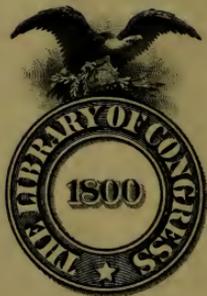


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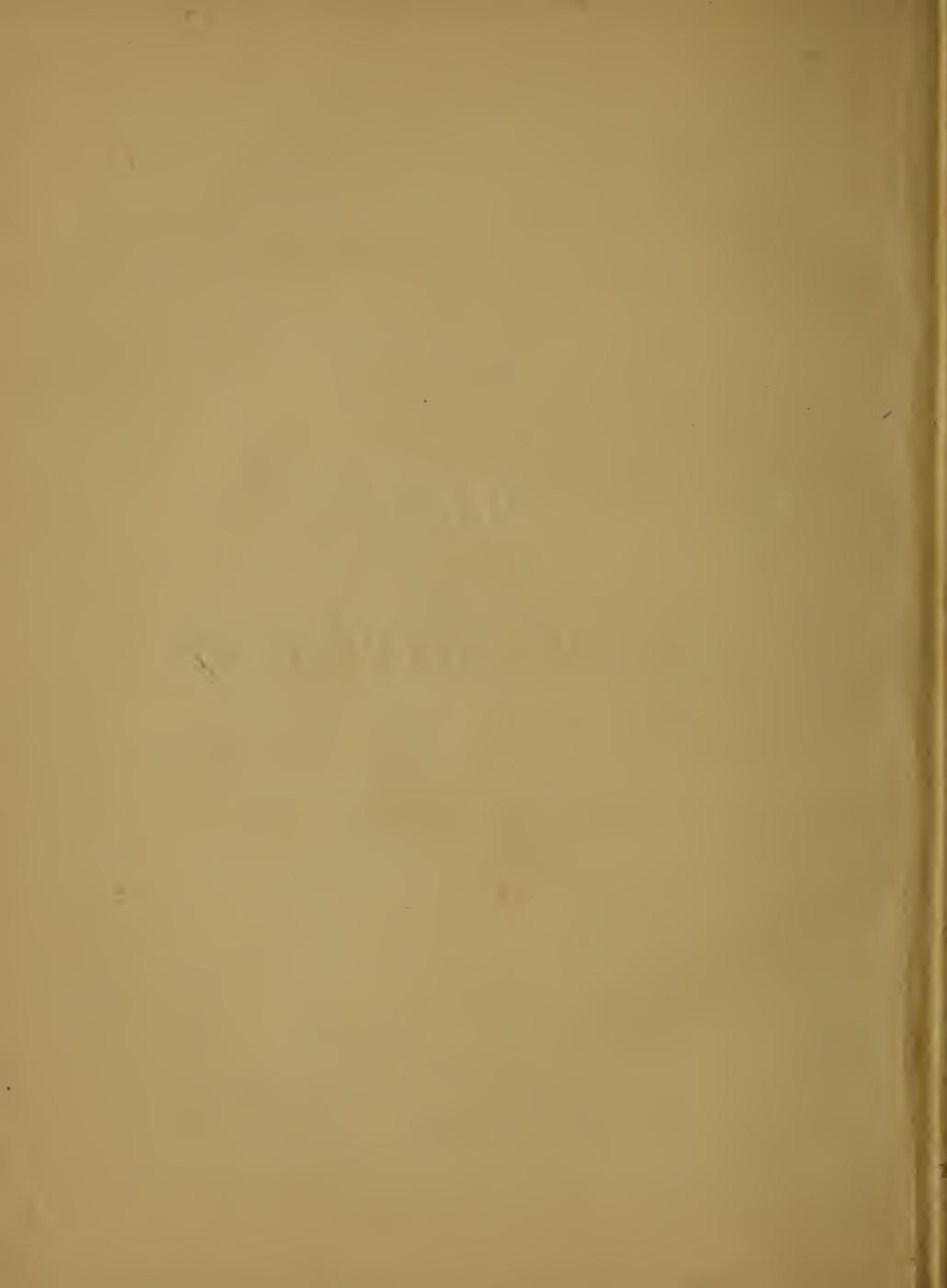




CHRIST'S PLAN



OF SALVATION.

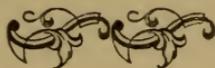


Christ's Plan  

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of Salvation.

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"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." . . . . .



A BIBLE STUDY.

BY

SAMUEL F. COOK.



LANSING, MICH.

1896.

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PRESS OF THOMPSON & VANBUREN,  
LANSING, MICH.

*copy*  
J. H. Russell  
July 2, 19



## Christ's Plan of Salvation.

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"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."—MATTHEW, 10-38.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—MATTHEW, 16-24.

"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."—MARK, 8-34.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."—LUKE, 9-23.

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."—LUKE, 14-27.

THE law given to Moses on the mount Sinai, made provision for a religion of works: an unceasing round of outward duties. He who realized that he had broken the law and needed forgiveness for his sin, might prove his contrition by bringing to the priest an offering whose burning fragrance might appeal to Heaven in his behalf. While this could avail to secure him the pardon he sought, when in the heart of the worshiper there was true

repentance toward God, and an earnest intent to "lead a new life, following the commandments of God blameless," there is ample evidence that the Israelites, as a people, soon forgot all except the making of the offerings, with the lofty pageantry accompanying them, and failed in the heart portion of the worship and service. And so through all the years, and along the ages, they plodded on with the continual round of thank offerings, sin offerings, first fruits offerings, birth offerings, solemn feasts and days of rejoicing, in the attempt to obey the commands of their religion by the *doing* of those things laid down in the Mosaic law, and thus to prove a desire to be at peace with the one true God who had so wonderfully made of them a people.

