Nor will forgiveness of our brothers debts or injuries from fear of the consequence of not forgiving, or from a sense of duty, be satisfactory to our Lord—"If ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." (vs. 35). And our Head instructs us to pray to our Father and his, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." "God commendeth his (kind of) love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Hereby perceive we love, in that he died for us—and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16).

Because "God is love," He forgave us our Great Indebtedness. Only by acquiring His attribute of Love in its fullness can we forgive our debtors, for the forgiveness—full, generous and free—of those who have injured, who have defrauded, who have trespassed against us, is the highest manifestation of the God-like quality of Love; and this quality must be possessed by all those who "love God, who are the called according to his purpose \* \* \* whom he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son," who is "the express image of the Father's person." (Rom. 8:28, 29; Heb. 1:3).

The servant who fails to exhibit this quality of love, the parable intimates, shall be "delivered to the tormentors, until he shall pay all that is due." What is 'due' from each of those who have covenanted to follow in the footsteps of Jesus? The apostle answers: "to lay down their lives for their brethren." If the life is not voluntarily, lovingly and cheerfully laid down, it must be paid under compulsion. To the class who are represented by this unloving servant we understand the Apostle refers in 1 Cor. 5:5: "Delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." If during the experience under the tormentors, the lesson is learned, the spirit is changed from harshness and selfishness to submissiveness and love—then though



such a one shall "suffer loss"—of the great reward, the share in the Kingdom—"he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

One other point is worthy of note—the behavior of the fellow-servants who saw the improper conduct on the part of the ungrateful debtor. They did not fall upon him with rebuke and abuse; they did not gossip among themselves or with others about it; they "came and told unto their Lord all that was done." Would that this example might be noted and copied by all the disciples of the Master in their relations with each other!

#### Parable 7.

#### THE CREATOR'S IMAGE.

Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17;  
Luke 20:19-26.

This is the shortest parable of our series; in fact, it is not usually listed as a parable at all. Shorn of its setting it consists of but one sentence of sixteen words: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." But it is undoubtedly a parable, within the meaning of the word, as it is "a juxtaposition of two things, differing in most points, but agreeing in some." The two things compared are, the things that should be rendered unto Caesar, and the things that should be rendered unto God.

It is introduced at this point in our consideration of the parables of the Kingdom because the Master here forcibly points out the propriety of complete consecration from a standpoint of Justice, which is the fourth in order of manifestation and of our consideration, of the attributes of the Father and of his Son, our Lord.

The hypocritical Pharisees had come to Jesus with a question that they thought would trap him. "Teacher, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" The question was based on the law—is it right, or just, is it in accordance with our God-given law, to pay tribute to a foreign potentate?

To understand the subtlety of the question it is necessary that we remember how heavy and irksome was the Roman yoke to the proud Jewish neck; that they considered that Jehovah was their king, as taught by the holy scriptures, and that any other power seeking or holding authority over them was sacriliciously usur-

pant. The law said: "Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave." (Deut. 10:20.)

If Jesus therefore answered their question affirmatively, the Pharisees would proclaim his reply as proof that he was disloyal to God, hence could not be the expected Messiah and deliverer. If, on the contrary, he boldly defied Caesar, and advised against paying his tax, the Herodians would denounce him to the Roman authorities and procure his incarceration or death. In any case, they hoped that his answer would destroy his influence with the common people, which they saw was daily growing as theirs waned.

But Jesus "perceived their craftiness"—their trap. Said he, "Show me the tribute-money." It was produced—no doubt from the folds of some Pharisee's robe—a Roman denarius. "Whose is the image and superscription?" It is worn and marred mayhap—but look closely—yes, it is the Emperor's features—"Caesar's." Ah, you accept Caesar's money; you trade with it, buy your food and clothing with it; you live under the protection of Caesar's government. Yet you ask me if you shall pay Caesar's taxes. Certainly "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Your own rabbis recognize this principle, for they teach you that if you accept foreign coinage, you acquiesce in the government back of it. "Render to Caesar that which is Caesar's"—it is only justice.

But while you are remembering and applying the principles of justice and righteousness in your secular affairs, do not forget the claims of justice on you upon a higher plane. "Render to God the things that are God's."

The record states: "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him." (Gen. 1:27.) In father Adam that image was clear and distinct, as the image on a newly-minted coin. "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." (Gen. 1:31). But Adam fell under the curse, and as generation succeeded generation, the image became debased, abraded, obscured. "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Jehovah declares "Ye have turned my glory into



shame." (Rom. 1:22, 23; Psa. 4:2.)

In some of the race of Adam it would seem the original image of the divine Creator has been entirely effaced. There is nothing in them to which the appeal of the Creator's rights—of the Creator's character—can be successfully addressed. But in most men, we believe, even after six thousand years of the fall—of the abrading contact with sin and error—some trace of the Imperial image of Jehovah may still be discovered. In love, in justice, in wisdom, in power—in whatever particular the image is discernable—along that line the appeal comes, "Render unto God the things that are God's." And what are God's? The Master answers: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:29). That is full consecration, and that is the law—mere justice. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1). Anything less is unjust and unreasonable—merely an evidence of the 'coin's' abrasion along the line of Justice—it is light weight.

Having consecrated, the worshipper has no will as to the Father's disposition of his offering. If He gives the invitation to the High Calling, it is gladly, and as a matter of course, accepted. If He wills that the one consecrating serve him upon the human plane, the consecrator is equally well pleased (as never having been begotten of the Spirit, he can have no real conception of, or desire for, spiritual things. If we have, that is one evidence of our spirit-begetting). So, to "render unto God the things that are God's" means to recognize God's paramount interest and right in all the affairs of our lives, and to seek to do His will in all our affairs with earnestness, honesty and zeal.

#### The Four Attributes.

We have found the Divine attribute of Wisdom particularly emphasized in the parable of the Tower; that of Power in the Army parable; Love, in the Forgiveness parable; and Justice in the Coin parable. Using initial letters to indicate the attribute referred to, note the significance of the following Scriptures, (quoted from the Revised Version) as showing that all character-development of God's creatures, and their relationship to him

and to each other, is or must be built up along these four lines.

1. Jehovah's government of the Universe is organized and controlled by the four attributes, symbolized as four "beasts" or living creatures in the fourth chapter of Revelations. Psalm 89:13-15: "Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand and high is thy right hand (P). Righteousness and Justice (J) are the foundation of thy throne: loving-kindness (L) and truth (W) go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound (of the four attributes working through His Plan): they walk, O Jehovah, in the light of thy countenance (character)."

2. The Church's recognition of Jehovah's character and supremacy by complete consecration, submission, devotion and confidence, prophesied: Isaiah 33:22: "Jehovah is our judge (J), Jehovah is our law giver (W), Jehovah is our King (P), he will save us (L)." The four functions of government, viz.: judicial, legislative, executive and sacerdotal, are here seen to be attributed to Jehovah by the Church.

3. A measure of these qualities are required of those who would serve and please Jehovah: Micah 6:8: "What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly (J), and to love kindness (L), and to walk (action, P) humbly (W—Psa. 111:10) with thy God?"

4. The members of the Church are reckoned perfect while in the flesh that they may offer an "acceptable sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1), through the imputed merit of Jesus, which operates along the lines of the four attributes: 1 Cor. 1:30: "Jesus Christ, of God, is made unto us wisdom (W), and righteousness (J), and sanctification (L), and redemption (P)."

5. The members of the Church must build up and develop their characters on each of these four lines: II Peter 1:5-7: "Add to your faith, knowledge and virtue (W), temperance and patience (P), piety and brotherly love (J), and love (L)."

6. The millennial age government of Earth by Christ and the Church is to be, like Jehovah's universal government, four-sided, as symbolized by the pyramid described in Rev. 21:16; its head, Jesus Christ, is prophetically described by Isaiah, 9:6, 7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be



upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor (W), Mighty God (P), Everlasting Father (L), Prince of Peace (J)—Col. 1:20; Psa. 82:7). Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

The most profound, the most remunerative, in the highest sense, and the most soul-satisfying subject for study and investigation in the Universe, is the character of Jehovah God, the Creator. He has consumed eighteen centuries and untold treasure in preparing a chosen and peculiar people, called the Christ, Jesus the head and the Church his body, for the express purpose of manifesting to all his creatures the virtues, the praises and the glories of his wonderful Character. The attention of all the sentient beings in the Universe, (with the exception only of those whose eyes are "blinded by the god of this world," Satan) hangs upon the completion of this vast preparation, now almost finished. The curtain is trembling to rise upon the most stupendous drama ever staged in God's Universe since the dawn of Creation. Let him whose eyes are open, attend! "Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth loving kindness, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith Jehovah. (Jer. 9:23, 24.)

#### Parable 8.

#### THE GREAT INVITATION.

Luke 14:15-24.

We find the Master, as he speaks this parable, amid unusual surroundings. He is a guest at dinner in the house of a ruler of the Pharisees. Doubtless the ruler and his friends desired an opportunity to study this new religious leader of the common people at close range.

The guests come in to the feast—smug and respectable, like their host. There is rivalry among them for the places of honor at the table. A sick man—not one of the guests, evidently—presents himself to the Master, and though it is the Sabbath, he heals him—despite the disapproving looks of the Pharisees. These incidents draw

from Jesus three stinging rebukes—stinging to the proud Pharisees none-the-less though spoken courteously, and clothed in parabolic form. One of the guests, to relieve, perhaps, the general embarrassment, gave utterance to a glittering generality—a platitude to which he thought Jesus could not fail to agree, and which would thus bridge over the situation: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!"

This neat remark was doubtless received with tokens of cordial assent by all the guests, as expressive of their faith and hope. As Pharisees, members of the strictest and most orthodox Jewish sect, they were professedly desiring, above everything else, the coming of the Kingdom. And as the leaders and faithful ones among the chosen people, when God did set up his kingdom, they would, they were sure, be the honored guests at the feast—the ones appointed to the positions of greatest favor. Their claims were correct in every particular. Descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom God had promised his blessings; recipients and custodians of the prophecies, from Moses to Malachi; faithful of the faithful, pharisee, meaning "Separatist"—exclusively religious—of course whatever God had by way of blessing or favor, would be theirs.

Yet how erroneous their conception of God's Kingdom; how hollow a mockery their professions of holiness! And how strange the religionists of our day cannot draw a parallel, and perceive in much of the professed Christianity of the times, the pride, hypocrisy and self-deception of the Pharisees of old. The Master foresaw this condition, for he said "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth?" "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (preached) in thy name (Christian)? And in thy name have cast out devils (of disease, etc.)? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I have never known you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Your lives—your hearts—do not measure up to your professions. (Luke 18:8; Matt. 7:21-23.)

By no means the least interesting feature of the critical study of the



Master's parables, is the insight we frequently gain therefrom into his perfect mind—his conceptions of the Kingdom truths; his method of reasoning and imparting instruction; the faith and love that controlled him. So, in this instance, we may almost see the thought forming in his mind. The gathering of the invited guests to the feast reminds him of the great feast his Father is preparing; this is on the Sabbath, the Father's will be on the anti-typical Sabbath; the healing of the sick man strengthens the comparison; the pride and selfishness of the guests, however, contrasts sharply with the character of the honored ones at his Father's feast. "Ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." (I Cor. 1:26.)

Then, in response to the Pharisee's remark, and in controversion of their self-satisfied attitude, Jesus gave them the parable of "The Great Invitation." In it was the plain intimation that they were rejecting the invitation to the very feast they were so confidently expecting to enjoy. Furthermore, he analyzed the motives actuating them and showed them what things were causing their rejection of God's invitation. Nor do we doubt that, by word, and look, and gesture, the significance of his symbolism was pressed home upon them.

"A certain man made a great supper and bade many." Many times had the Master conned over in his mind the splendid Messianic Kingdom prophecy of Isaiah 25. "In this mountain (the usual scriptural symbol for Kingdom) will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things." "All peoples"—"invited many;" "glad tidings of great joy to all people;" "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth;" "God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" "In Abraham and his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Such is the uniform testimony of Scripture; but it is just as clearly taught that there are to be distinctions made among the guests at the feast: "Star differeth from star in glory;" "Some vessels are unto honor and some to less honor;" in the vast mystic Temple of the Kingdom some will be kings and priests, some Levites; helpers; many worshippers, beneficiaries (see I Cor. 15:41; 2 Tim. 2:20, 21; Rev. 1:6; Ezek. 44:10-14; Micah 4:1; et al.).

The parable, however, has to do with the specially invited and honored guests—the Royalty of the Kingdom. The Host "sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready."

This was the Master's own message; he here refers to himself as his Father's honored servant. He came proclaiming "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand"—the feast is now ready. "He came to his own"—the chosen people, the invited guests—"and his own received him not;" "they all with one consent began to make excuse."

That the rejection of our Lord and his message by the Jews, his brethren, had been to him a bitter experience, we cannot doubt. However much he may have anticipated their apathy, indifference and even hostility, and endeavored to steel his heart for the experience, it cannot have failed to wound and sadden him deeply. "Whereunto," he said "shall I liken this generation? Like unto children who call to one another, We piped and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep. John the Baptist came, and ye say, He hath a demon. The Son of Man is come, and ye say, Glutton! Wine bibber! Friend of publicans and sinners!" (Luke 7:33-35.) Dully apathetic and irresponsible to the Father's message, whether a warning of punishment or a promise of blessing—what was the matter?

The Master's analysis discovers three dominant factors in this condition of deadness as regards spiritual things; three different causes for indifference to his message. He symbolizes them in the parable by the three excuses he puts into the mouths of as many of the invited. The three correspond to the three passing elements of the present evil world, referred to in I John 2:16, as follows:

1. Piece of Ground—Lust of the Eye.
2. Five Yoke of Oxen—Lust of the flesh.
3. Wife—Pride of life.

The three are radically different from each other, and the symbols are marvellously apt, as we shall see.

The "lust of the eye," symbolized by the piece of ground bought, represents the earthly acquisitions of all kinds, so dear to men—learning, power, fame, money, reputation—the lust or desire for which sharply differentiates man from all the lower animals. The higher mental powers of man are symbolized by the eye; it is through these powers that he looks and reaches out



for the objects of his desire. By the exchange of his time and efforts he buys a temporary and limited gratification. But what utter folly for one who hears the message to permit these things to so engross his time and attention as to cause him to disregard the King's invitation, and so lose the prize of all eternity—the Pearl of Great Price—a share in the Kingdom! This is the snare that prevents most of “the great, the wise, the noble, after the flesh” from accepting the invitation; the King's invitation requires humility and self-denial. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon,” said the Master. “If thine eye be single”—properly focussed so as to show a single object—“then thy whole body is full of light. But if thine eye be evil”—crossed, one eye on the heavenly things, the other on the earthly—“then is thy body full of darkness.” And many there are today in the Laodicean church—“Not knowing they are poor and blind and naked.”

“I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to try them. I pray thee have me excused.” What an absurd excuse on the face of it! Why not wait until the morrow? And why did the Master say five yoke? Why not one yoke?

The reason was that he desired to symbolize the lusts, or desires, of the flesh; these desires, figuratively, have their seat in the five senses. The senses are in yokes or pairs: two eyes, two ears; two hands; two nostrils, or two olfactory nerves; two lips, or two gustatory nerves. We may suppose the Master by a gesture indicated his meaning, which the minds of his hearers, accustomed to Oriental metaphor, readily caught. Fine and useful servants are the senses—but what terrible masters! See a man plowing with five yoke of oxen—how splendidly strong and obedient they are! But suppose the man lays down the rod of control; he releases the oxen; they take possession of the man, bind him to the plow, and take turns in goading him with their horns. An awful and fantastic picture? No more awful than to see a man the slave of his senses, his appetites—so busy with their gratification that he rejects the Great Invitation! No more fantastic or unnatural than is the spectacle of such a man from the standpoint of God and the holy angels. Such is he who barter his birthright for a single mess of pottage.

The third returned word “I have married a wife and I cannot come.”

Evidently the statement should be reversed; he thought he had married her, but in reality she had married him—very thoroughly! This excuse, however, is as highly symbolic as the other two, and contains no reflection whatever on the gentler sex. A woman, in symbolic scripture, signifies a religious system. The true church is a chaste virgin, espoused unto Christ. The apostate system is a harlot—false to her marriage vows. In plain terms, the man was joined to a religious system that would not permit him to come. He thought his mind was free in matters of religious faith and doctrine; in reality his opinions on religious subjects were dictated by his sect or denomination. Such were many of the Pharisees; such are many professed Christians of today. Their creeds and church connections prevent their making a candid investigation of Present Truth; they are heedless of the harvest-message, “The Kingdom of heaven is at hand;” they dare not accept and believe the glorious prophecies and promises of the coming “times of restitution of all things,” even though “spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21) because, forsooth, their church does not preach or sanction it! “I have married a wife and I cannot come!”

Nevertheless, the Great Invitation goes forth until the house is full. A certain definite number has been determined on, and will be obtained. The Jews “judged themselves unworthy,” as a nation, of the Great Invitation; it was therefore “turned to the Gentiles,” “until the fulness” or full number “of the Gentiles be come in,” to constitute the Kingdom or Royal Class. “Then shall all Israel be saved,” together with “the residue of men”—all who are not incorrigible in their determination not to submit to “that prophet”—the Christ, Head and Body. For such, there remains the second death. (Acts 13:46; Rom. 11:25; Acts 15:17; 3:23.)

#### Parable 9.

#### THE WEDDING GARMENT.

Matt. 22:1-14.

The general outline of this story is almost identical with that of “The Great Invitation,” but includes some added features, and the points upon which the emphasis is laid are quite different.



The following parallel shows at a glance the principal items of similarity and of difference:

#### The Great Invitation.

1. A certain man.
2. A great supper.
3. Three Invitations.
4. Three Excuses.
5. "None bidden shall partake."

#### The Wedding Garment.

1. A certain King.
2. A marriage feast.
- A. For his son.
3. Three Invitations.
4. Three Hindrances.
5. The King's Vengeance.
- B. The Wedding Garment.
- C. The Ungrateful Guest.
- D. The Outer Darkness.

While we would understand that the two feasts each represent the same "feast of fat things" spread by Jehovah, the description of it in the latter parable as a marriage feast for his Son limits the application more particularly to Christ and the Church, his Bride, than is the case in the former. The Bridegroom and Bride will participate in the Great Supper, and it will be, for them, a Marriage Feast.

The Jewish people had, for eighteen hundred years, been the guests specially invited to the Lord's banquet. Indeed, four hundred years before they entered, as a nation, into covenant relations with God at Mt. Sinai, the promise had been made by Jehovah to their great ancestor, Abraham: "In blessing I will bless thee. . . . and I will multiply thy seed. . . . and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Then, through Moses, at the time of making the Law Covenant, he had sent them the promise: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, . . . and ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Through all the prophets and holy men of old the promises and assurances of Messianic blessing had been renewed and emphasized. "You only, of all the families of the earth have I known." (See Gen. 22:17, 18; Ex. 19:5, 6; Psa. 2:6; 45:16; Isa. 9:6, 7; 62:1-4; Jer. 23:5, 6; Mal. 3:1; Amos 3:1-2; et al.)

In harmony with God's covenants and promises, then, the first invitation to a share in the Kingdom—to union with Christ as his "Bride"—

went exclusively to the Jewish people. Jesus himself, who gave the message, declared, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs" (Gentiles). To his disciples he said: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel . . . saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 15:24, 26; 10:5, 6.) So the parable states: "He sent his servants to call them that were bidden."

"They would not come." "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" "The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." (John 7:48; Luke 7:30.) These were the classes who were professing to maintain the attitude of readiness as God's invited guests. They were the official religious representatives of the Jewish people. They "sat in Moses seat." Their rejection of Jesus, therefore, was a rejection by the nation, and brought upon them the denunciation of their covenant and special favor with God. This was formally accomplished by Jesus, when with tears he looked down from the mountain upon Jerusalem and declared: "O Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Luke 13:34, 35.) This severing of special relations was, unwittingly, formally accepted by the Jewish representatives, when, before Pilate they declared: "We have no King but Caesar" (John 19:15). For eighteen hundred years they had claimed and accepted, willingly, no King but Jehovah. Now, in rejecting his Son, they rejected Him; and it is interesting to note that the severing of the ancient ties was carried out and recorded with fitting publicity, solemnity, and official ceremony. This is the significance of the statement of the parable: "I say unto you, none of those men who were bidden, shall taste of my supper." As Jews they did not. In the church—the Kingdom of God—"There is neither Jew nor Greek." The Jews who came into the Church came individually, on a basis of faith, not as Jews; and by far the larger number in response to the second invitation.

