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Why Evil Was Permitted. A DIALOGUE.

B. There are many beautiful truths taught in the Bible, which commend themselves to my better judgment, and if I could only have my mind clear on some points, I would gladly accept the whole. It seems, too, that there must be some way out of my difficulties, if I could only find it; for surely the book is stamped with a wisdom higher than human, and my difficulty must arise from a failure to comprehend it more fully.

A. Well, my brother, it gives me great pleasure to meet with an honest inquirer after truth. You are anxious, then, to find the connecting links in the great chain which binds the interests of humanity to the throne of God. We believe that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and that the Spirit will guide us into all truth. If it should please Him to use me as His mouthpiece, it will be a great privilege. Will you please state one of those points, and when that is made clear, we shall be glad to hear of others?

B. One of these questions is, why was evil permitted? If God is infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, why did he permit his fair creation to be so marred by sin? After creating our first parents perfect and upright, why did he permit Satan to present the temptation? or why allow the forbidden tree to have a place among the good? Could he not have prevented all possibility of man's overthrow?

A. I see just where your difficulty lies, and I think I can make it very plain to you. It pleased God for the joy it gives him to dispense his goodness, and to exercise the

attributes of his glorious being to create various orders of intelligent beings. Some he has endowed with greater capacity than others; but each he made perfectly adapted to his sphere and destiny. We are acquainted with many forms of life in our world, and doubtless many others exist of which we know nothing yet; but above all others, stands man, the master-piece of God's workmanship, endowed with reason and intelligence superior to all others, and given the dominion over all. He was made upright and perfect; God pronounced him "very good." He also made him (Adam) free in the exercise of all his powers--physical, mental and moral--and though these powers were all perfect in their measure, yet they were each capable of large development. Now, had evil never been placed before him, he could not have resisted it, and, consequently, there would be no virtue nor merit in his doing right. I presume I need scarcely remark here, that not the fruit of the tree, but the act of disobedience caused man's fall. R14 : page 1

B. But could not God have made man unchangeably perfect?

A. No; to have done so would have been to make another God. Unchangeableness is an attribute only of an infallible, infinite being--God. He who cannot err must, of necessity, be all-wise, all-powerful and, consequently, eternal-- a God and yet a creature--a supposition as absurd as impossible.

B. I had never thought of it so.

A. If an intelligent creature is to be made at all, he must be made liable to change; and, as he was created pure, any change must be from purity to sin. He could not even know the meaning of good unless he had evil to contrast with it. He could not be reckoned as obedient to God, unless a temptation to disobedience were presented, and such an evil made possible.

B. But could not God, with whom we are told "all things are possible," have interfered in season to prevent the full accomplishment of Satan's designs?

A. You say, "all things are possible with God." I trust you remember that it is all possible things that are possible with him. "It is impossible for God to lie." Heb. 6:18. "He cannot deny himself." 2 Tim. 2:13. He cannot do wrong. He cannot choose any but the wisest and best plan for introducing his creatures into life; and we should bear in mind, that the fact of God's not interfering with the introduction and development of sin is one of the very strongest of reasons for believing that evil is necessary, and designed ultimately to work good.

C. Bro. A, may I interrupt you here to ask, why, if it was proper and wise that Adam should have a trial under the most favorable circumstances, as a perfect man, should not all his posterity have a similarly favorable trial? We all know that we are born with both mental and physical ailments and imperfections. Why did not God give us all as good a chance as Adam?

A. If you or I had been in Adam's place, we would have done just as he did. Remember, he had known God only a little while. He found himself alive; perhaps God told him he was his creator, had a right to command his obedience, and to threaten and inflict punishment for disobedience. But what did Adam know about the matter? Here was another being at his side who contradicted God, telling him that he would not die from eating the fruit; that God was jealous, because eating of this fruit would make him a God also. Then the tempter exemplified his teaching by eating of it himself, and man saw that he was the wisest of creatures. Can you wonder that they ate? No; as a reasoning being he could scarcely have done otherwise.

C. But he should have remembered the penalty--what a terrible price he must pay for his disobedience--the wretchedness and death which would follow. If I were so placed, I think I should make more effort to withstand the tempter.

A. Wait, Bro. C.; you forget that Adam, up to this time, was totally unacquainted with wretchedness and death. He could not know what wretchedness meant; he never had been wretched. He did not know what dying meant; he never had died, nor seen any creature die, for death did not enter the world until after his disobedience (Rom. 5:12), and if you or I had been there, controlled by an unbiased judgment, we would have done just as Adam did. The reason you think you could withstand better is, that you have had experience with evil, and have learned, in a measure, what Adam up to that time had not learned in the smallest degree, viz., to know good from evil.

C. O! I see. Then it is because we would have done just as Adam did that God is justified in counting us all sinners, that "by the one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners," and "by the offence of one, all were condemned" (Rom. 5:18,19), and so "the wages of sin (death) passed upon all," and through or "in Adam all die."

B. Do I understand you to say that God does evil that good may come?

A. By no means. God did no evil, and he permitted it only because it was necessary that his creatures should know good from evil; that by being made acquainted with sin and its consequences --sickness, misery and death--they might learn "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and having tasted that the bitter "wages of sin is death," they might be prepared to choose life and live.

B. But did not God implant in his creature that very thirst for knowledge which led him to an act of disobedience in order to gratify it? Does it not seem too, that He wanted him to become acquainted with evil, and if so, why should He attach a penalty to the sinful act, knowing that a knowledge of evil could be obtained in no other way?

A. We can see readily that a knowledge of evil could be obtained in no way except by its introduction; and remember, Adam could not have disobeyed if God had given no commandment, and every command must have a penalty attached to give it force. Therefore, I claim that God not only foresaw man's fall into sin, but designed it. It was a part of His plan. God permitted, nay, wanted man to fall; and why? Because, having the remedy provided for his release from its consequences, He saw that the result would be to lead man to a knowledge, through experience, which would enable him to see the bitterness and blackness of sin--"the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and the matchless brilliancy of virtue in contrast with it; thus teaching him the more to love and honor his Creator, who is the fountain and source of all goodness, and to forever shun that which brought so much woe and misery. So the final result is greater love to God, and greater hatred of all that is opposed to Him. The best armament against temptation is knowledge.

C. Your reasoning is clear, forcible and would seem to me plausible were it not that this experience and knowledge come too late to benefit the human family. Adam failed from want of knowledge and experience to maintain uprightness of character. His posterity, though possessing that knowledge and experience, fail to attain uprightness from lack of ability occasioned by his sin.

B. I can see no objection to your new view, that evil was permitted because necessary to man's development and designed for his ultimate good, were it not as Bro. C. suggests: Mankind will never have an opportunity to make use of the experience and knowledge thus obtained. But, Bro. A., what did you mean a few minutes since when you said, God had a remedy provided for man's release from the effects of the fall before he fell?

A. God foresaw that having given man freedom of choice, he would, through lack of knowledge, accept evil when disguised as an "angel of light;" and also that becoming acquainted with it, he would still choose it, because that acquaintance would so impair his moral nature, that evil would become more agreeable to him and more to be desired than good. So, permitting him to take his own course, man brought upon himself misery and death, from which he could never recover himself. Then the voice of infinite love is heard: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin (Continued on page 7.) R14 :

page 7 Why Evil Was Permitted. (Continued from first page.) ----- of the world." This is Christ Jesus, and the death of Christ for man's sin was a part of God's plan as much as man's fall. He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." His death for our sins was purposed by God before man fell; yes, before man was created.

B. I begin to see a harmony and beauty connected with the introduction of evil which I had not suspected. May we not reasonably say that God could not have displayed those qualities of His nature so attractive to us--mercy and pity--nor could His great love have been made so apparent, had not the occasion for their exercise been presented by man's necessities?

A. I am glad that you have suggested this thought. It is true, that though "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy," yet neither of these would have been seen had there not been a sinner requiring them; and while "God is love," and always has been the same, yet it is true that "in this was manifested the love of God," and "hereby perceive we the love of God, because He (Christ) laid down his life for us." And do you not see that in the arrangement of the whole plan the wisdom of God is beautifully shown? Let me say further, that as we proceed, we shall find God's justice made to shine because of the introduction of evil. God might have told His creatures of these attributes, but never could have exhibited them had not sin furnished an occasion for their exhibition.

C. This suggests another thought: Man could not have developed these moral qualities had God set no example.

A. Another good point, "He hath set us an example that we should walk in His footsteps." We learn what mercy, justice and love are by God's illustration of them, and we are exhorted, "Be ye followers of God as dear children and walk in love." Notice, further, that we could not develop mercy, pity, love, etc., unless we had fellow sinners upon whom to exercise them. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

B. I am becoming anxious to see the outcome. You have suggested that Christ is the remedy for man's recovery from the effects of the fall, and that it was so arranged and purposed by God before creating the race, but you have not shown how the recovery is effected.

A. I am glad that you have not lost sight of the real object of our conversation. The answer to this question will involve the consideration of two points. First, What was the penalty pronounced R15 : page 7 and inflicted? and, second, What was the remedy, and how applied? May I ask you to state in Scripture language what penalty God pronounced on Adam's sin?

B. I believe it reads, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But he did not die for nine hundred and thirty years.

A. You quote correctly. The marginal reading will help you over the difficulty of his living nine hundred and thirty years. It is a more literal rendering of the Hebrew text: "In the day thou eatest thereof dying, thou shalt die." i.e., from the moment he would disobey God, death would have dominion over him--would have a claim and right to him, and would begin his work. It was only a question of time how long it would be before he should lay them low. Elements of disease infested all nature with which they came in contact since separated from Eden and its trees of life.

We all are in a dying condition, partially dead, mentally, morally and physically. From the moment of birth, and before it, we have been in the clutches of death, and he never lets go until he has conquered. Man, by means of medical aid, attempts resistance, but at best it is a very brief struggle. Adam, because physically perfect, could offer great resistance. Death did not completely conquer him for nine hundred and thirty years, while the race at the present time, through the accumulated ills handed down through generations past, yields to his power on an average in about thirty-two years.

C. We are, then, so to speak, overshadowed by death from the cradle to the tomb, the shade increasing each moment, until it is blackness complete.

A. Yes; you get the thought as David expresses it in the twenty-third Psalm: "I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." The further we go down into this valley the darker it becomes, until the last spark of life expires.