The purposes of God in the mission of the long foretold Messiah were too divine for the comprehension of the average humanity prior to, as well as at the time of his coming. Thoroughly cured of the sin of idolatry as the result of the Babylonish captivity, the teachers of the law had added thereto a vast

number of observances and rules for living, obedience to which was urged upon the people with more earnestness than even the requirements of the law itself, and the religious teachings were based on the central conception that individual peace with the offended Deity, and His favor for the nation, of which so small a remnant was remaining, were to be secured only by the constant doing of certain things, and the equally constant refraining from other things. The underlying spiritual intent of the teachings of the law and the prophets seems to have been beyond their comprehension.

But when the fullness of time had come for the one great sacrificial atonement which had been shadowed forth in the law and proclaimed in the lofty imagery of the prophetic poets, the Christ made his advent, and "by his oblation of himself once offered," made "a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." By this sacrifice so ample, Christ did away with the offerings and rites which were a necessary part of a system of salvation works, and inaugurated the reign of salvation by faith,

as the central essence of the gospel of love, as compared with the former dispensation of fear.

In the five similar passages which we are considering, Christ laid down with a wonderful precision of words, the doctrine of salvation by faith—the central conception of his mission. It is worthy of notice, that while Matthew and Luke each have two passages, and Mark one, setting forth the doctrines of self-abnegation and acceptance of the atonement as a necessary requisite to salvation, John, the beloved disciple, who more fully than any other of the sacred writers proclaimed the *love of God* for his fallen children, makes no allusion to this apparently important phase of the teaching of our Lord. It is still more noteworthy that not one of the epistles contains any reference to these declarations of Christ, nor do they set forth any line of thought by which we may be aided to a clear understanding of the teaching of the Master herein contained. Owing to this failure on the part of the early writers, it is not strange that these words of Christ have been so largely misconstrued, and even wrested into a foundation for the doctrines

they were, I am led to believe, intended to overthrow.

Following the third century of the christian era, there arose a class of ascetics and philosophical theorists, who seized on these words with a rare avidity, and from them, and the aid of their inner consciousness, evolved the doctrine of penance, which was so severely in vogue throughout the dark ages, and which to-day is one of the standard tenets of the Roman church.

The command of Christ that his followers take up their cross and follow him, is plainly prophetic and figurative. And yet, to the saints and martyrs of the early church, it had a sadly significant and literal meaning; for many, very many of them, bore to the place of their crucifixion the timbers upon which, and by means of which, their redeemed spirits were set free from the tenements of clay, and allowed "to depart and be with Christ." While it is evident that all of those who have named the name of Christ are not required to suffer torture for that name, and in defense of their faith, it is not to be doubted that it would

be the duty of each one of us, if thus put to the test, to attest with our lives the confidence we have in the adorable Redeemer. The command is not that we be crucified daily, but that we take up the cross daily. In the earlier years of the establishment of His kingdom upon earth, it seemed necessary that He should have many of these *strong* witnesses to the power of the gospel over death and the grave, but since it has become evident that death has no terrors for those who confess the Lord Christ, the rage for their blood has ceased, and the foes of the christian are chiefly those of his own heart.

The Romish doctrine of penance for sins has had no little influence upon the dogmatism of the Protestant churches, and ever and anon crops out as well in the instructions of the pulpit as in the lives of those who are striving to "make their calling and election sure." This doctrine of penance is based on the idea that the body is the home of sin: that were the spirit free from the body, the incentives to evil would be so far removed as that the spirit might aspire to absolute purity. But since it

is not lawful to throw off the body and free the spirit from its control, it was taught that the body should be so abased and tortured as that the spirit should be able to gain the mastery. With this view, during the dark ages, the church taught that the body must be made to suffer, in order that through that suffering it might be purified. To this end the devotee practiced scourgings, severe, and sometimes barbarous; the coarsest kinds of food were used, and very little even of that, taken; a wire shirt was worn; he slept on a bed of stone or on a filthy pallet of straw; he made pilgrimages to shrines, going long distances upon his knees, or entirely prostrate upon the earth, drew himself along in imitation of a vile worm. But this became, whatever it may have been to its founders, a religion of works. The devotee came by the natural processes of the human mind, to take pride in his outward abasement. There was lacking that humility of the heart of which his abuse of the body was but an outward indication. Although there was an evident crucifixion of the body, the heart retained its inherent pride.

Any effort after the performance of good works, is but a sure evidence of the unwillingness to repose implicit confidence in the atonement of Christ, and its efficacy to accomplish the present and eternal salvation of the soul. It is a certain indication that he who thus labors to perform meritorious acts, is inclined to attempt thereby to work out his own purification and salvation, as though fearing that God and His Son are unable to bring about so grand a result. Or else, governed by an insatiate pride, he scorns to leave so great a work to God alone, but proposes to bring about his own redemption by the doing of those things which he knows to be right in themselves, and by sedulously abstaining from those things which his moral sense and the law of God indicate to him are wrong. But this mode of procedure is not in accord with the gospel of Christ.

That we should feel our unworthiness of God's mercies is right; that we should realize the depth to which we have fallen, in common with all mankind, is a necessity; that we should confess to God our manifold sins and wicked-

ness, our proneness to evil, and the need we have of divine assistance, is also a necessity; but if we claim for this any virtue, we are sadly in error.

In the several passages which we are discussing, our Lord lays down three conditions requisite, and as I apprehend, three conditions absolutely requisite, to a conformance to the plan of God for the salvation of man. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Here are presented as necessary, denial of self, taking up of the cross, and following after Him.

First then, what did the Savior intend when he said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself?" In what does this denial of self consist? The English word deny, as used in this place, seems to me to have been very largely misconstrued. The Greek word used by our Lord signifies "to deny utterly." Like very many other words in our language, this word "deny" has a wide variety of signification. If I mistake not, it has usually been taken to mean, in these passages, that to deny

one's self, is to decline the gratification of appetites and desires ; in other words, to practice what is termed "self denial." But it must be remembered that Christ is here stating the conditions of salvation. Under the Mosaic law, this was to be accomplished only by the intermediary of offerings upon the altar, after the shedding of the blood of the victim. Under the new dispensation, the offering having been made once for all, it only became necessary for the truly penitent to avail himself of the results of that offering "made once for all, for the sins of the whole world." But now if we construe this word "deny," as bearing in these passages, one of the other proper significations, viz., to disclaim connection with, or to disclaim responsibility for, so that the passage might read, "If any man will come after me, let him disclaim any connection with the bringing about his salvation," we shall gain an understanding of these passages which will be in accord not only with the other teachings of the gospel, but gain an added light on the true signification of the taking up of the cross.