In 'The Great Invitation' the second call is said to have been sent to those in "the streets and lanes of the city;" in 'The Wedding Garment' the mes-



sage was still as the first to "them which are bidden." The 'City,' we understand, signifies the people of Israel; the first invitation naturally went to the Scribes and Pharisees, who made the greatest pretensions to holiness, and who figuratively occupied the mansions and palaces of the "city." But as we find today, the ones making the greatest religious professions are by no means the closest followers of Jesus; and the leaders of nominal spiritual Israel of the present are the last to accept the Kingdom message. So it was at the time of our Lord's first advent; as he told the chief priests and rulers of the people, "The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you." This was unbelievable to them, but they hated him for saying it, and later murdered him, because, among other things, he told the truth about and to them. We do not lack modern instances of the display of similar animosity, prompted by like motives.

The second invitation, therefore, did not go to the palaces and high places of Jewry, but to the "streets and lanes"—yet still within the city. The message too, differed somewhat: "My oxen and fatlings are killed; and all things are ready; come to the marriage feast." He who was the antitype of all the bullocks, or oxen, sacrificed by the Jewish priesthood during the 1800 years past, had now been slain—the world's great Sin-offering. As far as that feature of the Divine program was concerned, all things were ready—awaiting only the gathering of the full number of guests.

In accordance with the prophecy of Daniel, given over 500 years before, Israel was to enjoy 70 symbolic "weeks" or 490 years of special favor, from an easily ascertained starting date. Lack of space forbids our discussing the Bible chronology at length; those desiring to investigate are referred to Pastor Russell's book on chronology, entitled "The Time is at Hand." Suffice to say, in precise accordance with the prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27) Messiah the prince was cut off in the midst of the seventieth week. Jesus was crucified in the middle of the seventieth week, 486½ years from the decree granted to Nehemiah by King Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign, to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:3-8; 6:15; 7:1.) There remained, therefore, three and one-half years, or half a symbolic week, of special favor to

Israel after the Lord's death. During this time the Apostles labored exclusively among the Jews; going from town to town and synagogue to synagogue with their message. This was not of the nature of a national announcement, as was the message delivered by Jesus,—the first invitation of the parable. It was a personal gospel, to the individuals of Israel, in "the streets and lanes of the city." Thus exactly, as always, was God's word fulfilled.

The three hindrances, corresponding to the three excuses of the preceding parable, are introduced following the second invitation and its rejection. The invited ones "made light of it"—the King's invitation. They treated it with contempt; one going to his farm—the "lust of his eyes;" another to his merchandise—the "lust of his flesh;" "the rest laid hold on his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them." The latter class corresponds to the man in the preceding parable, whose wife had married him and would not permit him to accept the great invitation. The persecution of the true followers of Jesus is almost always from those who are professing to follow him, but whose ideas of what is pleasing to God are so warped and twisted that, as Jesus foretold, in killing his followers they verily believe they are "doing God service." Methods of modern times being more refined, character-assassination is the usual means now employed against God's servants; but from the spirit too often manifested by those now persecuting the ones proclaiming the harvest-message, a descent on their part to grosser weapons at any time would not be surprising. Nay, it would but parallel the experience of her Lord and Head, and fulfil the antitypes of the deaths of Elijah and John the Baptist, who foreshadowed the work of the Church, if the completion of her course on earth in the flesh should be through violence and bloodshed.

"The King was wroth, and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers and burned their city." This was literally fulfilled a few years later in the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Roman. Well might the present generation,—selfish, pleasure-loving, scornful of Jesus' kind of religion—take a solemn warning from the fate of the fleshly house of Israel, after their rejection of him at his first advent.



At the close of three and one-half years more of special favor to the Jews, Peter, to whom Jesus had figuratively delivered the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 16:19), had need of a special revelation, thrice repeated, to convince him that it was time to use the second of the keys and open the door for the Gentiles to come in. (Acts 10:9-29.) He had used the first key—to open the door for the Jews—on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 14-36, 41); and pursuant to the vision, he used the second, and opened the door once for all to the Gentiles when he made the journey to the house of Cornelius, preached to him the glad tidings, and received him into full fellowship in the church, by baptism and the laying-on of hands.

Since then the invitation to the marriage feast has been "preached in all the world for a witness;" outside the city, in the highways and hedges of the Gentiles, the message has reached those who realize their need—"the poor, the maimed, the blind, the lame." "They that are well need not a physician, but they that are sick." "That my house may be full." Some day that will be accomplished, and then the Great Invitation will cease for all eternity.

And now the parable pictures the guests as having arrived, and the King comes in to inspect them. He has given the steward instructions that each shall be given a "garment of marriage"—a robe to cover his short-comings in dress, and that will put each one on an equal footing with all the other guests. He finds one guest who has discarded his robe, evidently thinking his own garments superior. The King orders that the unappreciative guest be bound and cast forth from the house.

Isaiah gives us the clues to this symbology. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Thus it was with the guests, gathered in promiscuously from the streets. But we are enabled, by the King's gracious provision to say: "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." (Isa. 64:6; 61:10.) Christ stands as the Sponsor, Surety and Advocate for each member of his Church. His righteousness is imputed to them as a robe to cover their imperfections; their intentions, their hearts desires, are accepted in lieu of the perfect performance impossible

to them because of inherited weakness and sin. Under that robe's protection, the members of the church are able to develop a *will*—an *intention*—perfect toward God; the "full stature of Christ;" and in the resurrection, when they each receive a body such as "shall please Him," their characters of righteousness, developed in their warfare against sin in their members while in the flesh, will be so crystallized and fixed as to insure that they will never misuse the perfect powers of the new body, which shall then be theirs; but like their Head, they will "always do the things that are pleasing" to the Father.

To cast aside the robe during the probationary, the "inspecting" time, implies ingratitude; indifference to the King's desires; self-righteousness, self sufficiency. Such a mental attitude makes impossible the development of the Christian character-graces of love, obedience, humility, godliness.

How may the robe be discarded? In two ways. Doctrinally, by denying the ransom-sacrifice of Jesus; by holding no-ransom theories concerning the atonement. Practically, by the very ones, often, who are most vociferous in proclaiming themselves champions of the doctrine of the Ransom in hair-splitting punctillio; yet who, by the very aggressiveness of their condemnation and abuse of others who do not precisely agree with them in religious or other matters, exhibit their own self-esteem and self-righteousness, lack of love, and non-reliance on the Lord. "If you love not your brother whom ye have seen, how can ye love God whom ye have not seen?"

"Bind him, and cast him forth into the outer darkness, where there is the weeping and gnashing of teeth." Away from the light and joy of the marriage feast; away from the fellowship and helpfulness of the King's guests; bound that he may not injure others, by bitter spirit or false doctrine. Bound by the cords of truth in the hands of his fellow guests, who thus neutralize his struggles to kick and bite, to injure and destroy. Cast into outer darkness—not flames of hell—the ideas are incompatible; but into that "darkness that covers the earth, and gross darkness the people;" where the "whole creation groans and travels in pain together until now;" out, where the god of this world reigns "in the



hearts of the children of disobedience," and his subjects, partaking of his spirit, gnash their teeth in bitterness and hatred, at God, at each other, and at all righteousness.

What shall be the ultimate fate of such an one? We are glad we need not answer nor decide. God, who reads the heart, will judge; and his judgement is kind, but just—He makes no mistakes. But the wedding guests—theirs is light and joy and peace eternal; for theirs is the light of the Bridegroom's face forever.

#### Parables 10, 11 and 12.

#### THE KING'S GIFT.

Luke 19:11-27.

#### THE KING'S TRUST.

Matt. 25:14-30.

#### THE TWO CLASSES.

Matt. 19:27—20:16.

"Peter said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?"

Jesus' answer to Peter's question is of supreme interest and importance to every one of his followers. The real Christian's path through life, as we have found in preceding studies, is one of conflict and suffering; of self-denial and self-sacrifice; of being misunderstood and abused and persecuted by others with whom he comes in contact. The testimony of Scripture is plain and overwhelming that such would be the case; the experience of all the "sanctified in Christ Jesus" has confirmed it; and the denial of the principle or fact on the part of any one, no matter what his professions or standing, simply proves that such an one is not a Christian in the Scriptural sense, for only "if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." The King forwarned us: "The servant is not greater than his lord. If the world has persecuted me, it will also persecute you. In the world ye shall have tribulation."

From the standpoint of the true Christian, therefore, Peter's question is exceedingly pertinent. Is the sacrifice and the suffering really worth while? "What shall we receive therefore?"

The King, in his reply, drew a fine but very important distinction. He divided Peter's question into two parts, and answered the latter part first. One could not follow him with-

out leaving all; but one could leave all for him, by a covenant of consecration, yet fail in the test and not follow him all the way. Hence the Master said: "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." That is the first class, who receive the chief reward. But there is another class; a class of Christians who accept Jesus as their Saviour and Lord; who consecrate to follow in his footsteps; who thus leave all and lose all of their earthly rights and possessions, yet who, through carelessness, lack of determination and energy, the distractions of the world, the flesh and the devil, fail to follow him up the "strait and narrow way" of daily self-sacrifice, up to the achievement of his character-likeness and participation in the "likeness of his death," using up their strength and vital powers for others; and hence, because of their failure to fully carry out their covenant, they 'suffer loss,' not receiving a 'full reward;' they themselves "being saved, yet so as by fire."

But even of this second class, who receive an inferior reward, the Master said: "Every one shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life."

The verses so far considered serve as an introduction to all three of the parables of our present study; for the parables of The King's Gift, or The Pounds, and of The King's Trust, or The Talents, particularly deal with the testing, developing and the reward of the first class; while the parable of The Two Classes, sometimes called The First and Last, or The Eleventh Hour, pictures especially the second class, and their reward.

In the parables of the Pounds, and of the Talents, the stories are superficially much alike; yet are found to be essentially different in almost every particular, upon a closer examination.

In both parables we see our Lord pictured as 'going into another country'—'a far country, to receive a Kingdom.' In each parable he is represented as calling his servants—in the Greek, bond servants, or slaves—and bestowing something upon them.

Here the similarity ends. The pound was a small gift—a mere gra-



tuity from the great nobleman to his servants on his departure; estimated variously as the equivalent of from fifteen to forty-five dollars. It was bestowed equally upon all—irrespective of their position in his household, or their respective abilities.

What gift from the Lord to his followers could be so represented? There are two that fulfil these requirements, namely, Justification and Spirit-begetting. Of the two, the latter seems to us to be the one indicated by the Lord, for the following reasons:

1. The gift was bestowed upon bond-servants, or slaves. We cannot properly be so described at the time we receive Justification—not until after we are justified can we consecrate; and not until we submit ourselves in consecration to the Father, taking Jesus Christ, whom he hath appointed, to be our Head, may we properly be called bond-servants of the King.

2. The gift was capable of being multiplied by use. Justification cannot be increased—that is, the reckoned justification which is a free gift to us, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Justification means perfection—a conforming to Justice. **Actual** justification, in the case of every member of the fallen race of Adam, is a process, a growth, a development. But our actual justification starts with what we have and builds upon that, and is completed in the resurrection. However, it is reckoned as being instantly completed, when, by faith we accept Jesus as our Redeemer, Saviour and Advocate. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." (Rom. 5:1.) That justification cannot be increased by trafficking. But the growth of the New Creature, from its commencement as a begetting, may very reasonably be so represented.

Adopting the view, then, that the departing nobleman's gift to his bond-servants represents our Lord's bestowal of that especial gift of the Holy Spirit known scripturally as spirit-begetting, let us examine the testimony of the Word concerning it, and compare the text with the picture given us in the parable.

1. The Begetting is a mental quickening to life in a new direction:

"He begot us by the word of truth."  
—James 1:18.

"Begotten us again to a lively hope"—  
—or a hope of life, as reads the original Greek.—1 Pet. 1:3.

"By the renewing (Lit. Gr. **upnewing**) of your minds."—Rom. 12:2.

"He hath given us precious promises, whereby we may become partakers of the divine nature" (immortality—1 Tim. 6:16; John 5:26)—2 Pet. 1:4.

2. As the natural human embryo, or foetus, grows from a microscopic beginning to a size and development that enables it to sustain an independent existence, so the spiritual embryo, from the tiny beginning of a motive-thought—a hope of a new life, an up-turning of the mind—a precious promise,—planted, like a seed, in the good soil of a sincerely consecrated human heart or mind, increases marvellously:

Purifying its human host—1 John 3:3.

Building up a character-structure, fitted for eternal life—Jude 20, 21.

Bringing into subjection contrary thoughts and tendencies—2 Cor. 10:4; Rom. 6:14, 17.

3. This operation of God's Spirit, however, requires active coöperation on the part of the recipients:

To work out our own salvation—Phil. 2:12.

By exercising our new nature—Acts 24:16.

By disciplining our bodies—1 Cor. 9:27.

This growth and development is attained by using the truth—the enlightenment of Holy Spirit—adding our time and ability, to obtain more and ever more; thus trafficking or trading the earthly good things for the spiritual or heavenly.

But all are not equally successful in this, their business partnership with the King; and this is illustrated by the parable. The servants are represented as starting out with an equal amount each, but achieving a varying success. How can this be, if their success represents character-development, and all followers of Jesus must perfect a character-likeness of their Lord (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:13)? Simply this: That character is quantitative as well as qualitative. Of the attributes of God, two, Justice and Love, are qualitative only; two, Wisdom and Power, are capable of infinite expansion in quantity. Thus, with the followers of Jesus who are seeking to acquire divine character-likeness: while all must reach the mark of perfect love—good will to every creature—the extirpation from his heart of all malice and hatred;



and while each must attain the mental attitude of full loyalty, submission and devotion to God, and full recognition of his neighbor's equality with himself,—loving his neighbor as himself, which is Justice toward God and man; on the contrary, a vast difference will be in evidence within the Body of Christ, among the members composing it; in Wisdom, for wisdom is not merely knowledge, but combines experience, sagacity, foresight, insight, discretion, discernment, skill, understanding, and many other qualities capable of unlimited expansion; and in Power, the capacity for the proper exercise of which is developed in proportion to the development of Wisdom, and which will be bestowed in proportion to the capacity developed by each servant, as indicated in the parable.

Let us turn now to the compliment-al parable of the Talents.

The value of a talent is variously estimated at from seven hundred dollars to four times that amount. It will thus be seen to represent approximately one hundred times the value of the pound. The talents represented all the departing traveler's goods, or possessions. They were not bestowed as gifts upon his servants, but, in each case as a trust, or stewardship; not in equal amount to each slave, but according to each one's ability. "Occupy," he said, "until I return."

What constitutes the King's "goods" in the earth, which we are to administer until he returns to receive an accounting? We reply, in the broadest sense of the word, the Truth. The Apostle explains: "All things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation, to-wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore, on behalf of Christ." (2 Cor. 5:19, 20.)

We see, then, that the increase of the Pound represents the inward development of the Truth; the increase of the Talent our growth in outward service of the Truth. The two, indeed, go hand in hand; yet are quite distinct, and the principles governing the bestowal, administration and rewards for fidelity in the two cases differ widely.

"According to their several ability."

The maximum amount of talents bestowed was five; this would imply the possession of five abilities. Upon consideration we find that men have five abilities which may be used in the service of the Truth, and that the five have symbolic representation in the organs which stand for the five senses.

Thus the eye would represent higher mental powers; the ears the amount heard, or learned—i.e., education; the nostrils, as organs of breathing, of life, the amount of physical health possessed; the mouth, the aptness to teach, or instruct; the hands, symbols of power, represent the amount of earthly possessions,—mammon of unrighteousness possessed—the means whereby a man may multiply, in some directions, the results he could himself accomplish unaided.

All these may be used to the full extent possessed in the service of the Truth if we will, for the parable assures us that the opportunity is given us to the full extent of—"according to"—the ability we possess. We cannot doubt this without doubting the Lord's word, or his wisdom.

It behooves us, then, to study ourselves, and our environment, in the light of our Book of Instructions, and then put every resource into the service.

The servant receiving five talents would, roughly speaking, average up to about five 'abilities'—say fifty per cent of a perfect man; while he would not have nearly fifty per cent of Adam's life or vitality, he might have wealth that would purchase the services, for the Truth, of thousands of men and machines undreamed of in Adam's day; in the printing of millions of tracts, for example. The three-talent servant's abilities would average up to about three-tenths of a man—he would not have three 50% abilities, but some proportion, probably, of all five. So with the servants of still less ability. We will surely agree that most of Jesus' followers have abilities that entitle them to but one talent. That, no doubt, is the reason the man with one talent was represented as getting discouraged and making his fatal mistake—that we might see the possibility in our own cases vividly drawn, and so be warned in time.

The companion pictures of the Lord's judging and rewarding of his servants, in the parables of the Pounds and of the Talents, are so vivid and striking as to afford the



careful student an insight into the Lord's standards and methods nowhere else obtainable, in the Scriptures or elsewhere.

"Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart." "There is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears." "Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God." (1 Sam. 16:7; Heb. 4:13; Isa. 11:3; 1 Cor. 4:5.)

As bible-students these passages are familiar to us, and the principle stated is one we have often emphasized to ourselves and others. Yet it is so natural for us, reasoning from our human standpoint and applying our human standards, to forget the entirely different basis and standards of our great Judge and Law-giver. Especially in judging ourselves and our fellow-members of the Body—the Church—are we inclined, nay almost certain, to fall into the error of "measuring ourselves by ourselves, and comparing ourselves with ourselves." (2 Cor. 10:12.)

But here we find that the very things we would be most likely to consider in estimating our own or a fellow-Christian's future reward—namely, prominence and activity in the service of the Truth; fleshly attainments of various kinds—education, refinement; the giving of large sums of money, etc.;—all these are not considered at all by the King in fixing the relative standing of his followers in the Kingdom. To each one found faithful in discharging his stewardship, whether large or small, the reward was the same—"Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Whether steward of five talents or of one, it was but a small matter, a "few things" in the estimation of the King; the difference between the greatest and the least accomplishment was incon siderable from his standpoint; the essential thing was faithfulness—if that were evidenced the reward

was given to each one in equal measure.

What is the significance of the reward: "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord"? To the faithful follower of the King it suggests the fullness and completeness of his promised fellowship with his Head. "All things are ours, for we are Christ's and Christ is God's." It signifies an intimate association of life, nature, capacity, interests, activities. Our Bridegroom prayed his Father and ours: "Father I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." "Beloved," wrote the Apostle, "it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (John 17:24; 1 John 3:2.) Wherever the Bridegroom's home ('mansion,' or plane of existence), whatever his activities, his honors, his joys (no sorrows shall be there), these will the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, the true Church, share to the full. And particularly will she have learned the lesson, in her earthly experience, which he had previously learned in his, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Nevertheless, there are to be differences and distinctions among the members composing the Body; and to get an idea of the basis upon which these distinctions are made we must turn to the parable of the Pounds. Here, we remember, the gifts bestowed were equal, but the servants' gain in trading therewith varied widely. As there is nothing in the parable to indicate that each servant did not have equal opportunity with his fellow-servants to increase his pound, we are bound to conclude that the Master intended us to understand that each of his servants who are given the pound, or spirit-begetting, have, as a matter of fact, an equal opportunity; and that the unequal results attained indicate varying degrees of zeal and energy and devotion in cultivating the inner graces and virtues of Christ-likeness of character. As has been already suggested, some elements of character are incapable of greater increase than the perfection required by God's standard; while others permit of infinite expansion. We therefore understand that the King's distribution of varying spheres of authority—over "ten cities" and "five cities"—will, in



the reality, as pictured in the parable, be in accordance with a judgment of the development of **capacity** by the "inner man"; discernable only to him who does not judge after the sight of his eyes or decide after the hearing of his ears, but whose judgment is based entirely on the naked counsels and crystallized principles of the heart, the mind, the character.