B. I understand you to believe that diseases of the various kinds are but the mouths of death by which we are devoured, since we were placed within his reach by Adam's sin?

A. Yes; every pain and ache we feel is evidence, not that death will get hold of us, but that he now has us in his grasp. Adam and all his race have been in death ever since he disobeyed.

C. We frequently sing of death as the "Angel God has sent," "the gate to endless joy," etc., and yet I confess that I could never regard it except as an enemy, and such it would really seem to be.

A. Nowhere in Scripture is it represented as our friend, but always as an enemy of man, and consequently the enemy of God, who loves man; and we are told that "for this purpose Christ was manifest, that he might destroy death and him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil."

B. If death is the penalty for sin, has not mankind paid that penalty in full when dead? Might he not be released from death the moment after dying, yet fully meet the demand of justice?

A. "The wages of sin is death"--not dying, but "death"--forever. As well say that a man condemned to imprisonment for life had received the full penalty in the act of going into prison, as that man received his penalty in the act of going into death. In disobedience man fell into the hands of Justice, and though God is merciful and loving, there can be no warfare between his attributes. Mercy and love must be exercised in harmony with justice. "God is just" and "will by no means clear the guilty." Man was guilty, and must therefore be dealt with by Justice. Justice cries, Your life is forfeited, "dying thou shalt die." Man is cast into the great prison-house of death, and Justice, while locking him in, says: "Thou shalt by no means come out thence until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

B. Do I express the same idea by saying, that man forfeited his right to life by his disobedience, and, consequently, God, in justice, recognizing and enforcing his own law, could not permit him to live again, unless he could meet the claims of justice?

A. The idea is the same. Man is the debtor, and unless he can pay the debt he cannot come out of the prison-house of death--cannot have life. He cannot pay this debt, and consequently cannot release himself. But man's weakness and helplessness gives occasion for the display of God's mercy and love in Christ Jesus, for "When there was no eye to pity and no arm to save," God devised a way by which he could be both just and merciful; and "while we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

C. How for them? His death does not prevent men from dying.

A. It does not prevent their dying, but it does prevent their continuance in the prison-house of death. He came to "open the prison doors and set at liberty the captives." This he does, not by opposing God's justice, but in recognizing it and paying that which is due. He has a right to set those prisoners free. In his own death--the just for the unjust--he ransomed us, as it is written, "I will ransom (purchase) them from the power of the grave;" "I will redeem them from death;" "For ye were bought with a price, even the precious blood (life) of Christ."

C. I understand you to mean, that as Jesus came into the world by a special creative act of God, he was free from the curse which rested upon the balance of the race, therefore

not liable to death. As the second Adam, He was tried but came off conqueror. "He was obedient even unto death," but not having forfeited his right to life, either through Adam's sin or his own, death had no claim upon him. He, therefore had something to offer Justice for the life of mankind.

A. Yes, as he himself said, "My flesh I will give for the life of the world." Jno. 6:51. He must have a right to continuance of life else he could not give it. He did not conquer nor overthrow Justice, but recognizing the Justice of the Law of God in the forfeit of the sinner's life he purchased it back with his own, and thereby obtained the right to "destroy death"--the enemy who for a time is used as the servant of Justice.

B. Then Justice accepted the life of Christ as a substitute for the sinner's life. But it seems unjust to make the innocent suffer for the guilty.

A. It would be unjust to make or compel such suffering, but "Christ gave himself for us." "He for the joy that was set before him endured the cross."

C. But how could the life of one purchase the life of many?

A. By the rule of SUBSTITUTION.

As Adam was substituted for the race in trial, and through his failure "death passed upon all men" and all were counted sinners even before birth, so the obedience of death in Christ justified all men to a return to life. Paul so expresses it in Rom. 5:18. [Em. Diaglott.] "For as through the disobedience of ONE man, the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the ONE the many will be constituted (reckoned) righteous;" and "as through one offence sentence came on all men to condemnation, (condemning them to death) so also, through one righteous act sentence came on all men to justification of life." --justifying their living again.

B. Shall we understand then that the resurrection of the dead is optional or compulsory on Justice?

A. Christ having "tasted death for every man," it is certainly compulsory on Justice to release the prisoners held for sin. Christ's sacrifice having been accepted as "the propitiation (settlement) of our sins, and not of ours (believers) only, but also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD," all must go free because God is Just.

B. Does not this imply universal, eternal salvation?

A. No, it implies the saving or salvation of all men from the condition of death, but as many of them will be liable to the "second death" on account of their own sin, it cannot be eternal salvation. The second Adam will eventually restore to the race all that is lost by the first Adam's sin. We could not lose eternal life in Adam, because he never had it to lose--he was a probationer for the eternal life.

C. Was eternal life ever offered to Adam?

A. Not directly, but his continuance of life if obedient, is implied in the threatening of death if disobedient.

C. Then this salvation cannot be what Paul refers to saying, "the gift of God is eternal life."

A. No; the restoration to natural life was not a gift of God, but a thing once possessed and then lost, now to be returned, because "purchased"--paid for. Having restored the race, brought them back to where they were before the fall, with the advantage of knowing from actual experience the character and results of that evil which Adam mistook for good, and which is again to present itself for their trial, they will be given an opportunity of accepting this "Gift of God"--eternal life. When thus restored to perfect natural life, possessing the knowledge of good and evil, as perfect obedience will be expected of them as was required of Adam.

C. If ransomed, why do they remain in death and others die, since Christ has paid the price?

A. If you make a purchase, pay the price for goods, it does not follow of necessity that you take them away at once. You may have other things to attend to for a time, and when prepared, you call for the purchased goods. God has a time for everything; man had been in the enemy's country four thousand years before his release was purchased by Christ. The receipt was signed by God and accepted by justice, and in His "due time," when He has established his kingdom, R16 : page 7 all that are in their graves shall come forth, for as in, or through, Adam ALL die, even so in, or through, Christ shall ALL be made alive. (Not all at once, but "every man in his own order.") Jesus saw mankind a "treasure (precious thing) hid in a field, and for joy, He selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44). For the joy set before him, He bought the earth with man in it, giving all that He had (life) for us. We and the earth are now His "purchased possession," and Eph. 1:14, informs us that the time is coming for "the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory."

C. You seem to say nothing about conditions of salvation, while the Scriptures mention them frequently.

A. There are conditions laid down for the attainment of the "Gift of God-- eternal life," but none for the recovery of the race from the fall, except the righteousness and acceptableness of our Substitute. To have a clear understanding of God's plan, we must recognize the distinction which He makes between the world in general and the church, or called out ones of the present time. God "loves the world," and has made great and rich provisions, as we have seen, for their coming, in His due time, to a condition of perfectness and happiness; but in the meantime, while they are getting their experience with evil, God calls out from among them "a little flock," to whom He makes "exceeding great and precious promises," conditioned on their living separate from the balance of the world--"overcoming the world"--i.e., that they may become members of God's family, and be joined with Him in "blessing all the families of the earth." Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us (believers), that we should be called the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and JOINT heirs with JESUS CHRIST our Lord."

B. It is very clear to my mind, that a false idea of substitution has obtained among christian people from a supposition that it represented God as a vindictive, vengeful tyrant, angry because man had sinned; refusing to show mercy until Blood had been shed and caring not whether it was the blood of the innocent or the guilty so long as it was blood. I doubt not, many christians have been led to look upon Substitution as a God-dishonoring doctrine, even though there are many scriptures which are found difficult to otherwise make use of, as "He tasted death for every man;" "My flesh I will give for the life of the world;" "Without the shedding of blood (life) there is no remission of sins;" "Redemption through His blood;" "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." It was not His leaving the glory which he had, nor His having kept the law, nor by His being rejected of the Jews, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, nor by His resurrection, nor by work He has since accomplished, but, "by His DEATH that we are reconciled to God." R16 : page 8

I now see Him as mankind's Substitute, suffering death, the penalty which the justice of God had inflicted upon us. I can see "the exceeding sinfulness of sin" in God's sight, the perfection of His Justice, and His great wisdom in so arranging it all, that man's extremity was made the occasion for the manifestation of "the great love wherewith He loved us" when "He gave his only begotten Son," and "laid upon him the iniquity of us all," as well as the love of Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, (buy back to us all we had lost by iniquity). I feel to exclaim with Paul, "O! the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God."

C. I have heard frequently your views of restitution, and saw some force and considerable beauty in them, but I never before saw how absolutely certain man's restoration to life is. I see now that the same justice of God, which could in no case clear the guilty, and could not permit man's release from death until the price of his ransom had been paid.--The very purity of this Justice, as well as the love of God in providing the ransom, assures us that the penalty, or price, having now been paid, every man must ultimately be released from death. Now can we know that all when restored and under favorable conditions, with the Gospel church--Christ and the members of His body--for their rulers and teachers, kings and priests--will they not all be melted by the love of God, manifested in their recovery at such a cost as Christ's death? Will not all accept and be eternally saved?

A. It would seem as though such love, when seen, would beget love and obedience; but we are assured that there is a second death, and while those who become subject to it, will not compare in numbers with the saved, yet, there will be a great company "as the sand of the sea," at the end of the thousand years, who are incorrigible and are cast into the lake of fire, (the second death).

God made provision before our creation for the recovery from the first death, but, if after experience with evil and a knowledge of good, they do not appreciate God's offered gift--eternal life--and refusing it, die for their own sin, (not Adam's), there is no recovery; Christ will not die for them again. Those "count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sealed an unholy thing," and Justice and love can do nothing more for them.

C. Is not this scripture applied by the apostle to some living in the present age, and do not those christians who, having once believed that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," turn from this and regard the death of Christ as not rescuing us from "the wages of sin--death," but merely as a channel toward the perfecting of himself, that He might become the head of the spiritual race; do not such "count the blood of the covenant (Christ), wherewith they were sealed, an unholy thing"--a thing of small value?

A. This scripture is used with reference to this age, but is applicable and true of the next as well. I hope the class to whom you refer have not filled the picture (Heb. 10) of committing the unpardonable sin; yet, I confess that, it looks like a long step in that direction, to deny the statement that "He was cut off, but not for himself;" (Dan. 9:26.) "That we are justified (to life) by His blood," (Rom. 5:9-18) and many other plain statements of the Word. The old serpent is still wise to lead astray, and where he cannot keep God's children in the dark, since having seen and loved the light, he fain would present a false light, seeing they are so enraptured with the true, and, disguising himself as an angel of light, he would seek to lead off into bye-paths some of the chaste virgins who wait for the Bridegroom and love his appearing, and despoiling them of their wedding garment--the white robes which Christ purchased with his death,--cast them into outer darkness with the world.

