

Road To A New Life

- It is not money, power, or human affection that you crave. Your greatest need is acceptance by God.
- Drugs, alcohol, smoking, temper, overweight, and depression gone forever—you need to investigate.

INTRODUCTION

Should the teachings of God's word be made the controlling influence in the life of every man and woman, should mind and heart be brought under its restraining power, the evils that now exist in national and in social life would find no place. In conformity to the divine requirements there is a transforming power that brings peace and good will among men.

Jesus standing on an unknown mountain beside the Lake of Gennesaret, spoke words of blessing to His disciples and the multitude. In those days the spirit of true devotion had been lost in tradition and ceremonialism.

"Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Matthew 5:6.

Has Jesus put the emphasis in the wrong place? Why not, "Blessed are the righteous?"

But praise God, He has put the emphasis on those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. That would sum up the need of most of us.

Jesus' practical proposal is so radical, it turns our notions of God and righteousness and blessing on their heads. He blesses what most of us would curse.

According to Jesus, when we draw near to the kingdom, it is better to come empty than full.

We are tempted to think that righteousness is the condition we must be in to be blessed.

Jesus says the opposite. Righteousness is the blessing; hunger is the precondition.

We cannot labour for Christ's righteousness. Even if we wanted to work for it, we could not expend enough effort to obtain it. If we wanted to buy it, we could not offer enough money. We cannot get it by loan. The only way to obtain righteousness is to receive it.

We need to beware: As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism,



evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths.

There is a better path: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." James 3:17, 18.

Righteousness and faith go together: Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.

Is righteousness important? Righteousness is the foundation of God's throne. Of Jesus it is written, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Hebrews 1:9

THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

In the Bible the whole duty of man is defined. Solomon says, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." [Ecclesiastes 12:13.] The will of God is revealed in His written word. There will be no excuse found for any one who will not be in heaven through misapprehension of the Scriptures.

In the Bible every vital principle is declared,

- There are answers, and they are not complicated. Here is what you have always wanted: peace with God!
- How can you have it? How can you find Him? How can you be accepted by Him? How can you stay close to Him?

every duty made plain, every obligation made evident. The whole duty of man is summed up by the Saviour. He says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." [Matthew 13:37, 39.]

The gift of eternal life is promised on condition of saving faith in Christ. The drawing power of the Holy Spirit is pointed out as an agent in the work of man's salvation. The rewards of the faithful, the punishment of the guilty, are all laid out in clear lines. The Bible contains the science of salvation for all those who will hear and do the words of Christ.

The apostle says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." [2 Timothy 3:16,17.]

With the growing contempt for God's law there is an increasing distaste for religion, an increase of pride, love of pleasure, disobedience to parents, and self-indulgence; and thoughtful minds everywhere are anxiously inquiring, What can be done to correct these alarming evils? The answer is found in Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "Preach the word." In the Bible are found the only safe principles of action. It is a transcript of the will of God, an expression of divine wisdom. It opens to man's understanding the great problems of life, and to all who heed its precepts it will prove an unerring guide, keeping them from wasting their lives in misdirected effort.

With unanswerable arguments Paul set before the people their privilege of becoming free men and women in Christ, through whose atoning grace many were clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness. In their lives were revealed the fruits of the Spirit — "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Galatians 5:22,23)

WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH?

A resident in our town says that he reads the Bible every day because he wishes to be like Jesus. To be like Jesus produces something. And that something is “righteousness.”

This vast subject of “righteousness” put in a nutshell is holiness, likeness to God. It is conformity to the law of God; for ‘all Thy commandments are righteousness.’ Psalms 119:172 The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him. Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gifts or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it. As the body is continually receiving the nourishment that sustains life and vigour, so the soul must be constantly communing with Christ. A divine element combines with the human when the soul reaches out after God.

These sentences are full of meaning and should be meditated upon until their full significance is discerned. Righteousness, which is holiness, likeness to God, conformity to God’s law, is received by receiving Christ. This is simplicity itself.

The human element is the only weak link in the chain, for God’s love prevents Him from forcing man to receive righteousness. Man must receive it of his own volition. It is a Gift, but man has to reach out after God, to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Righteousness by faith is not a theory, not merely a doctrine, but it is a living power that possesses the soul giving it enabling grace or power to be like Christ.

The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ’s day was, that a mere assent to the truth constituted righteousness. In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

The darkest chapters of history are burdened with the record of crimes committed by bigoted religionists. The Pharisees thought themselves the greatest religionists of the world, but their so-called orthodoxy led them to crucify the Lord of glory.

The same danger still exists. Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. But they have not brought the truth into practical life. They have not believed and loved it; therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through sanctification (perfect love, perfect obedience, entire conformity to the will of God) of the truth. Men may profess faith in truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world.

The righteousness which Christ taught is conformity of heart and life to the revealed will of God. Sinful men can become righteous only as they have faith in God, and maintain a vital connection with Him. Then true godliness will elevate the thoughts and ennoble the life.

If we believe in God, we are armed with the righteousness of Christ; we have taken hold of his strength. The promise is, “Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.” Isaiah 27:5. We want to talk with our Saviour as though he were right by our side. We should have our minds stayed upon him. We should hold communion with him while we walk by the way, and while our hands are engaged in labour.

Righteousness by faith means faith that reaches to God’s throne, that enables one to “see Him who is invisible” Hebrews 11: 27, and accepts the power extended by God for the development of character so that it becomes like to that of Jesus.

The extent of the growth of

the character depends upon the continuous nature of the exercise of faith. The vital connection of the mind with God must be maintained. An electric train proceeds to its destination so long as the pole connects with the power lines above. The hungering and thirsting after righteousness must continue and the soul reach out after God continually in order for the character to be woven as a robe in the loom of heaven. As the soul thus seeks God the power continues to flow from God until the character is made righteous and conforms to the law of God, which is the standard of righteousness.

Righteousness by faith is represented by the wearing of a pure garment that has been woven in the loom of Heaven—see Revelation 3:4,5,18; 16:15; 19:8.

The Lord employed a garment by which to illustrate the development of character, because the illustration is so simple and so widely known. We all understand how the strands of material are made up, and then how the various strands are woven into materials from which the garment is made. In this way the Lord presents us with a practical, homely illustration by which He has driven home to our consciousness the important spiritual truth that our characters can be formed only as we look to Him day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, and accept by faith the power He extends to all who believe. It is in this way that we gain our fitness for heaven. In the first place righteousness is our title to heaven; and secondly it establishes our fitness for heaven.

In the Bible the wedding garment represents the character which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding. In the parable of the wedding garment (Matthew 22), the Lord has emphasised that there is a preparation to be made by all who attend the feast. Those who neglect this preparation are cast out. The fate of all who neglect this work of preparation, of character building, is illustrated

in the man who is pictured in the parable as being without “a wedding garment”—he was cast out and destroyed. By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ’s true followers will possess.

To the church it is given ‘that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white’, ‘not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing’. The fine linen, says the Scripture, ‘is the righteousness of saints’ (Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27). It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour ... This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repentant, believing soul. ‘I counsel thee,’ he says, ‘to buy of Me ... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear’ (Revelation 3: 18). This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising.

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us, He sees not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of God.

Let us open our Bibles to see what is meant by righteousness by faith and how it is obtained:-

Faith is a living connection with God—the hand of faith reaches to the throne of God where Jesus, the great High Priest, mediates solely between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

There He makes continual intercession for all who come to God by Him (Romans 8:35; Hebrews 7:25).