Upon this basis the opportunities and possibilities of all Jesus' followers are equal. All have the Word of Truth to feed upon; the Holy spirit to enlighten and instruct; the daily experiences of life to exercise and stimulate. Whether the great preacher used as a channel to reach thousands; the colporteur or volunteer who comes into contact with hundreds; or the invalid on the bed of pain, yet reaching out from her sick-room the tendrils of sympathy, of longing, of prayer; all have the opportunities and materials for developing faith and hope, dominance of circumstance, patience, love of God and love of neighbor, self-sacrifice.

Nor do we place so crude an interpretation on the reward conferred as to suppose that the "cities" are literal, and in geographical groups. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee **governor of Illinois**"—What a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous! A city is a symbol of a government; and the governments conferred will be **Spiritual**. We can only hint at a possibly approximate conception of the significance. What a tremendous **faith** is demonstrated by the Brother who, believing in his message, contends against a coldly critical, disbelieving, and often hostile world for forty years, until he sees his audience grow from a handful in a Sunday-school room to millions all over the world. Is it not possible that his reward may include some special relation of authority in respect of **faith**—of its development in others—beyond the veil, in the future, and in the powers of a divine spirit body?

And the sister, spending day after day for **seven years** on a bed of agony, her life ebbing by inches; yet who, nearing the end of the way, testifies that she would go through all the suffering over again cheerfully, if it were necessary to attain to the excellency of the **knowledge of the Truth** which she possessed; shall the vast degree of patience, acquired and

manifested in her character, not perhaps be recognized by the King in giving her special authority over the "City" of Patience—of Self-control?

Who can define or delimit the powers and activities of those who, "by patient continuance in well doing" gain "the crown of life"—"the divine nature"—"put on immortality"? Only He who bestows the infinite and priceless gift.

What of him, the "wicked and slothful servant", who treated the double favor of his Lord—the Pound and the Talent—with contempt; and who slandered, insulted and defied his Lord to his face when called to account? "I knew thee that thou art a hard man"; what a **murderous** assault on the character of a kind and indulgent master; "reaping where thou hast not sown"—a **falsehood**—his lord asked but for an accounting for his own property; "I was afraid"—**fearful**; "I went," **unbelieving**, "and hid thy talent in the earth"—**abominable**; "lo, thou hast that is thine;"—a message of sheer impudence. The fate of the class of servants represented by this one is described in Revelations, 21:8:—"But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Talent buried in the earth—no use whatever made of his opportunity; pound wrapped up in a napkin—that which wrapped the face of the dead in every other scripture where the word is used;—the Begetting dead, having made no growth whatever; what other class than those referred to in 1 John 5:16, Heb. 6:4-9 and 10:26-29, can be here pictured?

Both the 'pound' and the 'talent' were taken from the wicked and slothful servant and given to him who already had the most. The opportunity of service in the future; the potentialities—the possibilities—of the smothered spirit-life, were given to the one who, by broadest experience and greatest development, was best fitted to use them aright.

There was another course the slothful servant might have pursued, which, while not as commendable as that followed by the "good and faithful servants," yet would have saved him from the condemnation to extinction of being; namely, the one



suggested by our Lord in both parables: "Thou oughtest—wherefore didst thou not—at least) give my money to the bankers that I at my coming might have received my own with interest."

Whoever we commit our share of the Lord's work to, to do for us, is our 'banker' within the meaning of the parable. There is, and has been throughout the age, a large class of these professional religious bankers, who, for a fee, take upon themselves the religious duties and devotions of others. Their depositors, too pre-occupied by the world and the flesh, too careless and indifferent to actively engage in the service of the Lord, and the cultivation of the fruits of his Spirit in their characters and lives, yet not wholly disregarding of their obligations, are glad to save their consciences by compounding their indebtedness at the banker's, expecting that he will be able to satisfactorily account to their Lord for them when the accounting time comes. Foolish servants! They never have heeded the Apostle's warning: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15.) They cannot hope for the Lord's commendation as "good and faithful servants"; they have not entered into the joy of service and sacrifice on this side the veil, hence are not prepared to enter into the "joy of their Lord" beyond. Yet the Master indicates plainly that their course is more honorable and pleasing to him than that of the "wicked and slothful" servants.

This numerous class of 'banking' Christians, incidentally referred to in the "Pounds" and the "Talents," are particularly illustrated in the parable of "The Two Classes," or "The Eleventh Hour." After differentiating, in his reply to Peter's question as to what his followers' reward was to be, between those who really follow, and those who are called and covenant to follow but do not do so, the Master makes the statement: "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." (Matt. 19:30.) The parable concerning the two classes follows immediately after this statement, artificially separated from it by the modern chapter division, but connected by the conjunction *for*, thus making the parable a reason or ex-

planation of the statement preceding. And to emphasize the connection between the statement of fact, and the parable intended to illustrate it, the statement is repeated in more positive form after the parable (20:16): "So" or "Thus, the last shall be first and the first, last."

Unquestionably, then, the parable illustrates in some way this statement, and the Lord's reply to Peter's inquiry.

This parable has been variously applied as representing the Jews and the Gentiles; the Ancient Worthies and the Church; and those called at various times within the Church, in the Gospel Age. None of these interpretations fits perfectly. The "last" ones, which the Lord twice states were to be "first," are the eleventh hour laborers of the parable. To apply the parable in any way to the Jews, or Ancient Worthies, would make the whole Gospel Age the eleventh hour—a manifestly incongruous interpretation. If we apply the several hirings of the laborers, at the first, third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours of the day, to calls by the Lord at intervals of the Gospel Age, then again we have the difficulty of the preference given to the eleventh hour laborers, and the murmuring on the part of those hired earlier in the day. The Apostle positively states that those remaining alive until the Lord's second coming shall not precede those of former years of the Gospel Age, who have fallen asleep in Christ (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Can we conceive of Paul and the other Apostles and members of the early Church murmuring at the time of receiving their reward because someone else had received his reward first? Nay, this view also is untenable.

We suggest an interpretation that, to our mind, satisfactorily solves all these difficulties, "fits all the various parts of the parable, and is reasonable, Scriptural and harmonious."

The doctrine concerning the "Great Company" class is one of the most obscure and hidden in the Bible. There is a reason for this. It is not the desire of the Lord that any should 'run' for or try to become of this class. There is but one "hope of our calling"—the hope of immortality,—the hope of joint-heirship with our Lord and Elder Brother. The provision, in the Plan of the Father, for the "tribulation saints," the Great



Company, "saved so as by fire," yet "suffering loss" of the great reward because of lack of zeal, determination and faithfulness in seeking to "make their calling and election sure"—this provision of God's is a matter of mercy, a consolation prize for those who 'also ran.' If those who ultimately find themselves members of this class, had understood fully the provision in the Lord's plan for this Company, the knowledge would have tended to cause them to still further slacken their efforts: "If I don't get into the Little Flock, I'll at least make the Great Company, and that's good enough," would in most cases probably express their mental attitude. But it was the Father's desire that all have the spur and stimulus of striving for the highest possible prize, and thus be encouraged to put forth the greatest possible effort. Yet to others the understanding of the possibility of losing the Great Prize and receiving only a partial reward would act as the greatest possible incentive. Paul was one: "I severely discipline my body—lest I be disapproved"—for the first prize. In the stress and pressure of the **harvest times** of the Ages, Jewish and Gospel, this knowledge has been most helpful in this way.

We understand the "First and Last" parable to be a picture in a general way of this Great Company Class. The parable views each separate membership, or 'crown,' in the Body of Christ, as a separate contest. This view, we would understand, was the one the Apostle had in mind when he wrote: "Know ye not that they who run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may attain." (1 Cor. 9:24.) In this case the contestants do not all run at once, but each in turn. In every case it is a "race against time"—an effort to measure up to a certain definite standard—a **character** standard, not one of perfect performance. The Lord is the judge, and when one has finished his course satisfactorily, and is 'approved,' then for him is "laid up a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12). Thenceforth that particular 'crown' (i. e., position in the Body) is no longer to be contested for. The last one to run for it will receive it—thus becoming **first**, or preferred above all the others who had previously striven for it. This is the only way that we can see that the

statement can be applied, "Thus (all) the last shall be first, and the first, last."

We may apply the feature of the various hirings in the market-place in a very general, or a more particular way. The 'calls' or 'invitations' to association with Christ in his sacrificial work as under-priests, members of his church, to become with him kings and priests in the new Age when he shall set up his kingdom, has been going forth continuously during the past eighteen hundred years of the Gospel Age; in order, as shown in the "Great Supper" parable, that his "house may be full"—that is, the full, predetermined number secured. Whether the calls at the different hours in the parable we are now studying should be understood as applying definitely to particular dates in the Gospel Age, or merely in a general way picturing the continuance of the hiring right up to the end of the age, we cannot say certainly.

But we have reason to believe a comparatively large number of 'crowns' will be finally run for and gained in the latter part of the Age—the 'eleventh hour,' whether that is one-twelfth of eighteen hundred or one hundred and fifty years; or the forty year harvest; or an indefinite period. Nor does it seem necessary to a satisfactory understanding of the parable that we affirm any one of these possible views.

The important part of the picture has to do with the distribution of the rewards. The striking point is, that some will be dissatisfied with their reward, and murmur. We cannot conceive of any of those who receive the "full reward" of "glory, honor and immortality", being found in any such attitude or frame of mind. On the other hand there is a class who are elsewhere so represented in Scripture—namely, those "before the throne" in Rev. 7:13-17, from whose eyes God wipes tears away. Apparently they have received their reward, yet, figuratively speaking, are shedding tears. Are they tears of mortification and vain regret at wasted hours and lost opportunities of service and sacrifice? It would appear to be so.

And how shall the tears be wiped away? The parable indicates—the Father reasons with them and shows them the justice in the preference of



the "Little Flock" of "Lasts"—"more than conquerors."

"Friend," says the great Householder; friends they are, not enemies; "Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" The penny cannot represent immortality, nor joint-heirship; the Great Company will have neither, as clearly stated in Rev. 7, where they are represented as before, not on, the throne; and as needing provision for sustaining their life—feeding, protection from sun, etc. We would understand the penny to represent spirit-existence—"heaven"—release from the groaning and travelling of Earth. The Great Company Christian has, in reality, seldom gotten any higher appreciation of the Prize than that. That is really what the murmurer had "agreed" for. The Householder continues: "Take that is thine and go thy way"—your position is honorable, happy, glorious in its opportunities of serving and blessing others. Thus the Father's reasoning restores their spirits—it 'wipes away the tears,' being at heart submissive to the Lord, when the situation is made clear to them, and they fully realize that God's rewards have been distributed in accordance with strict equity, they have no further complaint to make.

The superiority of the Church's reward is indicated by their preference in the payment of the penny. To have made the point of their superiority stronger would have made the understanding of the parable too easy, and emphasized, in a manner not desired by the Lord, the doctrine of the Great Company.

It is interesting to note that this class, who in the "Pounds" and "Talents" are represented as shirking their responsibilities and opportunities, here complain that they "have borne the burden and heat of the day." It illustrates the difference in the way we may view a matter from the way it is seen by the Lord. Those who in reality are actually exerting themselves least often imagine they are doing and suffering most; while the most zealous and earnest, in humility and modesty, disparage their own efforts to themselves and others. But the King's balances are exact, and will unfailingly detect all merit and all sham.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth

the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." Let us remember that we must do better than any who have preceded us in striving for the 'crown' the Lord has offered us, or we, too, shall be 'castaways'—disapproved for the Great Prize. The 126th Psalm represents the resurrected members of the Church as "like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing." Which shall it be for us when we awake—laughter or tears? Songs of joy or murmurs of disappointment? A little more energy, a little more determination, a little greater zeal makes the difference. Which shall it be?

#### Parable 13.

#### THE FOUR SOILS.

Matt. 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-20;  
Luke 8:5-15.

The twelve parables of our Series so far considered are related to the nine to follow, as cause is related to effect. The former have principally to do with the laws and regulations concerning the Royalty—its requirements and rewards; the latter, prophetic at the time uttered, outline the development of the same class, its trials and besetments and final triumph.

In the story of the Four Soils, the great Chief Sower pictures the reception given the proclamation of the "word of God concerning the Kingdom" by the world of mankind to whom it is issued. While related, in this respect, to the parables of the Great Invitation and the Wedding Garment, we note that the two former analyze the causes that operate to prevent those who have received the invitation (i. e. the consecrated) from occupying a place at the great marriage supper; while the present parable, in a more general way, represents the four classes which comprise all who hear the message of the Kingdom at all, and pictures the effect it has upon them.

There are two kinds of "seed" parables—one in which the seed is the "word of God," the other in which the seed represents the "children of the Kingdom." Our present subject of investigation belongs to the former class. The first and chief sower of the word was Jesus; the Apostles followed, sowing—"Paul sowed"—and all who have followed in their foot-



steps and sowed the Kingdom proclamation, are represented in the Sower.

And all sow the "word of God of (concerning) the Kingdom," the gospel of the Kingdom. There is no other scriptural gospel.

The Master, observing the effects of his message upon his hearers, and astonished at the callous indifference, shallow inconstancy and preoccupied neglect shown by many of them, divides them in this parable into four classes, represented by the four soils. We find the Master's classification is still applicable, and that all mankind, in their attitude toward the Kingdom message, are divisible into the same four classes.

1. The first class we call the **Disobedient**. The good seed is represented as falling 'by the wayside'; on or by the path crossing or skirting the field, as is common in that largely unfenced country. The ground there was trodden down and hard; the seed could not penetrate the soil; the birds came, and finding it on the surface, 'devoured it up.'

Such, the Master says, is the heart or mind, given up to the influence of the "god of this world," the great Adversary, Satan, and the fallen angels associated with him. The 'birds of the air' is a common symbol for the unclean spirits, though individual varieties of birds are used as symbols of good spirits; as, for example, the eagle of Divine wisdom; the dove, of the holy Spirit.

Included in this class are most of the great ones, the educated, the moral and respectable. The depraved and criminal would usually fall under the next class. The path across the field would naturally seek the lower and smoother portions, and here the best soil is to be found. So the "god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4: 4). The message of the coming Kingdom of Christ, the "times of refreshing and restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3: 19-21) might bring forth glorious fruit in these minds if permitted to take root and grow; but it is snatched away by the Adversary, through various forms of deceit such as evolution theories, 'Christian' and other 'science falsely so-called' (1 Tim. 6: 20), Spiritualism, etc. "The whole world lieth in the wicked one," says the Apostle

(1 John 5: 19), Paul calls this class 'children of disobedience' (Eph. 2: 2), hence our name for them—the **Disobedient**—disobedient to the Kingdom message, however good and upright morally, according to the world's standards, they may be.

What will become of this class? Answering according to the analogy of the parable, their hearts (minds) need to be **plowed up**. "Break up your fallow ground"; "Judah shall plow and Jacob shall break his clods; break up your fallow ground for it is time to seek the Lord (Jer. 4: 3-7; Hos. 10: 9-15). Sometimes the plowshare of sorrow or disappointment prepares such ground for the reception and growth of the seed, during the present age. But the most of this class await the great plow share of the 'time of trouble' (Dan. 12: 1; Matt. 24: 21); the day when the "plowman" of the Millennial age overtakes the 'reaper' of the Gospel Age. That plowing will break all hearts, for all human plans and organizations shall come to naught. Then will men's hearts be mellowed and prepared for the sowing of seed for a new crop—the Millennial Age harvest. "For my determination is to gather the nations that I may assemble the Kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." "When thy judgments are in the earth ('Judgment Day') then shall the inhabitants of the world **learn righteousness**." (Zeph. 3: 8, 9; Isa. 26: 9.)

2. The second class differentiated by the Master, we denominate the **Incapables**. In the picture we see the seed fall upon shallow soil. The bedrock is near the surface; there is but a thin skin of soil over it. It is impossible to produce a crop under such conditions.

This comparison well illustrates the mental condition of the vast majority of mankind. As a result of six thousand years experience with sin, sickness, sorrow, privation, hardship, since father's Adam's fall, the race has deteriorated, become more and more shallow and superficial as generation followed generation. Knowledge, indeed, has been increased—vastly, among a minority, measurably among all. But with this increase has



not come a corresponding deepening of character, of moral and religious convictions, of faith and hope and love. Superficiality is characteristic of the times.

This class, be it noted, includes all the children of the race, (two-thirds of mankind dying before reaching the age of accountability, say fifteen years); all the idiots and imbeciles, and most of the heathen, as well as those who possess a little more mentality, but not sufficient depth of resolution and seriousness to use it in the pursuit of anything of more value than pleasure or money or notoriety. When such do gain a smattering of the Truth concerning the coming Kingdom they frequently show great interest and some effort toward reformation for a little time; but "when tribulation or persecution or affliction or temptation ariseth for the word's sake (as it invariably does—John 16: 33; Jas. 1: 12; 2 Tim. 3: 12; Heb. 12: 7-11) immediately they are offended and fall away."

Will the Lord hold this class responsible? Have they "come to the knowledge of the truth" such as God wills all men shall have (1 Tim. 2: 3-6) before being finally judged for eternal life or eternal death? Certainly not. God's equity insures to all an equal opportunity to obtain eternal life and happiness. We must conclude, therefore, that in the resurrection the limitations under which they are laboring, and for which they are not individually and personally responsible, will be removed.

This, indeed, is the positive assurance of the word. "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, that they give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep mine ordinances and do them and they shall be my people and I will be their God." (Ezek. 11: 18-21; see chapter 18, entire.)

3. The two classes of hearers so far considered are composed of individuals who, in the one case, because of complete pre-occupation by the affairs of the world and the flesh never give the Kingdom message any real and serious consideration; and in the other case, because of inherited or other limitations lack the mental capacity to grasp its real significance and importance. Hence these two classes have never made any acceptable covenant of sacrifice with the Father and cannot in any true sense be said to

have had the full, fair and free opportunity which the Almighty intends all his creatures to have to attain to everlasting life and happiness,—hence they will be included with the "residue of men" who at the Lord's return and setting up of His Kingdom will have the opportunity, with the abundance of light and knowledge of the millennial day, to "seek after the Lord." (Acts. 15: 17).

We have now to consider two other classes, the individuals composing which "hear and go forth." By this expression we understand that they understand the import of the message, they accept its terms and present themselves in consecration to follow in the footsteps of the Lord. The rank growth of thorns represented in the parable as characterizing the first of these classes would itself imply that the soil was deep and rich. But here the analogy of the parable is not perfect, for, while the soil is unable to prevent the thorns from growing upon it and crowding out the good seed, the human mind has the power within itself, with the instruments provided by the Lord, who "hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue," to purge itself of the destructive cares, pleasures and desires of this life which else will prevent the perfecting of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. A mind such as is pictured by the thorny ground is described by the Wise Man in Proverbs 24: 30-34: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." So in the end the individual of this class presents the pitiful spectacle of one who is poor in time of harvest. How perfect is the description of this class by our Lord in His message to the church of Laodicea, (Rev. 3: 14-19): "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." "So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth." We recognize this class as the same one de-



scribed in the parable of The First and Last as the murmurers; referred to in the parables of The Pounds and of The Talents as the "banking" servants; of whom the Apostle says, "their works shall be destroyed," their character-structure, because not made of right materials, lost, and they themselves suffering loss of the great reward, but their lives saved, "yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3: 10-15). In Luke's version of the parable, verse 14, the statement is that "they brought no fruit to perfection." This seems to be characteristic of this class—incompleteness, imperfection. We are reminded of those spoken of in Hebrews 11: 40; quite a different class, but one that also awaits a post-resurrection perfecting. Evidently both these classes, the Great Company of the parable and the Ancient Worthies of Hebrews 11, have proven under trial to the satisfaction of their Judge that their desire, their heart's intent, their spirit (1 Cor. 5: 5) is devoted to righteousness, although the positive elements of their characters have not been fully developed, and so their character-structures are not complete. Having proven, however, the sincerity of their intentions, the Lord is graciously pleased to give them a partial reward and permit them to complete the development of the lacking character qualities under the easier condition of the future life, and eventually to attain to positions of honor and happiness and to enjoy eternal life; not, however, on the exalted plane of the overcoming Church. Again we note how insignificant the things in the present life which hinder the proper effort and accomplishment on the part of this Great Company, and the folly of one who permits these trifling and unimportant things to rob him of so great a part of his reward. "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep," so the Wise Man diagnoses their case—"the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches," possessed or desired, "the lusts of other things" causes a loss of the kingdom honors, the immortal nature, the Pearl of Great Price. "For the love of money," says the Apostle, "is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after right-

eousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." (1 Tim. 6: 10-12.)