The practice of self-denial, as a means of

working out our salvation, is not at all in accord with the plan of the gospel for the redemption of man. Self-denials, as a result of being redeemed, and of the promptings of the divine spirit within us, are no doubt, a part of a true following of Christ. Self-denials, practiced as a means to an end, are sure to result in a self satisfied condition of the mind and heart, since having done those things which are distasteful to us, we are too apt to feel that we have done something for which we ought to be rewarded.

If then we would come after Christ, let us deny that we are able in any way to aid in the redemption of our souls, or to make our lives in accord with the mind of Christ; let us disclaim any responsibility in the matter; let us deny the proposition that it is possible for us to aid in our salvation. In other words, let us agree that only God alone is competent to accomplish the salvation of our souls, and bring us at the last to a home with Him. He has undertaken for us; let us deny ourselves in this matter, and accept His proffered aid.

But this denying of ourselves is not so easy

or so simple as may be supposed. It comes squarely athwart the pride and independence of the human heart. To acknowledge that we are sinners, is bad enough, but to acknowledge that we are in no way competent to save ourselves, to change our lives so as that they shall be in accord with the laws of right, to live in accord with those laws, and to make our way to the celestial city by our own efforts, and ascend to the presence of the Father as a result of having earned a right to be there, is not an easy thing to do. Especially is this true of a man full of manly vigor, and intent on being thoroughly a man. Such an one scorns assistance in the every day affairs of life, and prides himself on his ability to meet any of the mischances which befall, with steady nerve and unflinching purpose. Feeling strong in himself he feels able to bring his tempers, passions, appetites, under proper control, and to live a life filled with the christian graces. How shall such an one bring himself to acknowledge that he is incapable of at least aiding in the work of his salvation? To deny himself, and acknowledge that he must be the bene-

ficiary of the atonement, without having anything of his own to place on the credit side of the account, is too debasing for a man who feels his nobleness, and his ability to cope with the greatest difficulties. But Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself:" and that word deny is in the imperative mood.

Let us now inquire what our Lord meant when he said, "and take up his cross." The word used by the evangelists, and which is translated "cross," meant primarily, a stake, or a pole; and came to be used as the name of the two joined pieces of timber on which the Romans were accustomed to nail their criminal offenders, and then place in an upright position, while the miserable victim suffered untold torture which resulted finally in his death. The word used by our writers, and which is translated "let him take up," contains no idea of bearing, as the carrying a load, but rather that he who will come after Christ must take up, or set up his cross. In one view of this declaration of Christ, it was prophetic. Jesus had not yet paid the penalty for the sins of the

human race, by an expiation on the cross, and I apprehend that not one of those who heard him utter these words, had at the time, any conception of their meaning. What was this cross that those who will come after Christ, must take up? The usual conception of the meaning of this command, is, I apprehend, as was shown by some one of the great artists of the middle ages, as a man struggling along a path bearing on his back a heavy cross, the timbers of which were wholly out of proportion to the size of the man. The man was shown as bending so far forward as that his hands might touch the ground in front of him, were they not engaged in the struggle to hold the heavy timbers upon his back. The artist depicted his cross bearer as a man of finest athletic build, his muscles standing out bold and strong; but so heavy was the load he was carrying that those muscles were knotted under the fearful strain which they were undergoing, even the muscles of the head and face giving evidence of the almost overpowering load under which he was being weighed down, while the sweat stood in great drops upon his

brow, thus showing an intensity of pain.

The cross which our Lord commands us to take up, if we would come after him, is no such heavy load which we are to carry, as was there shown. More than this, let us clearly realize that it would be an unwarrantable torture of the words of Christ, to draw therefrom any idea of carrying any load at all. The word means simply, to lift up, to set up. It is not that we are to take up a load and carry it; we are to lift up our cross, set it up, and then follow Christ.

Not infrequently we hear christians speak of the heavy crosses they have been called upon to bear, when referring to some of the ordinary every day providences which befall the bad and good alike. Others speak of the bereavement of friends, as crosses which they find it difficult to bear. Others, when speaking of the divers temptations which beset them, call them heavy crosses,—burdens which weigh them down and cause them to sink under the load. Christ said that the burden which he imposed on his followers, is light. Surely, those things which are common to the race,

and in no way peculiar to the followers of Christ, cannot be regarded as crosses. Those who have no regard for God, have their friends taken from them ; those who disdain to claim the atonement of Christ in their behalf, endure the loss of property, and suffer severely thereby ; even those who are positively wicked, are beset with temptations, to which they usually yield, but they are for all that temptations as really as any which a christian has to withstand ; those who are making a hard struggle to accomplish their own salvation by right living, without any aid from the Redeemer of the race, suffer defamation of character and the buffetings of the evil one as severe as any which come to those who put their confidence, trust and hope in the promises of God through His Son. Neither can we regard those providences which befall us, and which a keen perception of the intent of our loving Father in Heaven readily sees are for the purposes of discipline and correction, as in any sense a lifting or taking up of the cross. Those who scorn to bow in obedience to the law of God receive similar chidings and reproof for their

misdeeds, but pay no heed thereto, unless it be with their muttered curses; while the true christian heeds the reproof, and thanks God that he is counted worthy to be reminded of his shortcomings.

