

A Berean Study on Knowledge

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1. What is the importance of knowledge?

(Mat 4:4) But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

R3058-3060 - LIVING BY EVERY WORD OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.

"Man shall not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."-
-`Matt. 4:4`.

BREAD is a general name for food; for that which satisfies the cravings of hunger; for that which builds up and strengthens; for that which enables the continuance of life. It was appropriate, therefore, that the Lord should use bread as a symbol, or figure of that heavenly sustenance which God has arranged should now upbuild and strengthen his people, and eventually, by the first resurrection, impart to them life everlasting. Divine truth is represented as being such spiritual food; and our Lord himself, because in the divine plan he is the channel of the truth,--"the way, the truth, the life,"--is spoken of as being also "the bread of life" for his people. We are to eat, or partake of the life-giving qualities which he freely gives us in himself, if we would reach the goal of our hope--eternal life.

Our text is our Lord's reply to the Tempter when he was in the wilderness fasting and hungry. The Tempter had suggested the use of the powers which Jesus had received a few days previous when, at his baptism in Jordan, he received the holy spirit, and with it the gifts and powers which subsequently enabled him not only to heal the sick, but to turn water into wine and to feed a multitude by increasing the two barley loaves and the two small fishes. The Adversary's proposition was that the Lord should use this power for the gratification of his own appetite. He said, "Command that these stones be made bread."

However pleased the Lord was to have these divine powers communicated through the holy spirit he had received, however glad he was, at appropriate times, to perform the miracles incidental to his ministry, he knew that the powers were not given him for any selfish use, for any self-gratification; and, therefore, he declined the suggestion and his reply is our text. In passing, we note that there is a lesson here worthy of the attention of all God's people; that spiritual and divine things are not to be used in a mercenary or selfish manner. So far as they can discern matters, the Lord's people are to keep separate and distinct their own personal preferences, desires and appetites, from the heavenly and spiritual things; and not use the latter for the services of the flesh, however pure and good the fleshly desires may be.

Our Lord's words accept the suggestion that bread, food, necessary to human sustenance under present conditions; but they carry the thought further --they draw our attention to a higher life than the present one. The present life is not really life, but death: the world is under divine sentence of death; and only those who have come by faith into relationship with God have "passed from death unto life;" as our Master on another occasion said, "He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son shall not see life." And again he said to one who was thinking of becoming his servant, his follower--"Let the dead bury their dead, follow thou me."

From this standpoint we see that man cannot live by bread alone. He has the divine sentence against him, "dying thou shalt die"; and he can find no kind of bread, no kind of food, that will produce life in the full and complete sense of that word--that will swallow up death in life. He must look for another kind of "bread of life" than any earthly food; he must have another kind of "water of life" than any earthly drink. It is this heavenly food or supply to which our Lord refers; saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

But how is it possible for us to live by the words that proceed out of the mouth of God? What did Jesus mean? How can God's words give us life?

He meant that all hopes of eternal life depend upon God--upon the divine plan and its promises. Looking into these promises we can see distinctly that the divine plan, dating from before the foundation of the world, is that all of God's creatures, created in his likeness and abiding in faith, love and obedience, in harmony with him, shall have life everlasting. This is God's general word upon the subject; namely, that obedience is the condition of life everlasting. This is, undoubtedly, what our Lord had in mind in using the words of our text: he may also have had the thought that he had come into the world upon a special mission, to do the Father's will, and that his understanding from the beginning was that his perfect obedience to the divine will would insure him glory, honor, immortality with the Father, eventually; but that any disobedience would mean the forfeiture of divine favor, and would involve the sentence of disobedience; namely, death.

Our Lord's prompt decision, therefore, was that to disobey the Father's will, and thus to secure bread for the sustenance of his body, would be a great mistake; that food thus secured could sustain life for but a little while;--that his better plan would be to trust in the Word of God, the divine promise that those who love and serve and obey him shall ultimately come off conquerors and more, and have eternal life with God. And this, our Master's conclusion, is full of instruction for us who are his disciples, seeking to walk in his footsteps. We are to learn the lesson that a man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesseth--food and raiment-- but that his life in the fullest, grandest, highest sense, is dependent upon his complete submission to the divine will--his careful attention to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The words of God's mouth to us are not exactly the same as to our Lord Jesus and to the holy angels; --because we are by nature children of wrath even as others--sinners: we must, therefore, be addressed from a true standpoint to begin with. Thus it is that we hear the words of God's mouth in different languages at different times in our experiences.

(1) The first word of God's mouth to us is the message of justice--informing us that we are sinners, imperfect, helpless, as respects our own restoration to the divine image. This first word which proceedeth out of God's mouth to us is alarming; he declares us to be under a sentence or curse of death because of sin;--that "the soul that sinneth shall die"; that "the wages of sin is death." It tells us that by nature we are "children of wrath even as others,"-- strangers and foreigners, aliens from God and all his blessings, which are held in reservation for those who love him and obey him and maintain the perfection in which they were created. It is necessary that we should hear this voice; necessary that we should be alarmed and feel fearful of the penalty of death; and necessary that we feel lonely and discouraged in our separation from God and our alienation from his gracious provisions for those who love him and whom he loves. This fear and dejection are necessary in a general way to prepare us for the next word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God; namely,

THE WORD OF GOD'S PITY AND AID.

(2) The message that God, while manifesting his absolute justice and the immutable integrity of his first word and sentence, is, nevertheless, kindly disposed toward us--that he pities us in our fallen condition. This word is not to the effect that divine pity will admit us as sinners into divine favor, present and future; but that divine pity contemplated in advance a ransom-price which, meeting the claims of divine justice, would permit of man's recovery from his condition of sin and death,--back to a condition of holiness and life everlasting--as though he had never sinned, had never been sentenced. This word which proceeded out of the mouth of God, prophesying a blessing and opportunity for recovery to as many as will accept, was first a voice to Abraham saying, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." As this hope begins to dawn in the heart of the penitent one, seeking life-eternal at the fountain of grace and truth, the ears of his understanding listen intently for other words of life from his Creator and he hears (^ Acts 10:36`),

THE VOICE OF GOD "SPEAKING PEACE BY JESUS CHRIST."

(3) The message of peace is that God has already provided the ransom price for sinners;--that Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man"; that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and rose again for our justification." This word from God's mouth informs us that through this transaction, which is entirely his own without our instigation or aid, "He may be just and yet the justifier of those who believe in Jesus." (^ Rom. 3:26`.) Oh, what joy, what hope of life comes into our hearts as we hear this word which proceeded out of the mouth of God! We exclaim with the Apostle, "If God be for us who can be against us?" If God so loved us while we were yet sinners, much more does he love us since we are seeking him, desirous of returning to fellowship with him, and since we accept the provision of his grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus to all who accept the atonement which is in Christ Jesus, through his blood, God indeed speaks words of grace and peace--forgiveness, reconciliation, mercy, love, kindness.

GOD'S WORD TO RECLAIMED SONS.

(4) Another word or message proceeds from the mouth of God, to such as have heard of his grace in Christ and have accepted it. He calls them children-- not now "children of wrath," not

now "children of the Evil One," but he addresses them as reclaimed children, as his own, as those to whom he is pleased to give his blessings upon certain conditions which he specifies; saying, "My son, give me thine heart." This call for the heart is a call for full consecration, for complete setting apart to the Lord and to his service. Our will is the center of our intelligence, our being; if the heart, the will, be given to God, it carries with it the title to every action, word and thought. It is such only as delight to respond to this Word or message from the mouth of God that he is pleased to own in the special sense of sonship which pertains to this Gospel age--sonship in the house of sons, of which Christ Jesus, our Lord, is the Head.

"THE WORD OF PROMISE."

(5) In our ignorance of the greatness of our Heavenly Father and the richness of his grace toward us in Christ Jesus our Lord, we might fail to appreciate the necessity or desirability of a full consecration of our hearts to him. In our ignorance we might prefer to say, "Some of self and some of thee." Knowing this, God, in his compassion, has been pleased to set before us certain features of his plan, and hence we hear his voice again in the "exceeding great and precious promises" of his Word. In these he points out to us the wisdom of a full consecration and complete obedience to him--assuring us in these promises that by obedience to them we may become partakers of the greatest of all blessings,--the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4.) Oh, how wonderful that the great Creator should condescend not only to redeem sinners but to urge, to entice them to receive his bounties and blessings! From the time the consecration begins a measure of the holy spirit is granted, that the consecrated one may, by application--by hungering and thirsting for the words which proceed out of the mouth of God, and by feeding upon them, --be enabled to "Comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." (Eph. 3:18,19.) Ah, yes! those who have heard and have fed upon "the words which proceed out of the mouth of God" thus far, find indeed a new life begun, a new vitality, a new energy,--new hopes, new aims, new ambitions, "old things are passed away," everything is tinged with the glories of the heavenly things which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive"--the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him;--an understanding and appreciation of which God, in some measure, gives to such by his spirit, which "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

FEEDING ON THE WORD OF ADMONITION.

(6) Harkening further for the words which proceed from the mouth of God--"Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life"--we hear a word of admonition. The Father instructs us, that the glorious things to which he now calls us cannot possibly be ours unless our consecration to him and submission to the influences of his providences and promises shall change, transform, renew our minds; --so that the things once loved we will hate, and the things once hated we will love. As a father spareth not the rod of chastisement from the son whom he loves, so the Lord will not spare the rod of affliction and chastisement from those who are truly his; because he loves them, and because he desires to develop in them such a character as will be pleasing to him, and as will permit him eventually to make them his sons on the plane of glory, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, their Lord.

This word respecting the necessity of chastisement and our correction in righteousness, that we may become conformed to the image of God's dear Son (Rom. 8:29), is accompanied with assurances of love from the Father--assurances that "Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him." He says to us also, through another apostle, "Faint not when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." He explains that such discipline is not prompted by anger towards us, but by his love, and if we are rightly exercised by the disciplines, trials, experiences of life, they will "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;"--they will work out in us such characters as the Lord will be able to use in the service to which he hath called us--the service of the Millennial age--the service of the royal priesthood, to be associated with Christ in the work of judging and blessing the world of mankind. The proper response of all who have the true spirit of sonship is expressed in the language of our Lord and Master, "Not my will but thine be done," O Lord; "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." Such as thus respond to the chastisement of the Lord, step more and more into divine favor, and hear other words of comfort, of grace, of help.

"YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE."

(7) God's Word or message of patience is, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (Jas. 1:4) How necessary to our perfection is this divine counsel--this Word which proceeds from the mouth of God! We might imagine that we had received sufficient testing and proving to indicate our loyalty to the Lord, to the principles of righteousness, long before we had been sufficiently proved according to the Lord's standards in the testing of character. He therefore graciously explains to us how necessary patience will be, that we should not think it strange concerning the fiery trials which must test us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. (1 Pet. 4:12) On the contrary he points out to us as we grow in grace and in knowledge and in ability to comprehend --that the glory, honor and immortality to which he has invited the Church of this Gospel age, is so high, so grand a position, that those who would share those honors must expect, necessarily, to be severely tried and tested that their absolute loyalty to the Lord and to the principles of his righteousness--justice, truth, love--shall be beyond question. Our characters must become crystalized along these lines, firm as adamant, before we shall be ready to be received as the "overcomers" who shall inherit all things, and share the kingdom and glory with the Captain of our salvation. He points out to us, further, that if it was necessary for the Captain of our salvation to be tempted and tried, tested and proved, much more reasonable is it that we who were children of wrath, and justified only through his grace, should be thoroughly proven as respects our loyalty.

WORDS OF CONSOLATION FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD.

(8) We might well be exercised with the strictness of the divine requirements as respects this overcoming class, and might say to ourselves, Others may attain to such glories and blessings; but we are too weak in the flesh through the fall and cannot hope to come off victors--cannot hope to stand the trials and tests which the Lord would impose. And here the Lord speaks again, a gracious word of comfort, consolation and encouragement, informing us that the perfection he is expecting is not a perfection in the flesh and of the flesh which is weak and imperfect, but a perfection of the heart, of the will, of the mind, of the intention. He informs us that he is not

judging us as human beings according to the flesh, but as new creatures according to the mind, the new will. He informs us that although he will expect the new mind to do its very best in the matter of controlling the flesh and bringing it into subjection, yet, nevertheless, he knows that the flesh being imperfect, perfection according to the flesh is an impossibility to any of the fallen race: and that, therefore, his arrangement through Christ under the New Covenant is, that the imperfections of the flesh which are not assented to by our wills are not counted as ours. They are covered by the merit of Christ's sacrifice, and are ignored in the Heavenly Father's reckoning with us. He assures us that we are to be judged according to the spirit (will, intent) and not according to the flesh.

What comfort and consolation are in these assurances! These are wonderful words of life, indeed! They inspire us with hope. If God will accept perfect heart-intentions, as instead of the absolute perfection of the flesh,--then indeed we have hope of attaining to the standard which he has marked for us,--the standard of perfection. We can be perfect in intention, in will, or, as the Master expresses it, "pure in heart", even though we cannot be perfect in the flesh. We hear through the Apostle the word proceeding out of the mouth of God to this effect, "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." (Rom. 8:4.) We can walk after the spirit, though, so far as our mortal bodies are concerned, we cannot walk up to the spirit's requirements. Our minds can walk up to the spirit, our intentions can be perfect; and this is what our Heavenly Father seeks in us, perfection of intention.

THE WORD OF RESURRECTION.

(9) A further word from the mouth of God assures us that he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust--under sentence of death, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return"--weak, imperfect, dying; and that it is not his purpose that we shall always be in conflict with ourselves--perfect will against imperfect body,--that he has provided that in the resurrection we shall have new, perfect bodies in full accord with our new minds. He assures us that he is able and willing to do all this, and that he proposes to give to his "elect" bodies of a still higher order than the human--that he will give us spiritual bodies. They shall have a part in the first resurrection, and thenceforth be able to do the Father's will perfectly in every respect--as they now show themselves desirous of doing his will so far as they are able. Oh, gracious provisions! O wonderful words of compassion, inspiring us to wonderful hopes of eternal life and glory! It will be to such as thus overcome in spirit, in faith (I John 5:4), that the Lord will give the final word of his mouth--"Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God--every admonition, every encouragement, every promise, is necessary to the development of those whom God is now calling to eternal life as joint-heirs with his Son in the Kingdom. The eating of natural food could not bring this life-eternal, nor its attendant glories; but the eating and appropriating of these words from the mouth of God can bring to us all these blessings which we crave. Let us then, more and more, as the disciples, pupils, of the Lord Jesus, keep in memory and act upon the suggestion of the words of this text, "Man shall not live by bread alone: but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

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There is among Christians today a great lack of established faith on any point of doctrine. They say, "I think," "I hope," or "Perhaps it may be so, but this is only my opinion, and it may be right or it may be wrong. I have charity, however, for your opposing opinion, and for every man's opinion; for who knows which is right? I'm sure I cannot say; but, nevertheless, I have great faith and charity (?). I shake hands with every body and call him brother if he claims to be a Christian, no matter what he believes and teaches, whether he is pointing to Christ as the door to the sheepfold, or whether he is trying to teach men how to climb up some other way. In Christian love I bid them all Godspeed and pray for the success of all their teachings, no matter how antagonistic they may be to each other or to the Scriptures as I read them."

All this passes among Christians generally for large-hearted benevolence and personal humility, while in fact it is an ignoble, compromising spirit that is unwilling to forego the friendship of those who oppose the Lord by opposing the truth; and which would rather see the truth suffer, and those weak in the faith stumbled, than that they should bear the reproach of Christ. Those who have real and sincere faith in God are willing to take him at his word; and with these the first principles of the doctrine should long ago have been established; much of the superstructure of gold and silver and precious stones should already be erected, and the work be steadily progressing. Such are able, if they are loyal and true to God, to discern between truth and error. The Apostle John, recognizing this ability, says, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 10.) We ought to know what we believe and why we believe it, and then should be bold and uncompromising in declaring it; for "if the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

Again says the Apostle (1 Cor. 2:6-10), "However, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [developed; we are not to cast our pearls before swine]; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes [the popular leaders and teachers] of this world, that come to naught. But we speak the wisdom of God, which was hidden in a mystery, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew....Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit [or mind of God in us, is so anxious to know his truth, that it] searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God."