4. "But other fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." He that received seed into the good ground is he that "heareth the word and understandeth it and which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth." In these words the Master describes the class elsewhere pictured as 'good and faithful servants.' The results are not equal in every individual case, but every one brings some fruit to perfection. "One star differeth from another star in glory; So also is the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15: 41.) Thus, as in the parables of The Pounds and of The Talents, the results accomplished by the various servants differ in quantity though not in quality. This parable does not suggest the reasons for difference in amount of yield, nor whether a responsibility for the size of the yield attaches to the individuals or not. These points are better illustrated in preceding parables. Only the fact of a difference in the amount of the final harvest in the various individuals, who are all said to have good and honest hearts and who together constitute the class acceptable and approved by the Master, is here stated.

Since we are the cultivators and the care-takers of the field of our own heart, let us note the importance of a determined and uncompromising attitude toward the foes and besetments with which we have to contend in seeking to produce the fruitage desired by the great Husbandman. Unless our characters are positive and determined in their devotion to the pursuits of righteousness and opposition to evil, we shall never be able to complete our course with joy and to receive the crown that fadeth not away. "Set your affections on things above," not 'let your affections be set'; "give yourself wholly to these things," not 'permit yourself to be given'; "think on these things"; "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life"; "he that willet to do the will of God shall know the doctrine." (Col. 3: 2; 1 Tim. 4: 15; Phil. 4: 8; 1 Tim. 6: 12; John 7: 17).



## Parable 14.

## THE GOOD SEED.

Mark 4:26-29.

Careful consideration of the preceding parable of the Four Soils raises many questions in the mind of the earnest disciple. Three classes of hearers of the Kingdom message bring no fruit to perfection; the fourth class yields a varying return—thirty, sixty, an hundred-fold. How can I prevent my mind from being or becoming non-productive? What steps shall I take to insure an abundant and acceptable harvest in my own character?

Some, in an earnest effort to exterminate the “thorns”—the cares, interests and ambitions of this world, of the flesh,—have adopted a life of asceticism, becoming anchorites, hermits—monks or nuns. They forget that the Christian’s great Exemplars, Christ and the Apostles, were men among men, men of affairs. They overlook the Master’s prayer (John 17:15): “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world (*Kosmos*—arrangement of things) but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” If it was necessary for the Master to come and associate with mankind in order that he might “learn obedience by the things that he suffered”—that he might be “touched by the feeling of our infirmities” and thus become a “merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God” (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15-16), how much more is it necessary that his followers, whom he purposes making “Kings and priests unto his God and Father” (Rev. 1:6) should associate with those over whom they shall one day reign to uplift and bless? “The servant is not greater than his lord.”

Others, no doubt equally desirous of pleasing the Lord by bringing forth an abundant fruitage, seek to enrich the soil of their minds by higher education and accomplishments—theological seminary courses, etc.; or to improve the seed—the Word of God—by the addition of human doctrines and philosophies.

To all of this the Master replies: “The earth (*ge*, soil) bringeth forth fruit of herself.” Special preparation or treatment, hot-house or forcing processes, are not necessary nor desirable. The ‘good and honest’ human

mind, as suggested in the parable of the Creator’s Image, will respond to the call of Him after whose image it was originally patterned. Only “the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” The good seed in the good soil will produce the good fruit, if given opportunity, without artificial assistance. The whole effort should be to **keep other things out**, not to bring in extraneous aids.

While we do not wish to be understood as disparaging all higher secular education, yet the earnest bible-student, informed as to the nature, condition and destiny of man by the Creator himself, must recognize that much that passes current today as scientific truth, is in reality “vain babblings of science falsely so-called,” especially along the lines of anthropology, psychology and theology (1 Tim. 6:20). That “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Cor. 3:19) is evident in the Lord’s choice of the twelve Apostles, for, measured by the world’s standards, they were “unlearned and ignorant men” (Acts 4:13); and most of the later and lesser members of the true Church, down to the present time, have been of the same type. “Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.” Not that the true Christ-followers have been mental weaklings; far from it. They have been and are those most nearly approximating, in balance and co-ordination of character attributes, the original divine image embodied in father Adam. The message of the Kingdom—the Gospel—has automatically selected these. It has found and laid hold on the sanest members of a mad race. (Eccl. 9:3; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Cor. 2:16). Not so, however, by the world’s standards. By them they are accounted “fools, for Christ’s sake” (1 Cor. 4:10).

We conclude, then, that **dependence on the word of God** as the agency that shall operate in the hearts of his chosen ones, working in them mightily both to will and to do his good pleasure, and to accomplish in their character-development that which is well-pleasing in his sight, is the central thought of the parable. Just how this divine alchemy operates we may not surely and fully know. The sower, after planting his grain, goes about his other affairs—sleeping and rising, night and day; not knowing by what



wonderful process the seed, buried in the earth, is going to reproduce and multiply itself; but knowing surely that the earth and sun and rain will work this miracle for his benefit. So certain and commonplace is the result, indeed, that the sower forgets that daily, through his natural laws, God is working a miracle in his behalf. "So is the Kingdom of God"—the proclamation of that Kingdom, the invitation to share in it—in the heart of the believer.

No less, but more, miraculous is the result of implanting the seed—thought, the hope of glory, the begetting to a new nature—for it eventuates in a heavenly, spiritual fruitage from a human, earthly soil, a New Creation through an old, a transformation, a metamorphosis far more wonderful than the legendary ones related by Ovid—when "we, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory"—so being "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 1:12).

Not instantaneous is the process, but one of growth. First the blade or leaf of **profession**; then the bud or ear of **effort**, activity in the divine service—the "quickenings of the Spirit;" then the "full corn" of ripened Christian character.

"But when the fruit is ripe, immediately, straightway, he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." "The husbandman hath long patience and waiteth for the precious fruit of earth;" shall he permit it to be injured after it has been brought to perfection by further exposure to the elements? "He sitteth as a refiner and purifier of silver;" shall he allow the precious metal, after the dross has been burned away, to be injured by further subjection to the flames of the furnace? Nay, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." Let us by faith lay hold upon this truth, that our chastening experiences are never pressed beyond the point where they will cease to be helpful, constructive, and become injurious, destructive. Sometimes in the stress of our fiery trials we are inclined to think the contrary—that our patience, or resistance, or faith is being broken down. Not so! He who watches over our trial is wiser than we, and he "chastens us that we may be partakers of his holiness. Shall

we not, therefore, be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits and live?" (Jas. 5:7; Mal. 3:3; 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 12:9, 10).

"The harvest is the end of the age;" though the harvesting time in each individual Christian's case is in a sense at death, by the provision in the Father's plan that all sleep from the time of death until the sounding of the seventh trumpet in the end of the age, all are brought into the heavenly or spiritual garner together, through the first resurrection, in the general harvest of the Gospel Age.

Are we to understand from the concluding statement of the parable, that immediately upon the completion of each individual Christian's character-structure to the satisfaction of his divine Husbandman and Judge, he will be removed from the field of his labors and trials by the sickle of death? We reply, not precisely so; we should rather think of the fruitage being character-qualities than individuals (as is the case in the Wheat and Tares), and the sickle as the Truth. The thought to be gained from the Master's statement is the comforting one of the permanency of that which we actually gain of character-development. Having attained a satisfactory degree of patience, God's sickle of Truth, thrust into our affairs, safeguards this character-quality, not permitting it to be broken down or 'worn out.' Having graduated in faith, God's Truth will so surround our hearts as to keep this quality from deterioration. Let us therefore establish our hearts on the Master's assurance, and affirm with Brother Paul (2 Tim. 1:12); "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day."

#### Parable 15.

#### THE MUSTARD SEED.

Matt. 13:31, 32; Mark 4:30-32;  
Luke 13:18, 19.

Dr. William Smith, in his Dictionary of the Bible, says: "The mustard-seed was used proverbially to denote anything very minute. Travelers mention the large size the mustard-plant attains in Palestine. Dr. Thomson says he has seen the wild mustard-plant on the rich plain of Akkar as tall as the horse and its rider, and it might attain to the same or greater



height in a cultivated garden. The words of the parable do not denote that the birds built their nests in the tree; the Greek word signifies 'to settle or rest upon' for a longer or shorter time."

The aptness of the Lord's comparison of the Kingdom, or Church, in its outward appearance or manifestation during the Gospel age, to the mustard-plant, is apparent as we look back upon its history. In Scriptural symbolism a tree represents the outward growth, appearance, beauty or prosperity of an individual or system, the character being represented by the fruitage. A tree bearing good fruit represents a good or righteous institution or individual; conversely, a tree with an injurious or disagreeable fruit represents an evil person or system. For example, the palm and cedar symbolize the righteous (Psa. 92:12); the bay-tree, the Adversary and his adherents (Psa. 37:35); the Vine, the Christ (John 15:5); the fig tree, the Jewish people or fleshly house of Israel (Matt. 24:32; 21:19-21; Zech. 3:10).

The outward and visible fabric of the Christian religion or church—the nominal 'Kingdom of Heaven'—had a very small and seemingly insignificant beginning. Christ, his Apostles and early followers organized his Church along simple and unostentatious lines. Her rites were few and unpretentious—water-immersion or baptism of believers and the yearly supper—memorial of her Lord's death—these were all. Her servants, with the exception of her divinely appointed Lord and his twelve Apostles, were "ordained by stretching forth the hand" (in voting—Acts 14:23) as Elders (elder-brothers), bishops (overseers), pastors (feeders, shepherds) and deacons (servants). They assumed no state, exacted no homage, and bore no worldly rank. Her members met in public halls, private homes, underground chambers or forest glades. She neither hoped for nor desired worldly honors, emoluments or praise.

But how soon all this was changed! It is interesting and often astonishing to trace the transformation through the pages of recognized Church histories, such, for example as that of Mosheim, who is considered by the Protestants as, perhaps, the greatest and most authoritative.

He traces the rise(?) of the Church

by centuries, and from his voluminous survey of conditions and developments in the early Church we quote very briefly as follows:

**"FIRST CENTURY:** The rule and standard of both faith and practice were the divine books called *The Old and New Testament*, which contain the revelation that God made of his will to persons chosen for that purpose, whether before or after the birth of Christ.

"The Apostles and their disciples took all possible care, in the earliest times of the Church, that these sacred books might be in the hands of all Christians, to excite and nourish in their minds a fervent zeal for the truth and firm attachment to the ways of piety and virtue.

"The method of teaching the sacred doctrines was at this time most simple, far removed from all the subtle rules of philosophy, and all the precepts of human art. The beautiful and candid simplicity of these early ages rendered such philosophical niceties unnecessary; and the great study of those who embraced the Gospel was to express its divine influence in their dispositions and actions.

"The rites instituted by Christ himself were but two in number—baptism and the holy supper; and we cannot help observing that since the divine Saviour thought fit to appoint no more than two plain institutions in his Church, this shows us that a great number of ceremonies are not essential to his religion."

**"SECOND CENTURY:** There is no institution so pure and excellent which the corruption and folly of man will not in time alter for the worse, and load with additions foreign to its nature and original design. Such, in a particular manner, was the fate of Christianity. In this century many unnecessary rites and ceremonies were added to the Christian worship. These changes were naturally pleasing to the gross multitude who are more delighted with the pomp and splendor of external institutions than with the native charms of rational and solid piety. Both Jews and heathens were accustomed to pompous and magnificent ceremonies in their service. They naturally regarded with contempt the Christian worship because it had no temples, altars, victims, priests, and was devoid of those idle ceremonies that rendered their service so striking. To remove



then, in some measure, this prejudice against Christianity, the bishops thought it necessary to increase the number of ceremonies, and thus to render the public worship more striking to the outward senses."

"Another cause of the multiplication of ceremonies was the adoption by the Christian doctors, of the Jewish titles of their sacerdotal orders. The aspiring clergy thought proper to claim the same rank and station, rights and privileges, as were conferred by those titles under the Mosaic dispensation. Hence the rise of tithes, first-fruits, splendid garments and other circumstances of external grandeur."

"The profound respect that was paid to the Greek and Roman mysteries and the extraordinary sanctity that was attributed to them were additional circumstances that induced the Christians to give their religion a mystic air, in order to put it upon an equal footing, in point of dignity, with that of the Pagans. The custom of teaching their religious doctrines by images, actions, signs and other representations, which prevailed among the Egyptians and other Eastern nations was another cause of the increase of external rites in the Church."

**"THIRD CENTURY:** The face of things now began to change in the Christian Church. By imperceptible steps the ancient method of ecclesiastical government degenerated toward the form of a religious monarchy, for the bishops aspired to higher degrees of power and authority. This was soon followed by a train of vices which dishonored the character and authority of those to whom the government of the Church was committed. Many were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance and ambition, possessed with a spirit of contention and discord and addicted to many other vices. They appropriated to their evangelical function the splendid ensigns of temporal majesty; a throne, surrounded with ministers, exalted above his equals the servant of the meek and humble Jesus, and sumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and minds of the multitude into an ignorant veneration for this usurped authority. The effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the sacred order."

**"FOURTH CENTURY:** An enormous train of different superstitions were gradually substituted for true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution proceeded from a variety of causes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity which the generality of mankind have toward a gaudy and ostentatious religion, all contributed to establish the reign of superstition upon the ruins of Christianity."

So, step by step, does history record the growth of that system or fabric, of many branches and vast and intricate structure, known collectively as Christianity; but all of which traces its origin to the simple ordinances of Jesus and his Apostles, instituted only as an outward reminder and symbol of unseen higher things. And all of this do we see foretold in the parable of the mustard-seed and its growth; the tiny seed has become a great tree, and the birds of the air have lodged therein and defiled it. Our Lord himself gives us the key to this symbolism (Mark 4:4, 15); the birds of the air represent Satan, the "prince of the power of the air" and his fellow-demons. Other prophets than our Lord foretold the same conditions, using the same symbols: "As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great and waxen rich. \* \* \* A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? **Flee for safety out of the midst of Jerusalem** \* \* \* **evil looketh forth from the north, and a great destruction.**" Existing systems are defiled by false doctrines and evil spirits—of pride, selfishness, hypocrisy—and their adherents do not want a change—a reformation—they "love to have it so." "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird;" etc. (Jer. 5:25—6:1; Rev. 18:2-8).

The fruit of the mustard-tree has no food-value; it is acrid and disagreeable, and in quantity, a violent irritant. Thus does the Lord illustrate the fruitage of an apostate



Church. The great mustard-tree system yet lives and harbors her defiling crew, and produces her evil fruit. To-day, as throughout the Age, she persecutes and maligns those who denounce her errors and decline to support her system. Today, as yesterday, her prophets and priests attempt to suppress all who dare oppose their rule, demanding, "What authority have you to preach? Who ordained you? To what orthodox (i. e., recognized by us) denomination do you belong?"

"What will ye do in the end thereof?" Let the inspired Word answer: "Evil looketh forth from the north, and a great destruction." The north is the symbolic direction from which emanates divine power. (Psa. 75:6, 7; Isa. 14:12-14.) "And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees; every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." (Luke 3:9-11). The axe still lies at the root of the trees awaiting the coming of him who has the ability and authority to wield it. That one is the Christ—one body, having many members. The 'Axe' is elsewhere referred to as a sword—"in readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience shall be made full." When the last member of the Church Invisible—"whose names are written in Heaven"—shall have finished his painful course with joy and been exalted to union with his Head and fellow-members in the glory of the spirit-world—then, ah! then the Axe will be raised and the great mustard-tree system of error, selfishness and deceit be cut down and burned up in the fire of the great "time of trouble;" and then the New Jerusalem be seen to come down from God out of Heaven, to rule over, bless and uplift all of mankind who are willing and obedient to the original likeness of their Maker. "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven." Amen!

#### Parable 16.

#### THE LEAVEN IN THE MEAL.

Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20, 21.

"Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump,

as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:6-8).

The invariable usage of symbolic Scripture makes leaven a figure for sin and sin's effects. Hence Moses' command to Israel to banish all leaven from their houses during the celebration of the feast of the Passover; and the strict provision of the law that no sacrificial offering to the Lord should contain any leaven. (Exod. 12:15, 20; Lev. 2:11). In fact, in no instance that we recall is leaven used with a good significance, in symbolic scripture.

As the mustard tree is particularly fitting as a symbol of the outward growth and fabric of Christianity, so leaven is peculiarly apt as an illustration of the inward corrupting of that which the Head of the Household of Faith provided for the nourishment and sustenance of his people until his return.

This provision was in three measures, enumerated by the Apostle: "Now abideth faith, hope and love; these three." As the Master quoted from the Old Testament: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." These three—"the faith once delivered to the saints" "the hope set before us," and the love that "God commendeth to us"—these were the "three measures of meal" which would prove amply sufficient for the needs of the "New Creature in Christ Jesus," the partaking of which would insure each one a proper growth into the full image and likeness—the "full stature"—of his Son and Head. "His divine power has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (1 Cor. 13:13; Matt. 4:4; 2 Pet. 1:3).

No leaven was in the "three measures of meal" as provided for us by the Head of our House; as the parable states, it was afterward hidden therein by 'a woman.' Her we recognize as 'that woman Jezebel,' the 'harlot' of Revelations 2:20 and Chapters 17 and 18. A woman is the usual symbolic scripture representation of a religious system, or church; and it does not take the careful and earnest student of the bible and of history long to identify the 'woman' of the parable as the great Roman Catholic or papal system, responsible for most of the



corruption of Christian faith and practice.

As the bishops of the early church rose in power and state, as traced in our study of "The Mustard Seed," the bishops of Rome gradually asserted and secured recognition of their primacy. And, keeping pace with the rapid changes we noted in the forms, ceremonies and outward observances of the church, an inner corruption worked in the faith, hope and love of her adherents, transforming the motives and aims of the organization from those of Christ and the Apostles to something entirely different. Leaven works with the material in which it is placed, apparently increasing the quantity largely and often giving the mass a smooth and pleasing outward appearance; but there is no actual increase—the appearance is due to the formation of gas. Just so with the faith, hope and love of the church; the materials employed by the false system were those furnished by Jesus, but they became so inflated by hypocrisy and pretense while in her hands that, although increasing and assuming a smoother and more pleasing aspect to the casual observer, their nature was completely changed.

It should be noted, however, that while this is true of the faith, hope and love of the **system**, yet the original source of supply, the Bible, was uncontaminated, and individuals were able to obtain their supplies of spiritual food direct, disregarding the system and her false teachings. These were few however, during the dark ages, as ability to read or to secure copies of the Scriptures was rare—not possible for the mass of the common people.

The Reformation worked much of the leaven out, but sufficient was left in the creeds and organizations of the Protestant churches to deceive such of their members as have had a self-seeking and sectarian spirit. But by the Reformers and their followers the word of God was once more enthroned as the supreme law of faith and practice for the church, and so long and so far as the Protestants have maintained this attitude toward the Bible, to the same extent God has been able to use them in gathering his **true Church**—"whose names are written in heaven," out of every kindred and tribe, nation and denomination.

To determine whether we as Christians, individually, are being sustained

by the proper elements, we need only be honest with ourselves and compare the faith, hope and love which is the basis of our own spiritual aspirations and endeavors with these three elements as clearly defined and described in our Guide-book. There is but one true basic Faith, one definite and comprehensive Hope, and one supreme kind of Love, that belong of right and necessity to every foot-step follower of Jesus; and such only are worthy the name of Christian.

The Faith of the true Christian primarily is belief in and acceptance of Jesus Christ as his Redeemer, Advocate and Head. Acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice of himself as the vicarious atonement for Adam's sin is the only foundation upon which genuine Christian character can be built. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved; neither is there salvation in any other." "He is the propitiation (corresponding price) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 3:11; Acts 4:12; 1 John 2:2; Heb. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:22.) Quotations might be multiplied, but let these suffice as evidence that only gross dishonesty of interpretation can deny that the New Testament clearly and positively teaches the substitutionary theory of the Atonement—Christ's sacrifice for sin.

The humility of mind consequent upon our realization of sinfulness and guilt, of helplessness apart from God, of His willingness to aid as tendered through His son, Jesus, and of our personal dependence on him as our Saviour, is the essential foundation for the erection of the character-structure of "gold, silver and precious stones." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (1 Cor. 3:12; Prov. 1:7; Micah 6:8.)

