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VENIAL AND MORTAL SINS.

ANY violation of divine law is sin; whether committed
 willingly or unwillingly.--1 John 3:4;
 James 2:10.

The terms "venial" and "mortal" as relating
 to sins are seldom used outside of the Church of
 Rome, the great counterfeit of the true Church; yet by
 the use of these terms two classes of sins are distinguished,
 properly and Scripturally, although in a way
 which the Church of Rome fails to recognize.

A "venial sin" is one which may be forgiven or
 pardoned--a pardonable sin.

A "mortal sin" is one which is not forgivable. It

is a deadly sin: one incurring the penalty of death--everlasting death.

The apostle John (1 John 5:16,17) refers to both of these sins, saying,--

"There is a sin unto death [a mortal sin]: I do not say that he shall pray for it [to ask or expect its forgiveness]....And there is a sin, not unto death [a venial sin]."

There is but one penalty expressed against sin by the Creator and Lawgiver. "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4.) But the great and just Judge never sits in judgment upon a case in which the one on trial has not a full and fair opportunity to know and do his duty. Thus it was in Adam's trial: he was created a perfect man in his Creator's image and placed amid a favorable environment where obedience was both possible and reasonable; and he was fully advised that the penalty of transgression would be death. (Gen. 2:17.) And thus in every case tried before the Supreme Judge of the universe and found guilty, the only penalty is death;--hence all sin is mortal sin at his bar.

But God purposed a redemption for Adam and his race through Christ. He therefore provided for the ransom-sacrifice--the sinless Jesus for the sinner Adam and the race condemned in him. Thus the race of Adam was bought by Jesus with his own precious blood; divine law was vindicated (Rom. 3:26), and the race by God's will was in new hands for trial; for thus justly God committed the judgment of all to the Son (John 5:22; Acts 17:31), under the conditions of the New Covenant. All who come to know of the grace of God in Christ and the New Covenant, and who accept it, are reckoned as lifted out of the mortal sin of Adam and its consequences, and granted a new trial for life under the New Covenant, which takes cognizance of their fall and imperfection, and treats all their sins and shortcomings as "venial" or forgivable sins, except such as are committed intentionally or wilfully.

All true Christians will of course seek to avoid every form of sin, and in all things will seek to do that which is pleasing to the Lord. But all, soon or later, find that they have the treasure of the new nature, the new will,

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in an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7); and that the imperfections of the earthen vessel (our human bodies) more or less mar all our efforts to please and serve God. Consequently, even the most devout find that they need to go repeatedly to the throne of divine grace, that they "may obtain mercy [forgiveness], and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16.) And knowing that there are some sins that are not forgivable,

it becomes important to all the saints to know just what is the difference; not that we may continue in (venial) sins that grace may abound (Rom. 6:1,2); for so to do would be to sin wilfully, which would change the sin from venial to mortal; but that we may be the more upon our guard against all sins; and that, on the other hand, those who have tender consciences may not unjustly accuse themselves of the sin unto death and become hopeless.

Because we are imperfect in our judgments by reason of the fall, we all need divine instruction and "the spirit of a sound mind." Otherwise some would err in one direction and others in the opposite. For instance, some are of a humble, self-accusing mind, constantly disposed to judge themselves too harshly, and to forget that God "knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust"; and that, had it been possible for us to have commended ourselves to God by our works and words and thoughts, judged by his standard or law, then there would have been no redemption necessary, no sprinkling of our hearts with the precious blood, no imputing of the justification or righteousness of Christ, through faith. Of this class, usually, are those who are oppressed with a fear that they have committed mortal sin, while those who seem to commit the sin unto death are generally quite self-satisfied and have no suspicion of the penalty upon them. This latter class, like the Pharisees of old, have so much self-esteem and self-satisfied assurance that they often estimate their errors, weaknesses and imperfections as graces. Quite a few of them even go to the extreme of boasting perfection and believe, or at least profess to believe, that they have not for years come short of God's perfect standard. Of course, in such a frame of mind they cannot come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy; for perfection needs no mercy. They, on the contrary, more and more, lose their appreciation of the redeeming blood; and when in course of time the Adversary sets before them the doctrine that Christ was not our Redeemer, but merely our pattern for holy living, many of them are ready to deny the Lord that bought them, to count the blood of the covenant a common thing, and to do despite to the spirit of divine favor and mercy--relying upon their so-called "perfect" works;--which really are "filthy rags" of unrighteousness, in God's sight. Their trouble is that they have not before them the perfect standard by which to know their own imperfections.

It is therefore of great importance that we all should form our judgments according to the revealed mind of God on this subject, as upon all others.

Under the Law Covenant given to Israel, no such distinction obtained respecting sins: there were no venial sins; all sins were mortal sins. Hence the Apostle, speaking of that Law, and of himself as under

it, says, "The commandment which was ordained unto life I found to be unto death." Under that Law the wages of sin was death; and nothing short of that.--Rom. 7:10.

True, Israelites were granted a typical Atonement Day, on account of which sins were covered for a year; but the necessity for repeating their sacrifices yearly proved that the sin was not actually canceled, but remained. (Heb. 10:11.) Thus the penalty of the Law Covenant upon all Israelites would have been death, everlasting death, just as in Adam's case, had it not been that our Lord, by the one sacrifice, did a double work. He not only redeemed the world by becoming Adam's substitute, but he was born under the Law that he might [also] redeem those that were [condemned] under the Law Covenant.--Gal. 4:4,5.

As all the world were actually in Adam and could be redeemed by one sacrifice, so all Israel were represented in one man, Moses (1 Cor. 10:2), the Mediator of their Law Covenant; in order that in due time the antitype of Moses might meet all the requirements of the Law Covenant, and fulfil it, and supplant it with the New Covenant. Thus Christ is become "the end of the Law Covenant for righteousness to every one [every Israelite] that believeth." (Rom. 10:4.) Thus Jews under the New Covenant find their unavoidable imperfections no longer mortal [deadly] sins but venial [forgivable] sins.--Heb. 9:15.

It is the Gospel, under the New Covenant, sealed with the precious blood of Christ, that speaks pardon and mercy to believing (and penitent) sinners in respect to all manner of sin and blasphemy, except one, which can never be forgiven; neither in the present age nor in the age to come.--Matt. 12:31,32.

The sins and blasphemies which may be forgiven are such as are committed in ignorance. The sins which cannot be pardoned are the wilful sins. Our race, because of the fall, is greatly under the dominion of weakness, ignorance, blindness, etc., inherited from Adam and augmented by all of our progenitors. And our Lord Jesus, having paid the penalty of Adam's transgression, can justly remit and forgive for his people all responsibility for such defects as they do not endorse but are striving against.

The sins and blasphemies which cannot be forgiven are such as were not covered by the ransom. While God's grace of forgiveness in Christ is for "many offences" (Rom. 5:16), it is because those many offences are directly or indirectly the result of the first offence --Adam's disobedience--which was fully offset by the obedience and sacrifice of Christ on behalf of Adam and all his race. Hence, all those who come to a clear comprehension of right and wrong, righteousness and sin, and who then deliberately choose the sin, the wrong, not because of inherited weaknesses, physical,

mental and moral, but of preference for unrighteousness, --such cannot claim that their fault was of ignorance, nor of heredity; and hence it would be a fresh and wilful sin like the first; and is not covered by the ransom which redeemed from the first transgression. It is therefore a fresh sin unto death (a mortal sin), for which Christ did not die; and "Christ dieth no more." Only one redemption is provided. Such a sinner must die for his own sin; his life is forever forfeited; he can do nothing to recover it; and it is not God's will that Christ or any other creature should redeem such again, seeing they chose sin, after they clearly comprehended its character and knew that they had been redeemed from its power. You need not pray for such, says the Apostle John. We must pray in harmony with the divine plan and arrangement if we would have our prayers answered.