The princes of this world do know something of astronomy and geology, and have their ideas of the shape of the earth, etc., but they have not known this hidden wisdom of the divine plan, which maps out a destiny so glorious to the faithful saints who will constitute the royalty of the age to come. Let the world speculate as it may about its own themes of interest, but let us devote ourselves to the one thing in hand, avoiding foolish questions and genealogies and contentions, ...for they are unprofitable and vain. (Titus 3:9.) Let us be faithful to our commission to preach this gospel to the meek who are ready to hear it. (Isa. 61:1.) Let the bride of Christ be diligent in making herself ready (Rev. 19:7), for the marriage of the Lamb is the event of the very near future.

2. In what four ways may knowledge be obtained?

A121:3

But the question recurs in another form: Could not man have been made acquainted with evil in some other way than by experience? There are four ways of knowing things, namely, by intuition, by observation, by experience, and by information received through sources accepted as positively truthful. An intuitive knowledge would be a direct apprehension, without the process of reasoning, or the necessity for proof. Such knowledge belongs only to the divine Jehovah, the eternal fountain of all wisdom and truth, who, of necessity and in the very nature of things, is superior to all his creatures. Therefore, man's knowledge of good and evil could not be intuitive. Man's knowledge might have come by observation, but in that event there must needs have been some exhibition of evil and its results for man to observe. This would imply the permission of evil somewhere, among some beings, and why not as well among men, and upon the earth, as among others elsewhere?

3. In which of these ways did Adam possess a knowledge of evil before he sinned?**A122:2**

Adam already had a knowledge of evil by information, but that was insufficient to restrain him from trying the experiment. Adam and Eve knew God as their Creator, and hence as the one who had the right to control and direct them; and God had said of the forbidden tree, "In the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die." They had, therefore, a theoretical knowledge of evil, though they had never observed or experienced its effects. Consequently, they did not appreciate their Creator's loving authority and his beneficent law, nor the dangers from which he thereby proposed to protect them. They therefore yielded to the temptation which God wisely permitted, the ultimate utility of which his wisdom had traced.

4. Where is the source of all true knowledge?

(Joh 17:17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

(Pro 2:6) For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

(Joh 6:45) It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, *cometh* unto me.

E50:2-4

The Father himself, the great Jehovah, is not only the great law-giver but also the Great Teacher of his own law. His own great plan for human salvation will yet be seen by all of his intelligent sons to contain the grandest possible exemplifications of Justice, Love and Wisdom in combination, and yet each perfect, inviolate.

Our Lord Jesus was and still is the Great Teacher of men by the appointment of the Heavenly Father, the great Master Teacher above all. And this is precisely what our dear Redeemer

claimed and taught. Did he not publicly declare that his teachings were of things he had already learned of the Father? saying, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." "My doctrine [teaching] is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. ...He that seeketh the glory of him that sent him the same is true." "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." "I have given them thy word." "They have kept thy word." "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 7:16-18; 8:38; 14:24; 17:6,14,17

Likewise our Lord appointed special teachers under him, the Apostles; and still others in the church to be teachers and under-shepherds of the Lord's flock, instructing them, "Feed my sheep"; "feed my lambs." "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, over which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with blood of his own [Beloved Son]." (Acts 20:28) Yet none of these teachers were to teach doctrines of their own, which could be only "wisdom of this world." The people of God were to be all taught of Jehovah, and none can be true teachers save as they present to men the words and plan and character of Jehovah as the standards of truth and excellence. In doing this they necessarily call attention to "the doctrines of Christ" and "the Apostle's doctrines," all of which were but expressions and inculcations of the Father's grand and eternal law.

5. How is knowledge "God's first gift to man"?

R3279 - "HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOR!"

CHRIST, THE INSTRUCTOR, JUSTIFIER, SANCTIFIER AND DELIVERER OF HIS PEOPLE.

"Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, [justification], and sanctification, and redemption [deliverance]." 1 Cor. 1:30".

CHRIST OUR WISDOM.

Since God's dealings with his creatures recognize their wills, the first step in his dealings with them, therefore, is to give them knowledge, or "wisdom," as it is translated in the above Scripture. It is for this reason that preaching was the first command of the Gospel age. To the worldly minded the preaching of forgiveness on account of faith in the crucified Jesus did not seem the wise course. To them it would have seemed better for God to have commanded something to be done by them. But, as Paul says-- "It pleased God to save those who believe by [knowledge imparted through what the worldly consider] the foolishness of this preaching."-- 1 Cor. 1:21.

The first gift of God to our redeemed race, therefore, was knowledge.

(1) Knowledge of the greatness and absolute justice of the God with whom we have to do. This knowledge was prepared for by the Mosaic Law, which was a "schoolmaster," or pedagogue, to lead men to Christ. And Christ, by his obedience to that law, magnified the Law and showed its

honorableness, its worthiness; and thus honored God, the author of that Law, and showed his character.

(2) Knowledge of his own weakness, of his fallen, sinful and helpless condition, was also needful to man, that he might appreciate his need of a Savior such as God's plan had provided for him.

(3) Knowledge of how the entire race of Adam fell from divine favor and from mental, moral and physical perfection, through him, was also necessary. Without this knowledge we could not have seen how God could be just in accepting the one life, of Christ, as the ransom price for the life of the whole world.

(4) Without knowledge as to what is the penalty for sin--that "the wages of sin is death"--we never should have been able to understand how the death of our Redeemer paid the penalty against Adam and all in him.

(5) Knowledge, in these various respects, was, therefore, absolutely necessary to us, as without it we could have had no proper faith, and could not have availed ourselves of God's provision of justification, sanctification and deliverance through Christ.

Most heartily, therefore, we thank God for knowledge or wisdom concerning his plan. And we see that this wisdom came to us through Christ; because, had it not been for the plan of salvation of which he and his cross are the center, it would have been useless to give the knowledge, useless to preach, because there would have been no salvation to offer.

CHRIST OUR JUSTIFICATION.

That Christ is made unto us righteousness or justification implies,--

(1) That we are unjust, or unrighteous in the sight of God, and unworthy of his favor.

(2) That, in view of our unworthiness, God had in some manner arranged that Christ's righteousness should stand good for "us," and thus give "us" a standing before God which we could not otherwise have because of our imperfections--our unrighteousness.

(3) This scripture does not imply that Christ's righteousness covers every sinner, so that God now views every sinner as though he were righteous, and treats all as his children. No, it refers merely to a special class of sinners--sinners who, having come to a knowledge of sin and righteousness, and having learned the undesirableness of sin, have repented of sin, and sought to flee from it and to come into harmony with God. This is the particular class referred to in this scripture--"who of God is made unto us justification," or righteousness.

(4) How God has arranged or caused Christ to be our "righteousness," or justification, is not here explained; but what we know of divine law and character assures us that the principle of Justice, the very foundation of divine government, must somehow have been fully satisfied in all of its claims. And other scriptures fully substantiate this conclusion. They assert that God so arranged as to have the price of man's sin paid for him; and that the price paid was an exact equivalent, a

ransom or corresponding price, offsetting in every particular the original sin and just penalty, death, as it came upon the original sinner and through him by heredity upon all men. (Rom. 5:12,18-20.) He tells us that this plan of salvation was adopted because by it "God might be [or continue] just, and [yet be] the justifier of him [any sinner] that believeth in Jesus"--that comes unto God under the terms of the New Covenant, of which Christ Jesus is the mediator, having sealed it, or made it a covenant, by his own precious blood.--`Heb. 13:20,21`; `10:29`.

(5) While the benefits of this gracious arrangement are only for "us," for "believers," for those who come unto God by Christ--under the provisions of the New Covenant--these benefits are, nevertheless, made applicable to all; for God's special provision for the whole world of sinners is that all shall "come to a knowledge of the truth," that they may, if then they will accept the conditions of God's covenant, be everlastingly saved. A knowledge and a rejection of error--of false doctrines which misrepresent the divine character even though they be mixed with a little misconstrued truth--will not constitute grounds for condemnation; but a knowledge of the truth and a rejection of it will bring condemnation to the Second Death. The Greek text states this much more emphatically than our common English translation. It says, "come to an accurate knowledge of the truth."-- `1 Tim. 2:4`.

(6) The provision made was sufficient for all men. Our Lord gave himself [in death] a ransom--a corresponding price--for all; he was a "propitiation [or sufficient satisfaction] for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2.) As a consequence, he is both able and willing "to save unto the uttermost [i.e., to save from sin, and from divine disfavor, and from death, and all these everlastingly] all that come unto God by him." (Heb. 7:25.) And inasmuch as God's provision is so broad, that all shall come to an exact knowledge of the truth respecting these provisions of divine mercy under the terms of the New Covenant;--inasmuch as the provision is that all the sin and prejudice-blinded eyes shall be opened, and that the devil, who for long centuries has deceived men with his misrepresentations of the truth, is to be bound for a thousand years, so that he can deceive the nations no more; and that then a highway of holiness shall be cast up in which the most stupid cannot err or be deceived; and in view of all this provision God declares that all men will be saved from the guilt and penalty incurred through Adam's sentence. Because, when all of these blessed arrangements have been carried into effect, there will be no reason for a solitary member of the human family remaining a stranger and alien from God's family except by his own choice or preference for unrighteousness, and that with an accurate knowledge that all unrighteousness is sin. Such as, of their own preference, knowingly choose sin, when the way and means of becoming servants of God are clearly understood by them, are wilful sinners on their own account, and will receive the Second-Death sentence as the wages of their own opposition to God's righteous arrangements.

6. What is the relation between knowledge and faith?

A13:1

No work is more noble and ennobling than the reverent study of the revealed purposes of God--"which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1:12) The fact that God's wisdom provided prophecies of the future, as well as statements regarding the present and the past, is of itself a reproof by Jehovah of the foolishness of some of his children, who have excused their ignorance

and neglect of the study of His Word by saying: "There is enough in the fifth chapter of Matthew to save any man." Nor should we suppose that prophecy was given merely to satisfy curiosity concerning the future. Its object evidently is to make the consecrated child of God acquainted with his Father's plans, thus to enlist his interest and sympathy in the same plans, and to enable him to regard both the present and the future from God's standpoint. When thus interested in the Lord's work, he may serve with the spirit and with the understanding also; not as a servant merely, but as a child and heir. Revealing to such what shall be, counteracts the influence of what now is. The effect of careful study cannot be otherwise than strengthening to faith and stimulating to holiness.

A20:2

Those who will turn away from the mere speculations of men, and devote time to searching the Scriptures, not excluding reason, which God invites us to use (Isa. 1:18), will find that a blessed bow of promise spans the heavens. It is a mistake to suppose that those without faith, and consequent justification, should be able to apprehend clearly the truth: it is not for such. The Psalmist says, "Light [truth] is sown for the righteous." (Psa. 97:11) For the child of God a lamp is provided whose light dispels from his pathway much of the darkness. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psa. 119:105) But it is only "the path of the just" that "is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4:18) Actually, there is none just, "none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10); the class referred to is "justified by faith." It is the privilege only of this class to walk in the pathway that shines more and more--to see not only the present unfoldings of God's plan, but also things to come. While it is true that the path of each individual believer is a shining one, yet the special application of this statement is to the just (justified) as a class. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles and saints of the past and present have walked in its increasing light; and the light will continue to increase beyond the present--"unto the perfect day." It is one continuous path, and the one continuous and increasing light is the Divine Record, illuminating as it becomes due.

A21:1

Therefore, "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous," expecting the fulfilment of this promise. Many have so little faith that they do not look for more light, and, because of their unfaithfulness and unconcern, they are permitted to sit in darkness, when they might have been walking in the increasing light.

R1719 last par.

Let us see, then, that we have the faith of Christ--the faith well founded in the Word of God, a faith examined and proved, deeply rooted in the heart as well as in the head, and therefore established as the motive power of life. Such a faith is not nervously looking about for something new, and always probing the vain philosophies of men to see how skilfully they can withstand the Word of the Lord; for those who do so show plainly that their faith is not of sufficient influence to be the moving power in them, impelling them onward to full and complete victory over the world, the flesh and the Adversary.

R2411 c1 p5

The most important lesson of this school-term is Faith: the faith with which we became the Lord's and entered his school must grow. And our faith can only grow by knowledge (We do not refer to worldly knowledge, worldly learning.), knowledge of the Lord--of his methods, his plan, his character. Hence we must study well our Teacher's words and general conduct and as well his providences or private instructions to us individually--interpreting these always by his words. Much of what we accepted at first by faith (respecting the Lord's goodness and wisdom) will gradually become knowledge: giving basis for still greater lengths and breadths of faith as well as for greater love and appreciation of our Redeemer.

7. Who only are counted "worthy" to know "the deep things of God"?

(Psa 25:9) The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

(Psa 25:12) What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

(Psa 25:14) The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.

(Mat 11:25) At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

R2624 c2 p3

How comforting are our Lord's words, that these things are revealed, nevertheless, to some--to babes, to those who are not great, not wise, according to the course of this world; to those who are of humble mind, ready to be taught of the Lord, instead of wishing to teach the Lord. This great blessing, dearly beloved, is ours, and let us be very careful that we maintain the attitude of childlikeness and simplicity, that we may continue to be taught of God, and to "know the things that are freely given unto us of God." Let us rejoice in them and use them, and let the light shine out to others. The explanation of the fact that the divine plan is hidden from the great majority of the learned, the doctors of divinity, etc., is that so it has pleased the Father to let "the wise be taken in their own craftiness," and to reveal his purposes to those of an humble mind. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." (1 Cor. 3:19.) The Father drew to the Son at the first advent, not the doctors of the law, the scribes and the notables, but certain "Israelites indeed," in whom was no guile, though they were but an humble few. And the same class has received the blessing all down the age.

R3103 c1 p5 and c2 p2

The knowledge of God's purposes is due only to those able and anxious to co-operate with him in their development; for God does not display his plans to satisfy mere idle curiosity. First, then, if we would comprehend what is revealed within the scroll we must have faith in what is written on

the outside--the promised redemption through the precious blood of Christ--and must be sincerely desirous of knowing the details of God's plan in order to an earnest co-operation with it. In other words, there must be the earnest inquiry arising from a heart grateful for the promise of life through the Redeemer--"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Such, and such only, are worthy to know, and such only ever come to see, in the sense of understanding and appreciating, the deep things of God written within the scroll. Such are the called according to the divine purpose, to be educated in and to serve the truth. Such are the righteous for whom the light (truth) is sown. Such was our Lord's attitude when he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:7.) He was meek and lowly of heart and ever ready to render implicit obedience to the will of God; and it is to those who are similarly meek that he was sent to preach the good tidings (Isa. 61:1)-- to open the scroll. "The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way." (Psa. 25:9.) If any man have this evidence of worthiness--this acquaintance with the truth--let him rejoice in his privilege and by his works manifest his continued worthiness.

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

R2208 and 2209 c1

DIVINE SECRETS REVEALED

"The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his Covenant."--Psa. 25:14.

IS THERE any secret in connection with the divine plan? Are not all of God's arrangements so plain that "a wayfaring man, tho unlearned, need not err therein?" Are not all of the steps of the plan of salvation so simple that even a child may understand them?

Oh no! very evidently not; for everywhere we find the utmost diversity of opinion respecting the divine plan. Not only is there a great variety of heathen theories utterly false, but the various theories which obtain amongst Christian people are in violent antagonism the one to the other. Even amongst the worldly-wise of Christendom how various are the conceptions of God's intention and method respecting his creatures? These differences are represented in the various theologies of all the various sects. His plan is claimed to be one of "Free Grace" in which he gives an equal opportunity to all his creatures to share; yet, looking about us we see most evidently that all are not alike privileged, not alike informed and not alike circumstanced. On the other hand, there is the claim of an "Election" which denies that grace is free to all, and holds that it is restricted to the favored few. Besides these, we have various other conflicting theories in Christendom, and the most obtuse thinker must admit that where so many theologians, college professors and doctors of divinity are in dispute, the unlearned "wayfaring man" has many chances to err in his endeavor to grasp the divine plan.