From that throne “of the Maj-

esty on high”—where He “upholds all things by the word of His power”—(Hebrews 1:3) from that “throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Hebrews 8:1), He dispenses mercy and help (Hebrews 4:16).

It is in His capacity as High Priest that He gives His people power to overcome sin (1 Corinthians 15:57; Revelation 3:21); that power flows from Him as a living stream to all those who make a living connection with Him by faith. That connection must be made with Him or no benefits will be received.

To illustrate this vital truth, the Lord overruled in the circumstances relating to the healing of the afflicted woman who “had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse” (Mark 5: 25). Hearing of the miracles performed by Jesus, she believed that Jesus could heal her. She had tried in vain to reach our Lord. But Jesus Who knows everybody in the world and Who knew that this woman was yearning to meet Him and to experience His healing power, saw to it that He passed near her. He was thinking not only of how He could answer this woman’s prayer; He also saw in this an opportunity of making clearer to His people the vital lesson of making contact with Him, the Source of all power.

So in spiritual things. To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul-hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. It is not enough to believe about Christ; we must believe in Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour, which appropriates His merits to ourselves.

Saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant re-

lation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigour, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.

Again, “saving faith is a transaction”—it is not merely assenting to a belief that Jesus once lived upon the earth. To live by faith, means hour by hour and moment by moment—maintaining a living connection with Christ. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

“FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE” (1 Timothy 6:12)

Fight and faith are incompatible concepts according to popular thought. Radically, Scripture proposes that faith without fight is not faith. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. Matthew 24:13. This is our introduction to the Christian’s warfare.

The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy to “war a good warfare”, “fight the good fight of faith”, “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3). Twice in his description of the Christian as a warrior, Paul urged the people to “put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having overcome all, to stand” (Ephesians 6: 11-13).

Then the apostle describes the parts of the complete armour to be worn by the believer, but concerning faith he says: “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (vs. 14-18). Faith is not a substitute for fighting, it is the shield which we may skilfully employ for our

protection from the assaults of the enemy—and Paul’s depiction of faith as a shield which he says is so important, shows that faith and fighting are inseparable.

Instead of faith being a substitute for fighting, Paul’s description of the Christian as a soldier is that of one engaged in a fierce conflict. It is so intense that faith is an imperative need. Describing the Christian soldier in his development of Christ-likeness, he likens him to a soldier who has gone into territory which is contested by the enemy. He must be on guard against Satan’s assaults, for he seeks to drive him back from the territory he has conquered. Catch the intensity in Paul’s words: “Put on all the armour of God, so that ye may be able to stand your ground against the stratagems of the devil. For our struggle is against the Powers of Evil, against those that hold sway in the Darkness around us and against the Spirits of Wickedness on high ... withstand the attack, and having carried the struggle through, still to stand your ground. Stand your ground, then.

Do this with continual prayer and supplication. Pray in your heart at all times. Be intent upon this, with unwearied perseverance” (20th Cent. N.T.).

King David recognising that the carnal mind is enmity against God counselled his son – “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.” 1 Chronicles 28:9

Satan fights hard to prevent people responding to God.

He who has determined to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Each day he must renew his consecration, each day do battle

with evil. Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery, and against these he is to be ever on guard, striving in Christ’s strength for victory.

The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought.

Each one will have a close struggle to overcome sin in his own heart. This is at times a very painful and discouraging work. Everyone who enters the pearly gates of the city of God will enter there as a conqueror, and his greatest conquest will be the conquest of self.

The ‘whole heart’ must be yielded to God, for the change to be wrought in us by which we are restored to His likeness. By nature we are alienated from God, therefore, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle.

This work [victory over sin] can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of God. The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain a constant warfare against it. Here is where Christ’s help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims, ‘Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ’ 1 Corinthians 15:57

The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a life-long struggle. Without continual effort and constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor’s crown. We must resist firmly or be conquered. The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavour that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. All must engage in this warfare for themselves.

In this great struggle faith is essential, “for by grace are ye saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). The grace and power are there, an inexhaustible supply. By His life of righteousness on earth and

by His sacrifice on Calvary, He has brought within man's grasp all the boundless resources of Omnipotence and Omniscience—"the exceeding riches of His grace"; "the unsearchable riches of Christ"; "the riches of His glory" (Ephesians 1: 7; 2: 7; 3: 8, 16). Heaven's unlimited supply awaits man's demand and reception. Faith is the hand that opens the doors of God's mercy and draws from that inexhaustible supply. The abundant grace is free, but man must put forth the effort to reach it, through the intercession of Jesus as the High Priest.

The Lord did say: "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find [me], when ye shall search for me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:12,13.

The conquest of Canaan illustrates Christian conquests. Through Joshua the Lord told Israel that He gave them the land of Canaan; it was theirs as His gift to them, but they had to go in and possess it: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses" (Joshua 1:2,3). "I have given into thine hand Jericho" (6:2). "I have given into thy hand the king of Ai . . . and his city, and his land" (8:1). The victory was assured beforehand, but they still had to fight for it.

In the Scriptures, the result of the exercise of faith is illustrated in various ways. The wedding garment, representing the righteous robe provided by the King for His guests, is the King's gift, but man has to co-operate with God in its making. The same truth of man's co-operation with God is again shown by the illustration of warfare to conquer and hold certain territory.

But this victory is assured those only who constantly look to the Lord Jesus from Whom cometh the power and wisdom.

As shown in our previous chapter, "saving faith is a transaction," a transaction as real as any

business transaction conducted between two parties. In a business transaction money or its equivalent is handed over in exchange for some other commodity. In the spiritual realm, our Lord accepts our confession of sin, our penitence, and imparts power for holy living in return. While salvation is free in that Jesus has paid the full price for our redemption, yet man must exert himself in acquiring that free salvation. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he hath found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matthew 13:44,45). "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried 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" (Revelation 3:18).

Sometimes in the endeavour to exalt the wonderful work of the world's Redeemer, some enthusiastic Christians speak and sing of salvation being free and costing man nothing, as if man has merely to give some kind of placid acknowledgment of what the Saviour accomplished on Calvary and salvation will be bestowed at the end of life's journey. But this is a serious error, for man has his part to play if salvation's benefits are to be obtained. When our Lord was asked: "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent" (John 6:28,29). "This is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another"

(1 John 3:23). Everlasting life comes to those who believe in the work of the Saviour (John 3:16, 17,36; 14:6; 20:31; Matthew 11:27). This belief includes acceptance of His work as High Priest in heaven on His Father's throne imparting power to all whose belief causes them to look "unto Jesus the Author and the Finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

As in life, success is usually proportional to effort, so in the spiritual life, for as we work, God co-operates with us. If we are faithful in doing our part, in co-operating with Him, God will work through us to do the good pleasure of His will, but cannot work through us if we make no effort.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

There is a need for balanced judgment based upon the Scriptures in discerning the full import of the theme of righteousness by faith. While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works. God saves us under a law – "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Luke 11:9,10.

Further, Christ offers Himself as willing to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. He invites all to come to Him. 'Him that cometh to Me I will no wise cast out.' John 6:37.

The young man came to Jesus with the question, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?' and Christ saith unto him, 'Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments'. He saith unto Him, Which?' Jesus quoted several, and the young man said unto Him, 'All

these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?' Jesus saith unto him, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me'. (Mark 10:17-21) Here are conditions, and the Bible is full of conditions.

