

July 7

Behold the Lamb of God! John 1:36

ALL of the Lord's servants should call attention to the Lord and not to themselves. Let us each bend our energies to pointing men to the Lamb of God, and not to self-seeking.... Modesty is a gem, wherever

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD"

R2570 "It was after our Lord's return from the wilderness that the delegation of priests and Levites, sent from Jerusalem, came to John asking, "Who art thou?" to whom he replied that he was not the Christ but merely a fore-runner, a herald. To these John pointed out Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," explaining how he knew Jesus to be the Messiah by a previously appointed sign which God had given him—the descent of the holy spirit in the form of a dove....

It was the very next day after this testimony to the priests and Levites that John, in the presence of two of his disciples, looking intently upon Jesus as he passed near (no doubt wondering how our Lord's Messiahship would be made known), exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" This was the same testimony (only abbreviated) that he had given to the priests and Levites, and which had evidently fallen, in their case, upon dull ears. But note the difference in the case of those who were "Israelites indeed:" the two disciples immediately followed Jesus. John's testimony became to them the drawing power of God, because they were in a condition of heart to be susceptible to that influence. Thus we see clearly illustrated how some are drawn and others are not drawn by the same message....

The Lord is seeking not merely the curious, but the truth-hungry, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and for fellowship with himself, and here, as in every instance, he that seeketh, in this proper attitude of heart, findeth....

Our Lord's salutation, "What seek ye?" not only overcame the diffidence of those who sought him, but the more they would consider his words subsequently, the more meaningful they would find them, as we do today. And this seems to be the question which the Lord puts to all those who approach him, and essay to become his followers, "What seek ye?" Are you seeking loaves and fishes of earthly advantage? Are you seeking earthly honor and social and political influence and preferment? The answer soon or later will be manifested by the conduct of the seekers...."

CALL ATTENTION TO THE LORD, NOT SELF

R5720 "We are to curb any tendency to self-glorification or show in telling of God's great Plan to others. Let us keep self out of sight, that the beauty of the Truth may be seen. Our manner of presenting the Message to others has much to do with its effectiveness. Speaking the Truth in love, we shall not only be accomplishing much more for others, but the Message will also be more impressed upon our own mind.

Whoever appreciates these things of God and then speaks forth in love and sincerity will receive a blessing in his own heart and mind, and the Truth will become clearer and sweeter. In helping others he will be helping himself. Thus the various

found, one of the graces of the Spirit, which all of the Lord's consecrated ones should seek to have largely developed and well polished....

And let us remember that following Jesus, in the best sense, means that we walk in His path, strive to do as nearly as we are

features of the Plan of God become more firmly engraved upon his mind."

R4502 "YE SHALL RECEIVE THE SEVERER TRIAL"

The Apostle James admonishes the brethren respecting the peculiar dangers which beset those ambitious to be teachers, saying, "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we (teachers) shall receive the greater condemnation (judgment, or trial). For in many things we offend all"--we are all imperfect.--James 3:1.

While all recognize the truth of the Apostle's words, few seem to be in any great degree deterred by them. As a consequence, we find many seeking the office of teacher in the Church, and perceive also the truth of the Apostle's words that as teachers they are subject to severer trials, and that the majority of those who appear to stumble and fall from the truth are of this class. We write thus not to suggest that teachers are unnecessary or contrary to the Divine arrangement, but to suggest that whoever enters upon the work of teaching should do so with a realization of the grave responsibility which he assumes, and the temptations or trials which beset his pathway toward the heavenly city.

St. Paul wrote, "He that seeketh the office of a bishop (of a shepherd, of an overseer) seeketh a good service," and so we should recognize that whoever out of a pure heart seeks to serve the Lord's cause as an under-shepherd of the sheep, and as a co-laborer with the Redeemer, is engaging in a most noble service. If he approach this service from this standpoint of earnest desire to serve the flock, an earnest desire to be in full accord with the Great Shepherd, he should not be ashamed to rejoice that he has to this extent the Spirit of the Lord. But if he find in himself, in either great or small measure, a spirit of ambition, a spirit of pride, a spirit of boastfulness, the desire to lord it over the brethren of the household of faith, then let him fear. With trembling heart either let him resign the service, or at the throne of grace rid himself, purge himself, of the evil ambitions of his heart, and be filled with the Spirit of the Master. That holy Spirit is the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness, love; to desire simply and only the glory of God and the blessing of his people--the spirit that is ready to sacrifice self at any moment for the peace of the Body of Christ, or the assistance of the flock.