Not infrequently, pastors exhort their people to bear the cross, by the taking part in the exercises of the social meetings,—in audible prayer, and in giving testimony to the truths of the gospel. Not infrequently, we hear people in the exercises of the social meetings, avow their willingness to bear the cross, their bearing of the cross consisting of the declaration that they are striving to be christians, and asking for the prayers of their fellows. While all these exercises of the social meetings are right, proper, and to some extent necessary, we cannot find that they are more than remotely connected with the lifting up of the cross. These exercises are spoken of as difficult of accomplishment, and hence as heavy crosses to bear. While a testimony to the efficacy of the atonement is a lifting up of the cross, in the sense which the word in the original will allow, viz., to extoll, it cannot be that even the

extolling of the great author and finisher of our salvation can be a burden to those who have tasted and know the truths of Christ's gospel. Would it be any less difficult for those who feel that it is a heavy load for them to rise to their feet and tell to those in full sympathy with them what they know of the power of redeeming love, than it would be to speak in the same manner on any other subject? I think not. Very few out of the whole number of our people feel at all at home and free with words, when on their feet in a public assembly. Most of us if called on for our opinions on any of the subjects of general interest, in such a manner as to make it proper to rise to our feet and give expression to thought, would find that we suffered under the same feeling of diffidence, and experienced the same lack of words to express ourselves. Our natural diffidence, and failure to familiarize ourselves with public speaking and thinking on our feet, cannot, I think, be urged as creating a burden to be borne and regarded as a christian duty.

Just here, I must indulge in a parenthesis.

Why is it regarded as a difficult thing, to rise in a gathering of christians, all of them in sympathy, all striving to follow Christ, all beset with the same difficulties, doubts and fears, and give expression to our experiences in the christian life? An illustration suggests itself to me as applicable in this instance. If any one of us had been very sick, in such manner as that the very best of medical assistance had been necessary, and under that assistance recovery had been made, would there be any hesitation or lack of words in speaking the praise of the doctor whose skill had brought us through? Would it be a burden to speak to our friends of his skill, and of our gratitude not only to him, but that his aid had been sought by our friends in our behalf? But we were very sick with sin; sicker by far than we appreciated. There was no help for us. We were lost. Ruined by the fall, we were still farther undone by the trend of our own hearts toward evil. But God himself undertook for us. He against whom we had sinned and done wickedly, himself brought salvation nigh. The triune God sent to earth the second

person in the Trinity, to bring us back into unison with the mind of God. "To earth the great Redeemer came, that we might come to Heaven." On Calvary He paid the debt, the debt beyond compare, even the debt of the whole human race, and made it possible, if we will but accept the proffered benefit, that we may yet be the sons of the Lord Almighty. And yet, how many of us who have vowed to accept the proffered mercy, who have solemnly on bended knees promised to follow Christ, lifting up our cross, hesitate and shrink from declaring our faith and love for Him who has bought us with his own blood, even the blood shed on Calvary's rugged mount. We certainly would not treat any earthly friend so ill.

But to return to our argument. It will be noticed that while three of our text passages, one each from Matthew, Mark and Luke are stated in the conditional form, two of them, one from Matthew and one from Luke, state the proposition positively. It may be noted also, that while the passages which are stated in the conditional form, "If any man will come after me," have also the command, "let him

deny himself;" while those which are in the positive form, are also in the negative, and contain no mention of the necessity for the exercise of self abnegation in the matter of our salvation. Matthew says, 10:38, "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me;" and Luke, 14:27 says, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." The word used by Matthew in the last passage mentioned, signifies to take, in the sense of grasping, but not in any way does it contain the idea of carrying, or bearing up under. In the latter passage from Luke, the word which is translated "doth bear," properly signifies "to lift up, to raise, and hence metaphorically to praise, to laud."

It should not be forgotten that in each of the passages we are discussing, the cross which is to be lifted up, is an individual cross, and the several passages might very properly have been rendered, "and take up his own cross."

We come now to consider the question as to, what our Lord meant when he used the word "cross" in the sayings recorded in our several

texts. We think that we may justly assume that no passage of scripture can be justly construed except by a comparison with all others of like import, and with the sacred writings as a whole. In our studies of these texts, we have endeavored to adhere to this rule. We find that under the Mosaic law, without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sins. We find that it was obligatory for each individual, when he would crave the pardon which he felt himself to need, when he would endeavor to win the favor of his offended God, that he must himself bring an animal, without spot or blemish, to the priest, who there before the altar, slew the victim, and while the penitent offered his prayers that his offering might be accepted, and that the pardon asked might be granted, the priest offered the flesh upon the altar, having first sprinkled the blood thereon. The old dispensation was in all respects a type of the new.

And yet, while under the old dispensation, the penitent must needs approach and make his plea by the aid of a priest, under the new, as is shown in our texts, he must take up his own

cross or offerings, and appear before God in his own person and make his own plea in abatement of the penalty for sins. The atonement on the cross was not for the collective human race, but for them individually ; for each one in his separate person. While Christ died for us, he died for you, for me. If then we would come after Christ, we must take our offering, even Him who was slain, as a lamb without spot, an offering which cannot be refused at the throne of high Heaven. If we would come after Christ, we must disclaim any ability or even disposition to save ourselves, and take up the plea of the sacrifice made on the cross for us. Appearing before God with hearts truly yearning after His favor, and presenting as our only claim for the divine favor the sacrifice made upon the cross, abjuring every other claim to the divine mercy, and trusting in that alone, we may be assured that we shall be accepted through the merit of the adorable Redeemer. And this we must do daily. It is not enough that once, or even occasionally, we present our offering, even the atonement made by God's own Son, for us and

in our stead; we must present our plea, we must, denying ourselves in the matter, lift up and lay before the Lord, the offering made in our stead and on our behalf, daily. It must be an every day exercise. Since under the Mosaic law none were allowed to appear before God to ask his favor, empty handed, no more may we. Nor may the offering be one of our own choosing. The law of Moses specified the offering to be brought and presented in each case of guilt or thankfulness; the law of Christ specifies that we shall present as our plea for recognition, either when we ask forgiveness for our transgressions, or ascribe our praises to the triune God for His manifold mercies to usward, the offering of Himself once made, even His death upon the cross, at each approach we make to the mercy seat. But these approaches are to be made every day. It is not enough that we bow in the public assembly on the Sabbath day, that at certain fixed times and occasions we ask the pardon we need, lifting up our offering of the atonement as our only plea; we must every day present ourselves, our plea and our offer-

ing, if we are at all intent on complying with the conditions under which we may hope to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