Thus we have before our minds, in a general way, the fact that the only mortal sins are those committed against considerable knowledge, and of evil intention, wilfully. It is not, we think, unreasonable to suppose that, in comparison with the whole world of mankind, these intelligent, wilful sinners are now comparatively few; just as the saints are a "little flock"; and in part for the same reason,--because, as it requires the light of the knowledge of God to permit us to choose the right and accept Christ and be justified by faith, and to be sanctified through the truth, so it requires light to reject Christ and his righteousness and to choose wilful sin, unrighteousness. However, the fact that comparatively few during the Gospel age have had light and opportunity sufficient to permit them to be of the "little flock," the "few chosen" to be the kings and priests in the Millennial Kingdom, and the fact that few for the same reason could commit full mortal sin, does not prove that only a few will ever commit mortal sin. When, during the Millennium, the conditions are favorable for all for the attainment of Everlasting Life, the same favorable conditions will make it possible for all to commit mortal sin, whose penalty is the Second Death. We have no assurance that the "sheep" will outnumber the "goats." (And although in Europe and America the flocks of literal sheep do outnumber the goats, yet in the land of Palestine, where our Lord spoke the parable, their numbers even at this day are about equal.)

It is evident, therefore, that as the vast majority of our race (heathen and imbecile), dying and dead, have not yet been enlightened by "that true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), they cannot have committed mortal sin, and hence are not under sentence of the Second Death, however ignorantly wicked they may have been; because under the New Covenant no sin is mortal (deadly), of which ignorance or inherited weakness is the cause.

And this New Covenant was made available for all, "for every man," and must be "testified in due time" to all. This opens before us the blessed thought that, though these heathen billions are yet in their sins, which cannot be blotted out except by faith, under the terms of the New Covenant, they are nevertheless not doomed to the Second Death. Their sins, judged by the New Covenant, would be venial and may be pardoned by their Redeemer; and themselves may be prepared for eternal life by certain experiences in purification in the great Purgatory--Christ's Millennial Kingdom --so different from the unscriptural Purgatory of Roman Catholic theology. Praise God for the worldwide redemption from Adam's mortal sin; and for the gracious provision that none of the ransomed race, except intelligent, wilful sinners, will be remanded to death,--the Second Death.

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MIXED SINS--PARTLY WILFUL.

If it were merely a question of wilful or not wilful sins, it would be comparatively easy to decide respecting our own shortcomings and those of others; but it is a more difficult question. The Christian may be considered in some respects a dual being: he not only has his natural body, depraved by inherited sins and weaknesses, and his natural mind also depraved, and in sympathy with the weaknesses of the flesh, but he has also his renewed mind or will, which desires to serve the law of God. These two minds or wills are contrary: they cannot be harmonized; and the man who endeavors to recognize both, and to make the two joint-rulers of his mortal body, is the "double-minded man," "unstable in all his ways," described by the Apostle James (1:8). The "lukewarm," neither cold nor hot, neither for sin nor against sin, are failures in every sense of the word. (Rev. 3:16.) God wants positive characters, and others will not be approved or accepted.

In every case, then, the new mind must be in control, and the depraved, fleshly mind must be subjected to it for destruction. But here comes the difficulty. The natural mind ("heart") is deceitful above all things, and desperate as well as wicked (Jer. 17:9), and the various members of our bodies in their depravity sympathize with the natural mind and favor it; so that when the new mind battles with the old mind and pursues it to destroy it, the latter feigns to be dead, and hides quietly for a time, only to come forth more craftily later.

So then, with the Apostle, we can realize that even when the new mind is enthroned as the ruler of these mortal bodies, the old mind or will, favorable to sin,

although dethroned and reckoned dead, is not actually dead, and will not be as long as our mortal bodies are

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defective--i.e., until death. Hence we must daily mortify [deaden] the will and deeds of the flesh. But sometimes the deadened will of the depraved flesh (selfish, or impure, or in any event despicable to the new will, "the mind of Christ"), encouraged and helped by the influence of the "spirit of the world" or by the devil (perhaps as a messenger of light to deceive), rises up to ensnare and destroy the new will and its new hopes and aspirations. In such cases how many have suffered at least partial and temporary defeat, until they have remembered to call for reinforcements of strength from Him who has promised to never leave nor forsake us, and to give grace and strength for every time of need. Then we realized that greater is he that is on our part, than all them that be against us,--within and without.--Rom. 8:23,31.

And when such a battle is ended, and the new will sits down to reckon the damage inflicted by the raid of the old will, there must be some self-crimination--"Oh! why was I not more watchful? I knew from experience that I was quite vulnerable at the point from which the attack came. Nor did I repel the attack with proper diligence. I almost fear that I was willing to have the attack, and that I encouraged the enemy, Sin; and if so, was it not disloyalty to the Lord? And was it not also a wilful sin, since the new will did not repel it with sufficient energy?"

Was this a venial or a mortal sin?

Such a case as we have described would not be a mortal sin. This is shown by the fact that the new will eventually holds the field of battle, and that so far from having pleasure in the wreck of good resolutions and hopes and prayers, etc., etc., it feels chagrin, shame and contrition for failure to have done all that could have been done to oppose the depraved will. On the contrary, those who have sinned wilfully and with full intent, and whose sin is mortal, do not feel penitent; but afterward approve their sin, and boast of it, generally as greater light and liberty. (See Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31.) In the latter text (verse 27), the "fearful looking for of judgment" does not refer to the wilful sinner, who is bold, defiant and self-satisfied, but to the people of God, who realize the fearfulness of the position of those who "count the blood of the Covenant a common thing," despising God's favor therein extended, and preferring to stand in the filthy rags of their own unrighteousness.

But such a sin as we have described would not be wholly a venial sin if the will consented to it in any degree; --if only to the extent of not resisting it. If there was anything that could have been done and was thought

of to resist it, but was not done, preferring to taste again "the pleasures of sin" only for a brief season, it would seem to contain a measure of wilful sin. Such is a mixed sin. Chiefly it originates with the weakness of the flesh and inherited weakness, aggravated by outside temptations, all of which are elements of venial sin, forgivable upon repentance, confession and restitution to the extent of ability, through the merit of the sin-offering presented by our great High Priest. "If any man [in Christ] sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"; "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 2:1; 1:9.) But to the extent that the will consented to sin, even for a moment, it was unforgivable; and for that measure of responsibility we must expect to suffer "stripes"; i.e., chastisements. This is dangerous, too, for every such raid by the old nature encourages and strengthens it for fresh attacks, and weakens and discourages the new nature, and tends to grieve the holy spirit whereby we are sealed; and, if encouraged, the new will would soon expire, the old will obtain complete mastery, and soon we would be walking after the flesh and not after the spirit; and "the end of those things is death"--the Second Death. It is evident, therefore, that the tendency of mixed sin is toward mortal sin.

Whenever we find that we have been overcome of evil, we should "judge ourselves:" we should scrutinize our own course, and not only feel contrite toward God, and resolved to be more vigilant and more faithful in the future, but we should right the wrong to the extent of our ability, and humble ourselves before the Lord. The Apostle says, "If we would judge [reprove, correct] ourselves, we should not be judged [reproved, corrected, by the Lord]; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord [punished with "stripes"], that we should not be condemned with the world."--1 Cor. 11:31,32; 1 Tim. 5:24.

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A brief definition of sin or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would be,--Any transgression, or words of evil disdain, against the light of truth, the spirit of truth, when clearly discerned. Such a sin contains at least a measure of wilfulness, and that measure cannot be forgiven. It must be expiated. If there were no extenuating circumstances, of weakness, blindness, temptation, etc., its expiation would cost the life of the transgressor, and constitute his share in the Second Death. But if, as generally now, there be extenuating circumstances, the transgressor, by availing himself of the terms of the New Covenant, may have forgiveness to the extent

of the ignorance or other extenuation, and may expiate the wilful elements of the transgression by suffering "stripes,"--chastisements. These chastisements

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may consist in the natural consequences of a wrong course, or in special retribution or discipline by means of adversity, sickness, etc.