Observation therefore sustains, as most literally true, the statement of our text that the Lord's plan is a secret: and it is in agreement with the statement of other Scriptures respecting the "mystery of God," "hidden from past ages and dispensations." In harmony with this is the fact that all the prophets have spoken more or less obscurely and in parables, not excepting the Great Prophet, our Lord Jesus, of whom it is written, that "he taught the people in parables and dark sayings"--"and without a parable spake he not unto the people." He promised, nevertheless, that in due time the holy spirit would be granted as a guide and instructor to his true disciples: "He will guide you into all truth" and "show you things to come." (Jno. 16:13.) Some of the mysteries of God were due to be understood at once, and some more gradually down through the age, but the great unfolding of the divine mystery we are expressly told was reserved until the close of the Gospel age, when "the mystery of God should be finished," which he hath kept secret from the foundation of the world.--Rev. 10:7.

Even so much of the divine plan as was due to be revealed by the spirit and to be understood step by step during this Gospel age, was intended only for a special class, and not for the world in general. The Apostle Paul emphasized this when he declared, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep [hidden, obscure] things of God." --1 Cor. 2:14,10.

This same thought is before us in our text, "The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." As this has been true all the way down throughout this age, it is still true, and the finishing of "the mystery of God" in the close of this Gospel age must therefore be expected to be understood and appreciated only by this special class of the Lord's people,--those who fear or reverence him. We are to make a distinction between those who fear or reverence the Lord and those who fear or reverence man and the work of man, sectarian systems, creeds, etc. "The fear of man [and of man's churches] bringeth a snare," and hinders growth both in grace and in knowledge;--hinders an appreciation of the "Secret of the Lord." "But the fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and this wisdom, if continued, leads to fuller knowledge of God, to greater confidence in him, and to that degree of intimate friendship and sonship which is the key to the understanding of the "Secret of the Lord."

Abraham was called the "friend of God;" because he had the divine confidence, so that God made known to him certain things that he did not make known to others: "The Secret of the Lord" was with Abraham, so far as that Secret could be communicated to any one at that time. For instance, in the matter of the destruction of Sodom, the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham [my friend] that thing which I do?" And it was because Abraham was the friend of God that he also made known to him something of the divine plan for human salvation: as the Apostle declares, God "preached beforehand the gospel to Abraham, saying: 'In thee shall all the nations be blessed.'"--Gal. 3:8.

While it was not possible for Abraham or any one else than God to fully comprehend this statement, or to understand therefrom the lengths and the breadths of the divine plan of salvation, yet it contained the whole gospel, in the same sense that an acorn contains a great oak tree. So likewise our Lord at the first advent spoke in parables to the nominal house of Israel, that "Seeing they might see and not believe, and hearing they might hear and not understand;" yet, a

certain few, full of faith and obedience and consecration to the Lord, were not thus treated; but, on the contrary, were treated as "friends" and had much explained to them. Thus our Lord said to the disciples when they inquired concerning the significance of a parable, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but to them that are without, these things are spoken in parables." And again he said to the same devoted disciples, I have not called you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, because whatsoever I hear of the Father I have made known unto you.--`John 15:15`.

This "mystery" of the divine plan, hidden in parables, in figures, and in symbols from the world, and from the nominal Christian,--hidden from all except the fully consecrated children of God--is most beautifully symbolized in the Book of Revelation. As therein recounted, John was shown in a vision a symbolic panorama, illustrative of the subject. The heavenly glories were symbolized and the Father shown seated upon the throne of his glory, holding in his right hand a scroll sealed with seven seals. This was the Mystery, the Secret of the Lord, unknown to any one but himself--his plan for the salvation of the world. John in the symbol hears the proclamation, "Who is worthy to open the Book and to loose the seals?"-- who is worthy to have committed to his care, the execution of the great divine plan, wonderful for its wisdom and love, and its lengths and breadths and depths and heights past human comprehension--that he may open it and execute it? A silence followed; and John fearing that this signified that none would be found worthy, and that hence the divine plan would never be fully revealed, and therefore could not be fully executed, wept much. But in the symbol the angel again touched him and said, "Weep not! for the Lion of the tribe of Judah,' the 'Root of David,' hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the seven seals thereon."

Ah yes! this was one significance of the severe trials and sufferings of our dear Redeemer;--in humbling himself, leaving the glory with the Father, becoming a man and ultimately giving his life a ransom for all, he was doing two works: not only (1) redeeming us with his own precious blood, but (2) additionally by this obedience he was commending himself to the Father, and proving himself worthy to be the Father's agent and representative in carrying out all the great "mystery of God" hidden from previous ages and dispensations. --`Eph. 3:3-5`.

The interim of thirty odd years, in which our Lord's humiliation and subsequent exaltation took place, is all passed over in the vision, and the symbol merely shows in the midst of the throne "a lamb, as it had been slain:" how forceful the illustration to those whose eyes are anointed that they may discern its meaning. And now the symbolical panorama proceeds, and shows us the Lamb approaching Jehovah and receiving from him "the mystery of his will," the great plan of the ages, as mapped out in the divine purpose from before the foundation of the world. As soon as the "mystery of God" was committed to "the Lamb of God;" who had already fulfilled an important part of that plan by redeeming the world with his own precious blood, he receives homage, as it is written: "Him hath God highly exalted, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things on earth," and "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

Then came the opening of the seals: the disclosing of one after another of the various features connected with the divine purpose. Each seal as it was loosed permitted the scroll as a whole to open a little wider, and a little wider, thus permitting "the mystery of God" to be a little more

clearly discerned. And so God's people down through this Gospel age have been privileged to know something of the "Secret of the Lord;"--the divine plan. But not until the last seal was broken, did the scroll fly wide open, permitting the "Mystery of God" to be fully disclosed; as it is written: "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the Mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."--`Rev. 5:1`; `10:7`.

This same thought, that God's consecrated people will have intelligence respecting his plans far different from any the world will have, is everywhere kept prominently before us in the Scriptures, and must therefore be considered a very important indication with all who profess to be God's people;--distinguishing whether they are merely his "servants," or whether they are still more intimately connected and have received the spirit of adoption as serving "sons," and are being treated as sons;--made acquainted with the Heavenly Father's plan.

Our text speaks merely of the fear (reverence) of the Lord, but, as we have seen, this reverence continued leads into the very deepest work of grace obtainable; --to a fullness of consecration to the Father's will and service. It is of this class who fear (reverence) the Lord that we read,--"They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared [reverenced] the Lord, and that thought upon his word [esteeming his Name, his Honor, his Will above any earthly, sectarian name or work]. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them [they "shall be accounted worthy to escape" the severity of the great time of trouble with which this age shall end], as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." These who reverence the Lord, in this full and Scriptural sense, are surely the Lord's "elect," "the body of Christ," the "overcomers," the "little flock," the "royal priesthood," who shall reign with Christ, and with him bless all the families of the earth in due time.

The privilege of this "royal priesthood" to know "the Secret of the Lord," to comprehend "the deep things of God" hidden from others, was beautifully symbolized and typified in the privileges of the Jewish priesthood. When the Tabernacle was set up, with its beautiful golden furniture, lamp stand, table of shew bread, golden altar, etc., all symbolizing spiritual things, they were covered over, hidden, not only from the ordinary Israelite, but even from the Levitical "servants" of the Tabernacle, who were not even permitted to look therein. The privilege of seeing those typical secret things, reserved exclusively for the priests, thus typified "the royal priesthood" and their exclusive privilege of understanding the mysteries of God, his Secret.

8. Is knowledge necessary to salvation?

(Rom 10:17) So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

A102:1 to 106

Many Christians, unwilling to believe that so many millions of ignorant infants and heathen will be eternally lost (which they have been taught means to be sent to a place of eternal and hopeless torment), insist, notwithstanding these Bible statements, that God will not condemn the ignorant. We admire their liberality of heart and their appreciation of God's goodness, but urge them not to

be too hasty about discarding or ignoring Bible statements. God has a blessing for all, in a better way than through ignorance.

But do these act in accordance with their stated belief? No: though they profess to believe that the ignorant will be saved on account of their ignorance, they continue to send missionaries to the heathen at the cost of thousands of valuable lives and millions of money. If they all, or even half of them, would be saved through ignorance, it is doing them a positive injury to send missionaries to teach them of Christ; for only about one in a thousand believes, when the missionaries do go to them. If this idea be correct, it would be much better to let them remain in ignorance; for then a much larger proportion would be saved. Continuing the same line of argument, might we not reason that if God had left all men in ignorance, all would have been saved? If so, the coming and death of Jesus were useless, the preaching and suffering of apostles and saints were vain, and the so-called gospel, instead of being good news, is very bad news. The sending of missionaries to the heathen by those who believe the Calvinistic or fatalistic view of election, that the eternal destiny of each individual was unalterably fixed before he had an existence, is even more absurd and unreasonable.

But the Bible, which is full of the missionary spirit, does not teach that there are several ways of salvation--one way by faith, another by works, and another by ignorance. Neither does it teach the God-dishonoring doctrine of fatalism. While it shows every other door of hope closed against the race, it throws wide open the one, only door, and proclaims that whosoever will may enter into life; and it shows that all who do not now see or appreciate the blessed privilege of entering shall in due time be brought to a full knowledge and appreciation. The only way, by which any and all of the condemned race may come to God, is not by meritorious works, neither by ignorance, but by faith in the precious blood of Christ, which taketh away the sin of the world. (1 Peter 1:19; John 1:29) This is the Gospel, the good tidings of great joy, "which shall be unto ALL PEOPLE."

Suppose we now look at these things just as God tells us of them, and leave the clearing of his character to himself. Let us inquire, What has become of the one hundred and forty-two billions?

Whatever may have become of them, we may be sure they are not now in a condition of suffering; because, not only do the Scriptures teach that full and complete reward is not given to the Church until Christ comes, when he shall reward every man (Matt. 16:27), but that the unjust are to receive their punishment then also. Whatever may be their present condition, it cannot be their full reward; for Peter says, "The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:9); and he will do so.

But the thought that so many of our fellow creatures should at any time be lost from lack of having had the knowledge which is necessary to salvation would be sad indeed to all who have a spark of love or pity. Then, too, there are numerous scriptures which it seems impossible to harmonize with all this. Let us see: In the light of the past and the present as the only opportunities, laying aside all hope through a restitution in the coming age, how shall we understand the statements, "God is love," and "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish"? (1 John 4:8; John 3:16)

Would it not seem that if God loved the world so much he might have made provision, not only that believers might be saved, but also that all might hear in order to believe?

Again, when we read, "That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), our observation says, Not so; every man has not been enlightened; we cannot see that our Lord has lighted more than a few of earth's billions. Even in this comparatively enlightened day, millions of heathen give no evidence of such enlightenment; neither did the Sodomites, nor multitudes of others in past ages.

We read that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death "for every man." (Heb. 2:9) But if he tasted death for the one hundred and forty-three billions, and from any cause that sacrifice becomes efficacious to only one billion, was not the redemption comparatively a failure? And in that case, is not the Apostle's statement too broad? When again we read, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to ALL PEOPLE" (Luke 2:10), and, looking about us, see that it is only to a "little flock" that it has been good tidings, and not to all people, we would be compelled to wonder whether the angels had not overstated the goodness and breadth of their message, and overrated the importance of the work to be accomplished by the Messiah whom they announced.

Another statement is, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:5,6) A ransom for all? Then why should not all involved have some benefit from Christ's death? Why should not all come to a knowledge of the truth, that they may believe?

Without the key, how dark, how inconsistent, these statements appear; but when we find the key to God's plan, these texts all declare with one voice, "God is love." This key is found in the latter part of the text last quoted--"Who gave himself a ransom for all, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME." God has a due time for everything. He could have testified it to these in their past lifetime; but since he did not, it proves that their due time must be future. For those who will be of the Church, the bride of Christ, and share the kingdom honors, the present is the "due time" to hear; and whosoever now has an ear to hear, let him hear and heed, and he will be blessed accordingly. Though Jesus paid our ransom before we were born, it was not our "due time" to hear of it for long years afterward, and only the appreciation of it brought responsibility; and this, only to the extent of our ability and appreciation. The same principle applies to all: in God's due time it will be testified to all, and all will then have opportunity to believe and to be blessed by it.

The prevailing opinion is that death ends all probation; but there is no scripture which so teaches; and all the above, and many more scriptures, would be meaningless, or worse, if death ends all hope for the ignorant masses of the world. The one scripture quoted to prove this generally entertained view is, "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be." (Eccl. 11:3) If this has any relation to man's future, it indicates that whatever his condition when he enters the tomb, no change takes place until he is awakened out of it. And this is the uniform teaching of all scriptures bearing on the subject, as will be shown in succeeding chapters. Since God does not propose to save men on account of ignorance, but "will have all men to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4); and since the masses of mankind have died in ignorance; and since "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" (Eccl. 9:10); therefore God has prepared for

the awakening of the dead, in order to knowledge, faith and salvation. Hence his plan is, that "as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive, but each one in his own order"--the Gospel Church, the Bride, the body of Christ, first; afterward, during the Millennial age, all who shall become his during that thousand years of his presence (mistranslated coming), the Lord's due time for all to know him, from the least to the greatest. 1 Cor. 15:22

As death came by the first Adam, so life comes by Christ, the second Adam. Everything that mankind lost through being in the first Adam is to be restored to those who believe into the second Adam. When awakened, with the advantage of experience with evil, which Adam lacked, those who thankfully accept the redemption as God's gift may continue to live everlastingly on the original condition of obedience. Perfect obedience will be required, and perfect ability to obey will be given, under the righteous reign of the Prince of Peace. Here is the salvation offered to the world.

Let us now consider another text which is generally ignored except by Universalists; for, although we are not Universalists, we claim the right to use, and believe, and rejoice in, every testimony of God's Word. It reads, "We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe." (1 Tim. 4:10) God will save all men, but will not specially ("to the uttermost") save any except those who come unto him through Christ. God's arbitrary salvation of all men is not such as will conflict with their freedom of will, or their liberty of choice, to give them life against their wills: "I have set before you, this day, life and death; choose life, that ye may live."

(Act 10:22) And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

R2989 c2 p3,4

"WORDS WHEREBY THOU SHALT BE SAVED."

Peter coming into the house, and finding a congregation of earnest God-fearing Gentiles assembled, asked the pointed question, "For what intent have ye sent for me?" (Verse 29.) Cornelius then related something of his past experience, his desire for fellowship with God, his endeavor to live in a manner pleasing to him, the vision that he had received, and now Peter's arrival in response to that vision, and his expectancy that he was about to hear what had been promised him--"words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11:14.) He was not saved by his almsgiving, not saved by his prayers, nor yet by the message which Peter delivered; but Peter's message, "words," explaining matters, enabled Cornelius and his household to grasp by faith the great redemption which is in Christ Jesus,--and thus to be saved. Saved at once from alienation from God and from condemnation, as sinners; a foretaste of the complete salvation to be granted unto them at the second coming of the Lord.

We note with keen interest the Apostle's preaching, that we may clearly discern the life-giving message which he brought, from which Cornelius and his associates derived their saving faith. We find that Peter's discourse was the same gospel message which he had delivered repeatedly

before. It was Jesus-- the good, the obedient--and the sacrifice for sins which he accomplished when he died on the cross. It was the message of the hope of a resurrection from the dead through him, as attested by his resurrection by the mighty power of God. It was the message that a ransom for sinners having been paid to Justice the Lord is now pleased to accept sinners on conditions of faith, reverence and obedience to righteousness according to ability. Peter's discourse was "the old, old story" which to many has become tedious and distasteful; but which to every soul, in the right attitude, is the Father's message of forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation, through the death of his Son. This is the same message which God is still sending by all who are his true ambassadors. There is no other gospel, and those who present another message are not, in their service, ambassadors for God, messengers and mouthpieces of his spirit.

R2990 c1 p1

The Apostle Paul tells us that "It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them which believe"--that is, it pleased God to adopt this method of declaring the truth respecting his redemptive plan, and to accept and justify those who would believe and accept this testimony. The testimony may reach people today through letters or tracts or books, or through oral preaching; it matters not in what manner; it merely matters that the true message shall be delivered, and received; but the message goes, invariably, through the human channel, and not through angels, nor by the holy spirit's power or operation aside from human agents. We are to bear in mind these lessons of God's methods, and to apply them appropriately in connection with the affairs of life. We are not to expect the Lord to move upon or instruct our friends or kindred or neighbors; but are to remember that this honor he has conferred upon his "royal priesthood;" and accordingly we are to be "not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;"--serving the truth in any and every manner open to us.