B. But there is a sense, is there not, in which, by resurrection, Christ becomes the Head, Leader, Captain of all on the spiritual plane?

A. O, yes! I think this principle is recognized by all who see any of the "deep things of God." The world, although purchased by His death, get back in Him as their Substitute only what they lost; consequently, will stand where Adam would have stood had he possessed experience or knowledge of evil. Great strides forward must yet be made to reach that full likeness of God and become spiritual bodies. This they could not have done without a leader or captain. We never could have become "Sons of God," in the full sense, and "joint heirs with Jesus Christ," without our Elder Brother to help us up, and we never could have entered the "Holy of holies." All praise for the work accomplished and made possible by His resurrection. A frequent error is, to ignore one truth while giving prominence to another. The death and resurrection of Christ are

inseparably joined and equally invaluable. As the death would have done us little good, because we could not without a leader go "beyond the veil, (the flesh), so, also, had Jesus been ever so perfect a leader and guide, we, prisoners in the pit--the grave--could not follow his leading until he first purchased our release from the "wages of sin"--death.

B. I see a force, then, in Paul's expression, Rom. 5:10: "Reconciled by the death--saved by the life."

C. I have a thought: If Justice could not let mankind go free from death, how could he permit Jesus to live if he became man's substitute? Must not his life be forever forfeited?

A. It was forever forfeited--he never took the same life again. He was quickened (made alive) to a higher life by the Father. "He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" to a higher plane a spiritual body. As we shall be, He, our leader, was "sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body." Had he risen a fleshly being, with fleshly life, we could not go free. It would have been taking back our "ransom"--our "price." As Paul says, "He took upon him the form of a servant (flesh) for the suffering of death." He had no need of it further; he left it. "He made his soul (life) an offering for sin:" "My flesh I will give for the life of the world." (Jno. 6:51.) It was given forever. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12), having received a higher sort of life.

B. This change, then, accounts for his acting so strangely after his resurrection -- appearing in different forms--as the gardener to Mary, and "afterwards in another form to two of them," etc. His appearing in their midst, the doors being shut, and anon vanishing out of their sight. I often thought it peculiar. But did not his fleshly body disappear from the tomb?

A. Yes; "His flesh saw not corruption." What became of his flesh; whether part of the atoms went to form the spiritual body or not, I know not. We do not even know what a spiritual body is R17 : page 8 composed of. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" but, remember, it was not the atoms of matter which composed the body--(and which are continually changing)--these atoms did not sin, and were not cursed nor forfeited by the fall. It was the flesh life, and Christ paying it with his flesh life did not affect the atoms of matter which composed his body.

C. I know you believe the law to be a shadow of the realities of the Gospel age; do you find this "tasting death for every man," and, also, "our high calling," there typified, and are they kept separate and distinct?

A. Very clearly so. To be brief: All Israel represented the entire race. The select tribe of Levi, which ministered to the Lord as his special portion --his servants--represents the entire church of believers and servants of God; while the Priests, selected from the tribe of Levi, represent "the little flock," "the overcomers," "the bride," "the Royal Priesthood." Our company of priests, as theirs, has a Head, Leader, High Priest.

The priesthood in the tabernacle services, offerings, &c., represent the church in this age. The large majority of believers, like the Levites, are connected with the tabernacle and the Lord's services, yet occupy more the position of the menial servant, simply carrying forward the Ark, attending to the outward and more common-place affairs. They are necessary as a part of the working machinery, and as assistants to the Priests, yet blessed much above the world in this honor.

As the priests were more clearly related to and associated with the High Priest, and permitted to go into Holy Places, offer incense, etc., so the "little flock" are more closely related to, and mingle more in Christ's society, than the general company of believers. These alone, can go into "the deep things of God." These only, are lighted by the golden candlestick, and feed upon the bread. These alone--the "holy ones," yet "little

ones,"--can approach close to the mercy-seat, and before it, offer sweet incense--"the prayers of the saints." The High Priest, as is beautifully described by Paul, represented, in all his services, Jesus, the "High Priest" of [our profession] the "Royal Priesthood."

Now, having the actors clearly defined in our minds, let us look at their work. We will not go into a particular and systematic examination now (we may again), but simply glance at the outlines. The High Priest, to be a perfect type of Christ, should have died--not bulls and goats instead--but himself, then have risen to new life, and taken of his own blood (life) into the Holy Place to make an atonement. But this he could not do, since the giving of his life would have ended his career, therefore an animal is used as his substitute. The animal, therefore, becomes the type of Christ in the flesh: "A body hast thou prepared me." The value of the death of the type (the animal) represents the value of Christ's death. The sins of the "whole congregation" were confessed, and imputed or laid upon the head of the victim when put to death, just as God "hath laid upon him (Christ) the iniquity of us all."

As the death of the sacrifice was not for the priests alone, so Christ's death is not for the "little flock" alone. As the animal's life was not for the tribe of Levi alone, but also for the "whole congregation," so the blood of our substitute was not for believers alone. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 Jno. 2:2.) Some one has truly said, "The animal represented the people, but pointed to Christ." It did represent the people by dying for and on account of their sins, and it pointed to Christ as the one who would really die for the "sins of the whole world." "He was once offered to bear the sins of many," and He did "bear our sins in his own body on the tree." "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man."

Now, the sacrifice having been made, the High Priest, representing the risen, spiritual Jesus, takes the shed blood into the Holy of Holies. You see, the life once sacrificed is not given back, but kept a sacrifice, showing that Christ did not take back his flesh life (the sacrifice) when he went into the Holy of Holies, but went in thither with another, a higher life.

While he is in the Holy of Holies presenting the price of the people's life, what is their attitude? They are bowed in the dust, waiting, until the atonement work being finished, the High Priest will come out of the Holy of Holies, appear to and bless them, then they all arise rejoicing. Representing by their prostrate condition humanity in death; who, when our High Priest comes forth to "bless all the families of the earth," will be made to arise from the dust and rejoice.

C. This seems to represent beautifully and clearly Christ as the world's substitute. Now, what type shows the exemptions which the Church enjoys above the world?

A. While all are justified from Adam's sin unconditionally, yet, where knowledge of right is possessed, obedience is expected as far as they are able to obey. Failure in this respect is the occasion for their being beaten with many or few stripes in the age to come. While the "little flock" who now believe into and are baptized into Christ, become members of his body, are by their faith "justified from all things" (Acts 13:39), and will not be beaten with stripes in the world to come. True, they now receive "chastisement whereof all are partakers," but not as a penalty; only as the "rod and staff" of Christ, the Shepherd, to guide his sheep.

Thus, the sins of the "Church of the First-born" are passed over (not imputed), and she is justified, not from death only, but "from all things."

This is beautifully pictured in the law by the Passover. Wherever in that night the lamb was eaten and his blood sprinkled, the first-born was passed over --spared. (Ex. 12.) So, during this night-- the Gospel age--Christ, our Passover (lamb), is sacrificed, and we "keep the feast." (1 Cor. 5:8.) We feed on our Lamb, with some of the "bitter herbs" of affliction to sharpen our appetite. All such are passed over, "counted worthy." This type

shows the special value of Christ's death to His body, the "Church of the First-born." Thus, "God is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe." (1 Tim. 4:10.)

C. Everything seems to be beautifully mirrored in the Law. But there are certain questions put by those who do not believe in Jesus as our substitute, which would still be difficult for me to answer, viz.:

First.--If Christ entered the Holy of Holies as our substitute, then we cannot enter for ourselves.

Second.--If Christ's sufferings were substitutional, would not we (the church) also be a part of the substitute, or sacrifice, since "we fill up the measure of His sufferings which are behind?"

Third.--Does not the race get back in the second Adam spiritual life? Jesus frequently speaks of himself as the giver of the spiritual life.

A. I will answer very briefly in the order given. First--The substitutional character of Christ's work was complete in the giving of the flesh life; consequently, no act after that life was surrendered and a new life begun could be as our substitute. Second--The sufferings of Christ are not a part of the price of our ransom. "We were reconciled by the death," not by the sufferings, consequently our filling up the measure of His sufferings, has nothing to do with the sacrifice. It is "the offering of the body of Jesus," "For this man having made one sacrifice forever," (Heb. 10:10-12) it needs no adding to on our part. See how fully shown in the type: The sacrifice of atonement was offered by the High priest and represents Him alone. (See Heb. 5:1-5.) The sacrifices being burned outside the camp represented disgrace. So Jesus suffered outside Jerusalem, and (Heb. 13:11) those who would be a part of the typical priesthood must share in the services and work of the tabernacle, and in any dishonors as well as honors attaching to it. They must ignominiously handle the ashes of the sacrifice if they would be honored by being permitted to go to the candlestick, eat the holy bread and offer incense. So we, if we would be antitypical priests, must share the shame, --"Go without the camp bearing His reproach." If we would have the heavenly food, heavenly light, be permitted to offer sweet incense (acceptable prayer), and spiritual sacrifices (the fruit of our lips, good works, &c.,) (Heb. 13:15.) "If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together."

Your third query we will talk of at another time. Let me suggest, however, that as Adam did not possess a spiritual life, not even a germ, never having been "begotten by the Word of Truth," he could not lose it; and if the second Adam restores what the first lost, this spiritual life would be no part of that work. The gift of God, spiritual and eternal life, is given only to believers. Adam, and the majority of his race, will be restored in the second Adam to perfect physical, mental and moral power, just what they lost, and from that they will then have the opportunity of going higher, and under the guidance and instruction of the glorified church, of attaining spiritual life. Jesus does speak of himself as the giver of spiritual life, and so he will be, but also of the natural. If the spiritual life and death are always meant, why should we not suppose that in "tasting death for every man" He tasted spiritual death; and, if so, lost spiritual life; and if He lost spiritual life, of course he could not give it to others, or be their leader to it. page 8 We must examine every text more closely to discern between the natural and the spiritual.