Sometimes the light may be very clear and the wilful wrong-doing very pronounced, as in the case of the Pharisees who heard the Lord's teaching and saw him cast out a devil, and said, He casteth out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. They were at least partly blinded by Satan and ignorance (Matt. 15:14; Acts 3:17); hence had they rejected Jesus and denied that he was the Messiah promised by the Lord through the prophets, had they called him a fraud and a hypocrite, all this might have been attributable to their blindness, and might have been forgivable as venial sin, under the gracious terms of the New Covenant. But when they blasphemed the holy power, the holy spirit of God, operating through Jesus, to good works and never to evil works, they were overstepping their ignorance, and stating wickedly, wilfully, what they could not have believed. To that extent, therefore, they were guilty of more than venial sin. Because of this wilfulness their blasphemy became a sin which could never be forgiven, "neither in this world [age], neither in the world [age] to come." No provision has been made (nor ever will be made, as we understand the divine plan), for forgiving any wilful sin, except Adam's first transgression. All other wilful sins must be punished.

But as the blasphemy of the Pharisees was more than a venial sin, so it was less than a mortal sin, because they did not sin against a clear understanding: they were "blind leaders of the blind," as our Lord testified (Matt. 15:14); and they did considerable in ignorance, as Peter testified. (Acts 3:17.) This unpardonable sin of the Pharisees, therefore, was one of the "mixed sins" which must needs receive a just penalty, proportionate to its wilfulness, in the Millennium, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory and judge the world in righteousness.

It would have been a very different matter, had these Pharisees been disciples, and had they witnessed all of his mighty works and heard all of his precious words, and had they been privately instructed as were the twelve Apostles (Matt. 13:11), and with them made partakers of Christ's holy spirit, so that, in his name and power, they themselves cast out devils and healed diseases. In this respect--that they sinned against partial, not complete, evidence--consists the difference between

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their sin and the sin of Judas,* by which his and not theirs was mortal sin.

Their case differed, too, from that of the enlightened, consecrated and spirit-begotten sons of this Gospel age. Because of our greater enlightenment and clearer perception, such a sin on our part would mean more wilfulness because of greater intelligence. It would probably mean mortal sin to us. Even in their case the Lord saw such a wrong condition of heart that he said, "Ye hypocrites, how can ye escape the condemnation of Gehenna [symbol of the Second Death]."

The intimation clearly is, that many of them, having developed such perverse characters, so out of accord with righteousness, will, even when blessed with the fuller light and opportunity of the Millennium, be likely to come under the sentence of death. The lesson to us is, that even those who are not of the Church, now on trial, if they have come in contact with the light, have thereby come under some responsibility. Each one is either preparing and building a character or destroying one, getting more ready or less ready to benefit by the Millennial reign of righteous judgment. Our Lord's judgment (in the day of judgment--the Millennium), as between those who knew and those who did not know his will, was expressed pointedly when he declared that, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for the city that rejected the Gospel messengers; because they sinned against greater light.--See Matt. 10:15.

Whoever has heard something of the Truth has a great responsibility. Whoever has opportunity to learn more, whether he uses it or not, has greater responsibility. He who sins (with wilfulness) against a little light shall suffer some "stripes" or punishment. He who sins with wilfulness against more light or more opportunity for light will receive "many stripes." He who sins with complete wilfulness against a clear understanding of the truth has committed a full sin in the full sense of the word, and will receive the full penalty of sin--death--the Second Death.

*See "Judas' Case a Hopeless One," in our issue of Apr. 15, '96

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A SERMON FOR CHILDREN.

--Text--The Rose.--

The roses are in bloom to-day!
Come, children, from your games away

A while to listen in the bower,
And learn from every blooming flower
Truths golden that shall evermore
Be garnered with the heart's rich store!

Within the garden meet our view
Roses of varied form and hue,
Unfolding now their graceful bloom,
Lading the air with sweet perfume;
From tiny buds to full blooms sweet,
They bend in clusters round our feet.

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Some robed in white are here displayed,
And dainty ones in pink arrayed;
Some in their golden glory shine;
Some wear the crimson hue of wine.

Charmed by their grace and beauty rare,
We cull some buds and blossoms fair.
Some that were once as fair and gay
We see now fading fast away.
Within the garden's blooming space,
Can we not here a semblance trace?
And read in this, the rose-crowned rod,
The love and power of nature's God?

Only a few short months ago,
The roses lay in death below;
In glad springtime the sun and rain
Aroused from sleep to life again;
Triumphant, they arose to bloom
In beauty o'er their winter tomb.

The buds seem like to childhood's day,
When happy children laugh and play;
The half-blown rose an emblem seems
Of youth, when life is sweet with dreams;
Youth slow expands in grace and power
Till, like the glowing, full-blown flower,
It zenith gains; then age draws on,
And soon the span of life is gone.

The roses spring to bloom their day,
Are early culled or fade away;
So, soon or late, all yield their breath,
Beneath the cruel hand of Death.
The God who clothes the roses fair,
Does he not for his creatures care?

Ah, yes! they'll rise from out death's gloom.
He by whose law the roses bloom
In love devised a wondrous plan
To save from death his creature, man:
His Son for all a ransom gave;--

Suffered e'en death our souls to save,
And rose to life on high again
Eternal life to give to men.
He holds the key of Death's closed gates;
The due time only he awaits.

In all of nature's wide domain,
There law and order ever reign;
Just so within the realm of grace:
For all things there's a time, a place;
When, as around its seasons roll,
They bring a springtime for the soul,
Christ will unlock their silent tomb,
And bid them rise again to bloom;
Then all who love the right and truth
Shall flourish on in fadeless youth.

Here let us pause. Again behold
The roses--how their leaves unfold:
The bud, unfolding hour by hour,
At length displays the perfect flower;
Slowly its petals all unfold;
Then do we see the heart of gold.

So, too, unfold God's plans of grace;
His scheme, deep-laid, no man could trace,
Till time the mystery unsealed;
The hidden riches stood revealed.
The roses their sweet sermon preach,
Graving it deep as any speech.
Does not each glorious blooming flower
Proclaim the wisdom and the power
Of Him who, from his throne above,
Watches o'er all his works in love?

MARY E. PENNOCK.

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THE THIEF IN PARADISE.

"He said to Jesus, Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.
And he [Jesus] said to him [the penitent thief], Indeed
I say to thee this day, thou shalt be with
me in Paradise."--Luke 23:42,43.

THOSE who consider salvation to be an escape
from everlasting torture to a paradise of pleasure,
and dependent only on accidental circumstances of favor,
see exemplified in this narrative the doctrine of
election--that our Lord Jesus, pleased by the consoling
words of the one thief, elected him to heaven, and
equally elected that the other should suffer to all eternity,

unpitied and unrelieved. Truly, if God has made salvation such a lottery, such a chance thing, those who believe it to be such should have little to say against church lotteries, and less against worldly ones.

But this is not the case. This Scripture has been much misunderstood. To get its true import, let us take in the surroundings and connections.

The Lord had just been condemned, and was now being executed on the charge of treason against Caesar's government, in saying that he was a king; though he had told them that his kingdom was "not of this world." There, upon the cross above his head, written in three languages, was the crime charged against him: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Those about knew of his claims and derided him, except one of the thieves crucified alongside. Doubtless he had heard of Jesus and his wonderful character and works, and said in his heart: This is truly a strange and wonderful man. Who can know that there is no foundation to his claims? He certainly lives close to God. I will speak to him in sympathy: it can do no harm. Then he rebuked his companion, mentioning the Lord's innocence; and then the conversation above noted took place.

We cannot suppose that this thief had correct or definite ideas of Jesus--nothing more than a mere feeling that as he was about to die, any straw of hope was better than nothing. To give him credit for more would be to place him in faith ahead of all the Lord's apostles and followers, who at this time had fled dismayed, and who, three days after, said: "We [had] trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel."--Luke 24:21.

We can have no doubt as to the import of his petition:

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he meant that whenever Jesus reached his kingdom power, he desired favor. Now note our Lord's answer. He does not say that he has no kingdom; but, on the contrary, he indicates by his response that the thief's request was a proper one. The word translated "verily" or "indeed" is the Greek word "amen," and signifies "So be it," or "Your request is granted." "I say to thee this day [this dark day, when it seems as though I am an impostor, and I am dying as a felon], thou shalt be with me in Paradise." The substance of this promise is that, when the Lord has established his kingdom it will be a Paradise, and the thief will be remembered and be in it. Notice that we have changed the comma from before to after the word "today."