9. What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God?

(Joh 17:3) And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

R2137 c1 p4,5 and c2 p1

The Apostle answers--"Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." At first it may occur to some that this has but a slight meaning, and that it simply signifies that we come to know that there is a God, and that there is a Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But the knowledge of God means far more than this to the advancing and developing Christian: to him it means an intimate acquaintance with the Father and with the Son, a knowledge of the "mind of Christ," which is a full and clear representation to us of the mind of the Father. We are to grow in this knowledge by studying the Word of God, by discerning through that Word the principles which govern the divine conduct, as to how divine justice, wisdom, love and power operate. These are progressive studies. Something may be learned the first day of our Christian experience, but the end of the first year should show considerable progress in the knowledge of the divine mind; the second year should show us a still further increase, and so on.

As our intimate knowledge of the divine plan and character increases, so must also our grace increase; for those who do not attempt to come into harmony, step by step, with that which they see of the divine character will soon lose interest in such knowledge, while those who have the interest which leads to further and further study must of necessity be growing in grace continually. And as they grow in grace, so also will they grow in peace; for peace also is a progressive thing. We had peace when first we found the Lord and realized the forgiveness of our sins; but those who have made progress in the knowledge of the divine plan and character have found their peace to be an ever-increasing one; and those who have advanced some distance in the good way can speak of it in the language of the apostles and realize it in their hearts as being "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

The Apostle, continuing, assures us that through this knowledge of God is imparted to us as by divine power "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." What an assurance! This statement of the importance of knowledge for our Christian development in every direction reminds us of the words of our Lord, "This is life eternal; that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (^John 17:3`.) To know God, as the Apostle here explains, signifies an intimate acquaintance with "him that hath called us by his own glory and virtue." It is only as we realize something of the greatness and perfection of the divine character that we are properly able to estimate our own littleness and imperfection; only as we see the beauties of his gracious character can we become intimately acquainted with God, familiar with his graces and virtues. The influence of this knowledge and fellowship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, reacts upon our own hearts, and has a cleansing and sanctifying effect. Thus the Apostle prays for some that they might grow in the knowledge of God so as to be able to "comprehend with all saints what is the length and the breadth, the depth and the height of the love of Christ which passeth [human] understanding." (^Eph. 3:14-19`.) Those beholding the divine character, even though but dimly, as through a glass, are thereby changed from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord.--^2 Cor. 3:18`.

R2138 c1 p3

In view of what we already know of our Creator, especially as revealed to us in and through our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus, shall we not, as those who have come to see something of his glorious character, "press toward the mark" (^Phil. 3:14`) for the attainment of all that he may be pleased to reveal to us concerning himself, that thus we may be more and more partakers of his spirit, more and more conformed to his likeness, more and more acceptable, and by and by be actually and everlastingly accepted in the Beloved, to the full realization of all those blessings which God has in reservation for them who love him, and of which now we have the exceeding great and precious promises?

R2624 c2 p4

The Master realized that his special instructions must be toward those whom the Father had given unto him, rather than toward the unready and unwilling ones who would not receive his testimony because not in a proper condition of heart to appreciate. To his faithful disciples, therefore, and to all of the same class since, he declared that all things he possessed he had received of the Father; he claimed nothing of himself; and further, he asserted that no one knew

him truly, fully, intimately, but the Father, and that no man knew the Father except himself, the Son, and he to whom the Son revealed him. The average reader gets very little meaning out of this passage at first. The Christian who has been making progress for years, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, can appreciate it much better. He realizes that while he had some knowledge about Jesus and about the Father at first, from the very inception of his Christian experience, yet it was a different matter to come to know the Father and to know the Son in the intimate sense, in the sense of becoming well acquainted with them, knowing their mind as one knows the mind, the heart, of an intimate friend. It is a privilege to receive such an acquaintance. It is not to be had by everybody; it requires seeking for and knocking for, and such seeking and knocking implies an earnest desire to have an intimate fellowship and communion. Such a growth in grace should be earnestly sought by all of the Lord's true followers who seek to be his joint heirs in the Kingdom; for without it they cannot make progress. In proportion as we know the Father and know the Son we will love them and seek more and more to do those things which are pleasing in their sight.

10. Does knowledge increase responsibility?

(Luk 12:47) And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.

(Luk 12:48) But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

F719:1

Doubtless this was one reason why the Lord instructed us to "judge nothing before the time." Eventually the judgment will be in our hands--as it is written, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"--our Lord Jesus being the chief of these judges. The Lord's declaration is that he who knew his Master's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes, while he who knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. (Luke 12:47,48) This indicates to us that the guilt of wilful sin is to be measured largely by our knowledge of the Lord and of his will. Hence the Church, and those who have during this Gospel age come under the light and influence of the Church, will be held responsible in a larger degree than others. Nero, although not of the Church, not begotten of the Spirit, and therefore, less responsible proportionately than the Church, had, nevertheless, considerable contact with the children of the light; and hence, we may presume, had a large measure of responsibility in connection with his crimes.

A349:1

And while the Bible is thus opening up from this standpoint, and disclosing wondrous things (Psa. 119:18), the light of the present day upon the various creeds and traditions of men is affecting them in an opposite manner. They are being recognized even by their worshipers as imperfect and deformed, and hence they are being measurably ignored; and though still subscribed to, they are seldom elaborated, for very shame. And the shame attaching to these

human creeds and traditions is spreading to the Bible, which is supposed to uphold these deformities of thought as of divine origin. Hence the freedom with which the various advanced thinkers, so-called, are beginning to deny various parts of the Bible not congenial to their views. How striking, then, the providence of God, which at this very time opens before his children this truly glorious and harmonious plan--a plan that rejects not one, but harmonizes every part and item of his Word. Truth, when due, becomes meat for the household of faith, that they may grow thereby. (Matt. 24:45) Whoever comes in contact with truth, realizing its character, has thereby a responsibility with reference to it. It must be either received and acted upon, or rejected and despised. To ignore it does not release from responsibility. If we accept it ourselves, we have a responsibility TOWARD IT also, because it is for ALL the household of faith; and each one receiving it becomes its debtor, and, if a faithful steward, must dispense it to the other members of the family of God. Let your light shine! If it again becomes darkness, how great will be the darkness. Lift up the light! Lift up a standard for the people!

11. What is our duty toward building up each other in knowledge?

F263, 264

"Him that is Taught" and "Him that Teacheth"

This scripture, in accord with all the others, shows us that God designed to instruct his people by means of each other; and that even the humblest of his flock shall think for himself and thus develop an individual faith as well as an individual character. Alas, that this important matter is so generally overlooked amongst those who name the name of Christ! This scripture recognizes teacher and pupils; but the pupils are to feel free to communicate, to make known to the teachers any and every matter coming to their notice and seeming to bear upon the subject discussed--not as desiring to be teacher but as an intelligent student to an elder brother student. They are not to be machines, nor to be afraid to communicate; but by asking questions, calling attention to what seems to them to be misapplications of Scripture or what not, they are to do their part in keeping the body of Christ and his teachings pure--they are thus to be critics; and instead of being discouraged from doing this, and instead of being told that they must not criticize the teacher or call in question his expositions, they are, on the contrary, urged to communicate, to criticize.

We must not, however, suppose that the Lord wished to encourage any hypercritical spirit, or combative, fault-finding disposition. Such a spirit is entirely contrary to the holy Spirit, and not only so, but would be very dangerous; because whoever in a spirit of debate sets forth a hypothetical, or supposititious case which he does not believe to be the Truth, merely with a view to confusing his opponent, having a "debate," etc., is sure to be injured as well as tolerably sure to injure others by such a course. Honesty to the Truth is a prime essential to progress in it: to oppose what one believes to be the Truth, and to even temporarily uphold what one believes to be an error, "for fun," or for any other reason, will surely be offensive to the Lord and bring some just retribution. Alas, how many have undertaken to "see just what could be said" against a position which they believed to be the Truth, and have been entangled and entirely captivated and blinded while pursuing this course! Next to the Lord, the Truth is the most precious thing in all the world; it is not to be trifled with, not to be played with; and whoever is negligent along this line will himself sustain injury. See 2 Thess. 2:10,11.

It is proper to remark that the word "communicate" is a broad one, and includes not only communication respecting thoughts, sentiments, etc., but may be understood also to mean that he who is taught and who receives spiritual benefits should be glad to communicate in some manner to the support of those who teach--giving to the Lord, the brethren, the Truth, of the fruit of his labors and talents. And such is the very essence of the holy disposition of the New Creation. Early in Christian experience each learns the meaning of their Master's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and, hence, all who have this spirit are glad indeed to give of earthly things in the service of the Truth, and that in proportion as they receive spiritual blessings into good and honest hearts. The question of how to give, and of the wisdom to be exercised, will be considered later on, under another head.

R3219 c2 p2

Knowledge is to be highly esteemed in the Church, and to be regarded as an evidence of progress, of growth; for none can grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might--in grace--unless he grows also in knowledge. We properly esteem most highly those whose love for the Lord and for his truth are evidenced by zeal in the study of his Word, and whose favor with God is evidenced by their being guided more and more into the deep things of God. Nevertheless, as in the earthly family we love and care for the babes and immature, so also in the household of faith the little ones and the dwarfs are to be cared for and loved and helped that they may grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

12. How do we know we are accepted as probationary members of the body of Christ?

(1Th 1:4) Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

(1Th 1:5) For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

E229, 230

How to Know the Spirit's Witness

A man's mind or spirit may be known by his words and conduct; and so we may know God's mind or Spirit by his words and dealings. The testimony of his Word is that whosoever cometh unto him (by faith, and reformation from bad works and dead works, through Jesus) is accepted. (Heb. 7:25) Hence the questions to be asked of themselves by those who are seeking a witness of the Spirit respecting their sonship are:

Was I ever drawn to Christ?--to recognize him as my Redeemer, through whose righteousness alone I could have access to the heavenly Father, and be acceptable with him?

If this can be answered in the affirmative, the next question would be:

Did I ever fully consecrate myself--my life, my time, my talents, my influence, my all--to God?

If this question also can be answered in the affirmative, the inquirer may rest fully assured that he has been accepted with the Father, in the Beloved One, and recognized of him as a son. And if scrutinizing his own heart's desires and sentiments he finds it still trusting in the merit of Jesus, and still consecrated to do the Lord's will, he may allow the sweet confidence and peace which this thought of harmony and relationship to divinity brings, to fully possess his heart. This conviction of the Lord's grace toward us in Christ constructed from facts of our own experience, built upon the unalterable character and Word of God, is not mutative, not changeable, as it would be if built upon the shifting sands of feelings. If doubts or fears intrude in some dark hour, we have only to take the "Lamp" (God's Word) and examine afresh the facts and the foundation, and if our hearts are still loyal to the Lord, faith, joy and peace will instantly return to us; if we find our faith in "the precious blood" crumbling, or our consecration slipping away, we know the true condition of affairs, and can at once make the proper repairs and thus re-establish our "full assurance of faith." (Heb. 10:22) But be it noticed that each one who would have this assurance must "set to his seal that God is true" (John 3:33): that our Lord changeth not, but is "the same yesterday, today and forever." The Lord's people may therefore rest assured that having once come into the conditions of divine favor, they may continue under those conditions so long as their hearts are loyal to God and their desires in harmony with his will: so long as they are at heart obedient to the divine commands--briefly comprehended in the word Love--to God and men. Heb. 11:6; 13:8

Whoever has taken the specified steps has the assurance, the "witness" of the Word of God, that he is a child of God; and this, during the Gospel age, signifies that he is a branch of the true vine, a probationary member of the true Church. (John 15:1) To such the Word of God witnesses that they have joined the true Church, which is Christ's body. This witness is given to their spirit, their mind, by God's Spirit, which testifies through his Word. And the same Spirit of Truth assures such that if their hearts continue faithful to the Lord to the close of their probation--if they willingly and gladly take up the cross daily, seeking as best they are able to follow in the Master's footsteps, their probationary membership in the Church of Christ will shortly be changed to actual membership--after they have finished their course, and been made sharers in his resurrection, the first resurrection. Phil. 3:10

F191:1

"Knowing Your Election of God"

"Knowing brethren beloved, your election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the holy Spirit and in much assurance." 1 Thess. 1:4,5

Elsewhere we have pointed out what constitutes the signs, the evidences that we are the children of God; namely, our begetting of the holy Spirit, our sealing, our quickening.* We will not repeat here, but merely in a general way call attention to the fact that whoever participates in this election has various evidences by which it may be discerned not by himself only, but ere long be discernible by "the brethren" with whom he comes in contact. There is a power, as well as a message, in this election. This election message, or call, or "word," is not only Gospel or good

tidings to the elect class, but it is more than this to them: it is the power of God working in them to will and to do his good pleasure. It brings to the elect the holy Spirit and much assurance, and they, in turn, are ready at any cost to sound out the Word of the Lord.

13. What is our present inheritance through obedience to our knowledge of God's will?

(Eph 1:7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

(Eph 1:18) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

R2762 c2

HEAVENLY VERSUS EARTHLY RICHES

We have said that the heavenly riches are to be attained in the resurrection, when the Millennial Kingdom shall be inaugurated, and the faithful overcomers, by their resurrection change, shall be richly endowed with all the good things which God hath in reservation for them that love him, and who prove their love by present-time devotions, sacrifices, etc. But, we should notice that there is a foretaste of these heavenly blessings granted to the faithful in this present life; these heavenly riches granted us now the Apostle speaks of as "riches of grace" (Eph. 1:7,18), and these grace-riches include faith, hope, and joy in the holy spirit and an ability to see and appreciate with the eye of faith things actually not seen as yet. The Apostle declares that these treasures of wisdom and grace--knowledge of divine good things in reservation, and the fellowship with God which permits us to anticipate and enjoy those blessings in a measure now, are all hidden in Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3.) We must come into Christ, as members of his body, the true Church, by sacrifice--before we can have the opportunity of even searching for these hidden treasures, or of finding any of them. And then, as we progress faithfully in our sacrificial service, as priests, walking in the footsteps of the great High Priest, we find more and more of these true "riches of grace" day by day, and year by year, as we progress.

Moreover, another kind of riches comes to the royal priesthood, faithful in performing their self-sacrifices. These are riches of the holy spirit. They find as they sacrifice the selfish interests, earthly aims, earthly projects, etc., in the service of the Lord and the Truth, that they grow more and more in likeness to their heavenly Father and to their Lord, and that the fruits of the holy spirit abound in them more and more--meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love.

Furthermore, they find a peace and a joy to which formerly they were strangers, and which the world can neither give nor take away. This peace and joy come through a realization that having given their all to the Lord, all of his exceeding great and precious promises belong to them. Now their faith can firmly grasp these promises as their own; they can realize that as their justification and call were not of themselves, but of the Lord, so all their course of sacrifice, in harmony with that call, is under divine supervision and care, and sure to work out blessings; and that to whatever extent they shall work out earthly hardships, trials and sufferings, God will

proportionately make them to work out a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory in the Kingdom.--`2 Cor. 4:17`.

With this peace of God and confidence in his leading and care, they can apply to themselves the prophetic statement, "All the steps of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord, and he [the righteous man] delighteth in his way." (`Psa. 37:23`.) They can delight in this way, be it ever so thorny and narrow and rugged, because of their confidence in God's love and wisdom, and that he who began a good work in them is thus completing it and blessing them with experiences which divine wisdom sees will be to their profit eventually. Thus the Lord's blessing is upon this class; and they realize indeed that, "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich." How rich it makes their hearts in the present time--rich in noble sentiments, rich in faith, rich in love, rich in good works to all men as they have opportunity, especially toward the household of faith; and very rich in God's blessing and under his providential care, which, if rightly accepted, will ultimately make these members of the Royal Priesthood heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, in an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.--`1 Pet. 1:4`.

14. What effect does the knowledge of the truth have upon superstitious fears?

(Joh 8:32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

R3153 c2 p5 to end of article

And not only shall the true disciple thus know the truth and be sanctified by it, but the Lord also said, "The truth shall make you free." Those who have received the truth know by blessed experience something of its liberating power. As soon as any measure of it is received into a good and honest heart, it begins to strike off the fetters of sin, of ignorance and superstition, and of fear. It throws its health-restoring beams into the darkest recesses of our hearts and minds, and thus invigorates the whole being. Sin cannot endure its light; and those who continue to live in sin when a sufficiency of light has been received to manifest its deformity must inevitably lose the light because they are unworthy of it.