B. I want to say to you before leaving, that I am much rejoiced to see clearly as I now do, why God permitted evil; that it was not, that He had elected ninety-nine to hell to each one chosen for glory, and the introduction of evil made necessary as a pretext to justify their damnation. Nor, on the other hand, was it because God could not help its introduction, and lacked wisdom to foresee and power to avert it; but, that He arranged for its introduction and our recovery from it as the embodiment of Wisdom, Love and Mercy.

We will probably call again and continue our conversation.

N.B.--Copies of July and August Numbers will be sent free to those interested.

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Do You Want "Zion's Watch Tower?"

We have sent out about 6,000 copies each, of the July and August Nos. of "Zion's Watch Tower" as samples. This we cannot continue to do, because first, it is expensive, and second, we have no desire to waste truth by sending where it is not desired and would not be appreciated. We would like therefore to hear from all who want the paper regularly before the tenth day of August, that we may know what number of copies to publish for September.

The price is very low in order to suit the purses of the majority of the interested ones, among whom are "not many rich," (for "God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom.") and unless a good large list of subscribers are had, fifty cents will fall far short of paying for printing, &c.

Do not suppose these remarks to be an appeal for money. No, "Zion's Watch Tower" has, we believe JEHOVAH for its backer, and while this is the case it will never beg nor petition men for support. When He who says: "All the gold and silver of the mountains are mine," fails to provide necessary funds, we will understand it to be time to suspend the publication.

Do not put off until to-morrow what you can do to-day. If you want the September No. take your pen at once. Remember that the paper is as free to you if too poor to send the fifty cents as though you could afford it and paid for it, but we cannot know your circumstances --You must write also.

Where it is impossible to get paper money, U.S. (not foreign) postage stamps may be sent.

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R18 : page 2

How will Christ Come?

Having considered in our last the object of our Lord's return, the manner in which he will come becomes to all who "love His appearing" one of great interest, and now invites your attention.

In order that we may have a good foundation, and as a basis for further investigation, we will first inquire. What is a spiritual body? What powers are theirs, and by what laws are they governed? We are here met by the objections --we have no right to pry into the hidden things of God: and, "Eye hath not seen, ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him." To both of these propositions we assent, but believe we cannot find out by studying God's word--and our investigation will be confined to it--what he has not revealed. The above quotation of scripture (1 Cor. 2:9) refers to the natural or carnal man, and by reading it, in connection with the three verses which follow the objection vanishes; for, says the apostle, "God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit," which was given to us "that we might know the things freely given unto us of God;" and in the last clause of vs. 13, he gives us the rule by which we may know, viz.: "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." We are very apt to invert this rule and compare spiritual things with natural, and thus get darkness instead of light. Let us now use the apostle's rule.

There is a spiritual body as well as a natural body; a heavenly, as well as an earthly body; a celestial as well as a terrestrial. They are distinct and separate. (1 Cor. 15:38,40.) We know what the fleshly, natural body is, for we now have such; it is flesh, blood and bones; for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and since there are two kinds of bodies, we know that the spiritual is not composed of flesh, blood and bones, whatever it may be, it is a spiritual body, and "that which is born of the spirit is spirit." But of what material a spiritual body is composed, we know not, for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we shall be like Him." [Christ.]

ANGELS ARE SPIRITUAL BODIES.

Christ was raised from the dead a spiritual body; this was His second birth. First, born of the flesh a fleshly body--for, "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." (Heb. 2:14.) He was "Put to death in the flesh but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit." He was raised a spiritual body. This resurrection was His second birth. He was the "first born from the dead," "the first-born among many brethren." The church are those brethren and will have a second birth of the same kind as His, viz.: to spiritual bodies by the resurrection, when we shall awake in His likeness--being made "Like unto Christ's glorious body." But, this second birth must be preceded by a begetting of the spirit--conversion--just as surely as a birth of the flesh is preceded by a begetting of the flesh. Begotten of the flesh --born of the flesh--in the likeness of the first Adam, the earthly; begotten of the spirit--in the resurrection born of the spirit into the likeness of the heavenly, the second Adam. "As we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We may, then, by examining facts recorded of angels, and of Christ after His resurrection, gain general information with regard to spiritual bodies, thus "comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

First, Angels can be, and frequently are, present, yet invisible; for, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are His, and delivereth them;" and "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) Are you an heir of salvation? Then, doubtless, they have ministered to you. Have they ministered visibly or invisibly? Undoubtedly the latter. Elisha was surrounded by a host of Assyrians, his servant was fearful; Elisha prayed to the Lord and the young man's eyes were opened and he "saw the mountains round about Elisha full of chariots of fire and horsemen of fire" (or like fire). Again, while to Baalam the angel was invisible the ass' eyes being opened saw him.

Second, Angels can and have appeared as men. The Lord and two angels so appeared to Abraham, who had a supper prepared for them, of which they ate. At first, Abraham supposed them to be "three men," and it was not until they were about to go that he discovered one of them to be the Lord, and the other two angels, who afterward went down to Sodom and delivered Lot. (Gen. 18:1.) An Angel appeared to Gideon as a man, but afterward made himself known. An Angel appeared to Samson's mother and father; they thought him a man until He ascended up to heaven in the flame of the altar. (Judges 13:20.)

Third, Spiritual bodies are glorious in their normal condition and are frequently spoken of as glorious and bright. The countenance of the angel who rolled away the stone from the sepulcher "was as the lightning." Daniel saw a glorious spiritual body whose eyes were as lamps of fire, his countenance as the lightning, his arms and feet like in color to polished brass, his voice as the voice of a multitude; before him Daniel fell as a dead man. (Daniel 10:6.) John, on the isle of Patmos, saw Christ's glorious body, (Rev. 1:14) and describes the appearance in almost the same language-- His voice was as the sound of many waters, His eyes as lamps of fire, His feet like fine brass as it burns in a furnace, (so bright that you can scarcely look at it), John falls at His feet as dead; but He said to him, fear not; I am He that was dead; behold I am alive forevermore. Saul of

Tarsus saw Christ's glorious body. It shone above the brightness of the sun at noonday. Saul lost his sight and fell to the ground, &c.

We have thus far found spiritual bodies truly glorious; yet, without a miracle, either the opening of our eyes to see them, or their appearing in the flesh as men, they are invisible. This conclusion is further confirmed when we examine the more minute details connected with these manifestations. The Lord was seen of Saul alone, "they that journeyed with him...seeing no man." (Acts 9:7.) The men that were with Daniel did not see the glorious being he describes, but a great fear "fell on them and they ran and hid themselves." Again, this same glorious being declares: (Daniel 10:13.) "The prince of Persia withstood me one and twenty days." "Daniel, the man greatly beloved" of the Lord, falls as dead before this one whom Persia's prince withstands one and twenty days. How is this? Surely, He did not appear in glory to the prince; no; either He was invisibly present with him, or else

HE APPEARED AS A MAN.

Christ is a spiritual body since His resurrection. During the forty days of His presence before ascension, He appeared some seven or eight times to His disciples; where was He the remainder of the time? Present but invisible. Notice, also, that in each instance He is said to have appeared, or He showed Himself, language never used of Him before His change from a natural to a spiritual body; now, as angels do--He appeared &c. Not only so, but He appeared in different bodies--as the gardener to Mary, "after that, He appeared in another FORM to two of them as they went into the country." Notice, it was in another form and consequently not the same one in which he appeared to Mary. (Mark 16:12.) Afterwards He appeared in a body, either the same or like the one crucified, having the marks of the spear and the nails. "He came and stood in their midst, the doors being shut." On these various occasions He appeared, talked with them, then vanished out of their sight as the wind; they could not tell whence He came nor whither He went. "So is every one that is born of the spirit." When we are born of the spirit (at the resurrection) we can do so also. All spiritual beings exhibit this same power. But Jesus said: "handle me; for a spirit [*pneuma*] hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" and He ate with them. True; I believe it. So did the angels [*pneuma*] (Heb. 1:7) appear as men in flesh and bones; they ate also; their spiritual bodies did not eat, nor were they flesh and bones, but the body in which they appeared was flesh, and it ate. The disciples did not see Christ's glorious spiritual body, but as He appeared in a fleshly body. St. Paul teaches us distinctly that Christ was raised from the dead a life-giving spirit, [*pneuma*, the same word used by our Lord.] (1 Cor. 15:44,45.) But where did He get the various bodies in which He appeared? I cannot answer you; but I believe, and you do also, other things which we cannot understand. I cannot understand how that grain of wheat grows. Yet I know it does. I know not how Christ turned the water into wine, or healed the sick, or raised the dead. Yet I believe that He did these things. Can you tell me where He got the clothes He wore after His resurrection? "They parted His raiment among them, and for His vesture they cast lots"--the old were gone, and the linen clothes lay in the sepulcher. Is it more difficult for spiritual beings, with their powers, to create a covering of flesh than a covering of cloth? No; the same power can and did do both.

Thus we have found Christ's spiritual body like those of angels; glorious, yet invisible to mortals, with power to manifest the glory; or appear as a man or in any form He may choose. In the resurrection we shall be like the angels; and "like unto Christ's glorious body." We shall be like Him; for (not until then) we shall see Him as He is," for though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more," [after the flesh.] (2 Cor. 5:16.) Such a spiritual being was Christ, at the time of His ascension, and with R19 : page 2 what we have learned of the powers of that spiritual body, we are now, we hope, prepared to inquire:

"HOW WILL HE COME AGAIN?"

Briefly stated, we believe the Scriptures to teach, that, at His coming and for a time after He has come, He will remain invisible; afterward manifesting or showing Himself in judgments and various forms, so that "every eye shall see Him." But every eye will not see Him at the same moment. A similar statement is made of the Resurrection, "All that are in their graves hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth." Taken by itself, this seems to teach the resurrection of all at once. Yet we know that there is a first resurrection composed of the "blessed and holy" only.

"Behold, I come as a thief" is the way He frequently spoke to His disciples of His coming. He comes "as a thief" for the church--the waiting virgins, both "they that sleep in Jesus"-- the first resurrection--and "we, who are alive and remain," "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"In that day two shall be in the mill, two in the field, two in bed; one be taken and the other left"--like Enoch, who was not, for the Lord took him." The world will go on with its affairs, unconscious of the great changes of dispensation.