This makes our Lord's words perfectly clear and reasonable. He might have told the thief more if he had chosen. He might have told him that the reason he would be privileged to be in Paradise was because his ransom was then and there being paid. He might

have told him further that he was dying for and ransoming the other thief also, as well as the whole gaping and deriding multitude before him, the millions then entombed, and the millions yet unborn. We know this because we know that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," "gave himself a ransom for all," that all in due time might have opportunity to return to the Edenic condition, forfeited by the first man's sin, and redeemed for men by Christ's righteous sacrifice.--Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5,6; Acts 3:19.

As already shown, the garden of Eden was but an illustration of what the earth will be when fully released from the curse--perfected and beautified. The word "paradise" is of Arabic origin, and signifies a garden. The Septuagint renders Gen. 2:8 thus: "God planted a paradise in Eden." When Christ shall have established his kingdom, and bound evil, etc., this earth will gradually become a paradise, and the two thieves and all others that are in their graves shall come into it, and then by becoming obedient to its laws they may live in it and enjoy it forever. We doubt not, however, that the kind words spoken in that dark hour to the suffering Savior will no more lose a special and suitable reward than the gift of a cup of water, or other small kindnesses, done to those whom this King is "not ashamed to call his brethren."--Matt. 10:42.

But have we a right to change the comma? Certainly: the punctuation of the Bible is not inspired. The writers of the Bible used no punctuation. It was invented about four hundred years ago. It is merely a modern convenience, and should be so used as to bring out sense, and harmony with all other Scriptures. This harmony and sense are obtained only by the punctuation we have given above. As usually punctuated, the passage would teach that the Lord and the thief went that day to a place called paradise, a statement contrary to the following Scriptures, which read carefully:--Luke 24:46; John 20:17; 3:13.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question.--I am a news agent, and as such have calls for vile novels and newspapers giving novels as supplements. What do you think, from a Christian standpoint, of my dealing in such papers?

Answer.--You ask a straightforward question, and no doubt desire a straightforward answer. We reply that we cannot see how saints can do a general book-business under prevailing conditions. We would consider the dealing out of poisonous mental food about as bad

as the selling of spirituous liquors, and much worse than dealing in adulterated natural foods. We believe that the mind is the most important part of the man, and our conscience would be extremely sensitive as to what we would put before our fellow creatures, or in any manner induce them to use to their injury.

This advice, we fear, will be very far reaching in its relations to your business; but your candid inquiry demands it.

Question.--Please explain 1 Cor. 15:29.

Answer.--The word "for" in the Greek signifies "on behalf of." The thought of the Apostle seems to be that our immersion into death is made on behalf of the "dead," not those who are in the tomb, but those who are nominally alive, though under sentence to death because of sin, "dead in trespasses and sins," dead in God's sight, condemned in Adam. We would not need to sacrifice anything were it not for the dead and dying

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condition of the world, and it is on their behalf (to bring them to Christ or to serve them after they are brought to Him, and to shine as lights in the world, reprovng sin) that it is necessary for us to lay down our lives. Therefore, while our sacrifice is no part of the ransom price, it is, as Paul expresses it in his letter to the Colossians (1:24), a filling up of "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake."

Question.--Please harmonize 1 Pet. 3:19,20 and 1 Pet. 4:6 with other Scriptures stating that the dead "know not anything."

Answer.--For explanation of the former passage see TOWER for July 15, '94. With this 1 Pet. 4:6 has no connection. It refers to the preaching of the Gospel to men resting under the Adamic penalty. In the Lord's estimation the entire race is dead, even though some have a measure of what we call "life." So our Lord expressed it when he said to one, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." (Luke 9:59,60.) We do not understand by this that our Lord required the disciple to absent himself from the funeral of his own father; but the young man was already a disciple (Matt. 8:21), and his thought probably was to leave the Lord's service and serve his father until his death. Our Lord knew that if he served

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his father for several years, other business or pleasure would crowd upon him, and he might never return to the higher service.

Those of the "dead" who hear the Gospel and accept it are reckoned as passed from death unto life, as translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. Thenceforth, though men

continue to judge of them according to the flesh, and by the outward appearance, they are judged by God according to the intents of the mind, here rendered "spirit."

Question.--What did the Lord mean when he said, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

Answer.--Nicodemus was no doubt acquainted with the fact that John the baptist had conducted a ministry, calling upon the people to repent of their sins and reform their lives, and that those who accepted his teaching were immersed in water as signifying that change of life. Our Lord and the apostles seem to have continued the arrangement to a considerable extent, preaching likewise, Reform ye, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. This water baptism became, therefore, to the Jews a symbol of reformation of heart and life. As only a mere fragment of the conversation with Nicodemus is reported, it is fair to suppose that the entire teaching and custom of our Lord with reference to the conditions for entrance into the Kingdom He preached were discoursed upon. In this conversation our Lord seems to bring out the fact that such a baptism unto repentance was not sufficient to insure entrance into the Kingdom, but that as the baptism symbolized a reformation, and thus the birth of a new character, it must needs be supplemented with the begetting of the spirit before the Kingdom privileges could be claimed. Hence it was that they were exhorted not only to be symbolically begotten and born to a reformed life, by baptism in water, but also to seek the begetting and birth of the spirit to the spirit nature.

In this connection it is well to remember that the Jews addressed by John and the disciples of Jesus were already God's people by covenant, and were already reckonedly justified; but that on account of disobedience to their covenant they needed to reform, and to return again to harmony with God in order that they might be fit subjects for the privileges and liberties of the Gospel age; namely, to become sons of God through begetting of the spirit now, and through birth of the spirit in the resurrection.

For other suggestions on this conversation see DAWN, VOL. I., pp.277-282. On the subject of baptism see TOWER, June 15, '93.

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WARNING TO THE DISCIPLES.

--JUNE 7.--Luke 22:24-37.--

Golden Text--"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."--Phil. 2:5.

ALTHOUGH the twelve apostles had been for three years in very intimate association with Jesus and had been greatly benefited and blessed by the association, they had yet many things to learn, and one of the last lessons that Jesus endeavored to impress upon them was that of humility and self-forgetful service of others. The occasion of this lesson was furnished by a little discussion among them on the evening of the last supper, as to which should be greatest. The context seems to indicate that the discussion originated with Peter; for while they all seem to have been involved, or at least interested in the discussion, and all were addressed in the Lord's reply, a pointed portion of the answer was addressed specially to Peter. Peter was one of the most prominent and active of the apostles, and by his zeal and energy he naturally became a leading one, as he himself probably realized in a measure, and the others doubtless conceded.

But the Lord realized what the apostles evidently did not, that even a very little prominence may become a dangerous snare unless it be coupled with great humility. Hence the warning to the disciples, and especially to Peter, against the ambition for self-exaltation and preferment. The warning lesson was given by an apt illustration, Jesus himself, their Lord and Master, performing for them the most humble service, washing their feet. (Compare Luke 22:1,24; John 13:1,13-17.) To the illustration he also added his words of counsel, showing how different must be the disposition among his disciples from that which characterizes the godless world.

"And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors." Thus he called attention to the fact that the disposition of the world is toward tyranny on the one hand, and servility on the other; the one class becoming arrogant and self-assertive, and the other class dependent and truckling, both of which are ignoble traits of character which he desired to see entirely eliminated from all of his disciples. "But ye shall not be so [Ye shall not cultivate in yourselves a spirit of arrogant pride, by seeking to lord it over others; nor shall ye cultivate in others a spirit of truckling servility, unworthy of noble manhood], but [on the other hand, cultivate in yourselves the spirit of humility and loving service, "in honor preferring one another"; and thus, also, by example, show others how becoming and beautiful is true worth of mind and heart linked with loving, self-forgetful humility] he that is greatest among you [he that has superior ability of one kind or another, let him not allow his talent to be offset by a corresponding

weakness of character which tends to self-glorification, and is easily intoxicated with the spirit of pride and selfish ambition, but let him think soberly of himself, realizing how far short he is of actual perfection], let him be as the younger [very meek and modest]; and he that [by qualifications and providential circumstances] is chief, as he that doth serve."