Some wonder why the Apostle should thus write of special dangers to those brethren who would attempt to teach in the Church. We answer that we accept his words as those of inspiration, and that, additionally, observation shows us the truthfulness of them. Moreover, unconsciously the Lord's dear people who make no pretensions themselves in the direction of teaching are often responsible to a considerable degree for the deflection of those whom they recognize as teachers, and whom unconsciously they lead into temptation. The besetments of teachers are, (1) pride, and (2) arrogance.

able what He would do today, taking our lessons from what He did and said personally, and from the instructions which He has left for us, through the apostles, respecting the path of fellowship in His sufferings, the path to glory and joint-heirship in His Kingdom. Z. '99-14, 15 R2418:1

(1) Encouraged by the laudatory words of the brethren, the tendency is for them to feel that they are somebodies, and to attribute the success of their efforts to natural ability, talent, etc., rather than to the wonderful power and beauty of the Truth. Ministers in general seem to be liable to besetment along this line, because it is indeed a very honorable position to stand before our fellows as ambassadors for the King of Glory. The general tendency is to boast of denominational strength and wisdom. But amongst those who are in the light of "Present Truth" the temptation to personal pride is perhaps even greater.

The antidote for this is a distinct remembrance of the fact that the plan is not our own, but all of its lengths and breadths and heights and depths are of God and for all his people, and that we are highly honored in the delivering of it in the most humble manner conceivable.

A proper allegiance to the Lord should lead us to hide ourselves, that all the glory and honor might go to the great Author of the Plan of Salvation, and to the great Redeemer, whose sacrifice is its very center, and whose love is the very circumference of our message. With these thoughts impressed upon our minds, the greater the service permitted us, the greater should be our humility and our realization of unworthiness to be the mouthpieces of the great Lord of Glory.

(2) Arrogance we mentioned as one of the besetments. Alas! how inappropriate it is that any, because of being honored of the Lord as his mouthpiece for his message, should attempt to take the place of his Lord, and to act arrogantly toward his brethren, or, as the Apostle expresses it, to "Lord it over God's heritage." (1 Pet. 5:3.) The Scriptures set before us the very reverse standard, namely, that those brethren permitted to serve as teachers, so far from being lords of the Church, are merely its *servants*. While they are servants of God, the Divine direction in the matter is to be sought through the Church. In a word, the Church's election of elders, pastors, or teachers is the election of those whom it esteems to be *the Lord's choice* for its service--to serve it in holy things, to minister to it the grace of God, to dispense for it the spiritual food of the Divine Word.

The Church has been responsible in a considerable measure for the stumbling of those whom it has recognized as Elder-brothers and teachers. While they should not think evil, surmise evil, surmise pride, or surmise arrogance, they should be so wakeful to their own duties and responsibilities toward these brethren that they would not *unduly* flatter them, nor *unduly* encourage them, nor *stimulate* them to manufacture new light.

On the contrary, all who are spiritual should be helpful to those elder-brothers; should compliment them on their loyalty to the Lord, and to the old, old story, rather than commend them for fanciful fictions, or encourage them further along such lines. The Gospel of Grace has not changed; it is

still the old, old story of Jesus and his love, and of the Father's love; it still includes the thought of our calling and election by faithfulness to the terms laid down in the Scriptures. The brethren should be encouraged along these lines rather than along the lines of manufacturing types by guess-work without any authority of the Word of God.

As for arrogance on the part of leaders, and a supercilious lording it over the Church, we believe that the Church itself has a great responsibility. Beginners should not be hastily pushed forward, as St. Paul points out, and when any Elder-brother advanced in the Truth begins to show signs of headiness, and of disregard for the voice of the Church, and a disinclination to submit to it all the questions pertaining to its af-

fairs, the Church should curb such arrogance promptly and thoroughly by declining the further election of such brother, and by insisting upon the rights of the Church. The insistence should not, however, be in the nature of wrangling or contention, but in a kindly, brotherly, noble manner the rights of the Church should be set forth, and the vote of the Church on the subject should be asked. If the vote be contrary to the brother who sought to protect the Church's rights, he should submit gracefully, because by him also the voice of the Church is to be accepted as decisive.

We have great sympathy for the dear brethren who, in the providence of God, occupy the positions of Elders and teachers in the congregations of the Lord's people.