The second advent, like the first, covers a period of time, and is not the event of a moment. The first lasted nearly thirty-four years, and the events connected with it--His birth, baptism, sorrow, death, resurrection, etc., as mentioned by the prophets, all took place at the first advent. The second advent, as we have seen, lasts much longer. It includes the millennial reign, and prophecy covers all the prominent features of that reign. He comes to reign--must reign until He has put down all enemies; the last being death. 1 Cor. 15:25.

In the application of prophecy to the events of the first advent, we recognize order. Christ must be the "child born and son given" "before the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He must die before He could rise from the dead, etc. So also in studying prophecy referring to the second advent we must recognize order; we must judge of the order somewhat by the character of the event. As the wife is the glory of the husband, so the Bride is the glory of Christ, for we are to be "partakers of the glory that shall be revealed," (1 Pet. 5:1,10) and as the "glory shall be revealed R19 : page 3 in us." (Rom. 8:18.) We know that Christ could not come in the glory of his kingdom [church] until he has first gathered it from the world. In harmony with this thought we read--"When He shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." (Col. 3:4.)

The prophets foretold the sufferings of Christ [head and body] and the glory that should follow. If the sufferings were of the whole body, so is the glory we suffer with Him that we may be also "glorified together." (Rom. 8:17.) "Enoch prophesied, saying--the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints," [gr. *hagios*, never translated angel.] (Jude 14.) Again, (Zech. 14:5) we read--"the Lord my God shall come and all thy saints with thee." Thus we learn that when He appears in glory we are with Him, and of course, we must be caught to meet Him before we could appear with Him.

We have further evidence to offer, proving that He comes unknown to the world; but attempt to answer two supposed objections first; viz.: "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven," (Acts 1:11) and "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise." (1 Thes. 4:16.) These Texts are supposed to teach that Christ will come visible to every eye, while the air is rent with the blast of the Archangel's trumpet, at which, mid reeling tombstones and opening graves the dead will be resurrected. It certainly has that appearance on the surface, and doubtless was intended to be so understood until due; but look at it again; would that be coming in like manner as they saw Him go? He did not go with the sounding of a trumpet and outward demonstration. It does not say you shall see Him coming, nor that any one would so see, but--He shall come. When he arrives it will be privately. He comes to organize us--the Church--as His kingdom; to set us up. He comes to be glorified in His saints in that day (2 Thes. 1:10.) The world saw him not after His resurrection; they did not see Him ascend. And "He shall so come in like manner"--unknown to the world. As He said,

"Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more," nor will they see Him at His second advent until His church is gathered, for when He shall appear we also shall appear with Him." What, then, does the trumpet mean? Let us see. We are to be rewarded "at the resurrection," we surely will not be rewarded twice nor resurrected twice. We conclude, therefore, that the "Trump of God," (1 Thes. 4:16) and the "Last Trump," (1 Cor. 15:52,) are the same, differently expressed; the same events are mentioned as occurring at each, viz.: the resurrection and reward of the saints, and for the same reason we believe the "Trump of God" and "Last Trump" to be the "Seventh Trump" of Rev. 11:15,18. Under it also the dead are judged and the prophets and saints rewarded. Then the "Seventh Trump" is the "Last Trump," and is called, "The Trump of God," possibly because introducing the special judgments of God connected with the setting up of His kingdom.

These trumpets evidently are the same, but what? The seventh angel sounded. A sound on the air? No, not any more than the six which preceded it. They are each said to sound, and Sir Isaac Newton, Clarke, and all commentators of note agree that five or six of these trumpets are in the past. They have been fulfilled in events upon the Earth, each covering a period of time. They certainly must all sound before the resurrection, for that is under the seventh. If THE SEVENTH TRUMP were to make a sound on the air, it would be out of harmony with the other six of the series. That it covers "the great day of His wrath," the time of judgments upon the kingdoms of the world and of the pouring out of the "seven vials" of His wrath, the "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation" seems more than probable, for we are told in the same sentence of the wrath of God coming on the nations.

We see then, that the sounding of the trumpets, and so coming in like manner, do not conflict but rather add force to the fact that He comes "unawares," "as a thief" and steals away from the world "His treasure, His jewels," remember too that this is Christ the spiritual body, that could not be seen without a miracle, that was present yet unseen during thirty-three days after his resurrection.

But will the world not see the saints when gathered or gathering? No; they are changed (in the twinkling of an eye) from Natural to Spiritual bodies, like unto Christ's glorious body, and in the instant of their change &c., will be as invisible as He and angels. But those who arise from their graves?--No, they were sown (buried) natural bodies, they are raised spiritual bodies--invisible. Won't the world see the graves open and the tombstones thrown down? A spiritual body (remember we are comparing spiritual things with spiritual, not natural) coming out of the grave will not make any more of a hole in the ground than Christ's spiritual body made in the door when "He came and stood in their midst, the doors being shut." But do not forget that only the church are raised spiritual bodies, all others, natural fleshly bodies as Lazarus, &c.

PRESENCE OF CHRIST BEFORE THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH.

Christ's personal presence and ministry of three and a half years at the first advent, as well as the three and a half years which followed his ministry is termed--"The harvest." It was the harvesting of the Jewish or Law age. Christ was present as the chief reaper. His disciples as under-reapers; their work was separating of wheat from chaff and the gathering of the wheat into the higher or Gospel dispensation. That harvest was the end of that age. Jesus said to His disciples, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor, other men (the prophets) have labored and ye are entered into their labors." (John 4:38.) That work was not general, nor for the world. He confined His labors to Judea, and the work to them did not cease until five days before His death, when he rode on the ass into the city, wept over it, gave them up, and their house was left unto them desolate. After His resurrection He sends the disciples to "preach the Gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem"; nor were they suffered to preach to the world in general until the seven years of harvest work to that Jewish people was fully

accomplished as God had promised. (Daniel 9:27.) "He (Jesus, chief reaper) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, (seven years) in the midst of the week making all sacrifice to cease"--himself being offered--the true sacrifice. But these three and a half years of the Gospel age were a harvest to none but the Jewish church; the Gospel church does not reap but sows the seed. Paul plants, Apollos R20 : page 3 waters, God gives increase, etc. But there is to be a harvest in the end of this age, as illustrated in the parable of the tares and wheat, and taught in the explanation of the same. Notice that both wheat and tares, are in the kingdom of heaven,--the church--and that this parable, as also the other six of the series, refers not to the non-professing world, but to two classes in the church.

The Son of Man planted the church pure, good seed. During the days of the Apostles there were special "gifts of the Spirit" such as "discerning of spirits," etc., by which they were able to prevent tares getting in among the wheat--hypocrites getting into the church. (Instance 1 Cor. 5:3--"Simon Magus"--"Ananias and Sapphira," etc.) but when the Apostles were dead, "while men slept" --the enemy began to sow tares among the wheat. Paul says that the mystery of iniquity had begun to work even in his day; now, they grow side by side in all our churches. Shall we separate them, Lord? No (we might make some mistake, pull up wheat and leave tares.) "Let both grow together until the Harvest." (Matt. 13.) The harvest is the end of the world" [aion age.] "In the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers --the reapers are the angels--gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Notice, this Harvest is the end of this age, yet, like the one ending, the Jewish age, it is a period of time--"In the time of harvest"--secondly, there is order-- "gather first the tares." There will come a time, then, in the end of this age, when the reapers--angels--will be present doing some sort of a separating work in the Church; and yet it is an invisible presence, for when the wheat is gathered (after the binding of the tares,)--translated, when "we which are alive are caught up to meet the Lord"--when taken they are in the field, mill and bed; would they be so engaged if they had seen angels going about gathering tares? No; it is an invisible work, done by beings invisible.

Again, before the living are gathered, the dead in Christ must have risen, whether it be but a moment before: "the dead in Christ rise first, then we which are alive," &c. (1 Thess. 4:16.) This harvest is not of the living only, but also of "the dead in Christ" "those that sleep in Jesus." The angels gather the living, but our Lord, who is the chief reaper here (as He was in the Jewish harvest), gathers or raises the dead. "I will raise him up;" "I am the resurrection and the life;" and in harmony with this thought, we find that in Rev. 14:15 --"One like unto the Son of Man, seated on a cloud," reaps the earth. Here, two harvests, or two parts of one harvest, are shown, the second being the casting of the vine of the earth into the wine-press of His wrath. The special point to which your attention is called, however, is the fact that the harvest will go on without outward demonstration, the chief and under-reapers being present but unseen.

THE PRESENCE (*PAROUSIA*) OF CHRIST.

Some may have confounded these remarks on the presence of Christ in a spiritual body, with the presence of the spirit of Christ; but they are quite distinct. The latter never left the church; consequently in that sense He could not "come again." Of His spiritual presence he said: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." We refer to the personal presence which did go away, and will come again--a spiritual body.

The Greek word generally used in referring to the second advent--*Parousia*, frequently translated coming--invariably signifies personal presence, as having come, arrived, and never signifies to be on the way, as we use the word coming. This fact is recognized by many who are looking for the Lord, but the error under which the church in general is laboring, is that of supposing that presence implies sight--manifestation--appearance. In the Greek, however, other words are used to express revelation, appearing and manifestation, viz: *phaneroo*--rendered shall appear in "when He shall appear, &c.,"--

and *apokalupsis*--rendered, shall be revealed--2 Thess. 1:7. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed."

But we have Christ's own words to prove that He will be present in the world, and the world will not know of it. Matt. 24:37, we read: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the *parousia* (presence) of the Son of Man be." The presence of Christ is not compared to the flood, but to the days of Noah, the days that were before the flood, as verse 38 shows; as then they ate, drank, married, etc., and knew not, so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be. The resemblance here mentioned is that of not knowing--they will not know of the presence of Christ. They may have been wicked then, and doubtless were, and may be similarly wicked in His presence; but wickedness is not the point of comparison, as then they ate, drank, married--proper enough things to be doing, not sins; so shall it be in Christ's presence. Now look at Luke 17:26, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." Verse 27 tells us how it was in the days of Noah, they were eating, drinking, marrying, etc. "So shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." Surely the days of the Son of Man are not before His days, any more than the days of Henry Clay could be days before he was born. No; the more we examine the more we are convinced that the world will go on as usual, and know not until "the harvest is past, the summer ended," and they are not in the ark, not with the little flock "accounted worthy to escape." There will be no outward demonstration of the second advent having begun, and Christ being present, until the church is gathered, whenever it takes place--soon or in the distant future.