The especial leaven that destroyed the food-value of this portion of the Household's supply for over a thousand years, so far as the majority of nominal Christians were concerned, was the Roman doctrine of the Mass;



recognized by the Reformers as the "abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet." (Dan 11:31; Matt. 24:15). This 'desolating abomination' is so-called because it so completely desolates or makes void true faith in Jesus' one and all-sufficient sacrifice of himself, by substituting for it faith in an oft-repeated sacrifice by a man-made priest. Just so completely as this theory is accepted, so completely is true faith destroyed.

A modern 'desolating abomination,' that for a generation past has been destroying the faith of Protestant Christianity, is the theory of Evolution or Darwinism. This theory teaches that man, as well as all the other forms of animal life, developed or evolved from lower forms, through countless ages, to his present nature and attainments. This hypothesis, of course, is in violent conflict with the Scriptural teaching of man's origin, only six thousand years ago, in Adam; his original perfection, moral, mental and physical, and subsequent fall. Since, according to the evolution theory, man did not originate in Adam and "in Adam die," it necessarily follows that he needed no Saviour in the scriptural sense. Thus, not only Jesus' work but his teachings and that of his Apostles is completely discredited by this modern "abomination of desolation." No wonder that the young ministers of the 'Christian' churches of today are half-hearted and uncertain in their proclamation of the message of Scripture, convinced as they are by their college training of the truth of Evolution and of the unreliability of the Bible! No wonder that their message lacks power, and that their churches are nearly deserted. "Hath a (heathen) nation (ever been known to have) changed their Gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens (ie., religious systems and people) at this, and be ye very desolate, saith Jehovah. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns (creeds, theories), broken cisterns that can hold no water." (Jer. 2:11-13).

This leaven has now about completed its corrupting work. The work of the Reformation has been almost entirely undone so far as present-day faith is concerned, and most of the 'Protestant Churches' are now neither

Protestant nor christian. As testimony to the complete destruction of the faith in the minds of the majority of professing Christians of today, note the following quotations from the New York Independent: "It is declared (in a book under review) that the atonement offered by Christ was a genuine substitution, a veritable ransom, the actual infliction on the part of God the Father of the punishment due and necessary for the sins of man upon the innocent Christ. This doctrine is pronounced the burden of the New Testament, the heart of the Gospel, the keystone of the Christian system. Yet the author is well aware that the great majority of Christian teachers have departed from this view, and that it is losing ground every day. He is arguing a lost cause. A generation is growing up which never heard the sacrificial explanation of the death of Christ, and many young people in the churches would be shocked by the declaration that Jesus was punished that we might escape punishment . . . ." "Now no statement of Evolution troubles anyone. It has conquered the religious field. Still more effective and disturbing is biblical criticism. It is difficult now to find a teacher of the Old or New Testament who is not more or less of a higher critic. The conservative men now would have been regarded as dangerous radicals thirty years ago. So moves the world."

Faith gone, hope and love naturally follow, for as the parable represents, they are so inseparably connected that 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,'—the leaven worked 'till the whole (of the three measures of meal) was leavened.' No longer does the nominal and professing church of Christ feed upon and proclaim 'the glorious hope and appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' The subject is tabooed, and as the Apostle seems to forecast, (Tit. 2:13-15) has become a subject of derision. Instead of a "lively hope," "both sure and steadfast," of a completion of the work of Jesus, who "came to seek and to save that which is lost," by a "resurrection both of the just and of the unjust," and a "restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets"—the average professor of religion, as one explained, "hopes that he may hope that he has a hope,"—of going to heaven when he dies. Having no faith, how can he have hope?

This vague and ignorant faith and



hope affords no foundation for character-development; hence love, too,—the kind that “God commends to us”—also perishes (if it ever gained a foot hold) from his heart. The manifestation of the love of God, as in the case of Jesus, demands a daily cross-bearing, self-sacrifice, renunciation of self-will. It is a narrow path, and as Jesus, its pioneer, foretold, “few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:14). Yet, in God’s estimation, “though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels; though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and give my body to be burned, and have not love, I am nothing, and it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:1-13).

That the present condition of corruption and decay of Christianity, both outward and inward, is neither surprising nor disconcerting to the Father, who “worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will,” is apparent from the following synthesis of new testament scriptures; wherein, it will be noted, the present condition of Christian faith, hope and love, as outlined in the foregoing, is specifically foretold by the inspired writers nearly two thousand years ago:

**FAITH DESTROYED:**—“When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?” “The spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” “There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways.” “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith.” (Luke 18:8; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Tim. 6:20 and 21.)

**HOPE LOST:**—“There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of his coming?’ for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation.” (2 Pet. 3:4).

**LOVE PERISHED:**—“Because iniquity shall abound the love of many

shall wax cold.” “In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, . . . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.” (Matt. 24:12; 2 Tim 3:5.)

Nevertheless, the Truth has still its remnant of witnesses among the people; the Watchman is alert in the Watchtower, and the warning has steadily gone forth. The faithless generation is without excuse.

#### Parable 17.

#### THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

In this parable the Great Teacher carries his prophetic analysis of conditions prevailing among his nominal followers during the Gospel age, a step farther. The Mustard Seed and the Leaven parables dealt with the Church as an institution, as a whole. In the Wheat and Tares we find explained the reasons for conditions in the Church not fully apparent in the two preceding; for the present allegory deals with the individuals composing the system of Christianity or Christendom, and their status in the eyes of the Lord.

Long familiarity has perhaps dulled our minds to the astonishing features of the comparison in this parable, and the facts regarding the Church thereby presented. They were so surprising to the Apostles as to prompt them to ask an explanation of the Lord; and his answer is duly recorded for our information.

The tares, or darnel, is a plant so closely resembling wheat as to be indistinguishable, in its earlier stages of growth, to any but an experienced eye. It is still common in the wheat-fields of Syria, and by the natives is supposed to be a degenerate wheat. They think the wheat turns to darnel in wet or unfavorable seasons.

Such is not actually the case, of course. The darnel grows from an entirely different seed; it is a different species. Herein lies the secret of the parable. The false Christian is not degenerated from the true; he is a separate planting, a separate class.

It should be noted in considering this parable that the symbols used do not represent the same things as in the parables of The Sower and The



Four Soils. In the latter the seed represents the Word of God concerning the kingdom, and the soil the human mind. In the parable under consideration, the Lord explains (Verse 38), "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom." The word here translated world is the Greek '*kosmos*' and refers to the present order, arrangement or system of affairs, temporal and spiritual, existing among men. In the Four Soils parable the effect of the word of God on the individual hearer is illustrated. In the present parable the subject is the relationship of the Christian, true and false, to the present order of society.

Divine inspiration alone enabled our Lord to foreknow that the great Adversary of his Father and of men would combat the work and influence of his followers among mankind during the Gospel age by a process of counterfeiting and substitution. These methods we now recognize as being pre-eminent characteristic of him whom our Lord denominated the 'father of lies.' The great natural wisdom and ability of Satan is manifested by his wonderful success in accomplishing his purposes in this connection; as the Apostle states, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Cor. 11:14.)

It is easy for him to deceive the wisest and best of men, unless they are armed and protected by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. This class of men, indeed, are the very ones whom Satan desires to control; and so successful is he in his efforts to do so that they are mere puppets or pawns in his hands. Thus the Apostle states (I John 5:19) "The whole world lieth in the evil one." Yet so skillful is this evil one in handling his subjects that the majority, especially the greater minds among men, scout the idea that they are so controlled; each one has his form of religion to which he adheres, his own moral standard to which he more or less closely approximates, and does not realize that he comes and goes at the beck of his unseen, evil master.

This deception of Satan is the more easy as mankind has an inferior nature to his own. Man's organism and the objects of his desire are material or fleshly; while the things for which Satan is striving, since he is spiritual, are spiritual. His mind is possessed of a hatred for the Almighty, and an

unholy ambition which has proven his undoing. To control men, to play the game of world politics, unseen but powerful in its affairs, and above all to, as he thinks, defeat the purposes of the Almighty, whose omnipotence Satan does not appear to realize, seem to command all his plans and efforts. Add to this a mania for sin for sin's sake, especially in its vilest and most grotesque forms, and some understanding may be realized of the mind and personality of him to whom our Lord referred as the sower of the tares; "an enemy hath done this."

"While men slept." This we understand is a reference to the inspired Apostles, and particularly Paul, who seems to refer to himself in this connection in 2 Thes. 2:7, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." It is a curiosity of the English language that the word 'let' has completely reversed its meaning in the last three hundred years, since the translation of the King James version of the Bible. The true thought of the passage quoted, in the Greek, as shown by the revised translation, is that the Apostle had restrained, and would continue to restrain, the development of the mystery of Satanic ingenuity and wickedness in counterfeiting true Christianity until taken out of the way by death; and, as we have seen in the two preceding studies, this 'mystery of iniquity' did indeed begin to work immediately after the death of the Apostles 'while men slept' and in an astonishingly short time appeared to accomplish all that is fiendish originator intended or desired.

The parable pictures the servants of God and of the Sower, his Son, anxiously inquiring, "Didst thou not sow good seed in thy field?" The good seed should take possession of the field and crowd out the weeds, and it was most natural that the servants of God, both human and angelic, should be astonished that, in spite of the preaching of his truth and the zeal of his faithful saints, the false should displace the true, wrong appear to triumph over right, and the tares take the ascendancy in the field. "From whence hath it tares?" The sower replied, "Yea, verily, the seed was good, but an enemy hath adopted this method of seeking to undo my work and make it fruitless." The servants



then said to him, "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up;" shall we go through the field and uproot the tares? shall we expose and destroy those who are falsely claiming to be Christians, basing their claims upon membership in some of the false systems of error and deception, that none need be deceived by the imitation? But the Master replied, "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat; let both grow together until the harvest."

In this command, of utmost importance and interest to the loyal follower of the King, the settled policy of action during the Gospel age was stated. The devil was not to be fought with fire. The kingdom of heaven would suffer violence, but must not resort to violent methods in return. Non-resistance and submission to evil was to be the Christian's course, while he gave his efforts to keeping himself pure and unspotted from the world. "I pray not," supplicated the Master, "that Thou shouldst take them out of the world; but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil that is in the world." "In patience possess ye your souls; in due time comes the harvest" and then, at last, right shall triumph, evil shall be exposed, the true shall be separated from the false, and the false—the 'tares'—be destroyed **as such**, in the great time of trouble in the end of the Age, here called a 'furnace of fire.' This 'fire' will be more particularly considered in some of the succeeding parables of our series; it is enough here to note that fire is the scriptural symbol for **destruction**, not preservation under any conditions; and that the burning of the tares does not signify the death or tormenting of the individuals who have been set forth by the Adversary as counterfeit Christians. None are on trial for eternal life in the Gospel Age save genuine Christians, begotten to that status by God's Holy Spirit, and sown or sent into the world—the kosmos—by the Sower, Jesus Christ. "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. 10:16). Only that which the "Enemy" sowed will be destroyed when the tares are consumed. He was not the author of their life, but merely of their false Christianity. The fraud, the pretense, the hypocrisy will all be burned away, and the individuals find themselves in the condition of any other worldling, without hope of the special re-

ward of the Church, but, since they were deceived by the Adversary, without prejudice to their share in the blessings due "the residue of men" under the terms of the New Covenant, after the glorification of the Church.

This particular figure of speech is not at all foreign to modern English idiom. War is often referred to as a conflagration. An editorial in the *Christian Advocate* on the "infernal irony" of the present European conflict, remarks: "Expedients for suppressing war will be of little effect until the political magnates of the world become actually Christian. If the crowned heads of Europe, who are most responsible for this wickedness, were the Christians they fancy themselves to be the peace of the world would not have been broken." Here is an instance of the conflagration of war burning away a pseudo-Christianity and exposing those who have been so masquerading, in all their wretched selfishness and hypocrisy, to the condemnation of the world, without taking their lives, much less placing them in eternal torment. And this is just the beginning of a general burning away of all the hypocrisy and cant the sham and pretense, the self-righteousness and self-deception of all the individuals composing modern Christendom. This is the fulfilment of the prophecy of our parable and the many parallel Scriptures.

The Master's statement that 'the reapers are angels' should not be understood, however, to signify that men are not at all to be employed in the work. The angels, or **messengers** (which is the literal meaning of the Greek word) of God are not always spirit-beings. Paul was received as an angel of God. (Galatians 4:14.) If the proclamation of the harvest message to practically all Christendom in this present time (which Bible students recognize as being characterized by all the signs foretold in scripture to mark the harvest and termination of the Gospel age), is evidence that the harvest is here and the fulfilment of our Lord's parable, we do not lack this sign also; for the books of our beloved Pastor and Leader have reached a circulation greater than any other save the Bible itself, and his fearless and incontrovertible sermons proclaiming the harvest truths cry to the people through the pages of fifteen hundred newspapers throughout Christendom.



Eternal Light! Eternal Light!

How pure the heart must be,  
When placed within thy searching  
sight,  
That shrinks not, but with calm de-  
light,  
Can live, and look on Thee.

Parable 18.

THE DRAG-NET.

Matt. 13:47-50.

Of the four great prophetic word-motion-pictures of the Church in the flesh during the Gospel Age, given us by the Lord, the three already considered have dealt only with facts and developments as they would appear to an intelligent observer, but without reference to the objects for which the organization was founded, or the measure of success achieved by it in accomplishing its founder's aims and intentions.

Whether or not the designs of the Church's Leader and Head—the great Sower of the Seed—were to any extent frustrated and brought to naught by the birds that defiled the Mustard-Tree, by the woman who leavened the Meal, and by the Enemy who sowed the Tares, those three parables do not definitely reveal. Indeed, from the simple stories themselves, the enemies would seem to have had the better of the contest.

But the fourth parable of the group, which we are now to consider, in its symbolism indicates the design behind the visible organization or fabric of the Church in the flesh; its complete success in accomplishing its Designer's purposes; and a brief picture of the consummation of its work.

"The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." (Isa. 57:20.) The sea, in scriptural symbolism, seems almost uniformly to represent the restless, discontented, enslaved mass of human kind; lashed by the winds, the unseen powers of the air, under "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;" under whom "the whole world lieth" (Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19). In this connection the land—continents and islands—which limits and opposes the ocean's waves and currents, represents the institutions of organized society; its laws, customs, governments, etc. These, together with the visible heavens above the earth, representing the

prevailing religious or spiritual powers recognized by men, their religious leaders ('stars'), etc., constitute a 'world' in scriptural terms. Peter tells us the first 'world' perished at the flood; the 'present evil world' is likewise to come to an end; while we, as Christians, "according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. Chaps. 2 & 3).

St. Peter, not using the symbol of the 'sea', uses 'fire' as a symbol of the agencies which will destroy the present 'world'; but other scriptures represent the same destruction as an inundation of the 'land'—organized society—by the waves of the sea—anarchistic uprisings of the people; to be followed by a new organization of mankind, under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ, so constituting a "new heavens and a new earth"—a third 'world'; in which "there shall be no more sea," for "the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee." And "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent (sin); and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." (Psa. 46:13; Luke 21:25, 26; Rev. 21:1; Isa. 60:5; 27:1; et al.)

"Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." "Go ye therefore and teach (disciple) all nations." "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. Then cometh the end"—"of the world" or age. (Mark 1:17; Matt. 28:19; 24:14,3.)

Thus was the commission to 'fish' for men given by the King at the beginning of the gospel age. The equipment supplied for this work is pictured in our parable as a drag-net. It consisted of the simple earthly organization and ordinances of the church, bound together by the proclamation of peace to "men of good will," and "exceeding great and precious promises, whereby they might become partakers of the divine nature," "heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." This is well pictured as a net, for these things are as entirely foreign to the present 'sea' conditions of mankind as a net is an unnatural and strange thing to the inhabitants of the deep.

The effect of the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom upon men we have already found pictured in the



parables of The Great Invitation, The Wedding Garment, and The Four Soils. In the parables of The Mustard-Tree and The Leaven in the Meal we have seen how (to alter the figure) the Net was expanded and stretched by unauthorized and over zealous fishers; and we have in various of these parables had the thought forcibly presented that **the net, during the drag, does not discriminate**; it has caught fish of every variety, large and small; good, bad and indifferent.

Now, in our present study, the lesson is equally plain, that in spite of the machinations of enemies and the luke-warm carelessness or over-zeal of professed friends, the Net accomplishes its Designer's aims; a sufficient number of the **right kind** of fish are enmeshed; the time comes when he who gave the commission to fish declares it is enough; draw in the Net. The watchful and heedful servant learns that his Master's work is no longer fishing, no longer sowing; the time has come to gather and sort the catch, to reap the field.

"The harvest is the end of the world"—(Geek, *aion*, age) declared the Master. Some of the evidences that we are now living in the 'harvest' of the Gospel Age will be examined in the two following studies; here we would only call attention to the fact that in the parable of the Drag-net, as well as in the preceding, that of the Wheat and Tares, this **change of procedure** in the end of the age, by the King, who is also the Chief Sower and the Lord of the Harvest, is plainly indicated; and those servants who are found watching and faithful will receive the necessary information and instructions to enable them to change the direction of their activities in conformity to the altered lines upon which the King is operating. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

The Net is full; it is drawn to the shore. This suggests the thought that the sorting of the fish will take place at the time when the 'sea' condition is coming to an end, and the 'new earth' condition beginning. Those doing the sorting are 'angels'—messengers; as we have already suggested, not all necessarily spirit-beings; any who assist in the work indicated are included in this expression.

Observation as well as scripture, tells us that four particular classes of

'fish' are found in the Net, when its contents are examined.

1. Consecrated Christians, who are fulfilling their vows of consecration by daily following in the footsteps of their Lord, in self-sacrifice for the Truth and the brethren.

This class will be gathered, in the first resurrection, into the golden 'vessels' of the divine nature—immortality; vessels 'unto honor' in the 'great house' of God's universe. (2 Tim. 2:20; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:53, 54.)

2. Consecrated Christians, who are not faithful to their covenant of self-sacrifice with the Lord; but by reason of the "cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, bring no fruit to perfection." We have considered this class at some length in the parables of the First and Last and the Four Soils; and will find further direct reference to them in the Ten Virgins. In the 'sorting' of the 'fish,' this class will be gathered into the silver vessels of a spirit-nature, inferior to the golden vessels of the first class; unto 'less honor' in the 'great house,' 'suffering loss' of the Great Prize once almost within their grasp, but which in each case was given to another because of their lack of zeal and devotion in their 'race' to make their 'calling and election sure.' (2 Tim. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:15; 9:24-27).

3. Believers, who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, thus being 'justified by faith,' but who have neglected or feared to take the next step mentioned by the Apostle (Rom. 5:1,2; 12:1, 2), that of full and complete consecration to do the will of God—presenting their bodies living sacrifices, their 'reasonable service.' This class are 'justified in vain,' not using their justification for the purpose for which it was given, i. e., to make their sacrifice 'holy, acceptable unto God.' In the sorting, these, therefore, are rejected as being unfit for the great Fisherman's purposes; they revert to the status of the rest of mankind; in the resurrection, "all the righteousness that they have done (in their previous life) shall not be mentioned;" with the 'residue of men' they will be encouraged to 'seek after the Lord,' and will be "judged out of those things which were written in the books" (of the law), "every man according to their works" at that time. (Acts 15:16, 17; Ezek. 18:24; Rev. 20:13).

4. The fourth class of fish in the



Net of the nominal church of Christ, are the hypocrites. These have joined themselves to the Lord's people, not because of faith in Jesus Christ, or a desire to please God, but because such a connection is fashionable, or profitable pecuniarily, or otherwise pleasing to their flesh. They may not realize their hypocrisy, but such it is.

The latter two classes, in the harvest of the age as pictured by the burning of the Tares, are to experience the baptism of fire. We have often heard earnest but mistaken Christians praying for this baptism, little realizing what they were invoking.