R5958 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

GOD FIRST--SELF LAST

ALL of the Lord's true people, begotten of His Holy Spirit, are beautiful characters as New Creatures: As the Apostle expresses it, "Holy Brethren, partakers of the Heavenly calling." (Hebrews 3:1.) "Every one that loveth Him that begat [the Heavenly Father] must love also that which is begotten of Him." (1 John 5:1.) The fact that the Heavenly Father has anything to do with a human being and in any sense of the word recognizes him--especially if He recognizes him as a son--signifies that there is a nobility of character, an honesty of heart and a consecration of will, whether we be able to see these things in the outward conduct and words of the individual or not. We must assume that they are there--that God, who readeth the heart, sees them to be there. Having confidence in the Divine Wisdom, it is proper for all of the Lord's people to accept each other as New Creatures in Christ, to whom old things are passed away and for whom all things have become new. But, as the Apostle points out, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels"; these good hearts, these consecrated wills, have no perfect spirit bodies in which to operate yet. They can act and speak only through the poor, imperfect flesh, which is consecrated to death.

And oh, how the imperfect tongue and the imperfect body often misrepresent the real sentiments of the New Creature using them! Our stammering tongues fail to express our real sentiments, and we are misunderstood. Our poor brains, which the New Creature strives to exercise in favor of justice and love, often get sadly twisted. The justice we would do, we often misunderstand and do not; and the love which we wish to manifest, is twisted also and misunderstood by others and is unsatisfactory to ourselves. Early in our Christian experience, we may have failed to see our blunders, and frequently have done *injury* where we supposed we had done *good*. Later, as we began to see our imperfect works, imperfect words, imperfect thoughts and reasoning, and discerned how little we really accomplished of the much we would like to do, we were in danger of being thoroughly discouraged. We needed the very encouragements which the Lord's Word holds out to us--the assurance that God looketh at the heart and not at the outward appearance; and that the pure in heart will be blessed and see God, notwithstanding the weaknesses of their flesh, against which they strive courageously.

GOD FIRST IN OUR HEARTS

Many are the rules and practices which will be assistful to the New Creature while endeavoring to prove loyal and to fight down and overcome the imperfections of his flesh. A great variety of rules might be mentioned, including the study of God's Word, continual watchfulness and endeavor to cultivate the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the remembrance of the Golden Rule, etc., etc. But we now wish to call attention to one general rule which seems to have a broad application to all of our thoughts and words and actions. If this rule be followed, the entire life will thereby be regulated. This rule is--God first, self last!

This is a hard rule so far as the old creature is concerned, and he will rebel against it--especially the latter part--putting self *last*. But the old creature cannot really object to the rule so far as "God first" is concerned; for even natural men realize that there are proper obligations to the Creator; but the New Creature sees this obligation in a special light. It is this special light which led to the making of a full consecration to the Lord, to enlistment under the banner of Jesus to fight a good fight against sin entrenched in the flesh, and to faithfulness in this warfare even unto death. In making this consecration, the individual put God first, Jesus next, and himself as the servant of These and the principles which They represent; and his flesh as de-

And hence, while calling attention to the severe temptations to which they are exposed, and while urging the Church to do its duty and to assist them to keep humble and faithful, we also urge, in the language of the Apostle, that those who are noble, humble, self-sacrificing, cannot be too highly esteemed nor too loyally supported. The Apostle's words are, "Remember them which have the rule (supervision) over you; who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering them that have the rule (supervision) over you"... "They watch for your souls as they that must give account..." (Heb. 13:7,17.) And again, "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."-- 1Thess. 5:13."

voted, consecrated, given over to death in the service of these principles.

But it is one thing to *recognize* the principles, and quite another thing to *apply* them in the *daily life* and in the Church. God first in the home and the personal affairs means that *all earthly interests and pleasures* will be subordinated, and that the will of God, the service of God, the honor of God's name, will have the most prominent part in *all of our affairs every day--in all of our words, in all of our dealings, in our very thoughts.*

Extending this principle to the Church, which is the Body of Christ, we perceive that if all the brethren had this spirit, it would imply the very highest ideals and practices in the Church. As the Apostle admonishes, nothing would be done through strife or vain glory, but merely to the glory of God--God first! It would mean that in all the matters of our worship, praise, and Bible study, pride or fond desire and selfishness and partiality and hypocrisy would be far away; for God would be *first*, and we would know that all of these traits of evil entrenched in our flesh are contrary to the will of our God.

APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES

In the election of servants in the Church, the rule of "God first" would mean that each one in voting would seek to vote according as he believed to be *God's will*, entirely ignoring *his own will* and the wills of all others of the brethren. "God first" would also lead him to take an individual stand in that kind, loving manner which the Bible declares to be the Holy Spirit, or disposition of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. Surely a blessing would follow such an endeavor to put God first, and to forget everything that might be in competition with the Lord in our affection!

As for the latter part of this resolution--"self last," this would mean the very essence of the Apostle's admonition, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory" (Philippians 2:3); and again, "in honor preferring one another." (Romans 12:10.) We look back at the record of the Twelve Apostles, and see how they were disposed to strive amongst themselves as to which should be greatest in the Kingdom. But this striving was before their begetting of the Holy Spirit, before Pentecost. How glad we are to see that such a spirit apparently disappeared after Pentecost, amongst those who received the spirit-begetting! "Self last" might well have been the rule among the Apostles--so loyally did they support the principles of the Lord's Word and uphold and encourage one another in the good work. How we rejoice with them!

But how sad it makes us feel when some dear brethren of our day, who profess to have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and whose professions we do not doubt, seem not to have learned this lesson of "self last"! "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5:6.) Occasionally, we perceive some disposed to seek office as Elders or as Deacons of the Church, disposed to feel offended if they are not elected to these offices. Oh, what a pity that they cannot take the broader and better view of the matter! We do not question their hearts; we shall suppose that as long as they abide in the Truth, the Lord's Spirit is not taken from them. And yet how little *growth in grace* is implied where a spirit of self-seeking is manifested amongst brethren aspiring to leadership in the Ecclesia!

"WHILE PLACE WE SEEK"

Dear Brethren, let us truly humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and take whatever His providence metes out to us with

full contentment. If for *any* reason the Class chooses us to the position of Elder or of Deacon, let us be thankful to the Class and to the Lord; and let us use our privilege as a gift, as a favor, with humility of spirit, remembering that an elder brother in the Class is a *servant* of the Class. Let us seek to use our opportunities and stewardship wisely, as those who must ultimately give an account. If on another occasion, the Class for *any* reason passes us by, failing to elect us to a service, let us remember that that is the Class' privilege-- yea, each one of the Class is in duty bound to vote according as his judgment shall be respecting the *Divine will*. Should we quarrel with the Divine will? Nay. Should we quarrel with the brethren for exercising their judgment respecting the Divine will? Nay. What should we do? Let us accept the Divine arrangement and be just as thankful of heart, and be just as energetic to serve in the proper ways according to our opportunities. Let us not seek to put stumbling-blocks in the way of those who have been chosen for the service, but rather do all in our power to cooperate with them.

Let the brother of high degree--that has a high position of favor in the Class--rejoice if he is debased and removed from the position. Let him rejoice to learn whatever lessons the Lord's providence may

have for him. Let him rejoice to learn how to serve in another position. And let a brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted. Let us receive whatever experiences come to us as being under Divine supervision, remembering that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28.) Let us be on the alert to have *God first*, the interests of His cause, His people, the Church-- and our own interests and *ourselves*, *last*. We may be sure, dear Brethren, that whoever is thus found faithful, in harmony with the principles taught and exemplified by our Redeemer, will have some good place in the Redeemer's Kingdom by and by; and that all the present experiences will be overruled for his preparation for that Kingdom position.

The time for our exaltation is not now. The dear brethren may have exalted us to some service in the Class for which we were not worthy, and the possession of which might have made us heady or otherwise have injured us. The proper thought is that *God is at the helm*, and is able to make our experiences work out blessings to us, as individuals and as Classes. It is for us to be rightly exercised by the Lord's Word and by the Spirit of our Master, putting *God first; self, last*.

IMPORTANT NEW COVENANT CLARIFICATIONS

When considering **R2417**, keep these clarifications & the 6th Vol. foreword in mind:

CHURCH (BOTH JEWS & GENTILES) NOT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

Fii "Inadvertently, the name New Covenant, which belongs to God's dealings with the world during the Millennium, has been used in respect to the Covenant which is now in operation during this Gospel Age with the Church. Our Covenant, of course, is a new covenant in the sense that it is different from the Jewish Covenant of Mt. Sinai, but it is not THE New Covenant. The Church's Covenant is referred to in the Bible as a "Covenant by Sacrifice."