This taking up of the cross in such manner as to meet the demands of the gospel, is a matter of no slight import; it is a personal humiliation beyond compare. Though we deny ourselves, rating our own ability in the task of salvation as nothing, and feel desirous of placing ourselves in the hands of God, and of trusting to his divine clemency for salvation, we are not, by this, severely belittling ourselves in our own estimation, and the humiliation is not in any such degree as is that of the taking up of the cross. Jesus made expiation for our guilt, by a death on the cross. But it must not be forgotten that a death on the cross was the most ignominious of any that were in vogue at that time. It was the method of execution for the most abandoned of their criminals, the lowest of the malefactors. Jesus was condemned to death upon the cross for the very purpose of emphasizing his low character in their estimation, as compared with

his own claim that he was a king. The apostle says of him,—Phil., 2:7,—that he “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Is it a matter of slight import, think you, that we, men and women, endowed with powers and attributes second only to our Maker, indeed made in His own image, must accept as our mediator with the injured Deity, the person of one who suffered with malefactors the most ignominious of deaths?

But if we humble ourselves to the degree that we earnestly avow our desire to be made partakers of the benefit of Christ's death and suffering, is our humiliation equal to that endured by Jesus in our behalf? The second person in the Holy Trinity, the Son, and hence heir of the Creator of the universe, in all the elements of divinity, coequal with the Father and in perfect accord with Him, so humbled himself that he took upon him the form of one of the common people, associated with the

ignorant and those outside of the upper classes of the time, devoted his time to aiding the poor, teaching the ignorant, and finally as a low class criminal, suffered the death of the cross. Was ever any love like this?

If now we would come after Christ, we must, denying any share in the work of redemption on our own part, take up the cross of acceptance of the mediation of our Redeemer, Christ, making our only plea in this behalf, that for us the Saviour died; we must accept the death on the cross as our individual atonement, and daily, lifting up the cross before the throne of Heaven, as the priests of old lifted the offerings, and laid them out on the altar, claim the acceptance of our offering in accordance with the promise left us that "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Do the conditions of salvation through Christ seem harsh? If you have sinned grievously against your neighbor, one who has been accustomed to befriend you in every way, one who has looked after your interests, perchance one who has actually saved your life, and whose

very honor, in your ungratefulness, you had assailed, would you think to be restored to his kindly regard except under such conditions as he might deem necessary to the preservation of his honor? Methinks that under such circumstances no conditions could be too severe. But the case between humanity and God was worse even than our supposed case; can any conditions which Our Heavenly Father has found necessary to impose, be regarded as too severe?

Perhaps our kind Father deemed this extreme humiliation on our part necessary, in order to test the sincerity of our approach to Him. Had He but made a royal road for us to travel, in our endeavor to reach Him, we could not so certainly evince our sense of our need of help from on High. Having shown an intensity of love for His fallen creatures, almost incomprehensible in degree, by the gift of a very part of himself as an offering for our sins, it certainly behooves us to be ready to evince our appreciation for this love so great, by the most perfect compliance with the conditions He has imposed, which are that we deny ourselves as

agents in the matter of salvation, and make use of the atonement by lifting up the fact of the pardon purchased for us on the cross, and daily appearing before Him with our sacrifice and our plea in our behalf. In further proof of our sincerity, we are not to be content with the justifying grace bestowed in answer to our first approaches to Him, but each day we are to feel the urgent necessity for the reapplication of the Redeemer's merits, and feeling thus, lift up, daily, the cross with all its hallowed influences and benefits.

If now we have, urged thereto by a desire to come after Christ, been able to make full and complete denial of ourselves in regard to the bringing about of our salvation from the thralldom of sin which has bound us, and have been able to humble ourselves so that we have made acceptance of the proffered mercy, even the atonement made for us on Calvary, and have lifted up our cross, even lifting the expiation paid by the adorable Redeemer in our behalf, up before the throne of the Infinite mercy, and have been made to know that the sacrifice so great was accepted in our behalf,

it is but meet and right, and it is our bounden duty, henceforth to follow Christ, according to his command. A royal potentate, the Son Most High of the King of Kings, he denied himself, and made himself of no reputation, and still further to benefit us, he humbled himself, even to die upon the cross, covered with ignominy and shame. Can He ask less from us than that we follow Him, and follow Him daily? Can we claim any immunity from the terms laid down in our texts? Shall we refuse to acknowledge our inability to save ourselves, or to apply in our behalf the sacrifice so wonderfully great, made by the loving Redeemer? But in our attempts to follow Christ, let us not forget that we are to be like him; that we are to have the mind of Christ, the spirit of Christ, the compassion of Christ. We should not fail to give heed to all his suggestions for holy doing and holy living. We should not for a moment forget that Jesus devoted the greater portion of his time to the poor; relieving their necessities, healing their sicknesses and teaching them the way of life. Let us not fail to remember and act on the injunction that we

love our neighbor as ourselves, in full appreciation of the declaration of the scripture that "love is the fulfilling of the law."

To sum up this study of the true significance of the several passages we have been considering, I would suggest the following explanatory rendering thereof: If any man will come after me, let him disclaim anything on his own part as in any way contributing toward his salvation, and let him set up in his behalf the atonement which I am to make on the cross, presenting that as his own personal sacrifice, and let him follow after me in obedience to my teachings and the rule of my life.