He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. John 14:21. This is the true test—the doing of the words of Christ. And it is the evidence of the human agent's love to Jesus, and he that doeth His will giveth to the world the practical evidence of the fruit he manifests in obedience, in purity, and in holiness of character. We are to work on the plan of addition, and the Lord will work on the plan of multiplication. It is through constant diligence that we will, through the grace of Christ, live on the plan of addition, making our calling and election sure. 'For if ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' 2 Peter 1:11.

OUR ONLY HOPE – JESUS

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22). In these words our Lord forcefully urges upon us the way of salvation—by looking to Him. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane [and] vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness." 2 Timothy 2:15,16.

All Jesus' words are truth, and they have a deeper significance than appears on the surface. Jesus said, And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32. Does it matter, when some say what difference does it

make if one worships on a Sunday and another worships on the Sabbath. One has to be truth and the other error, as one precept is unsupported by Scripture. The adoption of one principle of error will lead to “more ungodliness.”

It is impossible to worship God as Creator without worshipping on the day set aside as the memorial of creation – the Sabbath.

All the sayings of Christ have a value beyond their unpretending appearance. Minds that are quickened by the Holy Spirit will discern the value of these sayings.

The experience of Peter walking on the water was written to illustrate the teaching of righteousness by faith, the unspeakable benefits to be derived from looking at Jesus. So long as Peter looked at Jesus he was able to walk on the water (Matthew 14:25-31). He did the impossible by looking at Jesus.

Wonderful power comes to those who learn this principle of life—“Looking unto Jesus the Beginner and Finisher of our faith . . . Looking diligently” (Hebrews 12: 2,15). Victory is assured to all who keep looking to Jesus, Who begins our Christian walk—if we will keep looking He will most certainly finish the work He has begun. It is a matter of continuing to look.

Satan’s efforts are directed toward the objective of causing people to drop their shield of faith, to cease looking heavenward. Those who continue to look to Jesus receive His power, those who cease to look to Him become surrounded with the darkness created around them by the evil angels. Therefore the great struggle in the last days particularly is a battle between Satanic forces seeking to turn God’s people from looking to Jesus and thus cause them to be cut off from the source of power.

A vital truth is stressed by New Testament writers—the necessity of looking to Jesus in His priestly ministry with His Father on the eternal throne. Paul says: “Seek those things which are above,

where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection [mind, margin] on things above” (Colossians 3:1,2). He counselled the backsliding Hebrews to (4:16) “come boldly unto the throne of Grace” because there “we have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God”. There, centres our hope: “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” “Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them”. “And having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near . . . Looking unto Jesus the Beginner [margin] and Finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:19, 20; 7:25; 10:19-22; 12:2). Paul, in His epistle to the Ephesians, magnified the glorious privileges awaiting believers in Christ who will look to Him in His exalted position as man’s Representative on the Throne of Grace, where the Father has “set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named” (Ephesians 1:19-22; 3:10-21). The rugged apostle Peter, who passed from weakness to strength, pointed to “Jesus Christ Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him” (1 Peter 3: 22).

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan’s purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. He gave Him not only

to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.”

Jesus and Jesus alone is the Mediator between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love.

Remember, Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.

Calvary represents His crowning work. It is man’s part to respond to His great love, by appropriating the great salvation, the blessing of the Lord has made it possible for man to obtain. We are to show our appreciation of the wonderful gift of God by becoming partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. We are to show our gratitude to God by becoming a co-worker with Jesus Christ, by representing His character to the world. The Lord looks upon us as precious pearls.

ABOUT JESUS

Jesus says, “I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy” Luke 10:19.—not power over some of “the power of the enemy” but “over all the power of the enemy”. Thus our Lord declares that those who look

to Him for power will be “more than conquerors” (Romans 8: 37). “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”; “Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14). “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our



faith”; “ye have overcome them”; “Ye have overcome the wicked one.” (1 John 5:4; 4:4; 2:14).

Those who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God, will constantly receive a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command.

“The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Romans 1: 16). This is the “born again” experience brought on by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The gospel is not merely an avenue of power but is God’s power, working for the salvation of those who believe. But God’s power is not limited in its operation for individual salvation, but is available to the believer for the promulgation of the gospel message. Our Lord says: “All power is given unto Me . . . Go ye therefore” (Matthew 28:18,19). He thus declares that He exercises that Almighty power in His capacity as the Head of the church. He urges His followers

on earth to go into all the world preaching His gospel relying upon His Almighty power. Workers for God are not presumptuous when they rely heavily upon the Lord to fulfil His gracious promises of the exercise of Almighty power.

The belief that Jesus is the Son of God, Possessor of the nature and all the attributes and power of Deity, is the foundation of the Christian church—see Matthew 16:16-18; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:5-8. Why then, does the New Testament declare so forcefully that Jesus is no other than the Creator of all things? Because this truth is essential to our salvation. The meagre views which so many have had of the exalted character and office of Christ have narrowed their religious experience, and have greatly hindered their progress in the divine life. Do we need to broaden our view of the Lord's Deity or of some things pertaining to the exercise of His Almighty power in His capacity as Priest on His Father's throne? "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8: 1, 2).

This "great High Priest" (Hebrews 4:14) is equal with His Father. "... Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:6). "God ... His Son ... Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3).

The apostle Paul was chosen as a special agent to make clear to the church those truths which it is imperative for His people to understand. Observe how Paul discourses at great length on the glory of Christ's essential Deity and pre-existence; observe how he

brackets Christ's name with those of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and declares that, "By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the church ... For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (Colossians 1:16-19). In this same epistle, the apostle declared: "For in Him [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:9,10).

"They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3: 16). "They [ancient Israelites] drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased" (1 Corinthians 10:4,5, margin). Paul declares that the mighty God who led Israel out of Egyptian bondage across the desert to Canaan, that all-powerful God who wrought miracles for Israel, was no other than "Christ". It was Jesus in His pre-incarnate days Who went with them. Referencing the same event the inspired apostle applies that same wonderful truth to Christians on the way to the heavenly Canaan, that the same God, "Christ" the Saviour will be with them –

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]." (1 Corinthians 10:11-13)

Wonderful promise for us, living at the end of the world!

Our Lord, during his earthly ministry, claimed to be God. He openly exercised the prerogative of God, namely, to be able to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-11; Luke 7:48-50). The Jews were right in saying: "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Because Jesus was God incarnate, He unequivocally declared to the Samaritan woman at the well that He was the Son of God, the promised Messiah (John 4:25,26). Jesus professed to have power to give eternal life to all those upon whom He, with His infinite wisdom, saw fit to bestow this priceless gift. "The Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5:21-23). He revealed that He had complete mastery over nature, and possessed creative power—see Luke 9:16,17; John 2:9,10; Mark 2:5-12.

Jesus received worship which belongs only to the Deity. Our Lord replied to Satan's temptation: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:9,10). Yet Jesus received approvingly the worship that was offered Him—see Matthew 14:33; John 9:35-38; Matthew 28:9. After the incident of the miraculous catch of fishes Peter "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). Peter saw the manifestation of Divine power. In Jesus he saw One who held all nature under His control. The presence of Divinity revealed Peter's own unholiness.