Fire, in scriptural symbolism, almost always represents a **destructive agency**, but has an astonishing variety of applications. Thus, Paul in Romans (12:20) exhorts us to destroy our enemies by heaping upon them the burning coals of kind deeds and helpful service; thus burning them up as enemies, by making them friends. This is precisely what Jehovah declares to be his intention toward his enemies among men (Zeph. 3:8): "Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the Kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." The jealousy and indignation of God are justly aroused by the universal neglect of His worship 'in spirit and in truth;' the brazen worship of the creature, more than the Creator; the general love of pleasure more than love of God. Earth (society) was once cleansed by a baptism of water—the flood that engulfed the first 'world;' it is His determination now that the second 'evil world' shall be cleansed of those things which arouse His jealousy by taking His place in the hearts and minds of His human creatures by a baptism of symbolic fire. "The whole earth"—the fabric of society, comprising all that is dear to man, and in which he boasts himself as the crowning achievement of the united efforts of generations past and present, "shall be devoured by the fire of my jealousy." Why? To satisfy the vindictive hatred of outraged divinity? Ah, no—"Then will I turn to the people a pure language, (or message, in contradistinction to that given forth by the Adversary and his systems of counterfeit Christianity) that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, to

serve Him with one consent."

This is the proper view of the burning of the Tares, in the parable of the Wheat and Tares, and of the burning of the 'wicked' in the 'furnace of fire' in the parable of the Dragnet. The pretense, the sham, the hypocrisy, that has characterized these classes in the nominal church of Christ, will be burned away in the destructive experiences of the great time of trouble, which will mark the full ending of the Gospel Age and commencement of the Millennial Age. The experience for all the world of mankind will be very bitter; "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth;" but this has in it no suggestion of eternal torment, nor of destruction of the individuals composing these classes. "God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." When the hindrances, the beloved fetters are all burned away, the "pure language" or message of "the truth" shall be turned unto the people, that "the residue of men may seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things." Only those who "will not hear" (obey) that Prophet, who then shall speak to them the 'pure language' of the truth, shall be everlastingly "destroyed from among the people."

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Praise His Name! (1 Tim. 2:3, 4; Acts 3:19-23; 15:15-18).

#### Parable 19.

#### THE KING'S RETURN.

Luke 12:35-40.

This scripture will serve as an introduction to a brief consideration of all that wonderful series of prophetic and parabolic statements of our Lord found in Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 17 and 21, concerning the events which would precede and accompany his second presence and the "consummation of the age."

Prompted by the Master's prophecy of the destruction of the temple (Matt. 24:1-3; Mark 13: 1-4; Luke 21: 5-7) the disciples, in astonishment and consternation, put to him three questions: (1) When shall these things be? (2) What shall be the sign of thy coming (Greek, **presence**), and (3) Of the end of the world (Greek, **age**)?

The Master's answer to these ques-



tions, not being understood by the Evangelists, was recorded in so jumbled and mixed a fashion as to greatly increase the mystification of the casual reader, due to the symbolic and parabolic character of the statements made. This doubtless was foreseen and intended by the King to conceal the proper understanding of these matters until they became due to be known by the "watchers." It is therefore only by a careful dissection of Jesus' statements, a comparison of the different gospels recording this prophesy with each other and with other related scriptures, and above all by reason of the increasing light shining upon God's word in this favored harvest-time, that we may hope to obtain an adequate and proper understanding and anticipation of the mighty events which our Lord in mystic words described. "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We are told by the apostles that certain matters were written for the admonition of those "upon whom the ends of the ages are come," and we believe that this peculiar expression has reference to the lapping ends of the Jewish and Gospel ages—the closing of the one and commencement of the other and further and particularly to a similar lapping period in the end of the Gospel age and the beginning of the Millennial; in which period we believe we have every scriptural reason for thinking we are now living. (1 Thess. 5:4; Prov. 4:18; 1 Cor. 10:11; R. V.)

"The signs of his presence and of the consummation of the age" are only to be recognized by the "watchers," referred to by the Master in Luke 12:35-40. The faithful servants of the King were to ever be in momentary expectation of his return. Knowing that his return would mean a journey—a great change of environment and condition for them, they were always to be prepared to start at a moment's notice—their "loins girded about." For their instruction and enlightenment they have a Guide-book, the holy Scriptures, of which the Psalmist says: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path." (Psa. 119:105.) This lamp the King instructed his faithful servants to ever keep trimmed and burning. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think he have eternal life, and they are

they which testify of me." (John 5:39).

How foolish, then, to quote our Lord's words "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36) as proof that no man can ever know the time of the second advent. If no man can ever know, neither can the angels ever know, nor can Jesus himself ever know. On the contrary, it is manifest that he must know of the time of his own coming at least a little while before it takes place. In the fifth chapter of Revelations the Plan of God is represented as a book or scroll, sealed, and retained in the hand or power of the Father himself until the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the slain Lamb, having completed his redemptive work and been made perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:10) was found worthy to receive the scroll from his Father's hand and break the seal thereof—learning and putting into execution the beneficent provisions of the Divine Program. In harmony with this vision, the Apostle Paul assures us, that "God hath highly exalted him" and "put all things under his feet;" and Peter also testifies that "Jesus Christ hath gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (Phil. 2:9; Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Pet. 3:21, 22.)

Thus we see a vast change in the King's circumstances has taken place since he declared that he had not been informed concerning the time at which the Father purposed to send him to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant of blessing to Israel and "all the families of the earth;" and similarly, the Plan has progressed as regards the information vouchsafed the church. Jesus told the disciples that he could not tell them all he would like to; "but when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; and he will shew you things to come." (John 16:13.) In harmony with all this are the Apostle's words already quoted, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day (of the Lord's return) should overtake you as a thief." (1 Thess 5:4.) The "signs of the times" of which the King foretold us, are intended as they appear to arouse and warn all the faithful servants of the nearness of the time, and prepare them to hear his gentle knock that will announce his presence to those who are expecting him.



Three Greek words are used in the original New Testament language to mark three separate stages of the work to be accomplished upon his return. These words are **parousia**, meaning **presence**; **apokalupsis**, which signifies the revealing or disclosing; and **Epiphania**, the shining forth, or brilliant manifestation.

The **parousia** stage of his advent is to be characterized by **secrecy**. Only the initiated, the elect, the "watchers" will be aware of his presence. Others when told of it will scoff, saying "Where is the promise (assurance, evidence) of his presence? All things continue as from the beginning of the Creation." (2 Pet. 3:3, 4.) "There are no great changes such as we would expect if Christ had already returned, as you say. You'll have to show us stronger proof before we will believe it." "As a thief in the night"—silently, secretly, unknown to the master of the house—so will be the **parousia** of the King; unknown even to the great and wicked Master of the present house or Kosmos, Satan; "for, had he known he would not have suffered his house to be broken through (i. e. digged into, or undermined)." (1 Thess. 5:2; Luke 12:39.) Man is said to be but "little lower than the angels;" while our Lord, in his resurrection elevated to the divine spirit-nature of his Father, (see Parable 2) is said to be "far above all principality and power, and every name that is named." (Psa. 8:4-6; Heb. 2:6, 7; Eph. 1:21.) We conclude, therefore, that there is a far greater difference between the angelic, or lower plane of Spirit-life, and the highest, or divine, or immortal plane, than there is between the angelic and human. Hence, it would be as easy for a divine being, such as our Lord in his resurrection nature, to conceal his presence from Satan and the fallen angels, as from the world of humanity. And we further deduce that since **faith** is necessary to an understanding and acceptance of the evidences of the Lord's presence, and as Satan and his associates do not possess faith, they are probably not yet aware of his presence; they realize that something is wrong from their standpoint—their Kingdom is tottering, their schemes go wrong; but they do not realize any more than do their human dupes, that it is the **present Lord Jesus Christ** who is interfering in their plans. No doubt if they did fully realize the Lord's presence and

purposes their assaults upon the **human agents of the harvest work**, who have the knowledge of the Lord's presence and are co-operating with him, would be even more determined and malignant than they are. Being comparatively insignificant in numbers and influence among men, and by no means the most perfect and noble in outward appearance and behaviour ("not many wise, not many great, not many noble" having been chosen), they have to some extent been contemptuously ignored by Satan and his chief lieutenants personally, though subjected, as are all who try to "live righteously and godly in this present evil world" to the persecution and annoyance of the numerous lesser members of his following. In confirmation of this view, note the following remarkable prophecy of the Psalmist:

"Oh how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them **in the secret of thy presence** from the pride (plottings—R. V.) of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city (Babylon?)." Truly, "the world knoweth us not" even as "it knew him not." (Psa. 31:19-21; 1 John 3:1.) But can we doubt that when the present Lord and his mighty angels are revealed ("**apokalupsis**") taking vengeance upon his enemies (2 Thess. 1:7, 8) that demons and men will vent their wrath, impotent against the Lord, upon his faithful ones remaining in the flesh—creating the whirlwind that shall quickly bring to them the blessed change from earthly to heavenly conditions? So shall "the wrath of men (and demons) praise Him."

Reverting to the three questions asked of Jesus by the apostles, we find that he dismissed the first with a brief but comprehensive reply. "When shall these things (the destruction of the temple, etc.) be?" The answer is recorded only in Luke 21:20-24. This prophecy was literally and exactly fulfilled in A. D. 69-70, when Titus, the Roman, besieged and captured Jerusalem, burned the temple, laid the city waste and carried away its inhabitants captive. A remarkable historical fact, however, is that after investing the city, the



Roman army was temporarily withdrawn, giving opportunity for the Christians, who were familiar with the Lord's forewarning, to escape from the city, which they accordingly did.

"What shall be the sign of thy presence?" was the second question. The answer was prefaced by a warning: "Be not deceived; many shall come in my name saying I am Christ, and shall deceive many; go ye not therefore after them. If any man shall say Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not, even though they show (as they will) great signs and wonders. Therefore if they say to you Behold he is in the desert (as did Joseph Smith and Brigham Young nearly a hundred years ago) **go not forth**; behold he is in the secret chambers (spiritualistic seances, etc.) **believe it not**." "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation (outward show, pomp, parade); neither shall they say Lo, here! or lo, there! for behold the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you." Even as Satan's Kingdom has been among men—everywhere present and powerful, yet invisible, so shall the Kingdom of God be when it is set up. To understand that the Lord told the Pharisees, to whom he addressed these words and who he had denounced as hypocrites and 'whited sepulchres' that the Kingdom of God was in their hearts—"within you"—is impossible. The Master went on to give the real evidence and sign of his presence: "For as the lightening (Greek, literally "**bright shiner**," the **sun**) cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the son of man be." A great increase of knowledge was to be one of the characteristics of the time of the end as prophesied by Daniel (12:4). "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find so watching; verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Light, light, and more light, shall be the characteristic of his presence. Light upon the word of God so that his saints shall be stimulated and cheered by an understanding of his glorious plan never before dreamed of; light on the musty, narrow and often horrible creeds and beliefs of past ages, so that their adherents themselves shall be ashamed of them, and the unprejudiced recognize that they present hideous travesties on the character, word and

plan of the loving heavenly Father; light on scientific lines, so that instruments shall be prepared for the vast work of the dawning epoch of Christ's reign; light, turned into the dark corners of earth—of society—criminal, social, political; so that slowly a wide unrest, a deep indignation and resentment against the powers and institutions held responsible by the mass of the people for their wrongs and limitations should grow up, to finally burst in a storm of fury, a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." All this is to be the result of the increase of light, knowledge, due to the rising of the "Sun of Righteousness"—the parousia or presence of the invisible King.

Present but invisible; as pictured in the parables of The Pounds and of The Talents, calling first upon his servants for an accounting and apportioning to each his reward; then dealing with his adversaries—judging the present evil "world," finding it "wanting," and preparing for the ushering in of his glorious kingdom when present institutions shall collapse from the weight of their own iniquity. Linked, therefore, in the disciples' minds and in their question were the two coincident events: "What shall be the sign of thy presence and of the consummation of the age?"

"Wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes"—these, the beginning or origin of many sorrows among the Lord's people as well as the world's—are the sum of human history throughout the gospel age, but were not to be considered "signs of the end." Nor were persecutions of the church, nor treason in her ranks—brother betraying brother; nor false prophets which should arise; these were not signs of the end.

The first great sign of the approaching consummation was to be the universal preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom. "In all the world for a witness," were the King's words. (Matt. 24:14.) A third Greek word is here translated "world;" neither *aion*, age, nor *kosmos*, order; but *oikoumene*, the habitable, the inhabited earth. The message must go to "every kindred and tongue and people and nation"—not to convert all, but as a witness, that out of them might be taken "a people for his name." (Rev. 5:9-10; Acts 15:14.)

Never before the century just past has that condition been fulfilled; but during the nineteenth century it was



fulfilled—the Bible, the gospel of the kingdom, was translated into, and preached in, practically every language of mankind.

In the three verses, Matt. 24:29-31, seven further "signs of the consummation" are given. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days" we understand to refer to the general tribulation of the gospel age, and particularly during the period of Papal supremacy and persecution. While the sign of the darkening of sun and moon had a literal and harmonious fulfillment in the "dark day" and night of May 19, 1780; and the sign of the stars falling was literally given in 1833 and 1866, we believe that the symbolic significance and fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy is much more important.

The Sun is the scriptural symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ and of his gospel (Mal. 4:2; John 1:9; Rev. 12:1). It shines, not in the literal heavens, but in the hearts—minds—of believers. And in the minds of the majority of professing believers, Christians, of the present generation, its light has been darkened by Evolutionary theories, Higher Criticism, and pulpit infidelity. We have already presented testimony (See Parable 16—The Leaven in the Meal) from some of the religious leaders of the day, to the revolution that has taken place within the last generation, in the attitude of the "great majority of Christian teachers" toward the doctrine of the vicarious atonement of Jesus. Much less do these "Christian" teachers believe in the second coming of the King, the Millennial Kingdom and the "times of restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets." **The Sun is darkened.**

**"The moon shall not give her light."** As the moon shines by the reflected light of the sun, so the typical sacrifices and ordinances of the Jewish law reflected the light of the Gospel—the real sacrifices of the Christ, Jesus and His Church. Paul in Hebrews calls attention to the importance of these types in the Jewish tabernacle and its ritual to followers of Jesus, and to the strictness of God's command to Moses to "make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount," because the tabernacle he was to build was to be "the example and shadow of heavenly things." (Heb. 8:5.) To the earnest and believing Bible student the Tabernacle construction and sacrifices are of the greatest sanctity,

significance and importance. Not so to the Higher Critic. He does not believe that the Apostle Paul wrote Hebrews; he modestly considers his own opinion of the Jewish institutions much more trustworthy and reliable than that of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and of course he fails to see any hidden significance in the butchering of numerous bulls, rams and goats, and the offering of their blood in a hidden shrine to Jehovah. To him this appears to be expressive of the religious ideas of a semi-barbarous and ignorant people, with primitive conceptions of the Deity, and mistaken ideas of how to appease and worship Him. The idea that God desired such sacrifices offered to Him is as abhorrent to the Higher Critic as that Jesus died as a sacrifice for sins—"the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." The moon now gives no light to this class of "Christian" teachers, who, on the testimony of the excellent authority already quoted, are greatly in the majority and increasing every day. To them the moon has become "bloody." (Rev. 6:12.)

**"The stars shall fall from heaven."** In Scriptural symbolism the stars, lesser heavenly (religious) luminaries, represent religious leaders, teachers, guides. The twelve stars seen in the crown of the woman of Rev. 12:1 represent the twelve Apostles; the seven stars referred to in Rev. 1:16-20, are stated to be the seven angels, messengers, to the seven Churches, or stages of the one Church. Today these God-ordained guides of the Church are no longer recognized as authoritative by the majority of "Christian" teachers; "Higher Criticism has conquered the religious field," and one who confesses to a belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible in the original tongues is subjected to ridicule, more or less discourteous, and considered to be an ignoramus, or hopelessly behind the times. The stars have fallen from heaven.

**"The powers of the heavens shall be shaken."** In other words, in the end of the age the power of organized religion, of religious systems or churches, shall wane. Is this condition prevalent in our day? No better qualified observer than Prof. Walter Rauschenbusch of Rochester Theological Seminary (Baptist) could be found. In an article published in the New York Independent about ten years ago, he



said: "We are today passing through an historical transition as thorough and important as any in history. \* \* \* The present paralysis of the churches affects all western Christendom. State churches and free churches alike feel the drag. \* \* \* Individuals in the church are intelligent and active, but the church \* \* \* is inert. \* \* \* The efforts of the churches in the great cities for the last generation have perhaps never been paralleled. And yet they are futile. This is one of the most stunning and heart-rending facts in all our life."

Russell H. Conwell, D. D., Pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Philadelphia, commenting on Prof. Rauschenbusch's article, said: "Perhaps it is better to let the old forms die. Far better that some so-called churches should be buried than to exist as they do now, making it impossible for true religion or decent common sense to live near the house of Painted Disease. A steeple on a morgue will not make a church."

Unlimited further testimony might be adduced, but it would simply be the re-stating of an undisputed thing. Statistics, observation, the evidence of our own eyes and ears tell us that "the powers of the heavens are shaken."

"Distress of nations." The difficulties involving the governments of earth were never so universal and so great as now. In difficulties with each other, in difficulties with turbulent and rebellious subjects, in financial difficulties due to huge war-debts and vast military establishments; and ever, above all other sounds, "The sea and the waves roaring"—the ominous sound of the rising tide of Socialism, Radicalism, Anarchy—the foes of the present order. No wonder "men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth;" no wonder "all the tribes of the earth mourn;" they "see the Son of man coming with power and great glory," in these signs in the heavens and the earth, but do not see that it is He, for He is shrouded in clouds—he makes "darkness His hiding-place, His pavilion round about Him are dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." (Psa. 18.) Only the eye of faith can penetrate that veil; the "tribes of the earth" see the clouds of impending trouble, men recognize their threatening character and are afraid; but none but the "watchers" know that behind the

clouds is the present Lord, not the author nor in any way responsible for the cataclysm man has brought upon himself, but guiding and over-ruling the course of events, so that out of seemingly irretrievable disaster shall come lasting good.

Special conditions and arrangements are to pertain during the harvest time and 'parousia' of the King as regards his faithful servants still in the flesh. In our first scripture (Luke 12:37) we note the promise of the Master that upon his return a special feast would be spread by his hands for all his faithful servants. In response to Peter's request for further particulars he gave the plain intimation that this feast of good things would be served through a particular servant—a steward, whom his Lord would "make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season." (Luke 12:41-48.) This particular servant is referred to also in Matt. 24:45-50, and in Mark 13:34 as "the porter." Many Bible-students, including the writer, recognize in the remarkable work accomplished by Pastor C. T. Russell and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society under his direction, the fulfillment of these prophecies. At a time of general infidelity and skepticism toward the Bible as the divine revelation on the part of those professing to be its teachers, he has been its champion and firm adherent. In the time when the biblical chronology and prophecies concerning Christ's second coming have been generally neglected and tabooed by the churches, he has been enabled, in the providence of God, to proclaim the evidences from the Scriptures and the signs of the times that we are living in the 'time of the end,' 'parousia' of the great King; nor has this proclamation been made in a corner. It has been given through the medium of eight million volumes of works on scripture study, hundreds of millions of tracts, and sermons printed in two thousand newspapers throughout Christendom. No message save the Bible itself, has ever been so widely and thoroughly heralded. "It is a condition, not a theory, that confronts us." Pastor Russell has never put forth claims to be "that servant," etc.; but we find him doing the work attributed to "that servant" by the Lord himself.

The 'feast' set before us by the Lord through this servant has been



to thousands of sincere and earnest Christian people a source of the greatest mental satisfaction and spiritual uplift they have ever experienced; a renewal and confirmation of confidence in God, in His plan and in its ultimate triumph; and a revelation of the glories of His character never before realized. Testimony to this effect has been borne by many out of sympathy with the Pastor's work and teachings. "Don't read his books," one ingenuous clergyman warned his flock; "for if you do you can't help believing them." It is not on record whether he intended to compliment the convincing logic of the author, or to disparage the intelligence of his hearers. Another critic complained that "Pastor Russell is getting all the best people away from the churches." Be that as it may, (our modesty forbidding our asserting the accuracy of the reverend gentleman's statement) there are associated with this servant in faith and service individuals from every walk in life, every nationality, every previous shade of belief and conviction, religious, political, and social. Intimate association with these earnest truth-seekers and truth-servants who have followed the Master's admonition to "forsake all" else to follow him, and who have accordingly severed many fond ties of previous association and fellowship to be true to their later convictions—forbids the conclusion that they are influenced by the superior mentality or attractive personality of the one instrumental in their change, or better, development, of religious faith. Men are not held together and to a fixed and often painful course of conduct by any such influence. Nay, they are men and women solemnly convinced, often against their will; and because of the depth of their convictions, **desperately in earnest** in carrying out what they believe to be their duty as well as privilege in relation to the proclamation of the 'harvest message':—"The Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

This gathering out during his 'parousia' of a certain class, from every quarter to a common source of attraction, was also forecasted by the Lord.