A true and full compliance with the rule here laid down, can result only in a full salvation by faith, and not by works. The mind and heart which comprehends the true import of these sayings of our Lord, is at once compelled to assent to the fact that faith, and faith alone, is the key that will unlock the realms of the blest and spread them out before his enraptured vision; that faith in the verities of God's word, is the one great and only necessity for an experience of those blessings which are

promised to those who put their confidence therein. But since it is "with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness," a mental acceptance of the plan of salvation as laid down in the Word, will not suffice. A mere mental assent to the proposition that we cannot save ourselves, and that if saved at all, it must be by some power outside of and greater than ourselves, is not an equivalent for the denial required by our Lord in his command. A mental belief in the facts of the great atonement, and an acquiescence in the doctrine of salvation by faith, will not secure to us the results which are only promised to faithful followers, viz.: the forgiveness of our sins, and a knowledge of the fact that we have been accepted into the family of God. "The devils believe and tremble," and so do men.

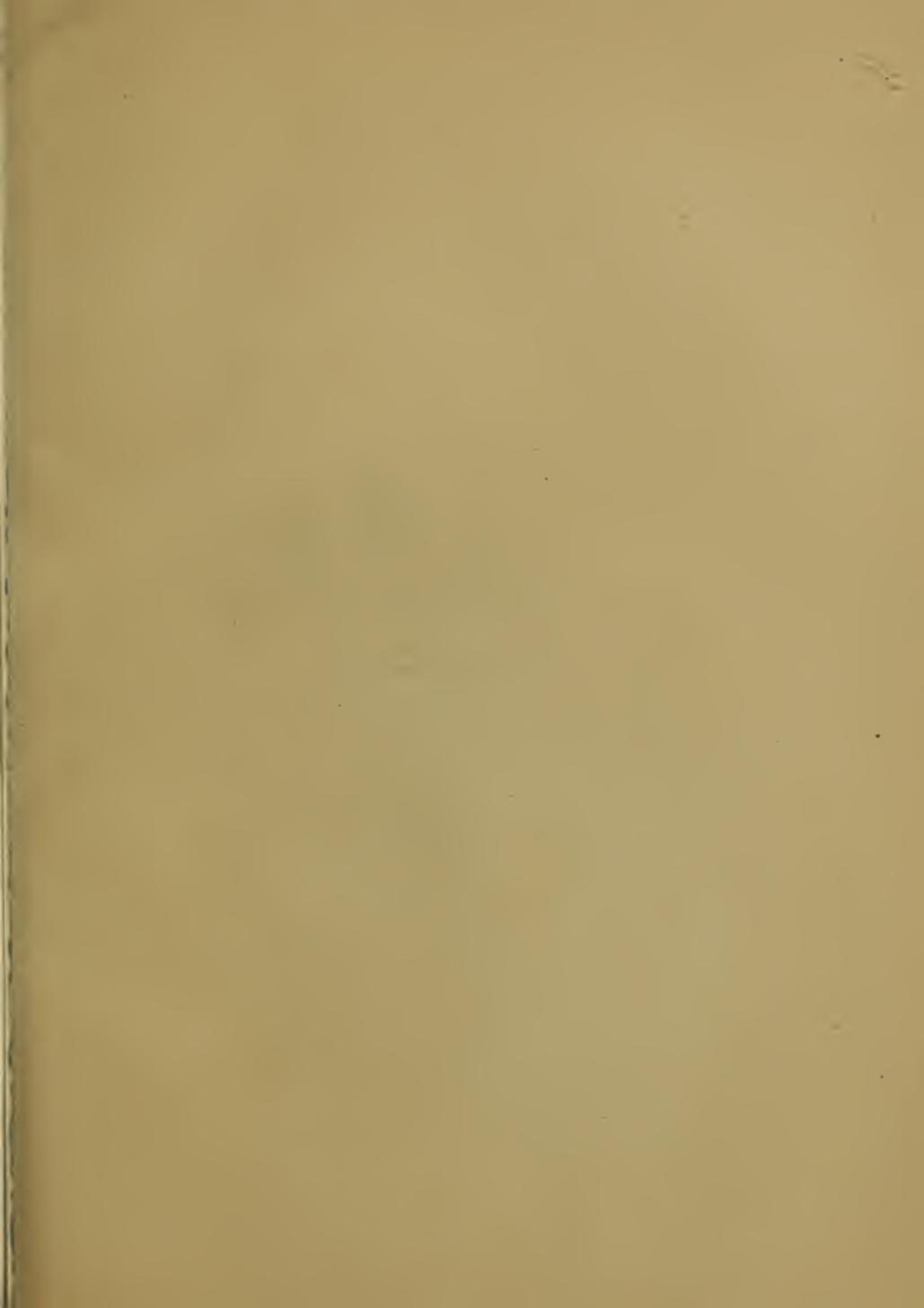
Let me urge you then to cease doing right as a means of securing the favor of God, but let your doing of those things which are right be the outgushing of your love for Christ and for your neighbor; a spontaneous proof that you, having denied yourself and lifted up your cross, have received your proof of the accept-