We think we have good solid reasons --not imaginations--not dreams nor visions, but Bible evidences (known to the majority of our readers) that we are now "in the days of the Son;" that "the day of the Lord" has come, and Jesus, a spiritual body, is present, harvesting the Gospel age; yet, as He had said, the world seeth Him no more; they eat, drink, etc., and know not. This day of the Lord, in which "He will show who is that blessed and only potentate, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings," is already dawning, but the majority of the professing church, as well as the world, are asleep; and to them--The day so cometh as a thief in the night. "But ye, brethren are not in darkness, that that day should come upon you as a thief." "We are not of the night, therefore let us not sleep as do others." This is the signification of our sub-title, "**HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE.**" Not the worldly wise but those humble ones, wise from heavenly instruction are meant when it is written: "The wise shall understand," but "If thou shalt not watch thou shalt not know, what hour I will come upon thee." Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with...the cares of this life, and so that day come upon YOU unawares." The events of "the day of God Almighty" will next be considered.

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"God is Love." No. II.

"Order is Heaven's first law." God has a plan, a systematic way of doing his work. All human plans laid in harmony with God's plan are perfectly safe and certain of success. God's work reveals himself, His wisdom, power and love. He can be known in no other way. As "the tree is known by its fruit," the fountain by the stream, the child by his doings, and the man by his life; so God's great Gift, and the work executed by Him, reveal the fullness of His love for man. God's plan is one of both revelation and salvation. He reveals himself as a means of eternal life to man. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. Jesus Christ is most emphatically the way of God's approach to us; the channel through which light and salvation flow within our reach, and also the way of our approach to God. He is thus the Mediator--"the way, the truth and the life." The glory of Christ's position and work, and our absolute dependence on Him, will be appreciated if we bear in mind that all we know of God is revealed in Christ, and "no

man cometh to the Father except by Him." Christ in every stage is called the "Word." Of the pre-existent state it is said, "In the beginning was the Word." John 1:1. By whom God spoke all things into existence, and for whom also they were created. Of the first advent--more properly the Incarnation--it is said: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,...full of grace and truth." Ver. 14. And at His future glorious epiphany --"the manifestation of the Sons of God," [Rom. 8:19]--as the Bridegroom and the Bride "glorified together, [ver. 17,] when at the head of that glorious "army in heaven," He goes forth "conquering and to conquer," He still is called "The Word of God." Rev. 19:13. The "Word" is an expression proceeding from God, and going forth to man, and in all the ages of redemption, He is as a stream from the Eternal Fountain; proving that "the mercy of the Lord endureth forever;" and as the "Arm of the Lord" made bare and extended to help, until "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Isa. 52:10. "I am the Truth," said Jesus. The Word is the Truth spoken or expressed. The Bible is God's word, because it reveals the Lord Jesus Christ, and the great plan of salvation. It contains and reveals Christ, as He contains and reveals the Father; hence, "he that heareth my words and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, &c." John 5:24.

The Lord Jesus is the Spirit of the Word, [2 Cor. 3:17,] the golden thread of revelation from end to end, even in the writings of Moses, [John 5:46-47,] but hidden by the letter as a veil from the unbelieving Jew, [2 Cor. 3:13-18,] and from all others who cannot "discern spiritual things," "the deep [covered] things of God."

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14. The ability to discern spiritual things must depend on the extent to which our minds are controlled by the spirit of God, [ver. 11.] Christ is not only the golden thread of revelation, but the foundation on which the structure of the Word is built, and of the plan of the ages.

The poet must have had a glimpse of the grandeur of the plan and of Christ's relation to it when he penned the hymn entitled "Rock of Ages."

"By whom, also, He made the worlds" [*aiónios*, ages]. Heb. 1:2. The plan and all things were formed not only by Him, but for Him. [Col. 1:16.] The plan of salvation is truly the plan of the ages which God formed for his Son; and to know God and Christ fully, we must know their plan of work. The work is moved by and expresses their love; therefore, the better we understand the plan and work, the more we will appreciate the love. God's love known--"shed abroad in our hearts"--produces love to Him in return. "We love Him because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19. And as God's love shows itself in his works, so will our love show itself in our works. "If ye love me keep my commandments." John 14:15. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, &c." John 15:10. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment: That ye love one another, as I have loved you." [V. 11-12] The Lord cares for our joy and comfort. He asks only what is for our good--"reasonable service," and yet He asks all--"your bodies a living sacrifice. Rom. 12:1. Self denial, under the Lord's direction, is the surest means of happiness. "Perfect love casts out fear." 1 John 4:18. Fear is not a good motive to obedience. Loving obedience is an expression involving both heart and life. The unfaithful servant who hid his Lord's money said, "I feared thee." He believed the lord unjust, because he was unjust himself. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee." Luke 19:20-22. As fear was the cause of unfaithfulness, so love is the cause of faithfulness. The one that knows God and His plan of the ages, cannot be afraid of the Lord, nor believe Him unjust. "Acquaint, now, thyself with him and be at peace." "Oh, taste and see that God is good, whoso trusts in Him is blest. That some love the Lord and serve Him, who know but little of God or his plans, there can be no doubt; and even babes in Christ are dear to the Master; He carries the lambs in his bosom like a tender shepherd. But we are not always to remain babes, but grow up into Christ as men of full stature.

Eph. 4:13-15. "Leaving the [first] principles, let us go on to perfection." Heb. 6:1. We would not discourage any, however weak or ignorant, who sincerely love the Lord; [and none of us but may yet learn more,] but we would encourage all to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 3:18. In order to grow we must be fed, and with the "bread of God." "I am the Bread of Life." "I am the Truth," said Jesus, and also, "Man shall not live by bread alone, [natural,] but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Oh, that we all may search for the truth, eat it, digest it, grow strong, and be faithful in the work of the Lord. Until we are sure that we know all that God has revealed in Christ and His word, there can be no stopping place, or time to stand still. Walk, run, strive, fight, press on in the path "that shineth more and more, even unto the perfect day," [Prov. 4:18,] keeping our eyes on "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." [Phil. 3:14.] To appreciate which, it will be necessary to know God's love as revealed in the plan of the ages.

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WHOSOEVER would be sustained by the hand of God, let him constantly lean upon it; whosoever would be defended by it, let him patiently repose himself under it.

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THE AGES.

The plan of salvation comprehended in the three worlds, is progressive in its character, requiring ages for its development. There seems to have been but one age definitely marked in the world before the flood, but this present world is sub-divided into three ages. The first, Patriarchal or one-man age, in which only one man at a time represented the Lord as ruler of the family; (in this it was similar to the age before the flood.) The second, Jewish, or the twelve tribe period, for in it, or from Jacob's death, the last patriarch, until the death of Christ, the tribes of Israel represented the Lord's cause, and were reckoned His people. The third, beginning at Christ's resurrection and reaching to His second coming, usually known as the Gospel age, during which the Lord turns to the Gentiles to take out a people for His name, i.e., the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the Church.

This brings us to the beginning of the world to come, which is, in God's purpose, subjected to the Bride made ready and glorified together with Christ; and it also is divided into ages, the first of which may be the thousand years' reign, (Rev. 20,) or that reign may include more than one dispensation. We would not speak of the order of future events with as much confidence as of the past, but it is evident that the period after the Lord's coming and exaltation of the Bride, is not as some say, "One Eternal Age," for Paul in speaking of that exaltation and the object of it, says it is. "That in the ages (aionios) to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace." (Eph. 2:7.) In the worlds and ages we thus have an outline of the plan, a bird's-eye-view of its development, and a glimpse at the glorious outcome. We may thus be prepared for a more particular study of the work of the various ages, and be better able to appreciate the progressive character of revelation.

Each age is a step in the plan, and each step higher than the preceding one. "Onward and upward" is a motto based on the spirit of God's plan. Each age is a period of time, and each period has its own peculiar dispensation, or work of God. The object of the Lord, by the various dispensations of wisdom, power and love, is to reveal Himself, and so save mankind. God deals with the race in some respects, as with an individual,

adapting His truth to the capacity, as in infancy, youth and manhood, which will explain why some things are stated as they must appear to man, rather than the absolute truth, which can only be received by a mind made perfect. Thus the sun is said to rise and set; and the unchangeable God is said to repent that He had made man, as if the work of infinite wisdom had proved a failure.

The Lord spoke to man as parents are compelled to talk to their children, coming down to their apprehension.

Some think this is deception or lying, but we view it differently. It is making a vague impression rather than none at all. Tell a little one that the sun stands still and the earth moves, and he is confused, for he will believe his own sense or what appears true to his own eyes, rather than what is told him.

Revelation is not designed to teach the science of astronomy, or anything else which man can discover himself by the use of his natural powers. God helps us only when we cannot help ourselves.

It is on this principle of adaptation that God teaches by symbols, figures, types and shadows, representing the real or spiritual truth by natural objects. The truth is in some respects hidden that it may be revealed, contradictory as this may seem at first thought. It is hidden for a season and made plain in due time. He spoke in dark sayings and parables, giving occasionally the key which would open them when applied. With a smoked glass, which obscures the light, we can see the sun better than with the naked eye. God in Christ can be known, but without a mediator he is unsearchable.

Before the Jewish age the Lord appeared as a man; but the law was by the disposition of angels; but "in these last days, He has spoken to us by his Son." When it can be realized that the incarnation, or "God manifest in the flesh," was a culmination of the same principle of teaching spiritual things by the natural, as God had used from the beginning, the unity of the Bible will be vindicated, and confidence in it as a divine revelation established.

However much the stream of truth may be soiled by handling, it but shows the nature of the soil through which it has flowed, while the sparkling jewels it contains reveals its heavenly origin.

The truth is revealed in a progressive manner, according to the plan of ages. Take one line of thought for example: when sin, by one man, had entered, and all its dark consequences entailed upon humanity, the first ray of light and hope dawned upon our race in the form of a threatening against the Tempter-- "Her seed shall bruise thy head, &c." Here is confessedly the whole plan in a nutshell. The Conqueror, the struggle, resistance, and the final victory. The figure used means death to, the Serpent, and in its execution, can signify no less than the extirpation of all that hideous monster represents. It points to a clean universe, when both sin and death shall be no more. But what could Eve know about it? It was not addressed to her, but to the Tempter. It was a threatening, not a promise; though containing, as in germ, the whole plan of salvation.