NEW COVENANT WILL BE WITH THE NATION OF ISRAEL (Jer 31:31-32)

R4321 "As the old Law Covenant was with Israel only, so the New (Law) Covenant will

be with Israel only. Other nations will share it by becoming Israelites, "Proselytes of the gate," not under the old but under the New Covenant. (Ezek. 16:60,61.) "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." [Proselytes at the gate: Isa. 56:6-7]

THE NEW COVENANT HAS NOT YET BEEN SEALED

R4477 "The New Covenant is not yet sealed. The blood of Jesus -- the merit of his sacrifice -- which will eventually seal the New Covenant at the end of this age, is now being *otherwise used*. It has been applied to the Church for her Justification, in order that she might have justified human rights to sacrifice and thereby might come into membership in the Body of Christ, the great Mediator, the antitype of Moses, whom God has been raising up during this Gospel Age. (Acts 3:23.) So far from telling us that Christ sealed the New Covenant, the Scrip-

tures tell us the very reverse, namely, that he became the "*surety*" of it. (Heb. 7:22.) A sealed Covenant needs no "*surety*," but an unsealed Covenant does need a "*surety*."

CHURCH HAS AN ADVOCATE NOT A MEDIATOR (1Jn. 2:1)

SM720 "Our Lord Jesus is not the Church's Mediator before the Father, but the Church's Advocate. There is a sharp distinction to be drawn between the two thoughts. A mediator implies a hostility between two principals, requiring the intervention of a third party; and this is not the case with the Church. We are not rebels. We are not alienated from God, but now through faith in the blood we are children of God, and our Redeemer assures us, "The Father Himself loveth you." (John 16:27.)... There is no need of a Mediator between the Father who loves His children and the children who love their Father."

R2417 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

FOLLOW THE LAMB WHITHERSOEVER HE GOETH

--JAN. 8.--JOHN 1:35-46.--

"Behold the Lamb of God!"--John 1:36.

JOHN'S mission was to bear witness to Jesus. He knew him well from his infancy to manhood, and as cousins according to the flesh they doubtless had discussed various features of the divine law, and they were of one heart as respects service to the Lord. Neither could begin a public service until thirty years of age, since this was one feature of the Law, but John being six months the elder was thus privileged to begin his ministry six months in advance of our Lord. During that brief period he had evidently made a considerable commotion as a reformer, his message being, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."--Matt. 3:2.

The Jews had been waiting for the Kingdom for centuries; they realized that the Kingdom given to Saul, David, Solomon, etc., had not fulfilled the promises, and that a Kingdom in a larger sense, and under a greater than David and a greater than Solomon, was to be expected. The Apostle assures us that this thought was continually before their minds. (Acts 26:7.) John's mission to that nation, therefore, was the announcement that the fulfilment of the divine promise was at hand, and that in order to be ready to receive the divine favor they should repent of sin and turn to the Lord. And as our Lord declared subsequently, if that nation had believed John and acted upon that belief they would have been ready to receive the Lord himself, and to have fulfilled to them all the gracious promises of the Kingdom to which they were heirs, as the natural seed of Abraham.

It was because they were not in a right condition of heart that they were not fit to have the Kingdom, the promise of which, therefore, was taken from them, to be given to a new nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood--which God has been selecting from amongst all peoples, kindreds and tongues, during this Gospel age, and which will now soon be completed, and be glorified, and begin the work of blessing all the families of the earth, as the Spiritual Seed of Abraham.-- Gal. 3:29.

John did not preach to the people that they should believe on God, for he was addressing only the believing, covenanted people, Israel. His message was respecting things already known to them,

and believed by them. He therefore exhorted merely repentance from their sins, and a return to their proper and covenanted relationship with God. In all this John's ministry is very different from the ministry of the apostles to the Gentiles, who not only had been without knowledge respecting God's purposes, Kingdom, etc., but also without faith or any ground of hope. As the Apostle declares, they were "without God, and having no hope in the world." Nor did any hope reach them, nor was the Gospel message sent to them, until after Israel's rejection in consequence of their rejection of Messiah.