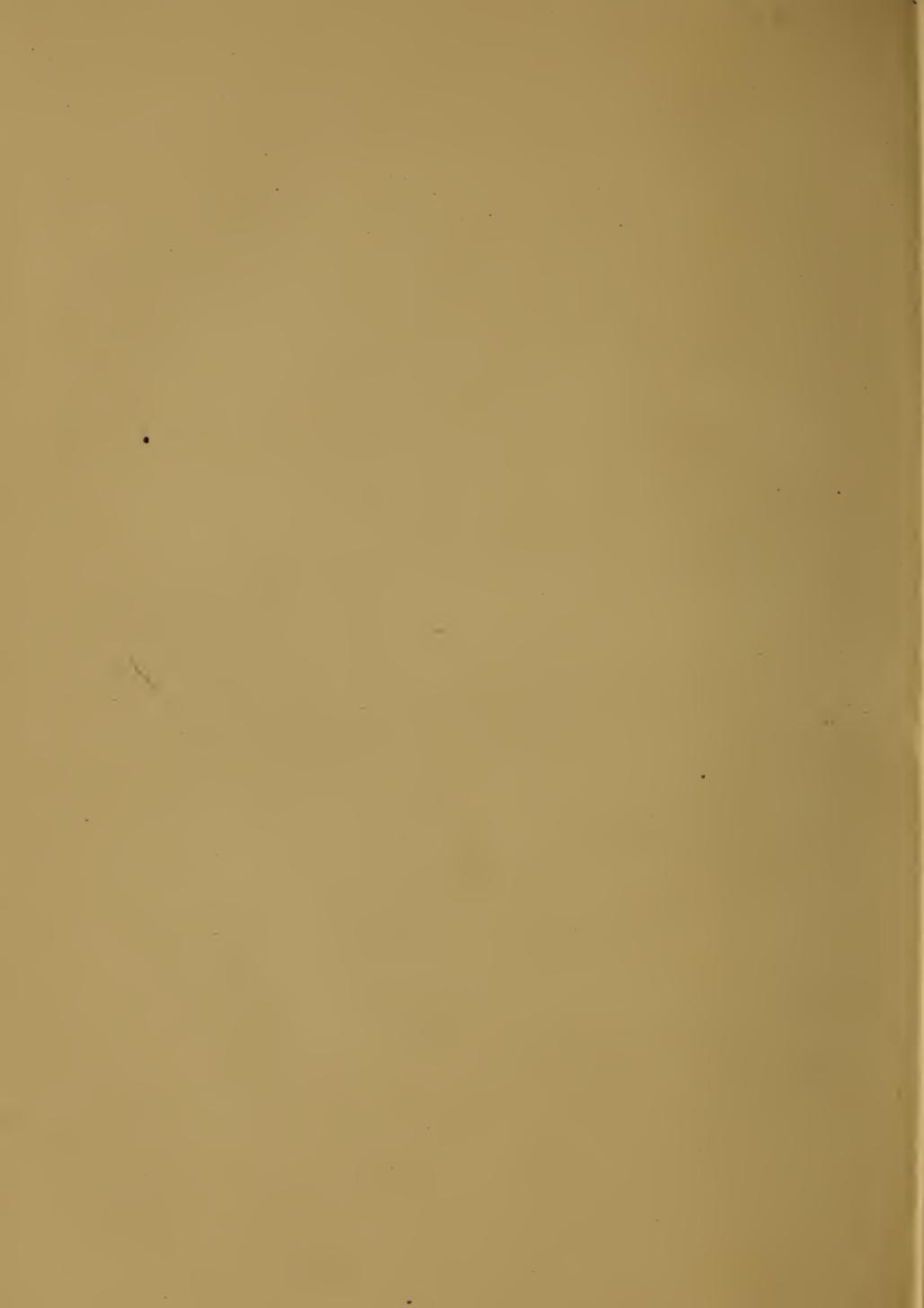
ance of the offering made, and that you are following your Redeemer in the doing of those things which since his ascension to the right hand of the Father, he has left for his children here on earth to do for him.

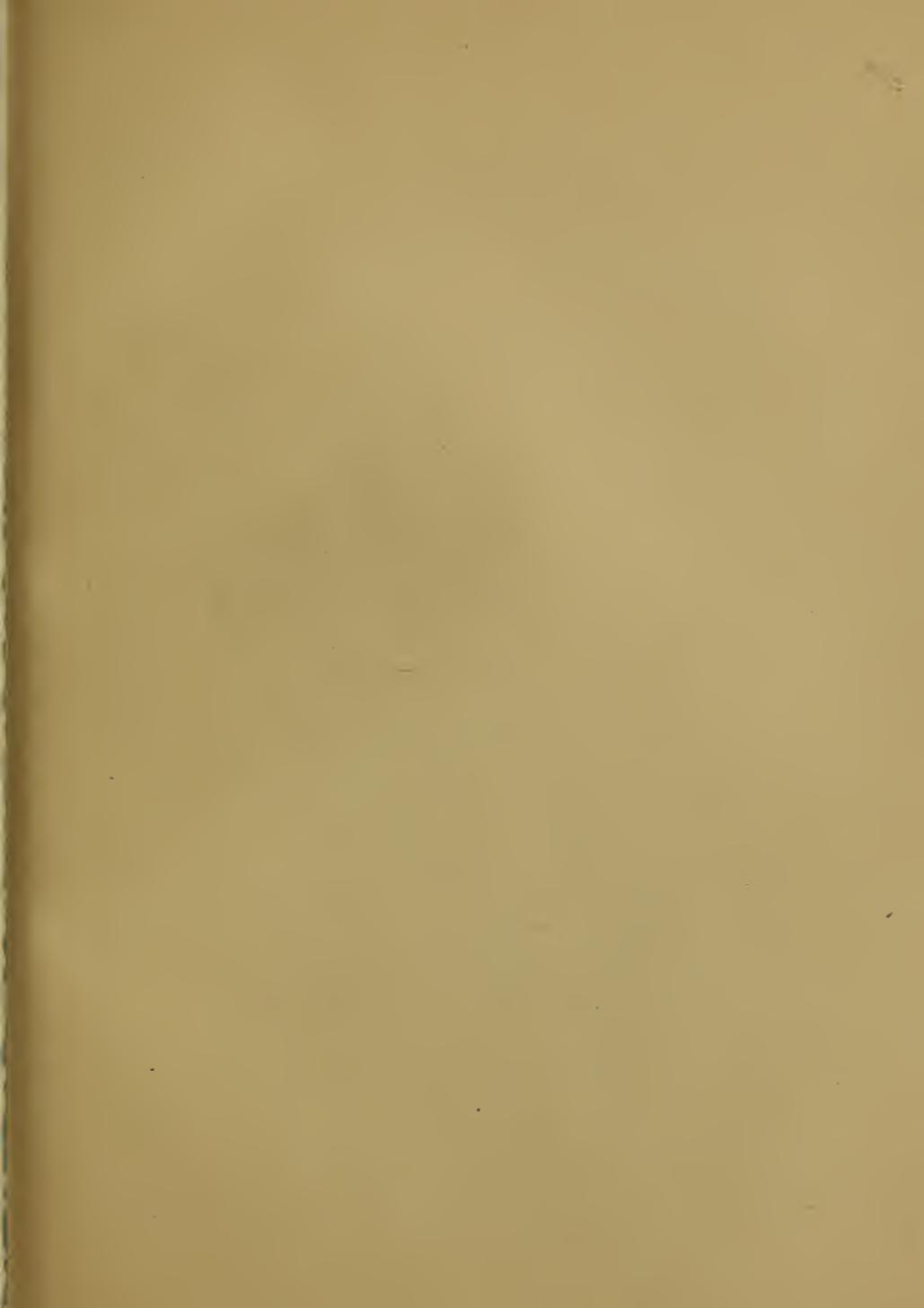
When you shall have comprehended the true import of the words of the Lord Jesus which we have been examining, you will cease to think or speak of the cross as a load to be borne along a rugged road with great difficulty, and with the odds against your ability to carry it to your hoped for destination; but rather you will come to think and speak of the cross as a joyous exercise in the merit of the atonement, which daily you present at the throne of grace as your only plea for notice and acceptance, and through which you are given to know that you are accepted, that your sins are pardoned, that you are on terms of intimacy with the Father through His adorable Son, that you are an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, to an inheritance with them that are sanctified. And further, be assured that if you have loads to carry, it is time that you examine yourselves and determine wherefore you are