Our Lord claimed to be equal in power with God the Father, possessing the same attributes. He declared that He did the same work as the Father (John 5:17); was "equal with God" (v. 18 with Philippians 2:6); exercised the same power as the Father (John 5:21); to receive the same honour as the Fa-

ther (v. 23). He claimed to be the "I AM", the Almighty Jehovah Who liberated the Israelites from Egypt (John 8:51-59). He claimed also to be "The Light of the World" (John 8:12; 9:5), and one with the Father (John 10:30). He did not deny the Jews' accusation: "We stone thee ... for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." He replied: "Say ye of Him, Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not ..., that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" (John 10:33-38). He claimed to be the Judge of all men (John 5: 26,27); that in the great day of judgment all nations will be gathered before His throne (Matthew 25:31-36); that they will all be judged by the word He has spoken (John 12:48); that eternal life is dependent upon believing upon Him (John 6:47,51); that the resurrection of the dead depends upon Him (John 6:39,40). In the book of Revelation He says: "I am ... the Lord ... the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8, compare with Revelation 22:13,16).

Practically everything recorded of Jesus in the New Testament testifies to His Divinity—this fact enters into the very warp and woof of every narrative, all doctrine, all instruction. The Bible teachings on creation, on redemption, the heavenly ministry, the judgment, the second advent, the resurrection, immortality, the home of the saved, the destruction of the wicked, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, of the angels, of the church—all of these are inseparable from the Almighty power and infinite wisdom of our Lord Jesus. Everything in the Bible proclaims with one mighty voice that Jesus is God in the fullest sense, and that all the prophecies and the fulfilment of all hopes and every promise depends upon His exercise of Omnipotent power and infinite wisdom. Soon the opening heavens will reveal Him at the head of a vast retinue of

mighty angels. “And on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:11-16). Then, as His Almighty word rings round the world, numberless multitudes of sleeping saints rise to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 5:28,29).

One of Paul’s favourite expressions concerning Jesus was “God our Saviour” (Titus 2:10,13; 3:4, 6).

Each thought, word, and deed is under the continual sight and constant supervision of the Lord Jesus. “He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18) because He, as man, knows how dependent human beings are upon Divine power, and because, as God, He has Almighty power which He employs to succour those who call upon Him to save them. “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

The belief in the Divinity of Christ is essential to salvation. The Divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life. Righteousness by faith has for its broad and indispensable foundation the belief in the divinity of Christ because that righteousness is obtained by faith in the continuous supply of power from Christ the inexhaustible Fountain of life. The power necessary for the development of righteousness comes from Christ Jesus in His priestly work in behalf of all who come to God through His perpetual ministry.

Only an infinite God could possibly meet the demands of man’s need, to answer the innumerable prayers with all their connotations and requirements. The exigencies occasioned by sin, the thousand plots of the evil one with his millions of minions, and human helplessness, are all handled with infinite skill and Almighty power. And only an infinite Saviour exercising Almighty power could possibly meet the requirements for the present or the future.

That the belief in the Lord’s Deity is essential to salvation may be seen by observing the Lord’s statement: “I am the Light of the world ... if ye believe not that I AM [*‘he’ is not in the Greek, as indicated by it being in italics*], ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). At first glance this may appear somewhat arbitrary, but mature consideration will reveal that our Lord states a fundamental truth, for salvation depends upon His ministry of power to those who come unto God by Him. There is no other Source of power—He alone is the One Who exercises Almighty power by which men are saved. That power not only created all things but it maintains the universe.

The maintaining of the illimitable universe requires the same keeping power as in its creation. This grand truth is emphasized in the Bible when the inspired writers teach the plan of salvation. This is the truth proclaimed by Paul when he clarified matters pertaining to the priestly work of Jesus. He said: “God ... hath ..., spoken unto us by His Son ... by Whom also He made the worlds; who being in the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Jesus created all the worlds; yes, but more than that, He is still “upholding all things by the word of His power”; yes, and more than that, He is exercising that same keeping power for those who look to Him for salvation. The worlds are sustained in their courses, they pursue their mighty orbits unfalteringly obeying the behest of the Son of God. He upholds them continually. In the same way He employs that same infinite knowledge and Almighty power in upholding all His trusting people. “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to

the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 24,25).

“By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the church ... for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell” (Colossians 1:16-19). Note again, why the creation or why we exist – “all things were created by Him, and for Him.” In other words, we belong to God. In another passage of Scripture, we are told, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. (1 Corinthians 6:20) What was the price? – the precious blood of Jesus.

Again Christ’s work as the Saviour of the Church is mentioned in connection with the truth that He not only created all things but “by Him all things consist” or are sustained. Verily that same keeping power exercised moment by moment in upholding the universe is employed in keeping man in his spiritual orbit moment by moment.

It is most important for each believer to understand the Deity of Jesus, that He is the Creator of all life and all worlds and that He employs His almighty power in His redemptive work for mankind. It is repeatedly stressed in the Scriptures that the Creator is the Redeemer, and in those passages where this truth is stated the emphasis is particularly upon the fact that His ability to redeem is because He, as the Creator, has the almighty power necessary to do the work of redemption—see Isaiah 43:1-3,11-14; 44:6,24; 45:11-13,17,18; John 1:1-3,12-14; Colossians 1:14-20; Heb. 1:1-3.

In the book of Isaiah commencing with the words, “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your

God” (Isaiah 40:1), the Lord reveals Himself as the Creator and Saviour of His people. Nowhere in all the Bible do we find such repeated emphasis upon the fact that He is the Creator, the Redeemer of Israel. In order to assure His people that He will exercise His almighty power in keeping them from evil, and from their foes, He utters sublime words exalting His position as the Creator of all things. In comparison with His might how utterly insignificant is this earth with all of its inhabitants (Isaiah 40:12-25). Hear His challenging words: “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth” (v. 26).

Then observe His application of this description of Himself as the Creator who knows the name of each of the myriad of millions of mighty suns and worlds and who sustains them all “by the greatness of His might”. He says: “Thus saith the Lord that created thee ... I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine” (Isaiah 43:1). This truth that Jesus as Creator knows the names of all people on this world is brought to view again when the Lord spoke concerning Cyrus, king of Persia: “... that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name, though thou hast not known Me” (Isaiah 45:3,4).

So the Lord states unequivocally that He employs the same Almighty power in naming and sustaining the saints as He does in naming and upholding the almost numberless hosts of the starry realms. In each it is the same Almighty power exercised by the same Person, even our Creator-Redeemer.

LOOKING TO JESUS

Our Lord declares that power will come to us when we look to

Him (Isaiah 45:22). The more we look to Him the greater will be our power. The formula could not be simpler.

Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life.

We look to God in prayer—that is, when we pray aright. A prayer to be effective must be directed to God. The mind must picture God; it must be concentrated upon God. We must learn the same lesson as that of Moses, for of him the inspired Book says: “He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27).

Here is the secret of power, the secret of victory, the secret of endurance—seeing Him Who is invisible. Keep the mind looking to God, and power flows into the life.

Look to Christ. Let the mind dwell, contemplate, upon His love, upon His beauty, the perfection, of His character. When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan’s constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour, and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ.

Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life. That is, just so long as we pray, that living power will flow into our life. Thus the soul grows “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10). Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness—all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly, by abiding in Him that we are to grow in grace. The mind must be constantly going out after God. Pray always. Rely upon Him hour by hour and moment by moment.