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."--Matt. 20:27,28.

Peter, while considering the question of superiority with some measure of self-complacency, little knew how great a trial would in a few hours put the metal of his character to the test. Nor did the other disciples comprehend the critical hour to which they had come. But the Lord fully realized it, and endeavored to prepare them for it; and to Peter he solemnly said, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat [this is no time for considering questions of superiority and self-exaltation; it is a time for sober thought and for humble watchfulness and prayer]. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not [under the coming trial], and when thou art converted [from this disposition, to a sober humility, then] strengthen thy brethren." The other brethren would also need strengthening, and Peter's hopefulness and fervent devotion and leading characteristics would be of great service to them; but not until he himself should first come into the proper attitude. But Peter, still unconscious of his weakness and his need, though full of loving loyalty to the Lord, replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee into prison and to death." But Jesus knew his weakness, and said, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me"; and it was so. So great was the trial that all the disciples were in dismay, and though they loved the Lord, yet in fear they all forsook him and fled (Matt. 26:56); and while Peter, loth to leave him, followed him afar off, yet by and by his devotion succumbed to his fears so that he openly denied him.

How much Peter needed the Lord's prayer and warning, and how graciously the Lord considered his need! But while we thus view Peter's error and Peter's need, as well as the needs of all the disciples, let us not forget our own; for we also are men of like passions: a very little exaltation, a very little success or praise or preferment, often serves to engender a pride of heart

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which becomes manifest to others in unbecoming self-inflation and self-exaltation. Let us guard against these tendencies by prayer and by the cultivation of humble, sober thought, remembering always

the inspired teaching, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth"; and with the apostles, let our rejoicing be this,--"the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom [the wisdom of this world which depends on self and takes credit to self], but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."-- 2 Cor. 1:12.

While the words of warning were solemnly given, the Lord did not forget to give them also words of encouragement, pointing them to the glory to follow the present scenes of suffering and humiliation, saying, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Yes, the end of all the humiliation and cross-bearing and suffering according to the will of God in this present time was to be the glory of the kingdom and joint-heirship with Christ. But none can gain that glory except by the way of present humiliation and cross-bearing. "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." "And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."--Luke 9:23; 14:27; Matt. 10:38.

This present Gospel age is the appointed time for this cross-bearing, when all the true members of the body must "fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of the Christ"; for the body, as was also the Head, must be subjected to the discipline of suffering and thereby be proved worthy to reign with him. It is important, therefore, that we realize this; for if we turn aside from the path of humiliation and daily cross-bearing, and strive for present exaltation and preferment, we are forgetting the very conditions upon which the future exaltation depends, and seeking instead the mean rewards of the present.

In verses 35-37 the Lord indicated that the disciples would henceforth meet with changed conditions in their work. Hitherto he had sent them out without purse or scrip or shoes (Mark 6:7-11) to preach the gospel of the Kingdom to a covenant people whose duty it was to receive and entertain the messengers of the Lord, and whose receiving or rejecting of them would be a test of their fidelity to God as his covenant people. In receiving the disciples of Christ they were to that extent receiving Christ, and the Father also whom he represented--"He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."--Matt. 10:40.

In thus going forth under the Lord's direction, and as his representatives, the disciples had lacked nothing, and great success attended their labors; for the common people heard them gladly, and were greatly moved by their teachings and their works. But henceforth they would find all this changed; "for," said he,

"I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And he was reckoned among the transgressors; for the things concerning me have an end [the prophecies concerning me are about to be fulfilled in my crucifixion]." Israel as a nation had now rejected Jehovah's Anointed, and were about to crucify him; and henceforth the name of Jesus would be a name of reproach, and his disciples would be hated and despised, and their teachings denounced.

Consequently the instruction he would now give them would be the very reverse of that formerly given; --viz., that henceforth they should go out in no wise dependent upon the people to test their loyalty to God which had already been disproved; but they should provide for themselves such things as they should need, and thus, being independent of the people, show them that self-denying zeal for God which would gladly espouse an unpopular cause with no hope of earthly gain, and for it endure reproach and persecution that thereby they might recover some from the blindness and sin into which the nation had stumbled.

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The instruction to provide themselves with swords, and the statement that two were enough, was probably merely to show that though there were at hand these weapons of defence he would not permit their use, but that he gave himself up a free-will offering for the sins of the world. When he was betrayed he sought not to escape, but, knowing the plot beforehand, he deliberately went to the place where they would seek him; when he was falsely accused, he opened not his mouth; when Peter unsheathed the sword in his defence, he ordered it to be put away, and immediately healed the wound of his enemy; and while twelve legions of angels were at his service for the asking, he asked not. Thus he freely gave his life a ransom for many; and though in him was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, yet he was numbered with the transgressors, condemned as a law-breaker, and crucified between two thieves.

The golden text of this lesson is aptly chosen,-- "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Amen, so let it be.

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CHRIST JESUS CRUCIFIED.

--JUNE 14--Luke 23:33-46.--

IN these days when the theories of the self-styled higher critics, and all who entertain theories of salvation by evolution, are making advances in every

direction, we are glad to see the "International Lessons" drawing the attention of Bible Students frequently to lessons like the present one, summed up in the Golden Text,--"Christ died for our sins."

The greatest transaction ever made, the purchase of all (over fifty billions) of the slaves of the great task master, Sin, was not appreciated in its day, and has not been appreciated since, except by the very few--in all a "little flock." The masses of mankind since have been doing just what the people did upon the day of our Lord's crucifixion. Some looked, but sympathized little, and appreciated not; others derided and blasphemed; others made sport of it, and still others with rude jest gambled over his raiment. They knew him not; they knew not the value of the work which he performed on their behalf. They appreciated his life to some extent, though very imperfectly, but as for value to his death, they could see none in it. The Apostle, by inspiration, calls attention to their condition, saying that the god of this world had blinded their minds, so that they could not see. False theories, false expectations, false reasonings, and a lack of true consecration to the Lord, have blinded the eyes of many since, not only of the world, but also of those professing to be disciples of Christ.

But to all who do see the real value of the ransom sacrifice "finished" at Calvary and whose eyes have been opened to see the wonderful results which must ultimately flow from that great transaction--to all these the Master's words apply forcibly: "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous persons have desired to see the things which ye see and have not seen them and to hear the things which ye hear and have not heard them." Such as do see this "great light" which illuminates the entire plan of God have certainly great cause for thankfulness; for such have been translated out of darkness into God's marvelous light. We can thank God, too, in the light of the cross, not only for the blessings which have reached us, his Church, who truly believe in his great sacrifice; but also for the assurance that in "due time" this gracious message of redemption through the precious blood will be made known to all, and that all the deaf ears shall be unstopped! In due time all shall see the real significance and merit which were in the great atonement sacrifice given once for all; for it is written concerning the blessed Millennial Day--"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped"; and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."--Isa. 35:5; 11:9.

Aside from the weeping of the disciples, the penitent thief's conduct is the only mark of appreciation of the Lord's righteousness found in this picture. It is suggestive, too, of the fact that, as then, so in every

age, many of the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees have crucified the truth without sympathy or appreciation; often the only sympathizers have been some of those apparently deeply degraded.

But if human hearts were unsympathetic and unappreciative of the great transaction, nature was not, for she, as a witness to the wonderful scene, veiled her face in darkness and trembled. The rending of the vail between the Holy and the Most Holy would seem to teach symbolically that a way into the Holy of Holies had been opened. The Apostle seems to interpret it thus in Heb. 10:19-22.