chastened. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." When you are loaded down with the corrections of the Lord, fail not to hasten to your altar of prayer, and there renouncing yourself in humble submission to His will, lift up your cross, even the atonement, as your plea for pardon, for relief. Rely on this and on this alone. He has promised to accept the plea; make it unreservedly, and the loads which oppress you, shall vanish from your sight as the morning dew under the rays of a brilliant sun.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; 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 the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."























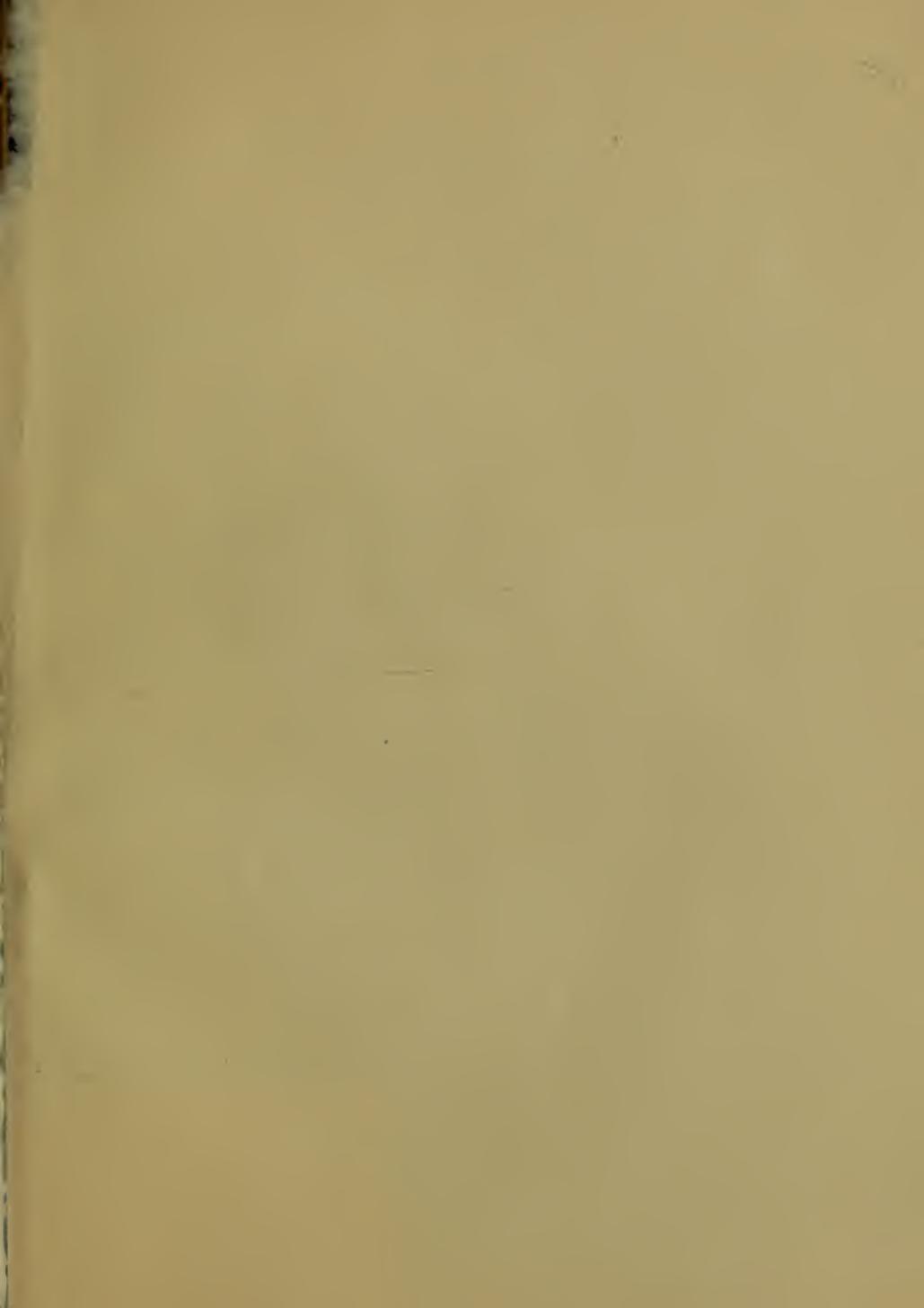












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