We must train our minds to look upward, for the thoughts to fasten upon God—and keep them there from early morning till late at night. Thus a living connection is made with God, the

union of the soul with the Lord is accomplished; but it has to be maintained.

Every individual, by his own act enters into a personal union with Christ by self-renunciation, faith and obedience. We must gain the victory over self, crucify the affections and lusts; and then begins the union of the soul with Christ. After the union is formed, it can be preserved only by continual, earnest, painstaking effort on our part.

This is the path to power—the mind fastens upon Jesus and maintains that vital connection with the Lord of life, light, and power. His power flows into our life, energizing the whole being. Receiving Christ we are clothed with power. Christ’s presence is a vitalizing power, strengthening the entire being.

When believers experience the righteousness of Christ pervading the life they diffuse vital energy, which is penetrating.

It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.

What is the righteousness of Christ? It is the unblemished character of Jesus.

How do we receive the righteousness of Jesus? By receiving Jesus as our personal Saviour.

The Holy Spirit will make all who are willing to be educated able to communicate the truth with power. It will renew every organ of the body, that God’s servants may work acceptably and successfully. Vitality increases under the influence of the Spirit’s action.

“The Spirit is life because of righteousness” the passage continues “The Spirit ... shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:10,11). Here we see the increasing manifestation of the presence of Jesus and our greater enjoyment and exercise of faith. Paul continues the same tenet of faith: “But we all, ... beholding ... the glory of the Lord, are changed

into the same image from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18) Here the same basic teaching is clearly stated: we are changed as we continue “beholding the glory of the Lord”.

The five foolish virgins represent the large number who will be lost. Why will they will be lost? Because they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. We are thus told plainly the reason the five wise virgins are saved,



because they have learned how to ‘look and live’ having learned this vital lesson. See Matthew 25.

Only those who are living up to the light they have, will receive greater light. Only those who have related themselves aright to power imparted will receive greater power. There is to be ‘first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear’ (Mark 4:28).

How to receive more power depends upon how we receive power in the first place—we lay hold on Jesus and He imparts His power, and that power increases as we continue to hold on to Him. This is illustrated in the case of the woman who received power for healing when she just touched the hem of His garment. The wondering crowd that pressed close about Christ, realized no vital power from the contact. But when the poor, suffering woman, in her great need, put forth her hand and touched the hem of Jesus’ garment, she felt the healing virtue. Hers was the touch of faith. Christ recognized that touch, and He determined to give a lesson for all His followers, to the close of time. Here was distinguished the casual contact from the touch of faith. But the touch of faith opens

to us the divine treasure-house of power and wisdom. See Matthew 9:20-22.

Thus in the healing of this woman, our Lord gave an illustration of how power is obtained. Connect up with Him and the life-giving flow of power commences. As we maintain that connection with Him the power continues and increases.

There is a wide difference between a pretended union and a real connection with Christ by faith.

Can we conceive of a closer, more intimate relation to Christ than is set forth in the words, ‘I am the vine, ye are the branches?’ (John 15:5) The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer’s relation to Christ. He abides in Christ, and draws nourishment from Him. We constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us. When this intimacy of connection and communion is formed, our sins are laid upon Christ, His righteousness is imputed to us. The power of evil is so identified with human nature that no man can overcome, except by union with Christ. A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. It is a union of utter dependence. After the union with Christ has been formed, it can be preserved only by earnest prayer and untiring effort.

The permanence of our faith is the condition of our union.

The permanence of our connection with Christ is the condition of our continued and increasing power. This is expressly stated by our Lord in His illustration of the vine and its branches seven times He urges us to “abide” in Him: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me . . . He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for severed from Me

ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ... If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:1-7).

As we continue to abide in Christ, despite hard circumstances that Satan casts about our feet to try to make us murmur against God and thus break off that union, then the Lord’s pleasure is revealed in that He fulfils His promise: “If ye abide in Me . . . ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you”.

But to know what is truth, he should search the Scriptures on bended knees, morning, noon, and night. Prayer should ascend from secret places, and a continual prayer should arise from his mind that God will guide him into all truth.

To “pray without ceasing” is to receive “power without ceasing”.

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” (Luke 21:36)

The hand of God is stretched out to save his people from sinking into the formal, Christless state into which the Jewish nation sank; to slight the means which God has ordained for this purpose, is to slight Jesus. The soul that would be saved must co-operate with God in the work of salvation; the human and the divine must unite in faith and practice. If we would have pardon, we must confess our sins, and believe in the mercy of God. Christ, our High Priest has said, “My grace is sufficient for thee.”

ONLY JESUS IS OUR PRIEST

Christianity is fundamentally a religion of salvation.

The work of gaining salvation is one of co-partnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the

character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness.

The office or work of the priest is perhaps the most difficult to present and the least understood of any part of the Christian system. The essential idea of a priest is that of a mediator between God and man. In his fallen state man is a sinner, guilty before God, and alienated from Him. He has no right of approach to God, nor does he have the ability, or even the desire, to approach Him. Instead, he wants to flee from God, and to have nothing to do with Him. He is, therefore, helpless until someone undertakes to act as his representative before God. And the only representative between man and God is the Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest.

The Bible teaches that, “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.” (1 Timothy 2:5).

The entire Old Testament Levitical service prefigured the sacrifice of Jesus and as such passed away as a unit at His death on the cross, also signified by the rendering of the temple veil. It is very inconsistent for a church to retain the priesthood while discarding the other elements of that Levitical system.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. His name was to be called Jesus for He would save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21) It follows that no question can go deeper into a religion than the question, how does this come about?

Increasingly, the churches must have some means of quieting their

consciences, and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. Two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world, would be saved by their merits (works), and those who would be saved in their sins (we can keep sinning till Jesus comes). Meanwhile, all species of error are being adopted into the churches.

Paul holds up the standard of perfection and shows how it may be reached. “Work out your own salvation,” he says, “for it is God which worketh in you.” (Philippians 2:12,13)

“The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. Seeing that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:12-16).

With these words the apostle Paul reveals the microscopic care and attention bestowed upon the children of men by the great high priest-Creator. He, the Word of God, as a sharp two edged sword, separates things that are difficult to distinguish or differentiate. He reads the thoughts, weighs the motives prompting the actions. This is the declaration of the inspired apostle when describing the office and ministry of our Lord Jesus as High Priest.

The same essential truth is also taught in the book of Revelation.

In this book our Lord is pictured in His priestly capacity, and so before presenting Himself as Priest in the sanctuary walking among the seven candlesticks (Revelation 1:11-20), our Lord declares: “I am the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). Then, having



presented Himself as the Almighty High Priest, He declares to each of the seven churches, “I know thy works” (Revelation 2 and 3). That infinite knowledge concerned not only the present but the complicated future, for John was invited to stand with our Lord as Jesus showed him “things which must be hereafter” (John 4:1). Then our Lord unveiled the future and revealed to John all the events that would befall the church. There at the very opening of the church’s experience the Lord demonstrated to John, for the benefit of succeeding generations, that all the future was to Him an open book, that nothing was hidden from Him, there would be nothing that could possibly surprise Him. Thus the church was to find joy and comfort in this knowledge that everything was known beforehand to the great Lord of the church, and that He had made provision for every emergency. To John was revealed all the enemies of the church; all the perils through which the church must pass, including the mighty scenes associated with the final conflict over the Sabbath

in the closing scenes of earthly history.

To John were opened scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the experience of the church. He saw the position, dangers, conflicts, and final deliverance of the people of God. Subjects of vast importance were revealed to him, especially for the last church.