Ignorance and superstition must vanish before the light of truth. And what a blessed realization it is to be thus liberated! Millions are still under this galling yoke. Under its delusions they fear and reverence some of the basest tools of Satan for their oppression and degradation, because they hypocritically claim divine appointment; and they have been made to fear God as a vengeful tyrant consigning the vast majority of his creatures to an eternity of torment. Thank God, we who have received the truth have escaped that terrible nightmare, and the bondage of Satan over us is broken!

We are made free, too, from the fear that we now see coming upon the whole world, as the great civil and ecclesiastical systems that have so long ruled the world are being terribly shaken. All thinking people are in dread of the possible outcome of anarchy and terror. And the alarm of all will increase as we near the awful crisis toward which we are rapidly hastening, and as the danger becomes more and more visible. Yet, in the midst of it all, and with the fullest assurance of the infallible Word of God of the terrors of the conflict through which the world will have to

pass within a few years, the true disciples of Christ who abide in his Word are not afraid, but rejoice, because they know that God's object in permitting the storm is to clear the moral atmosphere of the world, and that, after the storm, there shall come, by his providence, an abiding peace. Instructed in the truth, they realize the necessities of the situation, and have confidence in the divine providence that can make even the wrath of man to praise him.

Blessed promise!--"If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Dearly beloved, having received this favor from the Lord, shall we not continue in it, giving no heed to seducing doctrines? And shall we not be faithful to it under all circumstances, defending it against every assault, and with it bearing its reproach? Let us prove our appreciation of it by our loyalty and faithfulness to it.

15. How do we "grow in knowledge"?

(Pro 2:3) Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding;
 (Pro 2:4) If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures;
 (Pro 2:5) Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.
 (Pro 2:6) For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

(2Pe 3:18) But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and forever. Amen.

R3153 c1 p6,7; c2 p2-4

It is a blessed thing to take the first step in the Christian life--that of belief in and acceptance of Christ as our Redeemer and Lord; but the reward of this step depends entirely upon our continuance in his Word, in the attitude of true disciples. It is not difficult to do this, yet the disposition of human pride is to wander away from the simplicity of divine truth and to seek out new theories and philosophies of our own, or to pry into those of other men, who desire to be considered wise and great according to this world's estimate.

The reward of continued discipleship is, "Ye shall know the truth"--not that we shall be "ever seeking and never coming to a knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. 3:7.) Here is the mistake that many make: failing to continue in the Word of the Lord, they delve into various human philosophies which ignore or pervert the Word of the Lord and set up opposing theories. There is no promise, to those who seek for truth among these, that they shall ever find it. And they never do. Divine truth is never found except in the divinely appointed channels: and those channels are the Lord and the apostles and prophets. To continue in the doctrine set forth in their inspired writings, to study and meditate upon them, to trust implicitly in them, and faithfully to conform our characters to them, is what is implied in continuing in the Word of the Lord.

But the idea is entirely compatible with that of heeding all the helps which the Lord from time to time raises up from among our brethren in the body of Christ, as enumerated by the Apostle Paul. (Eph. 4:11-15; 1 Cor. 12:13,14.) The Lord always has raised up, and will to the end raise up, such helps for the edification of the body of Christ; but it is the duty of every member to prove carefully their teaching by the infallible Word.

If we thus continue in the Word of the Lord, as earnest and sincere disciples, we shall indeed "know the truth," be "established in the present truth" (the truth due), and be "rooted and grounded in the truth;" we shall be "firm in the faith," and "able to give a reason for the hope that is in us," to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," to "war a good warfare," to "witness a good confession," and firmly to "endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," even unto the end of our course. We will not come into the knowledge of the truth at a single bound; but gradually, step by step, we will be led into the truth. Every step will be one of sure and certain progress, and each one leading to a higher vantage ground for further attainments both in knowledge and in its blessed fruits of established character.

The truth thus acquired, step by step, becomes a sanctifying power bringing forth in our lives its blessed fruits of righteousness, peace, joy in the holy Spirit, love, meekness, faith, patience and every virtue and every grace, which time and cultivation will ripen to a glorious maturity.

R3156 c2 p1

But after we have attained this position, and after the promise of our text, and all like promises, are ours, it requires time and a continual application of faith, in order to rightly appreciate God's promises, and to appropriate them to ourselves; and this is Scripturally called "growing in grace and knowledge." We grow in knowledge as we take note of the promises of God, and by faith apply them to ourselves, and seek to discern in our lives the fulfilment of those promises; we grow in grace simultaneously, for unless each item of knowledge be received into a good and honest heart, and bring forth its measure of obedience and righteousness (grace) we will not be prepared for the next step of knowledge, and would be thus stopped, or possibly turned back. And as a loss of knowledge would mean a measurable loss of grace, so also a loss of grace would mean a corresponding loss of knowledge; --going into darkness, the promises of the Lord's Word becoming more and more dim and obscured, in proportion as our goodness or grace would be lost in worldliness or sin.

16. What is the significance of "the helmet of salvation," and is it *more important now than in the past*?

(Eph 6:17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

F658:1

The Helmet of Salvation represents the intellectual, or philosophical, appreciation or understanding of the divine plan. Apparently, it was less necessary in the past than now: but now, in the "harvest," when the Adversary is furiously attacking the Truth and turning everything scientific and educational into a weapon of destruction--now the helmet is indispensable. And now, and only now, is it provided in such size and shape that the humblest soldier of the cross can put it on. The Lord held back the Attacker within the bounds where the shield of faith would serve as protection; but now the whole armor is supplied, and not too soon for the needs of his faithful.

R2873 - THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE RANSOM

Question.--Is an understanding of the philosophy of the ransom essential to justification?

Answer.--Justification is the name for that standing in the sight of God in which He can accept us and deal with us no longer as sinners but as perfect human sons. This relationship or standing has been accounted to the friends of God ever since the day of Abraham, surely, and evidently to some others previously. Neither Abraham nor David nor Samuel nor the prophets understood the philosophy of the ransom. They could not understand it, for it had not yet been revealed in any sense or degree: it had merely been hinted at in types and through indefinite promises.

But they could and did have faith in God, and the Apostle Paul (`Rom. 4`) shows that it was that faith that justified them. They had faith to the full of the revelation of God's will and plan made to them. The extent of the knowledge of God possible to be possessed has increased considerably since Abraham's day. In `Rom. 4:24`, the Apostle makes faith in God the basis of our justification as it was the basis of their acceptance, though now faith in God includes faith in the Lord Jesus as our Redeemer. It was impossible for any to believe on Him of whom they had not heard; but Abraham believed God in His statement that in his seed (afterward shown to be Christ) all the families of the earth should be blest. Abraham's faith was reckoned as justifying him in God's sight. It was such an active, obedient faith as would have accepted Christ personally, as it accepted the promises concerning him. In due time his faith shall be perfected -- at our Lord's second advent.

Coming down to the first advent of our Lord: His teaching evidently brought a great light to them that had the eyes of their understanding opened, and he declared the ransom. We have no reason to suppose that even those who heard our Lord speak in dark sayings and parables grasped the philosophy of the ransom; and so through the Gospel age to the present time. We must therefore suppose that in God's wisdom it was quite sufficient that his people should believe the fact which his Word does clearly state, that Christ's death paid the penalty for the sins of the whole world somehow or other, not understood.

The ransom was necessary, so far as God was concerned, as the basis of our justification. But so far as we were concerned, the thing necessary was to "believe God" and to accept God's statement, that through the death of Christ the reconciliation for the sins of the whole world was effected, for all who would believe it and act accordingly.

The philosophy of the subject is needful in our day, and is "meat in due season;" now, because we have come down to a time when there is in progress a special sifting and testing in connection with Christ and his sacrifice, and when it is necessary to have the philosophy of the subject in order to be able to appreciate and hold on clearly to the fact that we were redeemed by the precious blood.

It will be noticed that the prophet declares that all the tables of Babylon are full of vomit--rejected things. They had some very good things upon their tables, among others the doctrine of the ransom; but failing to be in the right condition of heart now, the Lord is rejecting Babylon;

and those of his people in her are called away from her tables to the meat in due season, while her tables, served by those who are rejected from being the Lord's mouth-pieces ("I will spue thee out of my mouth"), are in the light of the dawning day being despised; and even the good things from the Lord's Word (the ransom, etc.), which once yielded them refreshment, are now defiled in their eyes along with the rejected nonsense of the dark ages.

R3156 c2 p3

There is danger that some may misunderstand the meaning of our text, and suppose it to teach that every incident in the life of God's people is what and as he intended it to be;--that God arbitrarily interferes in the affairs of his people, sets aside their free agency, and forces them to take this step or the other as mere machines. This is a serious mistake. No such thought is contained in the words. God has shown us his good pleasure in such matters; for, although he could have made us like wagons or wheelbarrows, to be pulled or pushed regardless of any ambition of our own, he did not so make us, and seeketh not such to be his children--the recipients of his favors. On the contrary, he made man a free moral agent--in this respect a copy of his Creator, free to will as he may please. Although we are not always free to do as we may please, we are always free to will as we may please, and, as already seen, in the present time the Lord is dealing with his people according to their wills. And if God respects the will of the natural man, much more would he respect the will of the new creature in Christ Jesus, begotten of the holy Spirit.

17. Can we give too much attention to acquiring knowledge?

F319:1

Our fourth proposition: Growth in knowledge is very liable to detract from devotion--strange as it may appear that it should be so. We find our capacities so small, and our time for religious things so limited, that if attention be energetically directed in one channel it is apt to lead to dwarfing in other directions. The Christian is not to be all head and no heart, nor all heart and no head. The "spirit of a sound mind" directs us to cultivate all the fruits and graces which go to round out and complete a perfect character. The tendency of our day in all matters is in the opposite direction --to specialize. One workman does this part, another workman that part; so that now very few workmen understand a trade in full as in former times. The New Creature must resist this tendency, and must "make straight paths for his feet" accordingly; lest while cultivating one element of grace he falls into danger through the lack of the proper exercise of another God-given faculty or privilege.

R2488 c1 p6

It is a great privilege for Christians to study the Lord's Word, yet a great deal of study is done to no purpose. Study which is not put into practice in daily life is worse than a waste of time. It is not he that merely knoweth the Master's will, but he who patiently and perseveringly seeks to do the Master's will, that shall be approved and win the crown. Every reasonable opportunity should be used by the Lord's people to obtain a knowledge of the divine plan--even to the extent of sacrificing; but the child of the Lord will be particular to see that it is his own conveniences and

comforts that he is sacrificing, and not chiefly the conveniences and comforts of others. The Bible study which is done merely at the expense of others is a sign of selfishness rather than a sign of a rich indwelling of the Lord's spirit of love.

18. What is the relation between knowledge and *love*?

(1Co 13:2) And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

R3150 c1 p5,6

Before describing the operation of love the Apostle impresses upon us its importance, assuring us that if we possess the very choicest of the "gifts" already explained, and do not have therewith love, we will still lack the evidence of our being New Creatures in Christ Jesus. We should be merely "sounding brass or cymbal" --making a noise, but having no acceptable feeling or virtue in ourselves in connection with our words. He assures us thus that ability to speak fluently on gospel themes, even, might not be a proof of our relationship to the Lord as New Creatures. The Apostle's declaration is introduced with an "if," which might be challenged, to a certain extent, by the assertion that no one could speak forth with power, with force, the gospel of God's dear Son unless he possessed the spirit of love. Although we have all met public speakers who could deliver very beautiful essays, we have generally perceived a hollowness in their teaching unless they spoke from the heart, prompted by love of the truth,--not by love of applause, nor for love of money.

Amongst the gifts, prophecy or oratory was one which the Apostle commended. Knowledge of mysteries of God is also commended, and large faith is reckoned amongst the chief of the Christian requirements; yet the Apostle declares that if he possessed all of these in their fullest measure, and love were absent, he would be nothing,--a mere cipher--not a member of the New Creation at all, since love is the very spirit of the begetting to the new nature. What a wonderful test this is! let us each apply it to himself. Whether I am something or nothing in God's estimation is to be measured by my love for him, for his brethren, for his cause, for the world in general, and even for my enemies, --rather than by my knowledge or fame or oratory. Yet we are not to understand that one could have a knowledge of the deep mysteries of God without having been begotten by the holy spirit of love; for the deep things of God knoweth no man, but by the spirit of God; but one might lose the spirit before losing the knowledge it brought him. In the measurement of character, therefore, we are to put love first, and to consider it the chief test of our nearness and acceptance to the Lord.

(2Pe 1:8) For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

E238:2 to 239:2

Furthermore, the holy Spirit witnesses to us, through the Word, that if we are the children of God we will not be ignorant of things present nor of "things to come," because we will be enlightened

and taught of God, through the Word of his grace--the Word of his Spirit. As we mature, "grow in grace," we will desire and seek and obtain, in addition to the milk of the Word, the "strong meat" which the Apostle declares is for those of fuller development. (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13,14) The development in the graces of the Spirit, faith, fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, piety, brotherly kindness, love, will bring us into closer fellowship with the Father and with the Lord Jesus, so that the Lord will be able and willing to communicate to us more and more clearly a knowledge of his gracious plans, as well as of his own gracious character.

Referring to this growth, the Apostle Peter says: "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off....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 Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 1:5-11. Compare John 16:12,15.

Each should ask himself whether or not he has this witness of the Spirit, this testimony to his growth as a new creature in Christ Jesus, and whether or not he is developing and maturing the kind of fruit here specified. Let us remember also that our growth in love and in all the fruits of the Spirit is dependent largely upon our growth in knowledge; and our growth in knowledge of divine things is dependent also upon our growth in the fruits of the Spirit. Each step of knowledge brings a corresponding step of duty and obedience, and each step of duty and obedience taken will be followed by a further step in knowledge, for so, the Spirit witnesseth, shall be the experience of all those who shall be taught of God in the school of Christ. If we have this witness of the Spirit of growth, both in grace and in knowledge, let us rejoice therein, and let us follow on in the same pathway until it shall bring us, under divine guidance, to that which is perfect, both in knowledge and in grace.

R2649 c2 p1,2

Knowledge is valuable, but only incidentally; of itself the Apostle assures us knowledge would be inclined to puff us up, make us vain and boastful, and thus quite out of harmony with the spirit of God, the spirit of love, meekness, gentleness. Knowledge might make us merely tinkling cymbals giving out a sound, but possessing no real merit in the Lord's sight. But knowledge, when it serves its proper purpose, brings us to the appreciation of "the love [that is] of God" and to a realization of the wisdom of copying his character, that we should seek so far as possible to be like our Father which is in heaven, copies of his dear Son, our Lord. The Apostle brings this position clearly to our attention when he says, "That ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know [appreciate] the love of Christ... and be filled with all the fulness of God.--`Eph. 3:17-19`.

Undoubtedly love is the principal thing to be studied, to be appreciated, to be copied and practiced in our lives. We trust that a large proportion of the WATCH TOWER readers have already become partakers of this "love of God," and that all such are seeking to have it perfected in them, and to be rooted and grounded in it. We have the Apostle's assurance that only those who take this standpoint can make permanent and thorough progress in grace and knowledge. Those who have entered the school of Christ, and who refuse to progress in it toward perfection, may assuredly expect that sooner or later their knowledge of the divine plan will slip from them;

while those who do make progress in this proper direction may expect that the lengths and breadths of the divine plan will continue opening before them, and that their growth in knowledge will keep pace with their growth in love.

R3215 c1 p6 and c2 p1

But what is it to grow in grace? It is to grow in favor with the Lord through an intimate personal acquaintance and fellowship of spirit with him. It implies, first, a knowledge and recognition on our part of our redemption through his precious blood and a personal faith in and dependence upon all the promises of the Father made to us through him, and then an intimate communion with him in our daily life of prayer, and of observation of his will and obedience to it. If such be our constant attitude of mind and heart, there must be a constant ripening of the fruits of the spirit, rendering us more and more pleasing and acceptable to our Lord. A sense of the divine acceptance and favor is given to us from day to day in increasing measure, in fulfilment of that blessed promise of our Lord, "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."-- `John 14:23`.

This, as nearly as words can express it, is what it is to grow in grace; but the full and blessed understanding of it is best appreciated by those who from day to day walk with God in faith and obedience and love.