The dimness of that light was the characteristic of the whole age. Let us follow the light and observe its development. Two thousand years pass before we find the promise, "In thy seed shall all kindreds of the earth be blessed." This is the same great plan. That was a curse, this a blessing; but curse to the Serpent means blessing to the nations. This is an increase of light on the same subject, and yet how dim. We, living at this late day, know that seed was Christ. (Gal. 3:16.) This is the Holy Spirit's definition of the promise. But the wording of the promise made it refer to Isaac or, in other words, "the seed according to the flesh." It may be said the promise had a double meaning--natural and spiritual. True, but the natural was all that could fairly be drawn from the words, and the spiritual was kept out of sight until the true seed had come. Isaac and Christ are to each other as the natural and the spiritual. Here, as everywhere, the order holds good; first the natural and then the spiritual. The natural is the basis, being first; Christ came through Isaac.

The greater in this sense proceeds from the less. "The elder shall serve the younger." From the lower to the higher is God's order, and all these facts prove the progressive character of God's plan.

The Spirit reveals also the fact that the "Seed" comprehends not one person only, but many persons united as one. Let special thought be given to this fact. It is much neglected. Truths of great value are obscure on account of this neglect.

This many in one is true of the natural as well as the spiritual. The Jews were the natural seed, and the whole age R22 : page 5 was used for their development. The Christian Church is the spiritual seed and an age is used for their development. Paul contrasts them thus: "They which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Rom. 9:8. Not one child, but children! Who are they? Gal. 4:28, answers: "Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." Then it follows that, "we brethren" are the seed.

During the Jewish age, while the natural seed was being developed, the law and the prophets bare witness, and the light increased, but only the spiritually minded could discern the deeper truth. The mass saw only the natural, and were led to expect an earthly glory; hence, they rejected their Messiah when He came. It is true He came in the flesh, as a part of the Jewish nation, and fulfilled such prophecies as related to His sufferings in the flesh, but these were overlooked as not in harmony with their desires; (see Isa. 53) and to them, in their blindness, it was as if He had not fulfilled them. Christ fulfilled, "First the natural," and did not enter fully upon the spiritual until he was born from the dead, "quickened (made alive) by the spirit," which was in Him before he died.

The true seed, destined to "bruise the Serpent's head," and bless the nations, is both spiritual and immortal. Jesus is the Firstborn into that condition, and is appointed Head of immortal mankind-- the second Adam. (As shown before, the natural is the basis of the spiritual, and man having forfeited his natural life, it is necessary that the natural man should be redeemed from death to give opportunity for development into the higher life. This redemption is a preparatory feature of Christ's work, and for this purpose He gave his life a ransom. Thus Christ is restorer of the old race as well as Head of the new race.)

During the Gospel dispensation and by the spirit of Christ, the members of the body are being prepared, and during the sounding of the seventh trumpet they will all be rewarded. Rev. 11:18.

"They that are Christ's at his (*parousia*) presence."

These, made one with Him even as he is one with his Father, (John 17:21-22,) constitute the seed.--"Heaven's conquering army." Rev. 19:14. The work of the seed must follow the complete development of the seed. Overlooking this fact has led thousands to suppose God's plan of salvation terminates at the second R23 : page 5 coming of Christ. From what has been written, it may be seen that God does not begin to save the world (proper) until then. The work of ages past has been the calling out of a few, under discipline, for a high position. Oh, what a responsible place we occupy, to whom the light of the good news has come. Our position in the kingdom depends on our faithfulness. The crown and reign are to those who suffer and overcome.

But what an encouragement to endure all--our's is indeed a high calling. Many are the titles given the church of Christ in the Word, but none so endearing as the "Bride, the Lamb's Wife."

To realize the glory and excellence of such a position in prospect, must prove the antidote to melancholy and worldliness, and be the strongest motive to faithfulness.

J. H. P.

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ONE personal struggle and conquest over self will be of more benefit than listening to a hundred sermons or singing a hundred hymns. It is not so much what we learn as what we practice that benefits us.

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DAILY BREAD.

"Give us this day our daily bread," is the first petition for self allowed by the Saviour. This is fundamental, as "bread is the staff of life." We need food daily, to supply the constant waste, and thus sustain the life. This petition is an expression of our conscious dependence on "Our Father" as the Giver. He knoweth that we have need of these things, and is constantly supplying the wants of even the prayerless and the unthankful. But the grateful ones know that they enjoy the blessings as they never did until they learned to look up.

If any one supposes that this, or any other prayer, will be answered while we remain in negligent misuse or disuse of the means appointed for the attainment of such blessings, they will be disappointed. God helps us to help ourselves. If God gives the increase, it is also necessary that Paul and Apollos should plant and water. To ask aright, implies that we are willing to receive the blessing in the Father's way, and truly the spirit of prayer will prompt the heart and nerve the arm for needed toil. That the Lord helps the helpless oftentimes, by more than ordinary means, we cannot doubt; and many of the Lord's poor, but "rich in faith," have proved to their great satisfaction the value of prayer.

What philosophy may not teach, and philosophers deny, because they can in their sphere deal only with natural or ordinary laws and means, is yet known to be a reality by those trained to a higher sphere of thought and experience, being "led of the spirit of God."

To deny the supernatural is not uncommon, even by those who would not dare to accept its legitimate conclusion --Atheism. From God's standpoint nothing is supernatural. All is below Him. What is above our range of thought or comprehension is to us miraculous. Let men deny the miracles who are wholly unconscious of the existence of spiritual beings. The existence of such beings involves the existence of spiritual laws, which in operation will produce effects as much above the laws with which mortals are familiar, as the laws themselves are higher. That the spiritual has power over the natural, is as true as that mind controls matter; and what we call a miracle, is a manifestation of the superiority of the spiritual over the natural in an unusual way; a glimpse of that, which to all who ever enter the higher plane of existence, will then appear simple, and as easily understood at least as the operation of laws on the plane of the flesh. It required no more power to feed the multitude by a miracle, than to produce the same amount of food by the ordinary law of growth. The use of miracles was to show that He who performed them was Divine; the same One by whom and for whom all things were created. Prayer, which is by the spirit, is a connecting link between us and heaven; a cause, which, in its sphere, is as effective as plowing or sowing on the earthly plane, and opening the windows of heaven brings the blessing down.

An answer to prayer does not prove that God is changeable, any more than the fact that faithful labor will secure temporal blessings, while the sluggard will suffer want.

There is another line of thought suggested by this petition. As bread is the staff of natural life, so it is used to represent the support of the spiritual life. This use of the term is quite common in the Bible: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God," said the Saviour in answer to the temptation. "I am the Truth," and "I am the

bread of life;" comparison will show that the truth and bread are used interchangeably. "He that eateth me shall live by me;" "and except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." That this is spiritual life, begotten by the word of truth, and sustained by the same word, I think no Christian will deny. While it is true and necessary that Christ should literally take the flesh and blood of man, that He should "taste death for every man," and by means of death destroy the captor and deliver the captives from the bonds of the same natural death, or, in other words, restore the natural life; (Heb. 2) it is also true, that as the natural life represents the spiritual, these same terms, "flesh and blood," are used to represent the bread of spiritual life.

The Bible clearly teaches the recovery of all from the loss by Adam, unconditionally; as they were not responsible for the curse, they are made partakers of that restoration without their choice, but it is necessary to obey the truth in order to secure the spiritual life, and consequent eternal salvation.

We need daily bread spiritually, as well as naturally. Regular eating, and working too, are essential to either natural or spiritual health. The lack of nourishment brings weakness, sickness and death in either life.

"If ye live after the flesh ye shall die," (Rom. 8:13,) spoken, as it was, to Christians, indicates the danger to which we are exposed if we neglect eating and working. That some are what we might call spiritual dyspeptics is doubtless true. They eat, but work not. Like some of old, they spend all their time either learning or telling some new thing. They manifest a greater eagerness for new ideas, than to make a good use of what they have already. Such are in danger, we think, of holding the truth in unrighteousness. But while this is true of a few extremists, the mass of professing Christians take the other extreme and eat not at all, or at best so sparingly that they are dying of starvation. Some use milk freely, i.e. the "First Principles" of the doctrine of Christ, Heb. 5:12 and 6:1,2, which is all right for beginners; as babes in Christ desiring the "sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby," 1 Pet. 2:2, (and it is not improbable that an occasional cup of milk is good even for grown folks,) but grown men need stronger food; (Heb. 5:14,) and the apostle urges the brethren to advance from the foundation, (building on it of course, which no one can do till they have accepted and obeyed the first principles,) going on unto perfection. Heb. 6:1. From the necessary relation between food and its results, we may well infer that the perfection here mentioned has reference to both knowledge and character. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is doubtless much given for milk that savors but little of Paul's definition; the high sounding essays on scientific subjects, aside from the science of revelation, may tickle the fancy and educate the intellect, "but starve the soul;" they do not feed the spiritual life. Some hungry ones are crying for bread, but the cry reaches not the ear of a worldly ministry; it does reach the ear of the Lord of the poor in spirit, who has said, "Blessed are they that hunger,... for they shall be filled. But the mass seem more than content to spend their money for that which is not bread. Isa. 55:2. The satisfaction and joy of those who live by faith on the Son of God is solid, compared to the passing ripple of emotion caused by mere religious excitement. Excitement must subside, but truth and its joys abide.

Advancing with the light in the shining way, receiving the truth as our "daily bread," we can "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

J. H. P.

ON INTERPRETATION.

Many friends of the Bible, instead of regarding it as containing a system of truth, look upon it as a compilation of facts, commandments and promises, that are not susceptible of arrangement. Such persons are weak and vacillating, and often at the mercy of the bold unbeliever, who finds in his "God of Nature" the embodiment of law and order. He sees order in Geology, Astronomy and other sciences, but only confusion in the Bible, and he rightly reasons that God's works should be harmonious. He knows the principles of those sciences, and can read the book of nature, we will suppose (though but few are free from the domination of leaders who give us ideas second hand), but he knows little, if anything, of the plan of the Bible, and therefore cannot read it. One man has as much right to reject Astronomy because he cannot understand it, as another man has to reject the Bible for the same reason.