Our Lord Jesus, faithful and trustful to the last, commended his spirit in his dying moments to the Heavenly Father, whose promises supported him during his eventful life, and now were his strength in his dying hour. Nevertheless, from another account we have the record that at the very last moment the Heavenly Father withdrew from our Lord this support, and left him, probably but for a moment, alone; and his last experiences were those of utter loneliness and complete separation from the Father. This we may know was not

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because of the Father's displeasure; for he had the full assurance that in all things and always he pleased the Father, and the Father subsequently testified to this in raising him from the dead, as said the Apostle Peter. (Acts 17:31.) That experience was necessary, however, because he was taking the place of the sinner. The sinner, Adam (and we all in Adam), had forfeited not only our rights to life, but also to fellowship with the Father; and in being our ransom-price in full, it was necessary that our Redeemer should not only die for us, but that he should die as a sinner, as a felon under sentence of death; and it was appropriate also that he should taste of the proper experiences of the sinner in being fully cut off from the Father's favor and communion. This last experience would seem to have been the most trying through which our dear Redeemer passed. It was then, as on no other occasion, that his soul sent forth the agonizing cry, "My God! my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"

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THE objectionable Post Office ruling, unfavorable to our mailing of
tracts and DAWNS, has been withdrawn. Join with us in acknowledging
to God the answer of our united prayers; and in using effectually
this "open door."

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A Brother residing in St. Louis reports preservation from the terrible
tornado which recently visited that city. He says, "The storm
did damage all around us, but we escaped injury or damage."

In another quarter all the houses were wrecked but two. One of these
unharmed is a barber shop owned by a son of a sister in the truth. This
suggests not only the Lord's power to protect whom he may please,
but also his interest in and care over the friends of his saints.

We anticipate that there will be some remarkable preservations during
the fierce trouble, after the Church has been glorified.

THE "new branch" of the work prospers. Bro. Draper is now in Eastern
New York and Pennsylvania, Bro. McPhail in Missouri and Kansas
and Bro. Cone in Illinois. A blessing seems to attend their efforts.
They aim to build up and not to tear down the most holy faith. They

are blessed themselves as well as a blessing to others. The Colporteur work is blessed also. MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., is in preparation in French and in Polish and VOL. III. in Swedish. Over 500,000 copies of VOL. I. are now in circulation. The signs of the times are awakening some to study who heretofore scoffed. Let us all take courage for greater diligence, thanking our Lord for the privilege of being his "servants" to feed his "household."

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VIEWS FROM THE TOWER.

THE North American Review has recently published four articles from the pen of Hon. Wm. E. Gladstone, ex-Premier of Great Britain, on the subject of Natural Immortality of the Soul. The subject is ably discussed, from records of earliest times to the present--Biblical and profane. He states his own convictions with becoming moderation. He believes that many confound "survival" of the soul, with "immortality" of the soul, but he does not so err. He sees that the resurrection hope was the one which the Lord and the apostles held out, that the Scriptures do not declare that probation terminates with the present life; that eventually some will "survive," some will be granted immortality and some become extinct in the second death.

We, of course, recognize no man, lay or cleric, as authority upon this or any other subject revealed in God's Word. Whoever speaks in harmony with God's Word deserves respect to that extent. It is the test. We are glad, however, that so able a thinker has drawn attention to the fallacy cherished by so many, and which is the basis of the eternal torment theory--natural immortality --immortality out of Christ. See our issue of Oct. 15, '95.

* * *

People who talk about the barbarism of the past, and the greater genius and ability of the present along lines of Evolution; and particularly all who talk about "Some Mistakes that Moses Made," are respectfully requested to carefully consider the following item:--

"The Prussian government has recently issued an order that the commissary of the army shall use no other meat as food for the army and navy except such as is slaughtered by the Jewish method. The tests made by the chemical and medical departments showed that such meats were far more wholesome and susceptible of preservation. Notwithstanding this the anti-Semitic factions in Saxony and Switzerland enacted laws prohibiting

the Jewish method of slaughtering. But 350 scientific non-Jewish authorities in physics and physiology in leading European universities have declared that the Jewish method is by far the most humane and best adapted means for obtaining animal flesh for food. Many intelligent Christians in European capitals use no meats unless the animal be slaughtered by Jewish methods."

* * *

The general M.E. Conference, recently held at Cleveland, O., demonstrated, what we have already called to attention, that a democratic spirit is at work in that denomination which ere long will transform it, removing the control from the clergy and putting it where God puts it, into the hands of the church.

Speaking of this a daily journal remarked:--

"The next indication, and the most important up to this time, was the action of the seventh district during a meeting discussing lay representation. Almost at the opening of the meeting this resolution was introduced:

"Resolved, that it is the sense of the seventh general conference district that lay representation in the church shall recognize in some form the right of the members of the church to a voice in the election of their representatives.

"This alarmed some of the more conservative members, but it was not enough for the radicals, one of whom offered a substitute, which reads:

"Resolved, that we favor the election of all class leaders, stewards and trustees by direct vote of the adult members of the church.

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"The substitute was lost, but the original motion was passed with hardly a dissenting voice. In the course of the debate there was much complaint of the concentration of power in the clergy, and although most of the speeches were guarded in form, their meaning was unmistakable. One clergyman who was present said that in the matter of church government Methodism is approaching Congregationalism, 'and must inevitably reach that point.'"

This will have a bearing upon the coming Protestant federation. As the people tend toward freedom and power, the ministers will all the more seek to hold their present position. Before long they will see that their interests will be best conserved by accepting the proffered hand of "the historic Episcopacy."

* * *

"When the priests spoke of the Czar as the God-selected

man, the God-ordained man, my blood grew warm. It is not true that God selected this Czar to rule and rob a hundred millions of human beings. It is all an ignorant, barbaric, superstitious lie--a lie that pomp and pageant, and flaunting flags and robed priests, and swinging censers cannot change to truth."
--Robert Ingersoll.

Very rarely are we able to quote the great Infidel with approval; but we can endorse him heartily when he assails the theory of "the divine right of kings." Yet this same doctrine supports all the thrones of "Christendom." The Church of Rome set the example, followed by the Greek and the Anglican churches. Her head, the Pope, claimed authority as Christ's representative to supply the thrones of earth with rulers, and to call them divisions of Christ's Kingdom ("Christendom"). When the other systems broke away from Papacy, they carried along her doctrines and practices on many subjects, including this one.

All of these kingdoms have over and over again demonstrated their unlikeness to Christ's Kingdom; cruel, selfish and bloody they all have been and are, and the Czar's is one of the worst of them. At the recent coronation of the Czar and Czarina this false doctrine of the "divine right" of kings to squander the substance of their subjects was illustrated. The gown worn by the Czarina is reported to have cost two hundred thousand dollars; the carriage in which she rode was "worth almost its weight in gold"; the harness of its six horses cost eighty thousand dollars; and every thing else was proportionately gorgeous and wasteful. The forty millions of dollars wasted in this vain coronation show were wrung from his poor subjects, who in their ignorance almost worship him. To charge the misrule of earth upon our gracious Creator from whom cometh every good and perfect gift is blasphemy. Thank God! very shortly now the world will witness the close of "the times of the Gentiles" and the beginning of "the times of restitution." The desire of all nations will come when "the powers that be" shall give place to him whose right the Kingdom is, and who will cause that God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

* * *

"The excitable and superstitious people of Madrid have distinguished themselves by a gorgeous religious ceremony as a means of invoking the aid of the Almighty in bringing to a speedy close the devastating Cuban war. It is said to have been a most striking and singular demonstration. At least one hundred and fifty thousand persons joined in the religious procession which marched the streets of the city, so say the dispatches, while nearly the whole of the population showed signs of deep enthusiasm.

"But what avails such religious mummery. The prayers that ascended bore no plea for justice or mercy, but implored instead that Spain might triumph in her cruel and barbarous warfare against a people striving to throw off the chains of slavery, and establish their own independence."

As we clipped the above from a secular journal we thanked God that he is raising up, outside the nominal churches, those who can see principles of justice, and point the people to them.

* * *

The subject of baptism is being stirred up considerably in various quarters. While two congregations of the "Disciples" or "Christian" denomination (which has always made "baptism for the remission of sins" its specialty) concluded to receive members without baptism, the Methodists are discussing the removal of the rule which for years has prevented its membership

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from practicing immersion, if they had been sprinkled in infancy. One minister who favored the change remarked that this rule had driven thousands of Methodists into Baptist churches.