R2198 c1 p5

But if this knowledge and liberty be not accompanied by a full self-surrender to God, a complete consecration of one's self to him who is the Author of our liberties and privileges, we stand in great danger; for, as the apostle here declares, knowledge alone without self-submission to God would incline to puff us up, to make us heady, arrogant, self-sufficient. But if the knowledge be accompanied by a love to God, which leads to self-consecration in his service, in harmony with his instructions, the knowledge will work good for us, by thus introducing the spirit of love as the controlling factor in our lives, because the effect of love is to "build up" instead of to "puff up." Love is constructive, and tends not only to build up our own characters after the Divine pattern, but by so doing it makes us co-workers together with God, in our sympathies for and interest in others--in their upbuilding and general welfare.

19. What is the difference between the knowledge which *precedes* justifying faith, and the knowledge which we should "*add to*" our faith?

(2Pe 1:5) And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

R2037 - *QUESTIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST*

Question.--Some define gnosis, rendered "knowledge" in `2 Pet. 1:5`, as "the spirit of judicial investigation and inquiry." If we are always willing to add to our faith the gnosis, the spirit of judicial investigation and inquiry, the epignosis, the exact, sufficient knowledge, will certainly be the reward. Do you consider this the Apostle's meaning?

Answer.--Reference to other passages in which the word *gnosis* occurs shows that the above definition is not adequate. See `1 Cor. 8:1`; `2 Cor. 4:6`; `Eph. 3:19`; `2 Pet. 3:18`; etc.

To our understanding the Apostle's meaning is not, "Add to your faith an investigating disposition," but as follows:

Beginning with those who already have some knowledge, enough to be a basis for faith, he exhorts them to add to their faith fortitude (common version, "virtue"); that is to say, he implies that if they hold to their faith against the attacks of the enemy it will develop fortitude, an added grace of character. And when he says, "Add to your fortitude knowledge," we understand him to mean that if faith be held firmly, and fortitude of character result, this, under the Spirit's guidance, will bring the faithful one to deeper and wider expanses of knowledge; or, as the same Apostle suggests (`2 Pet. 3:18`), the faithful one will grow in both grace and knowledge, and the holy Spirit, through its begetting, will enable such to know (appreciate) the deep things of God, the things freely given unto such by God, the knowledge of God resulting from our experience in the school of Christ. It is concerning this knowledge, not merely concerning the intricacies of doctrinal matters, but the heart sympathy and communion with the Lord himself, that the Apostle Paul exclaimed, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."--`Phil. 3:8`.

This knowledge, received into a good and honest heart, will bring forth the fruitage or grace of character here termed "self-control" (common version, "temperance"). As is elsewhere stated, "He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself," controls himself, purges out more and more of the old leaven. Following and connected with the attainment of such self-control would come patience: for the self-mastery would teach the necessity for sympathy with and patience toward others. This patience in turn would lead to and develop the next grace mentioned; namely, piety--a condition in which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, influencing all the thoughts and words and deeds. This condition in turn develops brotherly kindness --a love for all who are brethren and yoke fellows in the cause of righteousness and truth, the cause of God. And brotherly kindness in turn leads to that still broader and deeper experience designated the chief of all graces; namely, love, love for God, love for the brethren, love deep and pure and true, which thinketh no evil and doth not puff itself up, and is not easily offended, rejoices always in the truth and never in iniquity, the climax of Christian attainment in the present life; the grace of all graces, which never fadeth, and which will but be perfected when we receive the new resurrection body.

20. How are "grace and peace multiplied" unto us through knowledge?

(2Pe 1:2) Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

(2Pe 1:3) According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

R2136 first 8 paragraphs of article *THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD-ITS VALUE*

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto God and life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us by his own glory and virtue."--`2 Pet. 1:2,3` --Reading of Sinaitic manuscript.

THE FIRST question coming to us in connection with these words of exhortation is, To whom were they addressed? Are these the instructions given to sinners? Is this the way by which sinners are to approach to God? No. These instructions are addressed to those who are already justified through faith in the precious blood of Christ, as indicated in the preceding verse. They are addressed--"To them who have obtained like precious faith with us [the apostles] through the righteousness of our Lord and Savior,* Jesus Christ."

The suggestion clearly is that to become believers in Christ Jesus--even justified and fully consecrated believers--is not sufficient; there is to be a progress in the life just begun which will continue as long as we are "in this tabernacle," and, if faithful, be completed in "the first resurrection." The thought of the Apostle is not year by year revivals with year by year backslidings, but rather a continued progression in the new life. This thought is quite in contradiction of the experiences of very many who assume the name of Christ, which, alas! are too often expressed in the lines of the hymn:--

"Where is the blessedness I knew, when first I found the Lord? Where is the soul-reviving view of Jesus and his Word?"

The prevalent idea amongst this class of Christians might be termed alternate subtractions and additions of grace and peace. They first get a blessing, then lose it, then find it again to lose it again, and thus continue. There is a logical reason why this course is so prevalent, and why so few know anything about the multiplication which the Apostle here mentions-- "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you." The reason is that the majority of Christians lack a knowledge of those things which are necessary to preserve to them the grace and peace found through their primary faith in the Lord as their Redeemer; and much more do they lack a sufficiency of knowledge to multiply their grace and peace. The vast majority occupy the position mentioned by the Apostle Paul (`1 Cor. 3:1`) "I, brethren, could not write unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal-- even as unto babes in Christ;" "when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God."--`Heb. 5:12-14`.

An error on one subject often leads to many errors on many subjects; and so it is in this case: the doctrine of eternal torment as the penalty for the fall, from which only believers will escape, has distorted the judgment and misdirected the efforts of many of the Lord's people. With some of the most earnest the first thought is personal escape from eternal torment, and naturally the second thought is to help as many others as possible to escape such an awful eternity. With this thought as the mainspring of conduct, we cannot wonder that by such chief attention is paid to "saving sinners" and bringing them into the condition of "babes in Christ." But after they become babes comparatively little is done to develop them in the knowledge of God, that they may grow up into the full stature of manhood in Christ. As babes they are continually fed upon the milk, and hence are unused to the strong meat, so that when they do attempt its use, they are more likely to be choked by it than to be strengthened.

The Apostle points out the proper course by which the believer, having made a proper start, shall continue onward and upward in his Christian development-- multiplying his grace and his peace. It is all-important, however, that he begin right, that he be truly begotten "by the word of truth," "the faith once delivered unto the saints"--which the Apostle here terms "precious faith." This is not the faith promulgated by the higher critics. Their faith is far from precious. Their faith denies the fall, denies the ransom and all necessity for it, and consequently denies the resurrection based upon that ransom. Their faith consists in believing in their own judgments as the criterions of what is truth and what is error, and in doubting the testimony of Moses and the prophets, of the Lord and the apostles. Such a faith is not the "precious faith," is not "the faith once delivered unto the saints." And those who are building upon such a faith are not of those here addressed by the Apostle, and we need not expect that either their grace or their peace will be multiplied. We trust, however, that the majority of our readers are of those who can sing with the spirit and the understanding also,--

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand: all other ground is sinking sand."

The true foundation, upon which we should build, is,--faith in the righteousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,--faith that his sacrifice for sin was once for all a full and complete ransom-price for Adam and all his posterity, so that all of these, as in due time they shall be brought to a knowledge of Christ, may, if they will, obtain cleansing and eternal life under the gracious terms of the New Covenant. It is those who build upon this foundation that may hope to multiply their grace and peace. How?

The Apostle answers--"Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." At first it may occur to some that this has but a slight meaning, and that it simply signifies that we come to know that there is a God, and that there is a Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But the knowledge of God means far more than this to the advancing and developing Christian: to him it means an intimate acquaintance with the Father and with the Son, a knowledge of the "mind of Christ," which is a full and clear representation to us of the mind of the Father. We are to grow in this knowledge by studying the Word of God, by discerning through that Word the principles which govern the divine conduct, as to how divine justice, wisdom, love and power operate. These are progressive studies. Something may be learned the first day of our Christian experience, but the end of the first year should show considerable progress in the knowledge of the divine mind; the second year should show us a still further increase, and so on.

As our intimate knowledge of the divine plan and character increases, so must also our grace increase; for those who do not attempt to come into harmony, step by step, with that which they see of the divine character will soon lose interest in such knowledge, while those who have the interest which leads to further and further study must of necessity be growing in grace continually. And as they grow in grace, so also will they grow in peace; for peace also is a progressive thing. We had peace when first we found the Lord and realized the forgiveness of our sins; but those who have made progress in the knowledge of the divine plan and character have found their peace to be an ever-increasing one; and those who have advanced some distance

in the good way can speak of it in the language of the apostles and realize it in their hearts as being "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

A346

A knowledge of these things, and the evidences that they are nigh, even at the door, should have a powerful influence upon all, but especially upon the consecrated children of God, who are seeking the prize of the divine nature. We urge such, while they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, to lay aside every weight and hindrance, and to run patiently the race in which they have started. Look away from self and its unavoidable weaknesses and imperfections, knowing that all such weaknesses are covered fully by the merits of the ransom given by Christ Jesus our Lord, and that your sacrifices and self-denials are acceptable to God through our Redeemer and Lord--and thus only. Let us remember that the strength sufficient which God has promised us, and by use of which we can be "overcomers," is provided in his Word. It is a strength derived from a knowledge of his character and plans, and of the conditions upon which we may share in them. Thus Peter expresses it, saying, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that BY THESE ye might be partakers of the divine nature." 2 Pet. 1:2-4

But to obtain this knowledge and this strength, which God thus proposes to supply to each runner for the heavenly prize, will surely test the sincerity of your consecration vows. You have consecrated all your time, all your talents, to the Lord; now the question is, How much of it are you giving? Are you still willing, according to your covenant of consecration, to give up all?--to give up your own plans and methods, and the theories of yourselves and others, to accept of God's plan and way and time of doing his great work? Are you willing to do this at the cost of earthly friendships and social ties? And are you willing to give up time from other things for the investigation of these glorious themes so heart-cheering to the truly consecrated, with the certain knowledge that it will cost you this self-denial? If all is not consecrated, or if you only half meant it when you gave all to the Lord, then you will begrudge the time and effort needful to search his Word as for hid treasure, to obtain thus the strength needful for all the trials of faith incident to the present (the dawn of the Millennium) above other times.

21. What is the relation between knowledge and prayer?

(Joh 15:7) If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

F679, 680

"Ask and Ye Shall Receive, that Your Joy may be Full" --John 16:24—

"In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore," declares the prophet. (Psa. 16:11) It is because prayer brings the soul into the presence of the Lord that it prepares the way for divine blessing and superlative joys. Evidently the opening of the way for the Lord's people to approach the throne of grace is not with the object of their changing the divine will or plans. Such a thought is incompatible with every reasonable consideration of the subject; hence, the Lord instructs us that proper praying is not along the line of making requests that our wills be done, in opposition to the divine will, but along the line of full submission to the latter. The Apostle declares of some, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss"--in harmony with your own desires, and not in harmony with the divine arrangement and plan. James 4:3

Along the same line our Lord admonished: "Use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking; but your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. Be not careful [worried], therefore, respecting what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed, for after these things do the Gentiles seek; but seek ye primarily the Kingdom of God and righteousness in harmony with it, and all these needful earthly things shall be added unto you--by your Father in heaven, according to his wisdom." (Matt. 6:25-34) Again, our Lord says, "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 15:7) The following conditions are all-important:

(1) The one offering the prayer must be in Christ--must have come into vital relationship with him by the acceptance of the merit of his atonement sacrifice, and by a consecration to his will and service; and, more than this, he must continue to abide thus in Christ as a member of his body, as a member of the New Creation, in order to have the privileges of prayer here referred to.

(2) He must also let the Lord's Word abide in him; he must partake of the Word of truth and grace if he would have the wisdom necessary to ask, in harmony with the Lord's will, things which he would be pleased to grant-- otherwise, even though in Christ a New Creature, his prayers might frequently go unanswered, because "amiss." It is only those who profess both of these qualifications who may expect to approach the throne of heavenly grace with full confidence, full assurance of faith that their petitions will be answered--in God's due time. Only such can realize fullness of joy.

As the Scriptures explain, prayer is the attempt to gain access to the presence of God, and to hold communion with him. Who then may approach the throne of the heavenly grace to "obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need?" (Heb. 4:16) We answer, with the Apostle, that the world in general does not have this access, does not have this privilege of prayer. True, indeed, millions of heathen people are offering prayers to Deity with varying conceptions of who and what he is; but their prayers are not acceptable to God. "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is [must recognize him as the self-existing One], and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him [seek to know him, to obey him, to serve him]." (Heb. 11:6) Cornelius was one of this latter kind, who recognized the true God and revered him, and sought to know and do his will; and, as soon as the divine plan had reached the necessary stage of development to permit God's favor to be extended to the Gentiles, his prayers and his alms received a response. He was not, however, permitted to have communion with God in the full, proper sense; but was

instructed to send for Peter, who would tell him "words" by which he might be brought from his condition of alienation and separation into a condition of harmony and sonship, in which he would have the privilege of a son--the privilege of access to the Father at the throne of heavenly grace.

F688:1

It was the wisdom from above, the holy Spirit, which guided the Apostle Paul when going into a new city with the Gospel, to seek out those assembled at a place "where prayer was wont to be made." (Acts 16:13) And it is a fact, still, that both the knowledge and the love of God abound most amongst those of his people who pray one for another, that their joy may be full. However many meetings the Lord's people may have for the study of his Word, and for the building up of one another in the most holy faith, we advocate that no service be considered as properly commenced except the Lord's blessing upon the study be first invoked; and that no meeting be considered properly closed until the Lord be thanked for the privilege and blessings enjoyed, and for his blessing bestowed--that the Word of his grace may be meat indeed to the hearts of those who have heard with sincere desire to know and do his will.

R3217 c2 p2,3

What we thus see exemplified on a large and national scale we may see exemplified in a small way closer to us. How many of us in our ignorance and blindness have at some time in life prayed for the various systems of bondage, for the various sects of Christendom, and labored, too, for their upbuilding, only to find ourselves injured spiritually by that which we prayed for and labored for. We asked amiss, as did the Elders of Israel, while, instead, our hearts as well as theirs should have inquired continually for the ways of the Lord, for his leadings, not asking to have him favor and bless that which we ignorantly and mistakenly supposed to be for his glory and our own good. Let us learn to pray aright, as well as to labor and to hope aright; and in order so to do let us be swift to hear, slow to speak, swift to hearken to the Word of the Lord and to the lesson which he has already given us, and to his method of instructing us and guiding us and blessing us. Let us be slow to tell him what our preferences are; indeed, let us seek to attain that development of Christian character which will permit us always not to seek our own wills, but the will and way of our Father in heaven. (August 29 Manna)

The same principle will apply in the more private affairs of our daily lives. Several parents have told us, with aching hearts, of prayers answered which subsequently they could have wished never answered; they have told us of companions and children on their deathbeds for whose lives they had prayed with importunity and without either the words or the sentiment, Thy will be done, and how the Lord answered those prayers, and what terrible evils had come to them through the answers. All cases may not be alike, but the properly exercised and heart-developed children of God should expect to attain to the place where all of their prayers are answered, and answered in the best possible way, and most satisfactorily, because the Lord's Word dwells in them richly. They would not ask amiss-- would not ask anything contrary to the divine will and providences; but rather, trusting to the divine wisdom, their prayer would be, "Lord, thy will, not mine, be done."