"The baptism of John" was to the Jews only, and was wholly different from the baptism appointed for those called from amongst the Gentiles. The Apostle makes this fact very clear in Acts 19:2-5. John's baptism was not a baptism into any *thing*, or into any *body*, whereas our baptism is a baptism into Christ, as members of his body. John's baptism merely signified the putting away of sins, and thus to return to a condition of holiness and consecration already enjoyed. Our baptism signifies something very different from this--not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the submission of our consciences, our wills, fully and unreservedly to the will of Christ, that we should henceforth have no will of our own, but be guided entirely by the will of our Head, as members of his Body. Thus becoming dead to self--will we are reckoned alive as "new creatures," "members in particular" of the Body of Christ.--1 Cor. 12:27.

The Jews as a nation had already been baptized *into Moses* (1 Cor. 10:2), the mediator of their Law Covenant, and to the Jew, Christ took the place of Moses, and his ⁽¹⁾New Covenant took the place of the Law Covenant, so that any Jew, already baptized into Moses, and already thus in covenant relationship, would, by merely accepting Christ as the Messiah, the antitype of Moses, and the Mediator of the ⁽¹⁾New Covenant (and, in harmony with his faith, repenting of sin), be adopted, reckoned as a member in the Body of

⁽¹⁾ See previous section for important clarification on New Covenant.

Christ, instead of as a member of the Body of Moses. All others, however, who were of the Gentiles, and not of the natural seed of Abraham, are not to come first to Moses and the Law, and then through John's baptism into Christ, but are to ignore the Law Covenant entirely, and avail themselves of the better covenant direct, and hence they are instructed to be baptized into Christ, by being immersed into his death, and to testify to *this* consecration outwardly, to their fellows and before God, by an immersion in water.*--Rom. 6:3,4.

We have no record that John the Baptist was ever immersed himself--nor would we need to have, since he evidently was a godly man, living up, to the best of his ability, to the standard of the Law Covenant. His baptism, as he himself explained, was only for sinners, --those who had been living knowingly in violation of the principles of righteousness. Hence also John objected at first to the baptism of Jesus, assuring him that he was not a sinner, and that if Jesus needed to be baptized, much more appropriate would it be that John himself should be immersed. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But our Lord, while admitting the force of John's argument that a baptism of repentance and remission of sins would not be appropriate in his own case, requested him to proceed with the matter anyway, intimating that he had some other reason why it was right. The fact is that our Lord's baptism was the beginning of the Christian baptism: it symbolized the consecration which he had just made (at the first hour of manhood), his full consecration to do the Father's will, even unto death;--the giving up of his human life, a sacrifice on behalf of the world. It required all of the Lord's three and a half years' ministry to complete what there symbolized, and he said just before his crucifixion, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (Luke 12:50.) And so with the baptism of consecration, "death," into which we are to be baptized: as members of his Body we are to become living sacrifices, dead to the world, alive toward God, as is particularly set forth in Rom. 6:3-5.

It was in connection with our Redeemer's symbolical baptism in water, which promptly followed his consecration to death at thirty years of age, and was the public declaration of that devotion unto death, that the Heavenly Father bore witness to his adoption to the divine nature. We are not informed that any but John witnessed the descent of the holy spirit upon him, but John bore witness that he saw the spirit thus descend, and that the Lord, in sending him to preach, had previously testified that this was to be the sign by which he would surely know the Messiah (John 1:32,33). It was in harmony with this that he declared to his disciples subsequently, as Jesus passed by, "Behold the Lamb of God." John doubtless knew and expected that some of his disciples would cease cooperation with him, to follow the Messiah. Indeed he declared to them, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

The two who heard John's testimony promptly followed Jesus with a view to getting as close to the fountain head of the truth as possible; and all must admit the propriety of their course. How this suggests to us our own proper course, to follow the Lord as nearly as possible, and to seek as much as possible to come into fellowship and communion with him. And the noble, self-ignoring course of John appeals to all who have the right mind upon the subject--that similarly ⁽²⁾all of the Lord's servants should call attention to the Lord and not to themselves. Let us each bend our energies to pointing men to the Lamb of God, and not to self-seeking. And let us remember that following Jesus, in the best sense, means that we walk in his paths, strive to do as nearly as we are able what he would do to-day, taking our lessons from what he did and said personally, and from the instructions which he has left for us, through the apostles, respecting the path of fellowship in his sufferings, the path to glory and joint-heirship in his Kingdom. The Lord is found of all those who diligently seek him from right motives, and such are by and by to be granted full joint-heirship with him. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."--John 15:14.