The Bible teaching that the eyes of the Lord are continually upon us is not stated as a warning (though to the evil doer it should be). This teaching is presented so clearly in the Bible as an encouragement to the people of God; also because it is fundamental to Christian development. This fact must be grasped by those who are to obtain righteousness by faith—it is not a belief that one may believe or not as one feels disposed; it is a belief that must be acted upon as a fact that enters into the transaction of living the righteous life by faith. There can be no righteousness by faith without this knowledge burning into one's spiritual consciousness each moment of the day. Here is where many fail to grasp the meaning of righteousness by faith.

What infinite power is necessary for God to be able to see every person on this planet and to read every thought, hear every word, see each act, to make righteous inerrant judgments all day and every day on every person—as well as to govern the myriad worlds and suns that roll with faultless precision along their predetermined courses! It was this “awful”, inspiring truth that prompted David to write:

“Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from

Thy presence?”

After declaring that whithersoever he went he would find God there, that God watched his growth from months before he was born until he grew into manhood, David declared:

“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee” (See Psalms 139:1-18).

Our High Priest, Jesus, must be as infinite as God the Father, or else how could He function as man's Representative before His infinite Father. All the mercies and blessings of God come through Jesus. This oneness of operation with His Father is declared many times by Jesus. He says: “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me ... and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:27,28). “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14: 6). “I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10: 9).

From these and other Scriptures we see how essential it is for us to grasp the vital Christian teaching that our salvation depends upon Him Who is no less than an infinite Creator-Priest, even our Lord Jesus Who solemnly declares: “For if ye believe not that I AM He, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8: 24). Unless we believe that He is the great “I AM” of the Old Testament, the infinite God Who created the world and who has been with His people down all the ages, we “shall die in our sins”. Our only hope of overcoming sin is by believing in His Godhead and that He is exercising His Almighty power, moment by moment, in all we do, think or speak, as we keep the mind fastened upon Him.

“Wherefore, holy brethren,

partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1). These two facts—that Jesus was sent to this world by His Father to represent the Godhead to man and that back again in Heaven He would be man's representative on the throne of God—are inseparable: they are two facets of the one truth. Only the God-Man could be High Priest upon the throne of Deity. So essential is this mighty truth that it needs to be repeated again and again, for without the continual impartation of Almighty power from the High Priest no one can live the Christian life by faith. Righteousness by faith is using the Almighty power of Jesus for living a holy life. There can be no such thing as righteousness by faith without drawing upon that inexhaustible supply.

Jesus prayed: “Glorify Thou Me ... with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). Consider that He Who was sent was no other than the Son of God, the Creator of all. Thus the gospel of John commences with the same mighty truth: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-3,14).

The gospel of John, as is well known, was written to prove the Deity of our Lord, and everything in it bears evidence of this stupendous truth. Jesus declared that His works proved His Divinity (John 10:25,32,36-39). As shown in these verses, the Jews sought to apprehend him for blasphemy. Claiming to be the same in Person, nature, and attributes, as His Father, Jesus said: “If ye had known Me, ye should have known the Father also: and henceforth ye

know Him, and have seen Him . . . He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 14:7-11).

The sacrificial service that had pointed to Christ passed away; now the eyes of men are turned to the true sacrifice for the sins of the world. The earthly priesthood ceased; but we look to Jesus, the minister of the new covenant, and “to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, . . . by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Hebrews 12:24; 9:11-12). “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25

As regards the priesthood Christ alone is now our Priest,

By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, “I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” Exodus 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came “in the likeness of men,” He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God “manifest in the flesh.” 1 Timothy 3:16. And to us He says: “I AM the Good Shepherd.” “I AM the living Bread.” “I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matthew 28:18. I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. “God with us” is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.

our one and only High Priest. He fulfils that office in that He once offered up Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, thereby making unnecessary and putting an end to all other sacrifices. He paid the debt for the sin of His people, and so opened the way for renewed fellowship between them and God. And as the risen and exalted Saviour of His people He intercedes effectually for them with God the Father.

All of this is clearly set forth by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews who in the ninth chapter says that “Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption” (vss. 11,12); that we are redeemed through “the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God” (vs. 14); that “Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us” (vs. 24); that “now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (vs. 26); and in 8:1,2, that “We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.”

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:7,9) Forgiveness and cleansing = grace.

“By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of

yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). Christians have, by virtue of their union with Christ, free access to God at all times. This right is one of the finest things in the Christian faith, and it is a present possession. The Bible invites us to come to God through Christ, without any reference to priests or other intercessors.

The only mediatorial priesthood recognized in the New Testament is that of Christ, the great High Priest, and to Him alone is the title “priest” (hiereus) given: “Thou art a priest for ever, after the order (not the Levitical order of the Old Testament) of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7:17); “But he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, holy, guiltless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself” (Hebrews 7:24-27).

Paul enumerates the different kinds of ministers and offices in the Christian church, and the office of priest is not among them: “And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11). And again, “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers. ...” (1 Corinthians 12:28).

“Confess [your] faults (not your sins) one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16)

GOD WILL HAVE A RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of

water by the word,

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:26,27)

Today you are to give yourselves to God, that He may make of you vessels unto honour, and meet for His service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonouring to God. Today you are to have your vessel



purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Realising that when divine power is combined with human effort, the work will spread like fire in the stubble. It is therefore imperative that God has human agents in the field to fulfil what is recorded in Scripture— ... “and the earth was lightened with his glory.” (Revelation 18:1). God’s glory is His character, therefore the human agent has also to reflect the character, love and righteousness of Jesus. Is Jesus waiting for you or I?

When God’s work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favour. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

Who then composes the true church? The Bible offers two short descriptions of those who make up the church at the end of time –

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, (woman = church) and went to make war with the remnant (the last part) of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17) And,

Here is the patience of the saints*: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Revelation 14:12)

* There are going to be saints.

Further Jesus says, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20) Therefore, God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”. Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ’s church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church.

Where two or three are present who love and obey the commandments of God, Jesus there presides, let it be in the desolate place of the earth, in the wilderness, in the city enclosed in prison walls. The glory of God has penetrated the prison walls, flooding with glorious beams of heavenly light the darkest dungeon. His saints may suffer, but their sufferings will, like the apostles of old, spread their faith and win souls to Christ and glorify His holy name. The bitterest

opposition expressed by those who hate God's great moral standard of righteousness should not and will not shake the steadfast soul who trusts fully in God.

They that will be doers of the word are building securely, and the tempest and storm of persecution will not shake their foundation, because their souls are rooted to the eternal Rock.

Daniel after describing the march of the nations through the eons of time, gives us a glimpse of the closing events of this present world—

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation [even] to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame [and] everlasting contempt.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (Daniel 12:1-3)

Paul and his contemporaries lived through a time of persecution. So the saints at the end of time will do likewise. Does Paul give us a formula to meet the crisis, then and now, the original Christian church and the remnant church? Yes, he does!

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places].

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,

and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, (Ephesians 6:10-19)

The Spirit of the Almighty is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its influence become witnesses for God and His truth. In many places consecrated men and women may be seen communicating to others the light that has made plain to them the way of salvation through Christ. And as they continue to let their light shine, as did those who were baptized with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they receive more and still more of the Spirit's power. Thus the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God.

But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man.