"I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left." This 'bed' is the same that Isaiah tells us of—a creed-bed, built by our ancestors in the dark ages, not of the word of God, but of the theories and traditions of men. As the 'babe in

Christ' feeds upon the 'sincere milk of the word' and 'grows thereby,' he presently finds his bed **too short for comfort**; a "man cannot stretch himself on it;" moreover, the covering has been cut too narrow—God's promises restricted and belittled; he "cannot wrap himself in it." "One shall be taken"—of his own volition—"the other left." (Isa. 28:20; 1 Pet. 2:2).

"Two ('women' spurious—not in any original mss.) shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left." Theological grist-mills are referred to here; colleges, seminaries, churches, etc., where the doctrinal food is ground out, of each particular brand. One not liking the grist of higher Criticism and Evolution theories, recognizing the 'abominating desolation' in an ostensibly holy place, is taken away by his own determination. The other, left.

"Two shall be in the field—one shall be taken, the other left." "The field is the world;" some have come into Present Truth from the world, without entering any denominational 'house,' as instructed by the master. (Mark 13:16).

"Taken way" said the King. "Where, Lord?" was the natural and eager inquiry of the disciples. To which he replied—cryptic answer!—"Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." They could not understand, but we may. The eagles, or vultures, fly high in the air and are of such keen vision as to be able to see their food at great distances. When an animal falls, in a surprisingly short time it is surrounded by numerous vultures, coming from every quarter of the heavens. The keen-visioned ones, the wise, in this harvest-season are able to detect their food, the Truth from every quarter of the symbolic heavens, and have gathered to feast upon it. This, also, is a sign of the 'consummation of the age.'

Now, finally, the Master said, "Learn a parable of the fig-tree. When her branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is near." The fig-tree represents the Jewish nation. In the withering of the fig-tree that produced no fruit, as related in Matt 21:17:20, is pictured the withering of the Jewish nation under the curse of God because it bore him no fruit at Jesus' first advent. But the fig-tree **shall revive**, says the Master. The promises of ultimate restoration and blessing are not repented of and



shall be fulfilled. And when ye see evidences of this revival in renewed nationalistic aspiration and effort among my people, then—"Look up, lift up your heads and rejoice, for your (the church's) deliverance draweth nigh."

This sign, too is surely being fulfilled. The Zionist societies are flourishing among the Jews all over the world, and they are returning to Palestine in increasing numbers. "Look up, lift up your heads and rejoice!"

"Seeing that these (present) things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—(2 Peter 3:11-13.)

"To war the armored nations march,  
With echoing tread and thud of drums;

But under heaven's triumphal arch  
A King unseen in conquest comes.

A thousand wills are crossed in war,  
A thousand victories lost and won,  
They alter not His changeless law—  
One will is destined to be done."

#### Parable 20.

#### THE TEN VIRGINS.

Matt. 25:1-13.

The word "then," connecting this parable with the preceding context of Chapter 24, fixes the period of the Church to which it applies as just prior to and during the harvest-time of the age; the period in which the King himself is present, invisible to all save the 'watchers,' whose eyes of faith are anointed with the 'eye-salve' of truth, and during which the King is spreading the feast for these faithful watchers through the agency of 'that servant,' the 'steward.' The word 'virgin' is to be understood as signifying one who is pure in heart, without regard to sex. In Rev. 14:4 the over-coming church, the little flock of one hundred and forty-four thousand, are called 'virgins' because, it is stated, they were not 'defiled with women.' This signifies that they were not associated with any of the false religious systems of the age (which are sym-

bolically represented, as we have seen, as women), so closely and intimately as to have their purity of faith, hope and love defiled. It is entirely possible that one might live in a brothel and yet maintain his virtue; and this has been the experience of these vestals of the great King during their pilgrimage in this 'present evil world.'

"Then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins." All with which this parable deals are pure ones, consecrated to the Lord. Peter tells us of their lamp (2 Peter 1:19): "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts." All the virgins had the lamp, the word of God, containing the 'sure words of prophecy'; which, kept carefully 'trimmed' (that is, studied) by its possessor would give a clear light by which he might recognize the signs foretold to indicate the proximity of the Bridegroom. But possession of the lamp alone is not sufficient. A lamp without oil is worthless for the purpose for which it is intended, and the possession of a copy of the Bible and ability to read it is far from sufficient to enable one to understand its prophecies and admonitions and to walk in the light thereof.

The Hebrew word from which the English word 'Messiah' is derived means literally 'oiled,' and has evident reference to the ceremony of anointing the Hebrew high priests with the holy oil. The Greek word 'Christ' has the same significance. In Act 10:38 we read that God anointed or Christed Jesus of Nazareth with Holy Spirit, as it had been long before prophesied that he should be "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows." (Psalm 45:7.) This is the oil that each virgin had in his lamp, the Word of God; which is the channel or vehicle of His Holy Spirit, as Peter goes on to say in 2 Peter 1:20-21.

To avail oneself of this store of light or knowledge, it is necessary that the truth seeker have "oil in his vessel;" that is, Holy Spirit in his heart. This the Apostle John tells us in a passage in his first Epistle general (1 John 2:20, 27 and 28), which is quite badly mistranslated in the King James version. A careful rendering of the oldest Greek manuscript of this passage is as follows: "You have an anointing from the Holy One, you all know it. . . . But the anointing which you receive from him abides in



you and you have no need that anyone should teach you, but the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie; and as it taught you, abide in him. And now, dear children, abide in him, so that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be put to shame by him in his presence."

Herein is the distinction between the five wise virgins and the five foolish ones. The wise virgins took oil in their vessels; the foolish did not. The plain significance of this statement is that, unless our hearts are in sympathy with the message we find in the Word, we will miss its meaning, overlook the signs of the Bridegroom's presence, and fail to be prepared to welcome him upon his revelation of himself. We remember the Apostle expressed this thought in his final message to his 'beloved son Timothy,' and through him to the whole church: "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:8.) Those who 'love His appearing' are quite ready to accept the evidence of Scripture and the signs of the times indicating the fact of his presence and the nearness of his kingdom. Those who instinctively fear that his kingdom will interfere with their selfish pursuits of one kind or another, scoff at the idea and "guess that his coming is at least fifty thousand years in the future."

The seeming delay in the Bridegroom's coming referred to in the fifth verse is intimated in many scriptures. We are warned by Jehovah, through the prophet Habakkuk, to be prepared for an apparent failure of our expectations regarding the King's return. "Jehovah answered him and said . . . For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. 2:2, 3.) It should be noted that in this quotation in which the English word "tarry" twice appears, that word translates two entirely distinct Hebrew words; the first one seems to carry the thought of **apparent hesitation or reluctance**; the second one signifies to **loiter or be behind**. The thought then is, that though it seems to tarry, it will not really be behind time. We believe the disappointment experienced by many of the Lord's

people, who expected his coming in 1844, is referred to in this fifth verse of our parable, "while the bridegroom tarried." The 'Miller movement,' which culminated in the year 1844 and out of which grew the various so-called Advent churches, served the purpose of arousing in many Christian people in all denominations an interest in the subject of the second coming of our Lord; while at the same time, the disappointment of those who so confidently expected a visible return in 1844 cast a measure of discredit and ridicule upon the subject of scripture chronology.

This has resulted in discouraging the lukewarm, the faint-hearted and the careless, but has not prevented the 'wise' ones among the virgins from giving the necessary attention to the subject to enable them to obtain such information as the Lord desired them to have. During the ensuing thirty years much searching the scriptures—trimming of lamps—was done by 'the watchers' and just after the closing of the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five prophetic days spoken of by Daniel, which we understand ended in 1874, the evidence of the Lord's presence began to be proclaimed. This is as pictured in the parable, "At midnight there was a cry, behold the bridegroom, go ye out to meet him." Such is the reading of the oldest Greek manuscripts. This proclamation, as we have noted in preceding studies of this series, has gone throughout the length and breadth of Christendom since that time, now nearly forty years ago; and as suggested in the parable before us, has prompted a still deeper and more earnest trimming of the virgins' lamps.

Here arises the separation among the virgins pictured in the parable. The wise virgin found the evidence abundantly satisfactory, for acceptance of the message; his heart, in full harmony with his King's, rejoices at the prospect of early union with him in the glory of the Messianic kingdom of blessing; and as he accepts the message he hears the voice of his invisible King calling him out from the associations and organizations that would hinder his preparation for speedy union with his Lord, beyond the veil, as well as limit his activity and usefulness in the harvest work. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that 18:4.) Obeying this command entails ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. a separation from the foolish virgins



with whom he previously had been associated. To this the foolish virgins object, saying, "While we cannot accept all that you see in scriptural prophecy indicating the presence of the Lord and the nearness of his kingdom, yet we recognize your possession of holy spirit, your zeal, your earnestness, and we feel that we need you. Stay among us, therefore; do not leave our church, our fellowship; give us of your holy spirit, for we recognize that spirituality in our church is declining, 'our lamp is going out'; stay among us therefore and give us of your oil." But the wise answer: "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you." 'If I remain among you and seek to impart to you of my store of oil, holy spirit, the amount that I shall be able to give you, the amount of zeal, energy and devotion that I can incite in your breasts, will be little indeed, for I shall be one among many, and the result to me will be that I shall lose my store of oil and become as lukewarm, careless and indifferent as yourselves'. "Go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves." Was this good advice? Can holy spirit be purchased? Yea, verily. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? . . . If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:11, 13.) Of Him alone can holy Spirit be obtained. To the nominal church of the present time the Lord's message is: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tries in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Rev. 3:17, 18.)

What, then, does it cost? We remember that the Pearl of Great Price costs **all that we possess**. The foolish virgins, aroused at last to the necessity for action, go forth to pay the price and obtain the oil; but alas, too late, for when they return they find the door of opportunity closed. The Bridegroom had come; "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." So

when the foolish virgins knock, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," the answer will be, "I know you not"—that is, I recognize you not as members of my Bride. Though still virgins, pure ones, and now possessed of the requisite amount of oil, the spirit of the truth, zeal, devotion, love, they are too late to obtain the chief prize. They find themselves of that class spoken of in Psalm 45:14: "The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee." In this Psalm the church is spoken of as the queen, the King's bride; while the class which we have found pictured in several parables, the 'foolish virgins,' are here pictured as virgin followers and companions of the queen.

In the old Testament, under figures widely different from these, we find another picture of the same separation of the 'wise and foolish virgins' in the end of the age—that of Elijah and Elisha, and their associates.

When the messenger of the priests and Levites came to John the Baptist to question him, they inquired first, "Art thou the Christ?" the promised Messiah; which he denied. They then asked him, "Art thou Elijah?" to which he again returned a negative. "Then art thou that prophet?" and he answered, "No." The coming of the three referred to was expected by those of the Jews who placed confidence in their holy scriptures, our Old Testament. The Christ or Messiah was promised through many prophets. "That prophet" referred to the one promised by Moses (Deut. 18:15-18) who should arise with a blessing for Israel. And the last prophetic message that had been sent them, the concluding verses of Malachi's prophecy, reads: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Malachi 4:5-6.) Elijah had once turned their whole nation from the worship of Baal to Jehovah; and in these words of Malachi the Jew of our Lord's day took considerable comfort, expecting that Jehovah would send Elijah, or one like him, to do a similar work before the Messiah's coming and the consequent reckoning with the unfaithful servants. John the Baptist denied that he fulfilled Malachi's promise, but of him Jesus said; "If ye will receive it, this is Elias (Elijah) which was for to



to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:14-15). As he went on to say, however, the message of Elijah, the King's herald, as well as that of the King himself, met with no general response among his chosen people. "He came to his own and his own received Him not."

John was beheaded and has since been awaiting his reward 'in the dust of the earth.' Jesus the King died, the world's Redeemer, was resurrected by the power of his Father, and returned to heaven; but even as the prophecy of his glorious advent and reign upon earth is yet to be fulfilled on a far larger and grander scale than was anticipated by the Jew at his first advent, so the prophecy of Malachi concerning his forerunner has also been fulfilled on a larger scale than it could have been by John at the first advent. Yet, as John's message was apparently a failure, so also that of the Elijah of the second advent, as indicated in Malachi's prophecy. According to this prophecy the promised Elijah, if heeded, would turn the hearts of the fathers—the adults—to the children; that is, to a childlike condition of trust and obedience; and the hearts of these childlike ones to the faith and loyalty of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the others of the Ancient Worthies; and if this work of Elijah was not accomplished, if his message was not heeded, the earth (society) was to be smitten with a curse. The rejection of the Messiah at his first advent was followed by the smiting of the Jewish nation and the destruction of their nationality in A. D. 70. The proclamation of Messiah's kingdom to the world of mankind, to turn the mind of the people toward the Lord and his coming kingdom, has been carried on throughout the Age by his faithful followers, the true Church; which we recognize as the real Elijah promised through Malachi. By the mass of mankind, however, Elijah's message has been rejected; and as we have seen, the curse is to smite mankind in the great time of trouble, which shall end the Gospel Age and humble the whole race of mankind in preparation for setting up of Christ's kingdom.

Turning back to the history of Elijah's career as contained in I and II Kings, we find many parallels between his experiences and the experiences of his great anti-type, the Church. The three-and-a-half years of drouth, prophesied by and fulfilled during the life

time of Elijah the Tishbite, had, as foretold in Revelations, their anti-type during the Gospel Age in the three and a half years, or forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, a day for a year, of supremacy of the papal system, typified by Jezebel; during which time the true Church was persecuted and driven to the 'wilderness.' After this came the contest on Mt. Carmel between Elijah and the four hundred priests of Baal, to prove which was the true God, Baal or Jehovah; which resulted in Elijah's triumph and the killing of the four hundred heathen priests. This corresponds to the work of the great Reformation of the Gospel Age, during which the champions of the true faith publicly contended with the representatives of the apostate system ('Jezebel') to the latter's discomfiture. After a period in the limelight the true Church has again, like Elijah, been compelled to flee to the 'wilderness' condition—away from human organizations. As in the case of Elijah, two 'messengers'—Mr. Miller in 1844 and Pastor Russell since 1874—have aroused the Elijah class, the 'wise virgins', to a realization of the journey before them, at the same time supplying the needed food—the harvest truth—knowledge of the King's presence and the imminence of the Kingdom. The forty days of Elijah's journey to Mt. Horeb, the 'mount of God', corresponds to the forty years of the present harvest-time, 1874-1914. Finally, the prophet's vision on the mount, which symbolized to him the complete destruction that God was about to visit upon Ahab and Jezebel and their wicked rule, typified the destruction of the institutions—political and religious—of the 'present evil world', which the Elijah class will witness from their refuge in "the mountain of the Lord's house" (Isa. 2:2) immediately after the conclusion of the forty-year harvest period. "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked" (Psa. 91:8).

The three destructive agencies of Elijah's vision—the tornado, the earthquake and the fire (1 Kings 19:11, 12)—symbolized the work of three persons in exterminating the family and rule of Ahab and Jezebel; namely, Hazael, Jehu and Elisha (verses 16 and 17.) In the antitype, the work of these three individuals with their corresponding symbols, throws a remarkable light on the sequence of events



in the destruction of the antitypical Ahab and Jezebel—the civil and religious governments of the 'present evil world.'

In harmony with the usual scriptural significance of these symbols, we understand the first, Hazael and the whirlwind, represent **devastating wars**; the second, Jehu and the earthquake, **revolution** which will rend the very rocks of society; and the third, Elisha and the fire, the consuming and destroying effects of the Truth as preached by the Elisha class, upon the remnant of present institutions, after the first two shall have performed their part of the destructive work. "All the earth shall be devoured by the fire of my jealousy." The three agencies, so pictured to Elijah, are to destroy in the great time of trouble the institutions of this present evil world, preparatory to the ushering in of the 'new heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.' And as we write these words, all Europe breathlessly awaits the word that shall let loose the chariots of Hazael and mark the **beginning of the end**. All of this, however, while intensely interesting to us as observers of the trend of present events in the light of scriptural prophecy, is beside our present subject. What seems to be an entirely separate picture of events occurring just now and in the immediate future is given us in the second chapter of II Kings.

As Elijah typifies the true Church, the Bride class, the 'wise virgins', it is evident that in this chapter is pictured the concluding events of the Church's course in the world—in the flesh. The three places to which Elijah was successively sent seem to indicate, by the root meaning of the words, the Church's three most prominent **dates** in 'the time of the end', thus:

Bethel—The House of God.....1844  
Jericho—Its Month or Date; Or,

Fragrant .....1874  
Jordan—To go downwards or fall

(death) .....1914

At each of these places Elijah learned that he had farther to go. So in the antitype, the 'watchers' who had journeyed under Brother Miller's leadership to 1844, expecting that there the Lord would return in visible form and they would be snatched away bodily to 'the house of God', learned instead that they had yet farther to go; the 'month' or date for the Lord's return was yet ahead—future. Or, Jericho may signify the 'fragrance' of the

meeting of the Lord and his faithful, watching servants; the sweetness of the truth concerning his 'parousia' or presence at the end of the 1,335 days of Daniel (12:12)—the year 1874. But here again the 'wise virgins' learned that they had a further journey to make; that the King's presence did not signify an immediate taking away to the spirit-world of every remaining member of the Elijah class. And they also came to understand that all the members of the Church must "die like men"—must all be "baptized into his (Jesus') death" (Psa. 82:7; Rom. 6:3). The Scripture chronology and parallels indicate strongly that the Jordan-date for the remaining members of the Elijah class is about October 1, 1914. But be it noted that after passing Jordan Elijah **continued on for a little way into the wilderness**, before being taken away by the whirlwind.

As is almost invariably the case in symbolic scriptures in which the Church is represented, in this picture we find the 'companion' class; typified here by Elisha. He represents the same class as the 'scapegoat' of the Tabernacle type (Lev. 16:10); the unfaithful Levites of Ezek. 44:10-14; the 'Murmurers' of the parable of The First and the Last; the 'foolish virgins' of our present study; and the 'Great Company' of Rev. 7:13-17.

In this journey together of Elijah and Elisha just preceding their final separation in the flesh, we have a parallel picture to that of the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, with some added features. There is no clear-cut, outwardly visible distinction between the two classes; both are composed of consecrated Christians, 'virgins' or pure ones; all were originally of the 'Elijah' or 'wise virgin' class, for there is but "one hope of our calling." The distinction between the individuals composing the two classes is based on their heart conditions—the attitude maintained on the part of each toward the great Prize of the Kingdom—"Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness." The difference between them is distinguishable—at least at first—only to the eye of Him who "judgeth not as man judgeth, but looketh upon the heart."

A third class is represented by the 'sons of the prophets'. These, as we understand the matter, represent a class in the antitype who are not consecrated, but who are friendly toward



the Elijah and Elisha classes, and are interested in their message and watching to see whether it will be fulfilled or not. If the proportionate numbers are at all significant, this class numbers at this time twenty-five times the number of the consecrated, for fifty 'sons of the prophets' stood afar off and watched Elijah and Elisha go across Jordan.

The characteristic attitude of each of these classes is strikingly portrayed in the type.

Elijah was one who constantly received and acted upon the instructions of the Lord—the truth as it became due. Such are the 'wise virgins', the 'more than conquerors', in the anti-type.

Elisha followed Elijah—he refused to be separated from him. This is one of the earmarks of the Elisha class; they are partly at least following man rather than the Lord. A sifting work among professing Christians has been thrice accomplished during this 'time of the end': first, by the 'Miller movement' prior to 1844; again, by the disappointment of 1844 ('Bethel') and the subsequent period of waiting; and finally, by the 'harvest truth' of the Lord's presence since 1874 ('Jericho'). These siftings are indicated by Elijah's thrice-repeated injunction to Elisha to 'tarry' while he proceeded. Of course the Elijah class have never delivered such a message literally to their less zealous Elisha brethren, but this has been the effect of their constant preaching of self-sacrifice and complete consecration. It has acted as a damper on the enthusiasm of the less earnest Christians, has differentiated the Elisha class, and has driven away those who were not really consecrated and were unwilling to take that step. Elisha's attitude is characteristic of the Great Company; they refuse to be separated from their more determined companions, yet fear or neglect to sacrifice their human interests and preferences for the Truth, as they have covenanted to.