22. Do all kinds of knowledge profit us?

(Joh 17:17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

F137:2

SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE TRUTH

From the foregoing it is manifest that the sanctification which God desires--the sanctification essential to attainment of a place in the New Creation--will not be possible to any except those who are in the school of Christ, and who learn of him--are "sanctified through the truth." Error will not sanctify, neither will ignorance. Moreover, we are not to make the mistake of supposing that all truth tends to sanctification: on the contrary, although truth in general is admirable to all those who love truth and who correspondingly hate error, our Lord's word for it is that it is only "Thy truth" which sanctifies. We see the whole civil world ostensibly racing, chasing each other and contending for truth. Geologists have one part of the field, Astronomers another, Chemists another, Physicians another, Statesmen another, etc.; but we do not find that these various branches of truth-searching lead to sanctification. On the contrary, we find that, as a rule, they lead in the reverse direction; and in accord with this is the declaration of the Apostle that "the world by wisdom knows not God." (1 Cor. 1:21) The fact is that in the few short years of the present life, and in our present fallen, imperfect and depraved condition, our capacity is entirely too small to make worth our while the attempt to take in the entire realm of truth on every subject; hence, we see that the successful people of the world are specialists. The man who devotes his attention to astronomy will have more than he can do to keep up with his position--little time for geology or chemistry or botany or medicine or the highest of all sciences "Thy truth"--the divine plan of the ages. It is in view of this that the Apostle, who himself was a well-educated man in his time, advises Timothy to "beware of human philosophies" (theories and sciences) falsely so-called. The word science signifies truth, and the Apostle, we may be sure, did not mean to impugn the sincerity of the scientists of his day, nor to imply that they were intentional falsifiers; but his words do give us the thought, which the course of science fully attests, that, although there is some truth connected with all these sciences, yet the human theories called sciences are not truth--not absolutely correct. They are merely the best guesses that the most attentive students in these departments of study have been able to set forth; and these--as history clearly shows-- from time to time contradict each other. As the scientists of fifty years ago repudiated the science of previous times, so are the deductions and methods of reasoning of these in turn repudiated by the scientists of today.

23. How can we explain the Apostle's statement, "Ye know all things," and "need not that any man teach you"?

(1Jo 2:20) But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

(1Jo 2:27) But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

E280 to 287**AN UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE**

"Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things."

"The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." 1 John 2:20,27

These words unction and anointing awaken in intelligent Bible students recollections of the holy anointing oil poured upon the heads of each successor to the offices of High Priest and King in Israel. As the people of Israel were typical of "the true Israel of God," so their priests and kings were typical of Christ, the great antitypical High Priest and King. And as their priests and kings were anointed with the "holy anointing oil" as an induction into office, so our Lord Jesus was anointed with the holy Spirit at the time of his consecration. He thus became the Christ--the anointed of Jehovah.

The elect church is to be a "royal priesthood" (king-priests) under their Lord and Head--"members of the body of the Anointed [the Christ]." The holy Spirit of anointing which came to our Lord Jesus at his baptism at Jordan, and with "all power in heaven and in earth," when he was raised from the dead by the holy Spirit or power of the Father (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:19,20), he with the Father's approval "shed forth" or poured out as the antitypical anointing oil upon the representatives of his Church at Pentecost. There (keeping in thought the type) the anointing oil passed from the "Head" to his "body," the Church, and thenceforth the faithful, abiding in the body, were recognized in the divine Word as "the very elect" of God, anointed of him (in Christ) to rule and bless the world after being first "taught of God" under the guidance of the anointing Spirit.

The signification of unction (and of its Greek original *chrisma*) is smoothness, oiliness, lubrication. From custom the word carried with it also the thought of fragrance, perfume. How beautifully and forcefully this word represents the effect of God's influence toward goodness, upon those who come under this antitypical anointing--holiness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness--love! What a sweet, pure perfume does this anointing of the holy Spirit of love bring with it to all who receive it! However ungainly or coarse or rude or ignorant the outer man, "the earthen vessel," how speedily it partakes of the sweetening and purifying influence of the treasure of the "new heart," the new will within--anointed with the holy Spirit and brought into harmony with "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely!" Phil. 4:8

These words "unction" and "anointing" are in full accord with the correct view of the holy Spirit--that it is an influence from God, an invisible power of God exercised through his precepts, his promises, or otherwise as may seem good to the all-wise omnipotent One. These words certainly do not convey the thought of a person. How could we be anointed with a person?

But some one perhaps will suggest that in the expression, "an unction from the Holy One," not the unction but the Holy One represents the holy Spirit. We answer, No; the Holy One is the Father. Peter, describing the Pentecostal blessing, declares that it was "shed forth" or poured out--as anointing oil, but not as a person would be said to be sent. He says, speaking of Jesus, "Having received of the Father the holy Spirit promised [in Joel] he hath shed forth this which ye see and hear"--this miraculous power or influence which manifests itself variously, in quickening thoughts, in tongues of flame and divers languages uttered by unlearned men. Again Joel's prophecy was "I will pour out my Spirit." Can any one claim that this would be appropriate language to use respecting any person? That he was given by the Father to the Son, and that he was poured or shed forth and seen and heard as "this"? Surely not. And surely such language would be disrespectful, if applied to a third person of a trinity of Gods "equal in power and glory."

The item however which strikes everyone as most astounding is that those who have this unction "know all things." How many of the Lord's people have felt absolutely certain that they did not "know all things," and therefore doubted if they had received the anointing of the holy Spirit! How the matter is simplified when translated, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye all know it!"* Yes, indeed; all the true children of God know very well the difference between the natural mind or heart or will and the new heart, new mind, new disposition, controlled by love and righteousness.

*The words "all things" are omitted by oldest Greek MSS.

And how many of God's best and humblest children have read with amazement the words, "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you and ye need not that any man teach you!" Alas! they said, we have received no such anointing, for we have very much need that some man teach us, and know very little that has not come to us either directly or indirectly through human instrumentality. And these humble souls would feel greatly cast down and discouraged by reason of their honesty of thought, did they not see that the very best of the saints of their acquaintance similarly need and appreciate human teachers. On the other hand, some of the less honest, less candid, less saintly, endeavor to deceive themselves and others by claiming that they have learned nothing of men but have been taught all they know by direct inspiration of the holy Spirit. They see not that they are thus claiming infallibility for their thoughts and words, in the most absolute sense. They fail, too, to see that their errors of thought, word and deed, claimed to be under plenary inspiration of the holy Spirit, reflect against God's holy Spirit, as the author of their errors and follies.

Taking this passage just as it stands, it contradicts the general testimony of Scripture. Does not the Apostle Paul mention among the Spirit's gifts to the Church--apostles, prophets [orators], pastors, teachers, evangelists? And why give these if the Church had no need that any man teach them? What does the Apostle say of the reason for setting these special gifts in the Church? Hear him: "For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God." (Eph. 4:11-13) Compare 1 Cor. 12:28-31.

It is not supposable that the Apostle John was contradicting the Apostle Paul and the other apostles--all of whom were teachers and who instructed the Church to seek out the Spirit's choice of pastors, teachers and overseers, and to honor those who thus had the "rule over" the Church and who were to watch for the interests of souls as those who must give an account to the Lord. (Heb. 13:17) It was undoubtedly in full accord with the Apostle Paul's advice that the Church had need to select as its servants men "apt at teaching," "able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," and when necessary to "rebuke sharply that they may be sound in faith." They were to recognize under-shepherds, who would not "lord it over God's heritage," but would "feed the flock" with meat in due season--avoiding teachers having ears which itched for popularity and flattery. 1 Pet. 5:2-4; 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9,13

Furthermore, John himself was a teacher, and in this very epistle was teaching what he and we appreciate as sound doctrine--necessary to be taught. Surely no one reading John's writings could draw the inference that he meant them merely as social letters, devoid of doctrine or teaching. Does he not open the epistle by saying, "That which we have seen and heard declare [teach] we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us?" (1:3) Again he says, "These things write I unto you [to teach you] that ye sin not." (2:1) Again, "A new commandment [teaching] I write unto you." (2:8) Again, "Little children, let no man deceive you [but heed my teaching]: he that doeth righteousness is righteous." (3:7) Again, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us [obeys our instructions, our teachings]." (4:6) Again, "These things have I written unto you...that ye may know [be taught]." (5:13) He closes his epistle with a very important teaching, saying, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols [permit no person or thing to supplant God himself in your affections and reverence]."

Seeing then that the Apostle cannot be understood as meaning that the Church has no need of human teachers-- seeing on the contrary that he recognized human teachers as the agency employed by the holy Spirit specially "set in the Church" for this very service, what can he mean by these words, "Ye need not that any man teach you," and "the same anointing teacheth you all things"? The proper answer to this query will be readily seen by examining the context in the light of facts already discussed.

This epistle is supposed by scholars to have been written in the year A.D. 90. By that date Christianity had attained considerable prominence in the world. It had gathered the "remnant" of fleshly Israel and drawn upon itself the hatred and persecution of the vast blinded majority of that people and been scattered everywhere throughout the then civilized world. Many things in Christianity commended it to the Greek philosophers of that time who sought to combine with it and to become philosophic Christians and Christian philosophers--still holding their philosophies which the Apostle Paul points out were "falsely so-called." (1 Tim. 6:20) These philosophers were quite willing to acknowledge Jesus as a good man and a wise teacher but not as the Son of God who left a spirit nature, "a form of God," and was "made flesh," to thereby become man's Redeemer, and the author of eternal life to all who obey him. They were, however, teaching a future, eternal life and were glad to find Christians teaching the same: the difference being that the philosophers (Plato and others) taught that eternal life is a human quality, an inherent power in mankind-- deathlessness, immortality, whereas the Christians taught that eternal life was not inherent in man but a gift of God through Christ, intended only for those who accept him. Rom. 2:7; 5:15,21; 6:23; 2 Cor. 9:15

These philosophers practically said to the Christians-- We are glad to meet so respectable and sensible and free a people. Your great teacher, Jesus, surely did make you free from many of the customs and superstitions of the Jews and we congratulate you accordingly. But you are still in a measure of bondage: when you have investigated our philosophies you will have still more liberty and will find that much you still hold in common with the Jews--their hopes of a Messianic kingdom, their peculiar ideas of one God and your peculiar ideas that your Teacher, Jesus, was his only Son, etc., these things you will soon outgrow, with the aid of our philosophy. 2 Pet. 2:19; Jude 4

John's epistle is written to fortify Christians against these subversive doctrines. He exhorts them in this chapter (2:24) to hold fast the teachings heard by them from the beginning and to consider these philosophizing teachings as lies and all such false teachers representatives of the Antichrist which they had so often heard would be manifested in the Church. (2 Thess. 2:3-7; 1 John 2:18) He says, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that [seek to] seduce you [from Christ]." Verse 26

Then comes the peculiar language of verse 27, now under discussion, which we paraphrase thus:

But, dearly beloved, the true children of God cannot be seduced by any such philosophies: with us no philosophy can take the place of Christ in our hearts--no theory could cause us to question the fulness and the correctness of the great message which we received as the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ--the Father's Beloved, the Father's Anointed. Besides the reasonableness of "the faith once delivered unto the saints," consider the marvelous effect of that message upon you: it was accompanied by miraculous "gifts" of "tongues," "miracles," etc., which these philosophers declare are duplicated by the fakirs of the East; but aside from this you have another testimony in your own new hearts-- in the anointing which has transformed and renewed your minds, producing in your daily life fruits of the Spirit of holiness which the fakirs cannot duplicate and which the philosophers who would seduce you cannot deny.

On these fundamentals of our holy religion--that Christ Jesus was not an impostor but the very Son of God and our Redeemer; and that eternal life can be obtained only through vital union with him--you have no need of instruction, neither from these false teachers nor from me. And so long as you have this holy Spirit of love abiding in you, it will serve as a guard against all such blasphemous, antichristian theories. So long as you remember that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" came to your hearts through an acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God and the only power of God unto salvation, so long will this spirit hold you firm, steadfast, on this point. And you will find this same test (of loyalty to the holy Spirit of love received through the Father and the Son) helpful in proving all matters: for whatever contradicts or ignores this Spirit of love is an unholy spirit--a false teaching. And remember that its teaching is that if we would receive any reward we must "abide in him"--to abandon Christ is to abandon all.

The Apostle's thought is, that any who have become Christians at all, any who have understood the divine plan to any extent, must first have before them the fact that they and all were sinners and in need of a Redeemer; and, secondly, the fact that Jesus, the Anointed One, had redeemed them by the sacrifice of his own life. The Apostle further declares that they have no need that any man teach them this basic truth. They could not be Christians at all and yet be in ignorance of this fundamental of the Christian religion-- that Christ died for their sins according to the Scriptures, and rose again for their justification--and that our justification and consequent sanctification and hope of glory are all dependent upon the fact and value of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. He points out that although it might have been possible to trust in and believe on the Father without believing on the Son before the Son was manifested, yet now, whosoever denieth the Son of God denies thereby the Father; and no one can confess the Son of God without confessing at the same time the Father and the Father's plan, of which he is the center and executor.

So, then, we today can see exactly what the Apostle meant; namely, that whoever had been begotten of the holy Spirit must first have been a believer in the Lord Jesus; that he was the Only Begotten of the Father; that he was manifested in the flesh; that he was holy, harmless and separate from sinners; that he gave himself as our ransom; and that the sacrifice was accepted of the Father and witnessed by his resurrection to be the glorious King and Deliverer. Without this faith no one could receive the holy Spirit, the anointing: consequently, whoever has the anointing needs not that any man shall waste time in discussing further the fundamental question as to whether Jesus was or was not the Son of God; whether or not he was the Redeemer; whether or not he was the anointed Messiah who shall fulfil in God's due time the precious promises of the Scriptures. The same anointing which we have received, if it abides in us, will assure us of the truth of these things--"Even as it hath taught you ye must abide in him." Whoever abides not in him, in the Vine, is--like the branch cut off--sure to wither; whoever abides in him is sure to abide in his Spirit also, and cannot deny him.

"Ye have an unction from the holy one and ye all know it." (Diaglott) The holy Spirit was typified throughout the Jewish dispensation by holy oil which, poured upon the head of the High Priest, ran down over all the body; so whoever is of the body of Christ is under the anointing, under the influence of the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, it is unctuous, smooth, lubricative. Its tendency is to follow peace with all men, so far as is possible, and so far as fidelity to righteousness will permit. It is opposed to friction--to anger, malice, hatred, strife. Those under its influence are glad to be taught of the Lord, and so far from quarreling with his plan and revelation, they readily fall into full harmony with them, and have correspondingly the lubrication promised--the unction, the smoothness, the peace, the joy, the holiness of mind.

Those who have received the Spirit of the Lord in this sense of the word, bringing peace and joy and harmony into their hearts, knowing that they have these as a result of the Lord's dealings with them, and that they received these since they believed on the Lord Jesus and accepted him as the Anointed One. This unction, therefore, is an evidence not only to themselves but, in a considerable measure, an evidence to others that they are members of the body of Christ; while those who lack this peace and joy, and whose hearts are filled with malice and strife and hatred and bickerings and quarrelings and disputes, certainly lack the evidence of the anointing, of the lubrication, of the smoothness which accompanies the Spirit of the Lord. True, we are not all

alike, and the smoothness may not in the outward affairs of life manifest itself so quickly in some as in others; but very early in the Christian experience this smoothness should be looked for in the heart, as an evidence that we have been with Jesus and learned of him and received his Spirit, and shortly after it should begin to be evident to others in the daily life.

24. Explain Isaiah 53:11.

E91:1,2

Our Lord's words are still applicable to the case, viz., "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." (Matt. 11:27) The world knew him not: knew not of his high origin, and his great humiliation on its behalf; and when we remember that a long period of time probably intervened between the beginning of the creation in the person of our Lord, and the time when he was made flesh, and when further we remember that during all that period he was with the Father, "daily his delight, rejoicing always before him," we cannot wonder that the Son knew the Father, as his disciples and the world knew him not--as we are learning to know him through his Word of revelation and the unfoldment of his wonderful plan of the ages. Hear him again declare, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." John 17:25

The key to this wonderful knowledge of heavenly things is furnished in the statement, "He that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifies." (John 3:31,32) No wonder, then, that even his opponents asked, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" (Matt. 13:54) And it was his knowledge of heavenly things, his intimate and long acquaintance with the Father, begetting absolute faith in the Father's promises, which enabled him, as a perfect man, to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, and to present an acceptable sacrifice for our sins. Thus it was written beforehand through the Prophet: "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, while he will bear their iniquities." Isa. 53:11

R1835 c1 p1

The language of our Lord's faith was, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee." He had been with the Father from the beginning, had realized his love and his goodness, had seen his power and had marked his righteousness and his loving kindness and fatherly providence over all his works. And so it is written, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." (Isa. 53:11) The knowledge which he had of the Father gave to him a firm footing for faith in all his purposes concerning the future. Hence he could and did walk by faith. And that faith enabled him to overcome all obstacles and secure the victory even over death.