Daily they are improving the opportunities for service that lie within their reach. Daily they are witnessing for the Master wherever they may be, whether in some humble sphere of labour in the home, or in a public field of usefulness.

Morning by morning, as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying

power. As they go forth to the day's duties, they have the assurance that the unseen agency of the Holy Spirit enables them to be "labourers together with God.

Every vestige of business that breeds dishonesty, every thread of selfishness, is to be swept away by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. All idolatry is to be consumed. Let every altar be thrown down, save the one that sanctifies the gift and the giver,—the cross of Calvary.

We must enter upon the work individually. We must pray more, and talk less.

As we have previously discussed, only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the work of the Holy Spirit. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.

Those who make no decided effort, but simply wait for the Holy Spirit to compel them to action, will perish in darkness. You are not to sit still and do nothing in the work of God. If the professed people of God do not remove their wrongs, correct their errors and cleanse their filthiness of the flesh and spirit, they will be found wanting.

Let none think that in attending church gatherings, their duty is done. It is not an immutable law that all who attend general gatherings or local meetings shall receive large supplies of blessing from heaven.

As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation," they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of his Spirit. As the last warning message covers the earth, and as great power and glory attends the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the same outpouring of the Holy Spirit which revives and strengthens them to pass through

this coming time of trouble, which constitutes the last trial, before "he (Jesus) that liveth, and was dead; ... and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18) opens the graves of the righteous dead. And "we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (See 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17)

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. (Titus 2:11-15). Praise God!

ONE OF CHRIST'S LAST CALLS TO HIS PEOPLE

The prophecy of Revelation 16:13-16 presents the final conflict between the forces of righteousness and unrighteousness; it also presents Christ's last solemn warning to His people to be "clad in the armour" of His righteousness in preparation for the final conflict. There are other calls made to God's people in Revelation 14:6-12 and Revelation 18:4.

It would be well to take a brief look at this passage concerning the very last great battle, Armageddon.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs (frogs croak in unison) [come] out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet (speaking as one).

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, [which] go forth unto the kings of the earth

and of the whole world, (now, no separation of church and state – the churches will again approach the state to enforce its decrees) to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty (in the person of His saints).

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame (the saints need to be prepared for the persecution)

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. Revelation 16:13-16

[It is not within the scope of this article to go into detail of the prophecies. However, the reader of this Tabloid would be well rewarded to request a copy of the book – *The Great Controversy* – from an address appearing at the back of this Tabloid. Please bear in mind that stocks may have been exhausted.]

So powerfully does the Lord appeal to His people in this message that Satan has employed all his cunning and determination to deflect its meaning. Once God's people are inoculated with the virus of the idea that this prophecy pertains to some military conflict, it then becomes difficult for them to discern the true meaning. This prophecy is indeed a special message of the Lord to His people to prepare for the final conflict with the powers of evil.

The world's last 'holy' war is further sustained by an analysis of the structure of the book of Revelation.

Why was this book given? The Almighty Lord Jesus (Revelation 1:8), on the Lord's Day" (1:10), the sacred Memorial of His creative redemptive power, spoke to John with "a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches" (1:11). "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches" (22:16). To John were opened scenes of deep and

thrilling interest in the experience of the church. He saw the position, dangers, conflicts, and final deliverance of the people of God. Subjects of vast importance were revealed to him, especially for the last church, that those who should turn from error to truth might be instructed concerning the perils and conflicts before them. None need be in darkness in regard to what is coming upon the earth. Why, then, this widespread ignorance concerning an important part of Holy Writ? Why this general reluctance to investigate its teachings?

It is the result of a studied effort of the prince of darkness to conceal from men that which reveals his deceptions. For this reason, Christ the Revelator, foreseeing the warfare that should be waged against the study of the Revelation, pronounced a blessing upon all who should read, hear, and observe the words of the prophecy" (See Revelation 1:3).

The Revelation was written concerning the experience of the church, her conflicts and deliverances, especially concerning the last church and the "final deliverance" of the people of God. When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We are also informed of Satan's special hatred for the Revelation because in it Christ has revealed the enemy's "deceptions". But eventually God's people will see that the book deals with God and His people.

The book of Revelation is introduced with the words: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ"—it is not a Revelation concerning some supposed military conflict in the Middle East involving East and West, Russia or any such other nation. Such teachings are of Satanic origin and are completely false, having no basis in the Bible. The Revelation is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ", and its contents deal with Christ's Church and her enemies.

The "symbols and figures" of

the Revelation concern the church and her enemies. The imagery employed in describing Armageddon is highly symbolic and concerns the church and her enemies.

Satan's special hatred is shown toward this passage (Revelation 16:12-16) because it is a key to the understanding of the subject of righteousness by faith, which is essential to all who will stand true to God through the final conflict. Clad in the armour of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. This is the true interpretation of Revelation 16:13-16. This interpretation is in harmony with all Biblical laws of interpretation. For instance, it is a well-known fact that the purpose for which the Bible was written is to explain the great controversy—or war—between the forces of good and evil. The Christian is pictured as a soldier going to war against the forces of evil wearing armour and carrying a sword, God's Word—see Ephesians 6:10-18. He is to "war a good warfare" (1 Timothy 1:18), to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3), and to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12).

In Revelation 12:7-9 this great "war" is introduced and its terminal mentioned in v. 17. It is enlarged upon in Revelation 13, where the beast's rise, its "war" upon the saints in the Dark Ages, its deadly wound, its healing and association with the two-horned beast are explained. Rev. 14 explains God's message preparing a people to stand through the final conflict; chapter 15, the action that forever settles the two sides in the final conflict; then chapter 16 enlarges upon the final crisis. In Revelation 17:13-14 additional features are presented, and in Revelation 19:11-21 further details of the same "war" are given, including another portrayal of the forces of evil that have opposed Christ and His church.

After John's description in Revelation 16 of that miracle-working power which was to

gather the world to the last great conflict, the symbols are dropped, and the trumpet voice once more gives a certain sound. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev. 16:15).

"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Revelation 3:3. The advent of Christ will surprise the false teachers. They are saying, "Peace and safety." Like the priests and teachers before the fall of Jerusalem, they look for the church to enjoy earthly prosperity and glory. The signs of the times they interpret as foreshadowing this. But what saith the word of Inspiration? "Sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth, upon all who make this world their home, the day of God will come as a snare. It comes to them as a prowling thief.

The world, full of rioting, full of godless pleasure, is asleep, asleep in carnal security. Men are putting afar off the coming of the Lord. They laugh at warnings. The proud boast is made, "All things continue as they were from the beginning." "Tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." 2 Peter 3:4; Isaiah 56:12. We will go deeper into pleasure loving. But Christ says, "Behold, I come as a thief." Revelation 16:15. At the very time when the world is asking in scorn, "Where is the promise of His coming?" the signs are fulfilling. While they cry, "Peace and safety," sudden destruction is coming. When the scorner, the rejecter of truth, has become presumptuous; when the routine of work in the various money-making lines is carried on without regard to principle; when the student is eagerly seeking knowledge of everything but his Bible, Christ comes as a thief.

Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their

shadows before. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future? Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the general-ship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win.