The following will show that Presbyterians also are forced to consider the subject. The result no doubt will be that within a few years all denominations will remove restrictions, and permit each individual to choose for himself. And this in turn will prepare for the great confederation which will take form and power just before the total wreck of Babylon. The matter referred to is a second letter from Rev. A. T. Pierson to the Philadelphia Presbytery, which the Philadelphia Press says was in substance as follows:--

"I had foreseen that my course might compel a change of denominational connection, but I have preferred that such sundering of former ties should become necessary by your act rather than mine.

"I can only say that to submit myself to baptism as a believer had come to be a condition of my peace and of unclouded fellowship with God. For years the conviction grew upon me that the basis of infant baptism is traditional and ecclesiastical, rather than Scriptural; and side by side with this conviction grew another; viz., that by New Testament standards baptism is the

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act of a believer confessing Christ as Savior and Lord, and by typically claiming identification with him in his death, burial and resurrection. Hence I came, somewhat slowly and reluctantly, I confess, to the conclusion that I had never been baptized in a New Testament

sense, and, therefore, should yield my implicit obedience to a plain command.'

"It must, however, be my solace that whatever discord it may create in my business relations, it has brought conscious harmony with God, consistency with gospel teaching and practice, and liberty to preach a full gospel message, from which nothing is eliminated by a tortuous exegesis. As your action in my case seems to compel my withdrawal, perhaps you will forbear with me if I first state briefly why I have previously stated that 'this act was not meant by me as a change of denomination.'

"Not only was it very natural preference not to have changed my church relations after forty years of such identification, but I have ventured to hope my divergence from Presbyterian doctrine and usage might not be deemed radical and fundamental. Even while doubting the legitimacy of infant baptism, I have never questioned the right of parental covenant or the privilege of infant consecration, nor, indeed, the peculiar relation sustained by the children of believers to the Church of God; but I cannot see the warrant for applying to infants an ordinance meant for regenerate believers, and implying a voluntary putting on of Christ.

"It seems to me to lower the dignity of baptism to encourage a loose administration of a sacramental ordinance, and to lead to at least a modified form of baptismal regeneration, however the latter may be disclaimed.

"While thus holding substantially the same views as most of the godliest Presbyterians I have known, it is not yet clear to me that my Baptist brethren have a Scriptural warrant for making immersional baptism the condition of church membership and of approach to the Lord's table, which implies, also, a serious barrier to fellowship with other denominations. Hence, while largely sympathizing with the Baptist position in other respects, I had hoped that the body of disciples to which I had so long been attached might prove sufficiently flexible to allow me to continue among them.

"Had I this act again to perform I would only do it more promptly, for in the nature of the case there could be no motive prompting it but a desire to fulfill all righteousness.

"If, after the hearing of this final statement, the Presbytery still regards my position as a renunciation of my life-long connection with the Presbyterian body, I can only request that my name be erased from the roll as one who has withdrawn to another body of Christians, and I will return the letter which your action has revoked.' Dr. Pierson concluded by thanking the Presbytery for its 'very considerate course' toward him."

The Presbytery was as much in doubt as before as to what action it should take, and held the matter for further consideration.

* * *

A missionary in India notes that the census of 1891 revealed the fact that while 500,000 had been nominally converted from 1881 to 1891 there had been an increase of population of 30,000,000 during the same period. In this he sees the futility of hoping to convert the world by present agencies. He is now hoping and praying--"Thy Kingdom come."

* * *

We live in a day of wonders and rumors of wonders. The most skeptical age is fast becoming the most credulous in all matters related to invention. It is an enforced credulity. The following, from the Philadelphia Press, relates to the latest marvels. Should it prove true, it will render useless present power machinery--such as engines, boilers, etc., and throw out of work nineteen coal-miners out of every twenty.

"In addition to the magic names of Edison and Tesla two other electricians now claim attention. They are McFarlan Moose and Dr. W. W. Jacques. Mr. Moose has attacked the glow lamp problem and seems to have solved it, getting light without heat, and Dr. Jacques has attacked the coal pile and gets electrical energy, which can be used for any purpose, by the direct oxidation of carbon without the loss of energy through heat, as occurs in the ordinary combustion of coal. By heating carbon with caustic soda and passing air through the liquid mass of soda Dr. Jacques obtains 82 per cent. of electrical energy from his coal, which burned in a boiler in ordinary manner would give only 6 per cent. of electrical energy.

"This is revolutionary enough, to be sure, but Mr. Moose seems to cap it at the other end of the wire, for he is able to take the ordinary commercial current of electricity, and, by using a converter in a vacuum, to transform it into a current of such a character that it will light up a vacuum tube with a beautiful glow. His converter, the electrician says, costs but \$1 against Tesla's \$10,000 oscillator, and the amount of energy that is represented in actual illumination is vastly increased. Not only that, but his entire apparatus is simplicity itself."

Mr. Edison also has a new and powerful light--an X-ray light--from a "Crooke's tube." The lights, and powers, and machinery for the Millennium are rapidly preparing, and the whole world bears witness and marvels, but believes not in the great event. Mistaught, it is facing to the West instead of the East. Heeding the "traditions of the elders," it is looking to its own efforts to establish righteousness, and sees not the Millennial dawn, the plan of the ages consummating, the time at hand, the Kingdom come, and the

day of vengeance near, to be followed by the results of the great ransom--"times of restitution."

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MODERN DELUSIONS.

THIS ARTICLE FROM THE PEN OF REV. DR. GORDON, ENGLAND, IS IN REMARKABLE ACCORD WITH THE PRESENTATIONS OF MILLENNIAL DAWN.

"RITUALISM is an ecclesiastical eccentricity into which men of unquestionable piety and consecration have fallen. But at the risk of a seeming breach of Christian charity I must classify it where its origin and history place it, among the strong delusions which have come in to corrupt the Church and despoil it of the simplicity that is in Christ. Most gladly do I bear tribute to the humble self-denial which many of the Ritualistic priests are practising, and to the much sound theology which they are setting forth from their pulpits. Nevertheless, I must remind you how often, in the history of the Church, the highest saintship has been found in intimate conjunction with the lowest superstition.

"John Henry Newman, in a work which he put forth as a justification for his departure to Rome, makes this striking concession. In speaking of holy water and some other elements of the Roman Catholic ritual, he declares that originally they were 'the very

INSTRUMENTS AND APPENDAGES OF DEMON WORSHIP,'

though 'sanctified by adoption into the church.' Literally true is this statement, and as comprehensive as true, for it covers almost every element and particular of the Ritualistic service.

"Going into a church where this system is in vogue you see the congregation turning reverently toward the east at certain stages of the service. It seems innocent enough to assume this position, though you know no reason for it. But open your Bibles to the eighth chapter of Ezekiel, and there hear God denouncing the abominations which Israel is committing by mingling the worship of Babylon with the service of God. Among these abominations was the spectacle in the 'inner court of the Lord's house' of 'about five and twenty men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.' Such is unquestionably the origin of the eastward posture--a relic and remnant of primitive sun-worship. In the same chapter

of Ezekiel there is a reference to the ceremony of 'weeping for Tammuz,' Tammuz being another name for the pagan god Osiris. Remember that, if in the Ritualistic church you see some making

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THE SIGN OF THE CROSS,

this was originally a pagan and not a Christian ceremony; for though X, the initial letter of Christ, very early became a Christian symbol, the T-shaped cross was originally simply the mystic Tau--the initial letter of Tammuz, and this sign was used in Babylonish worship and emblazoned on Babylonish vestments fifteen hundred years before the crucifixion of Christ. If the Ritualism is sufficiently advanced to make use of

THE WAFER

in the Communion, turn again to the description of Jewish apostacy contained in Jeremiah 45:19, where the Israelites confess, 'We burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink-offerings unto her, and we did make our cakes to worship her.' Here the pedigree of the wafer is suggested, and if one will examine the literature of the subject, we challenge him to resist the conclusion that it has come down directly from this Babylonish cake. This cake was round, for the reason that it was an image or effigy of the sun, and was worshipped as such, and when it became installed as part and parcel of Christian worship the shape was strenuously insisted on, and is to this day. John Knox, in referring to this fact, says with his usual vigor of speech: 'If, in making the roundness, the ring be broken, then must another of his fellow cakes receive the honor to be made a god, and the crazed or cracked miserable cake that was once in hope to be made a god must be given to a baby to play withal.'