25. Should we expect to have any knowledge of the *future*?

(Amo 3:7) Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

(Joh 16:13) Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

B15:3

We find that the end of the Gospel age, like the end of the Jewish age, is called a harvest (Matt. 9:37; 13:24,30,39); that like that also, it is a period of forty years; and that upon the harvests of the ages the rays of prophetic testimony are specially concentrated, particularly upon the harvest of this age, where even all the light of the Jewish age--because of its typical character--converges in a glorious focus. In this light we may now distinctly see the stately steppings of our God, not only in the long vista of the ages past, but also in the present outworkings of his plan. And not only so, but according to his promise to show us things to come (John 16:13), we see, with wonderful distinctness of vision, his wise policy for the blessing of all in the incoming Millennial age--even down to its glorious consummation in the restitution of all things. We find that many great and wonderful events center in this harvest: that in it occur the great time of trouble, the day of Jehovah; the final and complete overthrow of Antichrist and the fall of Great Babylon; the beginning of returning favor to the Jew; the second advent of our Lord and the establishment of his kingdom; and the resurrection and reward of the saints.

R2973 c2 p4

The Watchers look not merely at the outward signs, as seen in the world. They scrutinize carefully and repeatedly their "chart," the Bible's prophetic outline of the world's history furnished by the King himself. It is because they see the time of trouble outlined in the prophetic chart that they know that it is sure to come, and are able in advance of others to "discern the signs of the times," and not to be in darkness respecting the "things to come." It was in respect to this that the Lord promised the Watchers that the holy spirit should guide them into all truth, as each feature became due, and would show them things to come--future things--in advance of the world's knowledge, and in advance of the facts themselves. (John 16:13.) But the same chart which shows the downfall of all earthly institutions, political, social and ecclesiastical, shows also that their fall is so timed in the great plan of Jehovah that it shall be the very hour in which he will establish his kingdom in the hands of the elect Church (who then shall be a royal priesthood glorified,--priests upon their thrones,--the religious as well as the civil rulers of the world), whose exaltation shall be to the glory of God and to the blessing of every creature.

26. What evidences have we that Dan. 12:4 is being fulfilled?

A337:1

An unanswerable argument, proving that this is God's due time for the introduction of the new order of things, is that he is lifting the veil of ignorance and gradually letting in the light of intelligence and invention upon mankind, just as foretold, when foretold, and with the results predicted. (Dan. 12:4,1) Had the knowledge come sooner, the trouble would have come sooner; and though society might have reorganized after its storm and melting, it would have been not a new earth [social arrangement] wherein righteousness would prevail and dwell, but a new earth

or arrangement in which sin and vice would have much more abounded than now. The equitable division of the benefits of labor-saving machinery would in time have brought shorter and shorter hours of labor; and thus, released from the original safeguard, fallen man, with his perverted tastes, would not have used his liberty and time for mental, moral and physical improvement, but, as the history of the past proves, the tendency would have been toward licentiousness and vice.

D414:1

They very generally fail to note the new element in the conflict never before encountered; viz., the more general spread of intelligence throughout the world, especially throughout Christendom. This, which many men forget, is brought to the attention of those wise enough to seek true wisdom at the fountain--God's Word. These are informed that "In the time of the end many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,...and there shall be a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1-4) They see the predicted running to and fro of mankind astoundingly fulfilled; they see also the general increase of knowledge; and to these the time of trouble predicted in the same connection means, not a repetition of history, not a submission of the masses to a favored few, but a stupendous reversal of history brought about by the new conditions noted. And the statement by the same prophet, in the same connection, that "at that time Michael [Christ] shall stand forth" and take his glorious power and reign, is in harmony with the thought that the coming trouble will end the rule of selfishness under the "prince of this world" [Satan], and introduce Immanuel's Kingdom of blessing. But let us hear some of the world's wise men tell us of what they see!

R2973 c2 p1-3

Those who have taken heed to the landmarks, pointed out by the Lord through Daniel and Isaiah and Jeremiah and all the holy prophets, realize that we have come already a much longer journey than was expected by the Church when first she started out; but we realize also from these landmarks, that we have approached very close to the end of the journey; very near to the time when the great blessing, for which God's people have so long waited and prayed, is at hand. For instance, the Watchers have noted the Lord's testimony through the Prophet Daniel that "the time of the end" would be a period of time (more than a century), and that in this "time of the end" there would be a great increase of travel, running to and fro throughout the earth, and a great increase of general intelligence, increased knowledge, as it is written, "in the time of the end many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."--`Dan. 12:4`.

Watching carefully respecting our whereabouts, hopeful and solicitous respecting the gracious things which God has promised, none of the Watchers is indifferent to these fulfilments of prophecy, which are to be seen on every hand today. All men discern these things, but not all alike: the faithful, the Watchers, discern them not only as facts, but also as fulfilments of prophecy; as proofs that we are already in the period termed "the time of the end." Further investigations and applications of the prophetic measurements prove to the watchers that we have been in "the time of the end" since 1799, and that it is also termed "the day of his [Jehovah's] preparation." Looking about them, they see the preparation that Jehovah God is making for the Kingdom of his dear Son. They see the lifting of the curtain of ignorance, and the

letting in of the light, and that thus God is using mankind at the present time to make ready, in a natural way, the mechanical and other arrangements and conveniences which ultimately shall be so great blessings to the world;--when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams, and the Millennial Day shall be ushered in, with all its multiplied blessings and mercies and opportunities;--"the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."--`Acts 3:21`.

Watching intently, earnestly, interestedly, because they know of the good things God hath in reservation (`I Cor. 2:9-13`; `I Pet. 1:4`), the Watchers note that Daniel's prophecy further points out that, as the increase of travel brings the increase of knowledge, so the increase of knowledge will bring an increase of discontent to the world of mankind in general; and the result will be, as prophetically stated, that "there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." The Watchers, seeking to note whether these things have yet had a fulfilment or not, look about them and behold on every hand discontent, unhappiness; much more than when the world enjoyed far fewer of the mercies and blessings of heaven. These latter day gifts of Providence (preparations for the Millennial age), instead of provoking thankfulness, gratitude and love to God, and generosity to man, produce in unregenerate hearts ambition, greater avarice, selfishness, envy, hatred, strife, and other works of the flesh and of the devil. Yes; the Watchers can clearly discern the approach of the great climax of human trouble, in which the Scriptures distinctly declare that all the present human institutions shall go down in anarchy, in confusion, in chaos. But the Watchers do not lose sight of God and his providence. They see that the approaching social and ecclesiastical catastrophe will be the natural result of the operation of selfishness under highly favored conditions; nevertheless, they remember that God is at the helm, and that he is able to cause the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of man's wrath (which would not praise him) he will restrain.--`Psa. 76:10`.

27. When will "the knowledge of the Lord fill the earth as the waters cover the sea," and "all men come unto the knowledge of the truth"?

(Isa 11:9) They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

(1Ti 2:4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

A74:3

A statement of the Word which belongs to one epoch, or dispensation, should not be applied to another, as things stated of one age are not always true of another. For instance, it would be an untruth to say of the present time that the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth, or that there is no need to say to your neighbor, Know the Lord.

(Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34) This is not true in this age, and it cannot be true until the Lord, having come again, has established his kingdom; for throughout this age there have been many seducing deceptions, and we are told that even in the very end of the age--"In the last days...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Tim. 3:1,13) It will be as the result of Messiah's reign during the Millennial age that knowledge and righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

E19:4

(k) In harmony with this thought also is the statement of Scripture, that the first work of Christ in connection with his Millennial reign, will be to bind, or restrain, Satan, that he shall deceive the nations no more for the thousand years (Rev. 20:3), also the numerous statements of the prophets, to the effect that when the Kingdom of God shall be established in the earth, the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, as the waters cover the great deep, and none shall need to say to his neighbor, "Know thou the Lord" (Heb. 8:11), also the petition of the Lord's prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth"--because this implies what the Apostle expressly declares, that God desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. 2:4

A105:2

The prevailing opinion is that death ends all probation; but there is no scripture which so teaches; and all the above, and many more scriptures, would be meaningless, or worse, if death ends all hope for the ignorant masses of the world. The one scripture quoted to prove this generally entertained view is, "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be." (Eccl. 11:3) If this has any relation to man's future, it indicates that whatever his condition when he enters the tomb, no change takes place until he is awakened out of it. And this is the uniform teaching of all scriptures bearing on the subject, as will be shown in succeeding chapters. Since God does not propose to save men on account of ignorance, but "will have all men to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4); and since the masses of mankind have died in ignorance; and since "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" (Eccl. 9:10); therefore God has prepared for the awakening of the dead, in order to knowledge, faith and salvation. Hence his plan is, that "as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive, but each one in his own order"--the Gospel Church, the Bride, the body of Christ, first; afterward, during the Millennial age, all who shall become his during that thousand years of his presence (mistranslated coming), the Lord's due time for all to know him, from the least to the greatest. 1 Cor. 15:22

28. What will be the relation between knowledge and faith in the *Millennial Age*?**R2677 c1 p5 to 2678 p1**

What is now known to the Church of this Gospel age as "justification by faith" (in like manner also the ancient worthies were justified) will not be in operation during the Millennial age, nor be necessary; because the conditions then will be so different from present conditions. It is because "we walk by faith and not by sight,"--because faith is now so difficult, and therefore so rare, that it is so highly appreciated and rewarded of God. But when the Millennial age will have been ushered in, the age of faith will have passed--that will be the age of knowledge,--the age of evidences so clear, so unmistakable, that even "the wayfaring man, tho ignorant, shall not err therein, for the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, as the waters cover the face of the great deep." With knowledge thus abundant, so that there shall be no need to say to one's

neighbor, "Know the Lord, because all shall know him," it follows that special faith will be impossible, and hence the rewards of special faith will no longer be offered.

We do not mean to say that mankind during the Millennium will not believe; on the contrary, none can do otherwise than believe: we do mean to say, however, that there is a difference between believing and exercising faith. We now believe various things by faith, which the world in the next age will believe, not by faith but on evidence, by knowledge--it will be impossible for them to doubt them, seeing that the evidences will be so indisputable. For instance, now God tells us to reckon all of our past sins forgiven, and ourselves fully justified in his sight. Nevertheless, we continually see evidences of our own weaknesses in our minds and bodies. The sins are not blotted out; they are merely reckonedly covered. In the case of the Church's sins: they will not be blotted out until death shall destroy these mortal bodies, and until the Lord, in the first resurrection, shall grant us glorious, spiritual, perfect bodies. In them there will be no trace of sin or weakness or imperfection; all our sins will then be actually blotted out. But now we are required to believe in the covering of our sins; to exercise faith in God's declaration. Our next step of faith is in connection with the high calling to sacrifice earthly and temporal interests for the gaining of the heavenly glory, honor and immortality. But the heavenly crown and blessing are seen only with the eye of faith; and whoever runs in the race now set before us in the Gospel, must not only look with the eye of faith unto Jesus, as the author and finisher of our faith, but with the same eye of faith must see the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, has laid up for those who are faithful. Thus ours is preeminently an age of faith, of reckoned conditions, and of trust in the promises: and it shall have its great and precious reward.

Not so will be the conditions of the Millennial age, when ushered in. Knowledge will be there, as we have seen; and each day's experiences will result either in mental, moral and physical development, or in chastisements for failures to make progress. Such experiences will give ample demonstration of what may be expected as the ultimate outcome,--restitution as the reward of obedience, or the Second Death as the punishment of disobedience.

The matter is clearly set before us in the Scriptures, which clearly teach that, during this age, the rule of divine dealing is, "According to thy faith be it unto thee," while the rule of the judgment of the world in the Millennial age is clearly laid down in `Rev. 20:12`: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book of life was opened [the first book of life is called the Lamb's Book of Life, containing the names of the elect Church, his Bride:--this other Book of Life will be the book or record of those who shall pass the restitution trial or judgment satisfactorily], and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books [the Scriptures--`John 12:48`] according to their works."

It would be a mistake to suppose that God will call mankind to sonship during the Millennial age, and not require them to make full consecration of themselves to him, and to that righteousness of which he is the personal representative. None can ever have eternal life upon any other condition than this--absolute obedience, and more--absolute harmony with the very spirit of the divine law, the law of righteousness, the law of love. And all who will be in harmony with the Lord to such an extent as this, would of necessity sacrifice, if there were opposition to

the Lord or to righteousness which would make necessary a sacrifice of any kind, rather than deny the Lord and the principles of his holiness.

The reason why there will be no sacrifices required of the world during the Millennial age is, that sin and Satan will no longer be in control--"this present evil world" (dispensation) will have passed away, and in its stead will have been ushered in "the world to come, wherein dwelleth righteousness"--wherein righteousness will be the rule, wherein the King and all in favor with him and every feature of government will be one of righteousness, truth and love.

To suppose the restitution call already commenced, would be to suppose that God had in some manner authorized some one to announce that henceforth no one would suffer for right doing, but only for wrong doing; and that henceforth whoever sought to do right to the best of his ability, would find himself unopposed therein, and that his every effort would promptly bring mental, moral and physical strength and recuperation, which, going on and on, would by and by reach absolute perfection. Furthermore, it would be to promise that any who accepted this restitution call would never die the Adamic death; but on the contrary, accepting this call heartily, would find that day by day, year by year, the power of death in him was being vanquished and the process of restitution progressing.

When that call shall go forth, and those restitution privileges shall be offered to mankind, it will be as the Prophet has declared, that no man shall thenceforth die for Adam's sin, nor for the sin of his fathers, but only for his own sin. (Jer. 31:29,30'.) We understand that this time will not be reached until after the time of trouble--not until A.D. 1915. To our understanding, from that date onward, the Kingdom being fully established, the call of the world to restitution privileges will be opened, and whoever shall then die will die for his own sin [Second Death] and not for father Adam's; and whoever will then be obedient to the Lord will experience the blessings of his grace in restitution,--actual, perceptible recovery beginning at once, as the reward to the faithful under the restitution call.

The sense in which Millennial blessings and favors are already lapping upon the Gospel age, to our understanding, is this: First, knowledge, inventions, etc., are bringing to the world of mankind blessings never hitherto enjoyed, and which are really intended for the Millennial age, and are merely being gotten ready or prepared in this "day of God's preparation." (2) Restitution blessings are lapping also, in the sense that these inventions, etc., are gradually leading on to the great time of trouble, in which present institutions, social, financial, political, religious, will all be overthrown--that in their stead God may bring in the better provisions and arrangements of the Millennial Kingdom. (3) Restitution blessings are coming to the Church now, in the sense that she is permitted to foresee these coming blessings upon the world, and to rejoice exceedingly, and to lift up her heart in thankfulness and praise to him who loveth us and who bought us with his own precious blood, and to realize how it is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

F106:3 to F107

True, faith may even then be said to be essential to restitution progress toward actual justification, for "without faith it is impossible to please God," and because the restitution

blessings and rewards will be bestowed along lines that will demand faith; but the faith that will then be required for progress in restitution will differ very much from the faith now required of those "called to be saints," "joint-heirs with Jesus," "New Creatures." When the Kingdom of God shall be in control and Satan bound and the knowledge of the Lord caused to fill the earth, these fulfilments of divine promises will be recognized by all, and thus sight or knowledge will grasp actually much that is now recognizable only by the eye of faith. But faith will be needed, nevertheless, that they may go on unto perfection; and thus the actual justification obtainable by the close of the Millennium will be attained only by those who will persistently exercise faith and works. Although of that time it is written, "The dead shall be judged out of the books according to their WORKS," as in contradistinction to the present judgment of the Church "according to your FAITH," yet their works will not be without faith, even as our faith must not be without works to the extent of our ability.

The Apostle's declaration that God will justify the heathen through faith (Gal. 3:8), is shown by the context to signify that the reconciliation by restitution will not come as a result of the Law Covenant, but by grace under the terms of the New Covenant, which must be believed in, accepted and complied with by all who would benefit by it. A difference between present and future justification, is that the consecrated of the present time are, upon the exercise of proper faith, granted instantly fellowship with the Father, through reckoned justification, by faith; whereas the exercise of obedient faith under the more favorable conditions of the next age will not bring reckoned justification at all, and will effect actual justification and fellowship with God only at the close of the Millennium. The world in the interim will be in the hands of the great Mediator, whose work it will be to represent to them the divine will and to deal with them, correcting and restoring such as obey, until he shall have actually justified them--at which time he will present them faultless before the Father, when about to deliver up his Kingdom to God, even the Father. 1 Cor. 15:24