The evangelist furnishes us the name of only one of the two who first heard John the Baptist speak of Jesus. It is possible that the Apostle John himself was the other one, and that through modesty he refrained from bringing himself into special prominence, in his own records, just as, in another place, he speaks of himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned on his bosom." ⁽³⁾Modesty

is a gem, wherever found, one of the graces of the spirit, which all of the Lord's consecrated ones should seek to have largely developed and well polished.

The narrative of how Andrew found Peter and how Philip found Nathaniel (supposed to be the disciple called Bartholomew) is interesting, and shows that true devotion to the Lord is unselfish--desires to confer upon others all blessings and truths enjoyed. This is still the spirit of true discipleship: having found the great Light of the world, and having seen thereby something of the lengths and breadths, heights and depths of the divine character and plan, we are and should be anxious to serve the same favor to others. And this desire to serve the Lord, the truth and our fellows should be so strong in us as to make it impossible for us to withhold the good tidings from any selfish consideration. Indeed, if we have the spirit of the Lord, which is the spirit of the truth, the spirit of true discipleship, we will be so anxious to make known the good tidings as to be willing to "lay down our lives for the brethren,"--to help them "out of darkness into his marvelous light."

It will be noticed that these who found the Lord were full of faith respecting the Messiah, of whom Moses wrote in the first five books of the Old Testament, called the Law, and of whom all the prophets also wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the reputed son of Joseph. They had not yet learned that Joseph was not the father of Jesus.

Nathaniel's answer, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" reminds us of the prejudice which now exists respecting certain quarters from which good things may or may not be expected. For instance, some of our English friends tell us that when the present truth was first brought to their attention they were inclined to disregard it, and consider it unworthy of special investigation, simply because it came from America; for tho they might expect many useful things to come from America, the product of "Yankee skill," they had no expectation whatever that any new light upon the Scriptures would come from America, where they seemed to imagine everyone given over to cheating and muck-raking for wealth, and that consequently it would be one of the last places in Christendom in which the Lord would cause the harvest light to shine out for the blessing of his people. This undoubtedly has hindered many foreigners from investigating the truths which are now meat in due season for the household of faith. America is Nazareth with them, and they expect nothing of the kind from this quarter.

Similarly, others will inquire, What denomination backs up these religious teachings? and when told that no sect or party has endorsed these things, and that not many great, or rich, or wise, have in any sense of the word become interested, they say to themselves, if not to others, What could you expect?--Can any good come out of Nazareth? Nevertheless, all who are of the Nathaniel type of character, "Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile," will find sufficient reason for investigating, and on investigation will find sufficient proofs to *satisfy them*,--"as nothing else would do." Our answer to all such objections should be that of Philip, "Come and see,"--test, examine, prove for yourself.

Another lesson here, that should prove of value, is found in the words respecting Andrew, "He first findeth his own brother Simon." So all who find the Lord, and who are anxious to make him known to others, should similarly begin in their own households, with their own brothers and sisters, father or mother, or husband or wife. There is frequently a diffidence about mentioning the Lord and the truth to those who are of the family and home circle which is surely much out of place. True love for our kin should lead us to make an extra and special effort on their behalf.

In conclusion let us remember that those who follow the Lamb through evil as well as through good report--those who follow his teachings and example-- are they who ultimately shall be with him and share his glory as members of his elect Zion.--Rev. 14:4.

"Caesar's friends? or friends of Jesus?"

Solemn question for to-day!
Friends of Caesar! Friends of Jesus!
Take your sides without delay.
If ye pause for man's forbidding,
Caesar's friendship ye secure;
If ye do the Father's bidding,
Scorn, reproach, ye shall endure.

"Free from Caesar, friends of Jesus!
Stand in phalanx! never fear!
Love, severely tried, increases;
Courage yet! the Lord is near!
Onward still, his name confessing,
Weaving crowns to grace his brow;
Lo! his hands are full of blessing,
Lifted for your succor now."

* Our friends of the Disciple denomination wholly misunderstand this matter, and are practicing John's baptism of repentance and remission of sins, instead of the baptism of Christ. They should note the Apostle's words and correct this matter, as he instructed others to do in his day--by a fresh baptism.--Acts 19:2-5.

⁽²⁾ ½ July 7 Manna, John 1:36

⁽³⁾ ½ July 7 Manna