The attitude of the 'sons of the prophets' is one of questioning—of doubt. They come to Elisha at every stage—they feel freer with him than with Elijah—and ask: "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today?" Do you really believe what Elijah is telling us about what is to happen in the immediate future? And Elisha stoutly replies, but doubtless with some in-

ward qualms: "Yea, I believe it; hold your peace."

And now we see Elijah and Elisha on Jordan's bank; there they part company from the 'sons of the prophets' and they two pass through the parted waters of Jordan and go on for a little time together in the wilderness. The careful wording of the scripture describing this scene is worthy of our most earnest consideration at this time. Having passed Jordan the two classes are complete, and in the consideration of Jehovah, as expressed by the Apostle, they are "dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God." Shall we conclude that at the day which marks the end of the Harvest period 'the door will be closed, finally and no one thereafter begotten of the Spirit and added to the Church? If so, these two classes would then be complete and distinct in the mind of Jehovah. The statement that they went on (evidently for a very brief and indefinite time) 'talking together,' may indicate that the work of the Church for the little time intervening between the Jordan date and the time when they drop their mantle and are snatched away by the whirlwind shall be spent not so much in public ministry as previously, but in preparing the Elisha class for the separation.

"Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee?" And Elisha said, "I pray thee, let a double portion, (the eldest son's portion) of thy spirit be upon me." The request was practically that he should be Elijah's successor;—successor in the anti-type as we would understand the matter, in the ambassadorship or representation of Christ in the flesh. This Elijah promised, if Elisha continued with him and saw him taken away. "And it came to pass, as they still went on talking, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire and parted them both asunder and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the heavens." Be it noted that Elijah did not go up in the chariot of fire, as is usually pictured in our minds and our pictorial Bibles. The fiery chariot separated Elijah and Elisha. The fiery trials and testings from within and without are even now beginning to work the separation of these two classes in the ecclesias, and are destined to become more fiery and destructive as the days go by, until the final separation takes place and Elijah's end in the anti-type, the finale



of the Church in the flesh, takes place through a sudden whirlwind of violence. Elisha then receives his petition. The mantle of Elijah falls upon him, and he returns across Jordan. There is no break in the narrative here, or anything else to indicate that there is any change in the type; and, therefore, we believe that Elisha continues to represent the Great Company class to the end of this chapter (2 Kings 2).

This view is strengthened when we remember that it was "the sword of Elisha" (1 Kings 19:17) that was to complete the work of exterminating Ahab's and Jezebel's dynasty—type of Satan's empire of the present. As a matter of fact, Elisha had nothing whatever to do with their deaths; Jehu indeed made it appear that Elijah was responsible for the slaughter of Ahab's seventy sons (2 Kings 10:1-10) and Elisha at that time wore Elijah's mantle, so by a somewhat far-fetched argument the word spoken by the Lord to Elijah in Mt. Horeb may thus be said to have been fulfilled. It is clear, however, that by far the most important and perfect fulfillment is to be looked for in the antitype. The things done by Elisha after his return across Jordan are therefore of especial interest to us, as they picture a work to be accomplished by the Great Company after the Little Flock has been glorified, during and after the worst of the great time of trouble.

The first thing was to discourage the desire of the 'sons of the prophets' to search for Elijah. This suggests that some may seek to re-establish the Gospel Church and its message after the worst of the trouble is over, but that the Elisha class will discourage this, knowing that 'the door is closed'. Then came the incident of the sweetening of the waters of Jericho. Water is a symbol of Truth; the truth, as preached by the Elijah class during the Gospel age and especially in its harvest-time, has been a bitter draught to the world—a message of God's displeasure with existing institutions and of a coming destruction of them. After the destruction has been largely accomplished in the anarchy of the 'great tribulation' (Dan. 12:1; Mat<sup>+</sup> 24:21) the same message, then given through the Elisha class, but with its promise of coming peace and blessing through Messiah's kingdom emphasized, will become sweet indeed to the tempest-tossed and humbled world.

No doubt the truth so promulgated by the Elisha class will result in the, perhaps voluntary, relinquishment of the remnants of the old order, political and religious, throughout the earth, in preparation for the new regime; just as Ahab's sons were voluntarily given up by their custodians. In this hypothesis we see a reasonable and harmonious fulfillment not only of the prophecy concerning Elisha's sword, but also of the similar one of Psalm 149:5-9, if the latter indeed apply to the saints this side the veil. For be it remembered that the term 'saints', meaning holy ones, includes all the consecrated—the virgins; the 'great company' as well as the 'little flock'.

However, the old order will still have adherents—'children of the city', Babylon—who will persecute the Elisha class; as illustrated in the incident of the impudent children and the two bears. Elisha on the way to Bethel, 'the house of God', signifies apparently the departure from the world—the flesh—of the Great Company class. It is accompanied by the jeers of the lovers of the defunct evil system; and as Elisha departs he calls forth from the depths of the forest two she-bears which tear (but not necessarily kill) forty-two of his tormentors.

The successors of the Elisha class as the Christ's representatives in the flesh are to be the Ancient Worthies, "whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth" (Heb. 11:1-40; Psa. 45:10). In the Tabernacle types this class are represented in their sacrificial work by the Red Heifer (Num. 19). Why should they not be represented by she-bears in the destructive work necessary in the inauguration of their visible control of earth's affairs? A bear's method of attack is to **tear down**. No doubt these representatives of the Lord's Kingdom, who will in his name and power "put down all dominion and authority and power" opposing itself, will appear very 'bearish' to those who feel the weigh of their authority.

Withal, our Lord's admonition to "Watch, for ye know not" ever applies in our efforts to penetrate by by means of Scripture prophecy into future events. However suggestive and helpful in inciting us to increased zeal, energy, devotion and prayerfulness the advice and prophecies of the Scriptures may be, we may not be dogmatic in our interpretation and application of them. "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch!"



## Parable 21.

## THE KING'S REIGN.

Matt. 25:31-46.

The Cryptic parables of Jesus Christ the King concerning his coming Kingdom have a fitting climax in this, usually called the parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

We have traced the history of the "Royalty of God," the "Majesty of the Heavens," from its inception in that Vine planted by the great Householder in Eden, through its forfeiture, its recovery by Jesus, his offer of a share therein to those who would leave all to follow in his footsteps of self-sacrifices; the disdain with which his invitation was received by the many; the vicissitudes experienced, the dangers dared, by those who embraced his offer; finally his graphic prophecies of conditions on earth which would prevail at the time of his promised return; all these we have found vividly portrayed in symbolic word-pictures by the King himself. Now we reach the climax of the story—the consummation toward which all that has gone before has led: "WHEN THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN HIS GLORY." Not then in humility, for the suffering of death as the world's Redeemer; not in the secrecy of his parousia, to reckon with his servants; but to be "SEATED ON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY"—for his apokalupsis or glorious revelation.

Glory is of two kinds—personal glory, and the glory of position or office. Both are referred to here. The first is that which the King achieved as "The Son of Man," by successfully accomplishing the Father's will in laying down his life as the "corresponding price" for Adam and his race, at such a tremendous cost to himself. And because of this the Father has also been pleased to bestow upon him the glory of the highest position in the Universe, next to Himself. The Father "hath highly exalted him, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." (Phil. 2:9, 10.)

Before His judgment-throne "shall be gathered all nations." Not a mere gathering of all mankind to one spot on the earth is here signified; a far greater and more wonderful assembling is referred to—the gathering of all nations and individuals of past ages, by a re-awakening from the death-state to a simultaneous existence upon the scene and amid the sur-

roundings and associations of their former lives.

As in the case of the Apostle Paul, (Acts 23:6) the Christian is still "called in question as touching the resurrection of the dead." This doctrine is still the true criterion of Christian orthodoxy. Those who believe the dead are not really dead, but more alive than ever in a state of bliss or woe, can have no real belief in the **resurrection**, or return to life, of the dead, as taught in the Bible.

Nevertheless, the universal promises of God have yet to be and yet will be fulfilled. In Abraham and in his Seed all the families of the earth must yet be blessed. The good tidings of great joy are still waiting to go to all people. All men must be saved and be brought to the knowledge of the truth, in accordance with the Father's will. There shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust; all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth; Israel shall come forth; the inhabitants of Samaria and Elam, Sodom and Gomorrah, Ninevah and Tyre and Sidon, Bethsaida and Chorazin and Capernaum shall, in that resurrection and judgment day, have opportunity with the "residue of men" to "seek after the Lord." (Gen. 22:18; Luke 2:10; 1 Tim. 2:4; Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; Jer. 49:39; Ezek. 16:53, 55; Matt. 12:41; 11:21-24; Acts 15:14-17.)

For the "work" which is "before" the King and his associates—his Bride—is not limited, as we have mistakenly thought, to a 24-hour day. Really we as Bible-students are without excuse for having so "limited the Holy One of Israel" in our ideas of the Judgment Day, for the Apostle Peter expressly warns us, in this very connection, not to be ignorant of the fact that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Through John also, we are told of the thousand-year reign of Christ and His Church; and Isaiah tells us that during the Judgment-day the inhabitants of the world are to learn righteousness. No wonder the Psalmist describes it as a time of general rejoicing. (Isa. 62:11; Psa. 78:41; 2 Pet. 3:7, 8; Rev. 20:4; Isa. 26:8, 9; Psa. 96:11-13; 98:7-9.)

The work of Christ and the Church, as finally constituted in the Spirit-realm, will be to educate, enlighten (John 1:9) and judge "every man that cometh into the world." Every one is to have at least one hundred years of



opportunity to begin to make progress toward righteousness (Isa. 65:20); a broad highway of holiness will be opened up, far different from the "strait and narrow" way of holiness of the Gospel Age (Isa. 35:8-10; Matt. 7:13, 14). The veil of ignorance and superstition "spread over all nations" by Satan, the Arch-deceiver, will be removed and he shall be "bound for a thousand years" that he may "deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are finished." Instead of "darkness covering the earth and gross darkness the people" as now and for six thousand years past, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 25:7, 8; Rev. 20:2, 3; Isa. 60:2; 11:9.)

The hosts of mankind, who have lived and died since father Adam was created, are reckoned by the best estimates to number approximately twenty billions, or about twelve persons to each one now living. The work of separating these into the two classes represented by the sheep and the goats will occupy the glorified Church, under the direction of the Lord, the whole of the thousand-year judgment day. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" inquires the Apostle (1 Cor. 6:2). Their judging will be that of the Lord, for they "have the mind of Christ" perfected in them by following in His footsteps in the flesh.

Not literal, either, will the separating be. The "right hand" signifies the position of favor; the left, that of disfavor. By the end of the Millennial Age in the collective judgment of The Christ, the worthiness or unworthiness of every member of the human race of continuous or eternal life will have been established. But the reasons for the decision in each case will not have been made manifest to their fellowmen, the justice of the verdict not yet vindicated in the minds of all. All will, by that time, have reached human perfection through obedience to the laws of the Kingdom; for none can reach the end of that "highway of holiness" without having become clean (Isaiah 35:8); the effects of the Adamic death will then have been completely destroyed. (1 Cor. 15:26.) But human perfection, physical and mental, such as father Adam possessed and lost, does not necessarily include perfection of character. As with the Lord's judgment of the members of the Church during the present Gospel Age (for "judg-

ment must begin at the house of God"—1 Pet. 4:17), the Christ's judgment of mankind during their judgment-day will be based on the thoughts and intents of their hearts, "naked and open before" their judges, for the Christ will be Spirit-beings, even as our Judge is a Spirit.

Since, therefore, to outward appearance the distinction between the sheep and the goat classes in the end of the Millennium will not be manifest, the question in the minds of every one on both the right hand and the left will be WHY, Lord? What is the reason, the basis, for your decision and the sentence passed upon us? Or rather, in the parable the Lord represents this as the question in the mind of each, but other scriptures tell us that in reality the question will be answered before it is asked—before sentence is pronounced. To answer this question to the satisfaction of every just and reasonable mind in the Universe, and to give a final lesson of the paramount importance of character in God's estimation, the life of the great Adversary, foredoomed to destruction, will be prolonged for a thousand years. We have already noted the statement of Revelations 20:2, 3, that Satan is to be bound, at the commencement of the Millennial reign, "that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be fulfilled." The Revelator continues: "After that he must be loosed a little season. . . . And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth. . . . to gather them together to battle. . . . as the sand of the sea in number. . . . and they compassed the camp of the Saints and the beloved city."

What will be the nature of the deception foisted by Satan upon all those of the restored human race who will lend him an ear? If this, through the prescience of God, were revealed (as it could be) it would defeat the very object for which He permits it. However it may be clothed, by whatever specious arguments supported, the real deception will be that it is possible to successfully oppose God—his arrangements, the human representatives of His government. It is against his "saints"—holy ones—and the "beloved city"—government—that the impious efforts of the Satan-deceived ones are directed.

The most important point for us to



note, and of which in the light of our parable we may be assured, is that none will be so deceived and involved in this final great Rebellion unless he is at heart disloyal, self-willed, a goat. The Millennial rule will be an iron one; its laws, corrective and elevating in their application will be inflexible in their prohibition of all forms of evil, some of which are very dear to the hearts of many of the fallen race. Submit they must to Christ's rule, or else after a hundred years of incorrigibility be destroyed (Isa. 65: 20; Acts 3:23). But many, evidently, will submit with a very bad inward grace, from motives of pure policy. To these the Adversary's whispers of sedition, clothed with all the plausibility of which he is past master, will come as a welcome suggestion. And by heeding them and following "the Devil that deceives them" into open rebellion, they but throw off the mask they have been wearing and so demonstrate the justice of the judgment already entered against them by their unseen judges, as pictured in our parable.

For our Lord's allegory gives us a marvellous fore-glimpse behind the scenes into the Millennial Kingdom. Here we see the great Judgment as it will appear in its essential features to those who sit upon the throne as Kings and Judges.

The great Chief Justice and his associate Justices, who are to hear and judge the causes of all mankind, have been made competent to be merciful as well as just by having themselves "in like manner" suffered the pains, the hindrances, the limitations of those who are to come before them for trial. "All judgment has been committed" by the Father unto this Judge "because he is the Son of Man," hence "made perfect" for the work of judging "by the things that he has suffered." (John 5:22, 27; Heb. 2:10.) His associates have also "suffered with him" that they might "reign with him." Hence when their human brothers in suffering are brought before them their interest and sympathy are deeply moved.

"Then shall the King say to them on his right hand . . . . I was an hungered . . . . I was thirsty . . . . I was a stranger . . . . I was naked . . . . sick . . . . in prison . . . . and ye succored me." In astonishment they ask, "When saw we thee so?" Thou, the great King, eternal, immortal, invisible! Dost thou know the meaning of these terms

of human misery? Ah, yes! We remember that "the Son of Man had not where to lay his head." We remember that "he was an hungered" after fasting forty days in the wilderness, yet would not use his God-given miraculous powers to minister to his natural cravings. We remember that he was stripped naked and nailed to a cross; exposed, while dying an agonizing death, to the jeers and taunts of the cruel multitude. Yet no doubt even these excruciating physical sufferings were not so hard to endure as the cold and hunger and thirst of heart—of mind—for human sympathy and appreciation and fellowship. How he grasped at the measure of these he received from John! How grieved was he in Gethsemane that his closest followers were not sufficiently concerned about his suffering to "keep watch with him one hour." Truly, "He came to his own and his own received him not." "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Now all is changed. The battle is fought, the victory won. This is his hour of triumph. Yet he has not forgotten his human experiences. As mankind is brought forth from the tomb with the same characters that they took with them there (for "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest" Eccl. 9:10) yet stripped of all their possessions, sin-sick from past experience with evil; in prison chains of habit and prejudice, forged upon them by their previous master, the Adversary; hungry (though perhaps not realizing it) for the Word of God, thirsting for the water of life—all these needs appeal powerfully to the King's sympathies, for He remembers His own similar past experiences. Not that he had suffered from the same causes, but that he had suffered the same sensations. The experience is the same whether one suffers nakedness and hunger from his own folly or the violence of others; or when imprisoned, whether innocent or guilty. What, then, will be the King's method of aiding these needy ones? The parable answers, through inciting humanity to a new spirit of mutual helpfulness; by example and precept teaching mankind that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Abundant supplies of everything needful will be provided; "Thou openest thy hand and suppliest the desire of every living thing" (Psa. 145:16); "whosoever will may (then) take of



the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.) Note, however, that when "the Spirit and the bride say Come," then "let him that heareth say Come." As the successive generations of re-awakened ones come back to earth, the ones who preceded them and have been partaking of the King's bounty since their own awakening will be privileged (but not forced) to assist the new arrivals in adjusting themselves to the new conditions among men. To those who have the King's spirit of helpfulness and sympathy this service will be the source of their greatest joy and satisfaction. These are the sheep—those who follow the good shepherd. To the goats, however, the labor and sacrifice of continually leaving their own pursuits to minister to the oft-repeated inundation of ignorant and needy ones crying for aid will become exceedingly irksome and distasteful. On one excuse or another the privilege of helping will be shirked; the goats will have their own way, not realizing that in following this course they are day by day building a character that eventually will bring about their deception and destruction.

Finally the work will be completed; the oath-bound promise of Jehovah to Abraham will have been fulfilled in the blessing of every member of Adam's race; the last one will have been re-awakened, saved from the Adamic death and brought to the knowledge of the truth in accordance with the will of God; his mind enlightened by that true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, he will be able to intelligently accept or reject his one opportunity for everlasting life. "Then cometh the end, when Christ shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power;" the last enemy to be destroyed being the Adamic death, by the full release from all its effects of every member of the race. Then will come the application of the acid-test of character through the releasing of Satan for a little season, as we have seen. And finally, as pictured in the parable, the goats will be sent away into everlasting punishment of fire prepared for the devil and all his messengers, spirit and human. Not, as some would have us believe, into everlasting punishing, but into that which is the antithesis of the reward given the righteous (parable, verse 46)—namely,

death eternal. This is clearly stated in the parallel passage in Revelations (20:14), where the "lake of fire" is declared to be "the second death." From that death there is no hope of re-awakening or resurrection; it is truly eternal punishment, once for all, finally and forever. It is, we are told by the Apostle (2 Thes. 1:7-9; 2:8), "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord"—"consumed with the spirit (power) of his mouth, destroyed by the brightness of His presence."

To those on his right hand the King says: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"—the Kingdom of the restored and perfected earth, "created, not in vain, but to be inhabited;" destined to be "given to the children of men" in which to "abide forever" (Isa. 45:18; Psa. 115:16; Eccl. 1:4). Then shall be possible and be established the dream of philosophers and philanthropists of past ages—the World Republic, the Co-operative Commonwealth; where there will be no ignorance, destitution, selfishness or hatred; and better than any human philosophy ever hoped or dreamed, no sickness, sorrow or death. (Rev. 21:1-5.)

Still more glorious is to be the future of the Church, the Lamb's wife. This little flock of Gospel-Age overcomers, after being exalted to the immortality of the divine nature in the first resurrection and associated with their Lord and Head in the glorious Millennial Age work of restitution and blessing, are, the Apostle declares, to be the particular objects of Jehovah's favor throughout the ages of the Ages (Eph. 2:7). What the "exceeding riches of his grace" includes is not yet revealed, but the myriads of worlds that occupy space suggest the possibilities of future creative and educational work that the Church's experience on Earth will have particularly fitted them for.

Let us therefore, brethren, "cast not away our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." "The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay." "Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low (all social-'earthly'-distinctions levelled); and the uneven shall be made level and the rough places a plain: and the glory of Je-



hovah shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spaken it." "And the Kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; His Kingdom is an everlasting King-

dom and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Here is the end of the matter." "The Great God hath made known what shall come to pass hereafter, and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." (Heb. 10:35; Hab. 2:2; Isa. 40:4, 5; Dan. 7:27, 28; 2:45.)

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