What is confusion when not understood, becomes when explained beautiful and harmonious.

Because, while learning, men differ and quarrel over their opinions does not militate against the truth of any system. If men were more fully controlled by the Spirit of Christ, they could differ in opinion without quarreling.

Until absolute knowledge is gained, each ray of light will at least modify former ideas.

To understand any science or book it should be read according to its own principles of interpretation. "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." 2 Pet. 1:21. Moved by one Spirit it should be taken as a whole, and not disconnectedly. If we would compare scripture with scripture, we would learn that--

*"God is his own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."*

We affirm that a piece-meal interpretation is the cause of confusion in the Christian world, and gives rise to the profane proverb that "the Bible is just like an old fiddle on which any tune may be played." Very few pretend to use much of the Bible; only a few practical precepts, and enough to prove the particular creed, are valued by the many. They virtually blame the Lord for giving a large book when a small one would have been all-sufficient.

The practice of many in teaching is no more consistent than was that of the old Negro who made Paul vindicate him in theft: "Let him that stole, steal." The words, "no more," did not suit his purpose. The writer remembers hearing a minister (shall I say, of Christ) preach a sermon against the doctrine of justification by faith from the words: "To him that worketh is the reward." Rom. 4:4. The perversion will be apparent to all that will read the context.

We do not accuse men generally of dishonesty; we are glad to believe that all parties have some truth, and that they defend their errors with sincerity. None of us are perfect in knowledge, and doubtless all have in the past sincerely believed to be truth, and earnestly defended what is now regarded as error. This should make us feel kindly toward all who differ with us, and who cannot yet see all we can see.

The sects are too much like men backing R24 : page 6 into a corner, and defending themselves with a text.

A text is of no value as proof of a doctrine unless its place in the plan of the ages be understood. The Calvinist, Arminian or Universalist may readily find a text that will seem to sustain his theory; and the Infidel will say the three texts contradict each other.

Each disputant will pass lightly over or ignore the proof-texts of the others, and so sustain their own theory at all hazard.

If the Bible is true there must be a theory which will make use of all these texts, and belittle none of them. There is a theory which claims to do this, and the foundation of that theory is a plan of the ages. Would that all lovers of truth understood that theory, and the plan on which it is based. In the search for truth it becomes necessary to discriminate between Bible language and "home made scripture" or pulpit phraseology. The Bible does not claim to be so plain that everybody can understand it. "But if God intended the word for man's use, why has He not made it plain?" I ask, why are the gold, the coal and the iron hidden deep in the earth? Why are all things of value made difficult of attainment? There is a question of character involved in it. Desire, will, energy, determination and faithfulness will be rewarded.

Some truths lie on the surface and are easily understood, being adapted to the conditions of childhood physically and spiritually. These properly used are as "milk for babes," and give strength for work, growth and further search. But to become as men in the knowledge of God, we must cry after it, seek it as silver, and search for it as for hid treasures. (Prov. 2:1-5.) As the word is arranged as food for the individual as babe, young man and aged, so is it of the race in its different stages of development. It will assist us if we remember that the Bible was not written for one man, nor for one age, but for all men and all ages, adapted to the circumstances as "meat in due season." Thus the "word is a lamp to our feet," giving light for present need; and "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. 4:18. Many do not understand how the Bible could be so written as to remain dark for a time, and then gradually unfold its truth as a burning lamp; but the fact of its being so is to all that understand it an unanswerable argument in favor of its inspiration by the foreseeing spirit of God. In Dan. 12 is given an example clear and simple.

The truths concerning the "time of the end" are said to be "shut up and sealed" until that time. Then "knowledge shall be increased," and "the wise shall understand." The Papal dominion over both Church and State crippled every energy and prevented Bible searching. The overthrow of that dominion in 1798 by the French Revolution marked the beginning of the "time of the end" (Dan. 11:35), and opened the way for a multitude of improvements and the "increase of knowledge." Of course those who have the spirit of truth love it, and search for it, will learn when others will fail, but the wisest and best of Christians could not gain accurate knowledge on this subject until the seal of that book was broken at the time appointed of the Father.

We are not more intelligent or pious than our fathers, even if it be true as we claim that we have advanced truths. Let all bear in mind that "to whom much is given much is required." If we are advanced in truth we should also be advanced in holiness, and obedience to God's will is an important aid in knowing the truth. John 7:17.

He that values reputation more than truth, how can he believe? John 5:44.

J. H. P.

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ONLY WAITING.

*Only waiting till the dawning
Is a little brighter grown,
Only waiting till the shadows
Of the world's dark night are flown,*

*Till the shadows all shall vanish,
In the blessed, blessed day;
For the morn, at last, is breaking
Through the twilight, soft and gray.*

*Only waiting till the presence
Of the Sun of Righteousness,
Shall dispel the noxious vapors,
Ignorance, and prejudice.*

*Till the glory of the sunlight
Of the bright Millennial day,
Scatters all the powers of darkness;
Lights the gloom with healing ray.*

*Waiting for the Restitution,
Promised in the Holy Word;
When a once-lost race restored, shall
Know and love their Savior Lord.*

*When each man shall love his fellow;
Justice give, to great and small;
Dwell in love, and dwell in Jesus;
He in us, God all in all.*

--From "Songs of the Bride."

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DIFFICULTIES.

There are some very dark and strange things in the Bible--things which to many seem irreconcilable with the character of justice and love which we ascribe to our Heavenly Father. "God is love," and "by the grace of God Christ tasted death for every man." "He is the propitiation for our sins, and also for the sins of the whole world."

Why then did Christ say to his disciples: "Go not in the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not," &c. Matt. 10:5. Again, He always spake to the multitude in parables, and explained them to the disciples. Because "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to them that are without all these things are done in parables, lest they should see, hear, understand: be converted and their sins should be forgiven them." Mark 4:11,12.

Perhaps you would rather not look at such facts my Arminian brother. Here is election with a certainty. I can remember when I wished such statements were not in the Bible. But facts cannot be set aside by shutting our eyes, and we must face them. If we can not harmonize these statements with our theories, as the Bible is true, our theories must be false. If Christ had wanted the multitudes to be converted by his preaching, He would have preached to them so they would have understood him. The same text implicitly

teaches the necessity of understanding the truth in order to be converted. He says he spoke in parables so they would not understand and be converted. Now who can believe for a moment that these multitudes were to be eternally lost because Christ, the loving Son of the God of love, withheld the bread of life from them? Do you wonder, my Christian brother, in view of popular teaching, that the church and world are flooded with infidels? I say here is election, and my Calvinistic brother rejoices in the confirmation of his theory.

But why did the Lord choose a few? If I have no right to ask such a question the Lord will not answer me, but He speaks in words of explanation. They are "called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:14-28. But has He revealed His purpose? Do not think that because He chooses only a few for a "purpose" that R25 : page 6 He means to torment or destroy eternally all the rest. Among the "little flock" chosen are no irresponsible persons incapable of believing, for the word says: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. 2:13. And yet it is nowhere taught that any but responsible, guilty rebels will be lost eternally.

Remember the few are not called merely because He purposed to call them, but He calls them for a purpose. Like a wise mechanic who makes an implement, He has an object in view; there is a use to which it has reference; and that object controlled the original choice. We freely affirm that the principle underlying the choice of God is: The few are chosen for the good of the many. Christ himself is chosen of God, and precious," (1 Pet. 2:4) and all admit that He is "anointed" and "exalted to be a Prince and a Savior." In him the fullness of blessing dwells. To the twelve He said: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." John 15:16. The Jewish "remnant," the "sheep" that heard and knew "his voice" and were his "according to the election of grace," (Rom. 11:5) were in fact the nucleus around which the gospel church was afterward gathered, and it was proved that "Salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22.

Paul was chosen of the Lord "to bear his name before the Gentiles," (Acts 9:15) and to be for salvation to the ends of the earth.

All the chosen--even the whole church --are chosen in Him, and consequently with reference to the same object--the blessing of others.

If any one thinks God has chosen him and given him light and salvation for his own sake merely, he greatly mistakes his calling. If God gives light it is that it may shine that others may see and be blest. What is true individually is true also of the church collectively and dispensationally. The purpose for which the church is called is revealed both directly and indirectly in the New Testament. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:43.) To shine now and then, can mean no less than to give light. And if the church give, the nations receive, and "walk in the light of it." Rev. 21:24. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The church are predestinated to a work--"the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." (Eph. 1:5.) Christ the Father and the church the mother of the family of children by the laws of spiritual regeneration. We are well aware that this text gives no such idea to the most of readers; but the fact that elsewhere Christ and the church are said to be related to each other as husband and wife gives good ground for the application. The great work is called the "mystery of His will" made known to us, "which He hath purposed in Himself." "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ." (vs. 9,10.) The object of God in raising up the body of Christ to the level of the Head is expressly stated to be: "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of his grace." Eph. 2:7.

In view of the purpose for which we are chosen, the doctrine of election is a glorious doctrine, and our calling is well named "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:14. Oh! that all Christians might have "the eyes of their understanding enlightened,"

that they might "know what is the hope of his calling." (Eph. 1:18.) They would not grovel here any longer, nor their souls go heavily in the heavenly journey. They need no longer be afraid to look at the supposed "difficulties," nor wish such passages were not in the Bible. They are parts of a great system of truth which would be marred without them. God is a God of order. The plan of salvation is under the laws of order. As in the natural, so in the spiritual family. Christ the second Adam, both husband and father is developed first. Next in order comes the church as both wife and mother. And after the marriage, which takes place at the Second Advent, the whole family of man will be regenerated (excepting willful rejectors). This view explains why He did not and does not call all at once. We vindicate the plan of God as revealed, by showing that it is in harmony with itself, and is a grand proof, when complete, of the fundamental statement of the Bible--"God is Love."

J. H. P.

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Exhortation.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. Gal. 6:1.

And above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently, lest any fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Heb. 12:14,15.

"Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any. Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which, also, ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful that the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Col. 3:12-17.

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Col. 4:6.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward, for ye serve the Lord Jesus Christ." Col. 3:17-24.

"For, brethren ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Gal. 5:13-16.

"For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1 Peter 2:20,21,24.

"Therefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator." 1 Peter 4:19.

Therefore, by love let us serve one another.

H. B. M. LANDIS.

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