The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round, and the heavens still declare the glory of God. Men are still eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying, and giving in marriage. Merchants are still buying and selling. Men are jostling one against another, contending for the highest place. Pleasure lovers are still crowding to theatres, sporting venues, gambling halls. The highest excitement prevails, yet probation's hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day just before the seven last plagues will be poured out, when those fateful words will be proclaimed in heaven—

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Revelation 22:11)—At that moment the destiny of every man, woman and child will be sealed, and the door of mercy be forever shut. 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Every form of evil is to spring into intense activity. Evil angels unite their powers with evil men, and as they have been in constant conflict and attained an experience in the best modes of deception and battle and have been strengthening for centuries, they will not yield the last great final contest without a desperate struggle and all the world will be on one side or the other of the question.

God's people are to hear a bold, decided testimony for the truth, unfolding the purposes of God by the witness of pen and voice. In place after place they are to proclaim the message of God's Word, arousing men and women to comprehend the truth.

The storm is coming, relentless in its fury. Are we prepared to meet it? Are our feet on the Rock of Ages? Are we one with Christ, as He is one with the Father?

Jesus asked His disciples to 'watch and pray' in the garden of Gethsemane. He "findeth them asleep." They had not heeded the repeated warning, "Watch and pray." They seemed paralyzed by a stupor which they might have shaken off if they had continued pleading with God. They did not realize the necessity of watchfulness and earnest prayer in order to withstand temptation.

Furthermore, that climactic event of Satan appearing through his agent Judas is about to be repeated—As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. Does not Matthew 24 warn us?—

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here [is] Christ, or there; believe [it] not.

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

"Behold, I have told you before.

"Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, [he is]

in the secret chambers; believe [it] not." Matthew 24:23-26

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:36

In this last conflict the Captain of the Lord's host [Joshua 5:15] is leading on the armies of heaven and mingling in the ranks and fighting our battles for us. We shall have apostasies; we expect them. "They will go out from us because they were not of us" (see 1 John 2:19). "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

Satan, in co-operation with his angels and with evil men, will put forth every effort to gain the victory, and will appear to succeed. But from this conflict, truth and righteousness will come forth triumphant in victory. 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can cause us to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee,"

He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18.

Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5,4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalms 40:8. When on earth, He

said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.

The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.

We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." "Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." 1 John 3:24; 2:3. This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness.

The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and

regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into the daily practice.

He who becomes a partaker of the divine nature will be in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness, His holy law. This is the rule by which God measures the actions of men. This will be the test of character in the judgment.

There are many who claim that by the death of Christ the law was abrogated; but in this they contradict Christ's own words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. . . . Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Matthew 5:17, 18. It was to atone for man's transgression of the law that Christ laid down His life. Could the law have been changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died. By His life on earth He honored the law of God. By His death He established it. He gave His life as a sacrifice, not to destroy God's law, not to create a lower standard, but that justice might be maintained, that the law might be shown to be immutable, that it might stand fast forever.

Verses 13 to 15 (Revelation 16) refer to the events that lead up to that doom of Babylon, the destruction of the hosts of Babylon (three parts—churches and state), and this fact is evident by the very fact that in v. 15 the Lord addresses His people and warns them that He is about to close His ministry as our High Priest. The same expression concerning keeping the "garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" is a repetition of the Lord's message to the last church in the Christian era—see Revelation 3:18. That message is Christ's urgent appeal to His people to hear His voice as He stands at the door knocking for entrance before He puts on His royal robes and comes as KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF

LORDS, so must this repetition of that message in Revelation 16:15 be imminent!

EMPOWERED BY GOD THE SAINTS TAKE THE FINAL MESSAGE ABROAD

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1, 2.

The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning. He will not close up the period of His mediatorial work (See Revelation 22:11) until the message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. The law of God is to be magnified; its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. See Romans 9:28

The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of Revelation 14:6-12. This message embraces the two preceding messages. It is represented as being given with a loud voice; that is, with the power of the Holy Spirit:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine

of the wrath of her fornication.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:6-12

While Satan works with his lying wonders, the time will be fulfilled foretold in the Revelation, and the mighty angel that shall lighten the earth with his glory will proclaim the fall of Babylon, and call upon God's people to forsake her.

In the last work for the warning of the world, two distinct calls are made to the churches. The second angel's message is, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." And in the loud cry of the third angel's message a voice is heard from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Revelation 18:4

There is a great work to be done, and every effort possible must be made to reveal Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour, Christ as the Sin Bearer, Christ as the bright and morning Star; and the Lord will give us favour before the world until our work is done.

SATAN HOPES TO TAKE THE WHOLE WORLD CAPTIVE

Fearful is the issue to which all the world is soon to be brought.

As the message of Christ's righteousness sounds from one end of the earth to the other the power of which, will madden those who oppose it.

The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not.

The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that all, 'both small and great, rich and poor,



(This message is going around the world. Moscow above.)

free and bond' (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the custom of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.

Church and State are now making preparations for the future conflict. To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for a Sunday law. Those who fear God cannot accept an institution that violates a precept of the Decalogue. On this battle-field comes the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. As the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the disciples of

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the impending destruction of Jerusalem, so will this apostasy be a sign that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return.

The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and in this work the churches unite. As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment-keepers.

That time will be a time of severe test on the character—only those who have understood and applied the Saviour's call to His church to be "clad in the armour" of His righteousness will endure through that final conflict. Then, as the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified by it [i.e., having failed to be made righteous by faith] through obedience to the truth, abandon their position, and join the ranks of the opposition.

Soon God's people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear genuine and true will forsake the truth. To stand in defence of truth and righteousness will be a great test. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His Word. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths

of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.

The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering—a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah.

The honour of the law of God is to be vindicated before the unfallen worlds, before the heavenly universe, and before the fallen world. The bitterest persecution will come, but when Zion arises, and puts on her beautiful garments, she will shine forth in the beauty of holiness.

NOTE: ON ARMAGEDDON

When the three powers make "war" with the remnant (Revelation 12:17), they make "war with the Lamb" (Revelation 17:14), and in so doing they gather to the "war" of the Almighty Lamb, the great God, Jesus (Revelation 16:14), a war that will end in the destruction (Armageddon means, "the mountain of destruction") of all the enemies of the church, including all professing Christians who fail to be "clad in the armour of Christ's righteousness".

They work miracles to bring about the enforcement of the mark of the beast; these are the same miracles that lead the world

to Armageddon! Evil spirits communicate with the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon saying that they are sent by Christ to declare it is His will for them to keep Sunday; these are the same powers who lead the world to Armageddon

By the enforcement of Sunday laws Satan will make "war on the remnant." That, in itself, will not be Armageddon, but these laws will bring the church persecution and, later, the threat of death. The attempt to slay God's people because of their allegiance to the Sabbath is the prelude to the slaughter of Armageddon. By passing stringent Sunday laws, Satan makes "war on the remnant", but "Armageddon" is God's battle (the war . . . of God, the Almighty) in which He intervenes on behalf of His people, and destroys those who have sought to slay them. Armageddon will come to those who persecute God's people through the enforcement of Sunday laws. The events described in Revelation 16:17-21 are part of "the war of the great day of God".

God draws upon His armoury in nature to bring death and destruction to a world in rebellion against His Government and people.

"The Lord hath opened His armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of His indignation" (Jeremiah 50:25).

"The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of His indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty" (Isaiah 13:4-13).

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (Malachi 4:1)

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"I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds." Jeremiah 23:3

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, And He will dwell with them, And they shall be His people, And God Himself shall be with them, And be their God." Revelation 21:3. Paradise will be restored to the saints. Praise God!

And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Daniel 7:27.

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