LIGHTED CANDLES.

"So, too, in regard to that which is universally characteristic of Ritualism, the lighted candles about the altar. In the Apocryphal Book of Baruch there is a minute and extended description of the Babylonish worship, with all its dark and abominable accessories. Of the gods which they set up in their temples it is said that 'their eyes be full of dust through the feet of them that come in.' And then it is added that the worshippers 'light for them candles, yea more than for themselves, whereof they cannot see one.' In the pagan worship at Rome, which was confessedly borrowed largely from Assyria and Egypt, we have accounts of processions in which surpliced priests marched with wax candles in their hands, carrying the images of the

gods, and we find a Christian writer in the fourth century ridiculing the heathen custom of 'lighting of candles to gods as if he lived in the dark,' which he certainly would not have done had the practice formed any part of Christian worship.

HOLY WATER, ALTARS, INCENSE, ETC.

"And time would fail me to tell of the confessional, so closely reproducing that imposed on the initiates in the ancient mysteries, and of holy water, whose origin has already been pointed out, and of ceremonies and vestments nameless and incomprehensible.

"Granting, for the sake of charity, that altars and incense were borrowed from Jewish worship, which things indeed were done away in Christ, it still remains true that the great bulk of the Ritualistic ceremonies were originally part and portion of primitive idol worship. I am ready to challenge anybody who will make a candid investigation of the subject to disprove it.

THE CLAIM OF NEWMAN.

"But what if it be said with Newman that these things are 'sanctified by adoption into the Christian Church?'

"Our answer would be, Alas, how has the Christian Church been unsanctified by their adoption! For of

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what are they the accessories? What have they brought in with them as they have crept stealthily back into the sanctuaries that were once purged of them? These two central errors--baptismal regeneration and transubstantiation--falsehoods of Satan which have done more to deceive souls, and accomplish their present and eternal undoing, than is possible for the strongest language to set forth.

"Concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation, let me quote the words of a godly English rector, whose soul is stirred within him as he is compelled to see what he calls 'the centre and sum of the mystery of lawlessness' gaining recognition in his own church. He says: 'The crowning error in the process of Satanic inspiration is this, that the priesthood possesses a divine power to locate the Lord Jesus Christ on an earthly altar, and to lift Him up under the veils of bread and wine for the adoration of the people.' It is in this blasphemous fraud that the Apostle Paul's prophecy finds its accurate fulfilment. Of the apostacy forerunning the second coming of Christ, he says that the deluded followers of the lawless one should believe the lie. 'Of all the impostures that the father of lies ever palmed upon a credulous world this doctrine, which, both logically and theologically, repeats millions of times the humiliation

to the blessed Redeemer necessarily transcends all.' It is worthy by pre-eminence to be called the lie.

THE ABOMINATION.

"Admitting now that Ritualism is of pagan origin, what is the conclusion to which we are brought? To this: that by its revival in the Church there is a repetition of that sin which God so constantly denounces in the Scriptures as an abomination--the mingling of the worship of demons with the worship of God. Here we go expressly by the Book. In Deuteronomy (32:17), when the Israelites are charged with provoking the Lord to jealousy by strange gods, the ground of offence is declared to be that 'they sacrificed unto devils, not to God.' In the Septuagint version of Psalm 96:5, it reads: 'For all the gods of the nations are demons.' And in 1 Cor. 10:20, it is written: 'The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice unto demons and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons.' Dr. Tregelles, commenting on this last passage, says: 'Did the ancient heathen think they were adoring evil spirits--demons--when they sacrificed to their gods and demi-gods--when they honored Jupiter and Hercules? And yet the Scripture thus teaches us that the worship did actually go to demons; it was thus directed by Satan. And this put the idolatrous nations under the distinct tutelage of demons, whose power showed itself among them in many ways. We should form, I believe, a very inadequate estimate of Romish idolatry if we were to overlook the solemn fact that it is demon worship commingling itself with that of the living and true God, so that Romish nations stand under demoniacal tutelage, just as did the Gentiles of old.' And this conclusion accords as closely with the teachings of history as with the teaching of Scripture.

SATAN THE REAL POPE.

"How can we account for the course of the Roman apostacy for the last twelve hundred years--that career of blood and blasphemy unmatched by anything in human history, except under the supposition that behind the scene it is Satan who is the real pope and his subordinate demons who are the real cardinals --that just as through the mystery of godliness the Holy Spirit became incarnated in the body of Christ to guide and enlighten it, so through the 'Mystery of Iniquity' the evil spirit became incarnated in the great apostacy to inspire it with 'all deceivableness of unrighteousness.' Is then Ritualism an ecclesiastical pastime --a harmless freak of religious aestheticism? So it seems to many, even of those who have no affiliation with it. But look at it just as it is. Trace the history of the ceremonies piece by piece back to their original

source, till you find that true of almost every one of them which Newman admits of a part of them, that they were 'the very instruments and appendages of demon worship,' and then imagine the exultation among these demons as they see Christian priests, clothed in their paraphernalia, marching in their idolatrous processions and preaching their delusive doctrines. And how must their joy be enhanced by the anticipation of the yet greater triumphs still to come in the culmination of idolatry and man-worship.

THE ANTICHRIST.

"Some, looking for a future infidel Antichrist, have imagined how easily some master genius, inspired with infernal energy and magnetism, might evoke a worldwide allegiance to himself, and out of the restless elements of Socialism, Atheism and Paganism get himself worshipped as a god.

"But I ask you to look not at what may be possible, but at what has actually been accomplished along the line which we are considering, and this, too, not merely in the first centuries of the papacy but in our own day. It is hardly more than fifty years since the Tractarian movement began in Oxford. From among the company of its originators we may select two, Newman and Manning, as noble and sincere souls, so far as we can judge, as any age of the Church has produced. But they came under the fascination of Ritualism; and it threw its spell little by little over their minds. Watch their course from the beginning to the present day. Observe the mental struggles, the ill-concealed reluctance, as fold after fold of mediaeval delusion closes about them. Almost can we hear cries of pain here and there as the process of branding the conscience with a hot iron goes on. But at last the work is complete; they have reached old age and with it the dotage of superstition. And where do we find them now? Prostrate on their faces before a defiled man; all the ascriptions which could be claimed by a god on earth they yield without reluctance to the Pope. Infallibility in his decrees, indefectibility in his conduct they now ascribe to him who sits upon the throne of Rome. Cardinal Manning, speaking for the line of Popes, says: 'In the person of Pius IX. Jesus reigns on earth, and He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.' Words, which as I read them, constrain me

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to ask of this sovereign: 'Art thou the Antichrist that was to come, or do we look for another?'

"Cardinal Newman, voicing the sentiment of the Church, which he calls 'a never-failing fount of humanity,

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equity, forbearance and compassion,' uses, with emphasis, these words: 'We find in all parts of Europe scaffolds prepared to punish crimes against religion. Scenes which sadden the soul were everywhere witnessed. Rome is the one exception to the rule. The Popes, armed with a tribunal of intolerance, have scarce spilt a drop of blood: Protestants and philosophers have shed it in torrents'--so 'drunk with the blood of martyrs' that she does not even know that she has been drinking!

"Here is the goal which the advance-couriers of Ritualism have reached in half-a-century; is it unlikely that the thousands of clergymen and laymen who have within a few years entered upon the same path will fail to arrive at the same destination?"

THE ATTEMPT OF RITUALISM.

"To sum up this part of our subject, then, I believe that Ritualism is a desperate but marvelously insidious attempt of the great enemy to regain for the Man of Sin what was wrested from him by the Reformation. It is a scheme so fascinating that already many of the very elect [?] have been deceived by it, and are being led back to Rome as sheep to the slaughter. To such I would commend again the solemn words of Tregelles: 'A recurrence to Romish connection, a recommending in any way with the maintenance of Romish idolatry, would place a Protestant nation again under the sway of those demons to whom idolatrous worship really ascends, whether the name under which they are adored be that of Jupiter or Simon Peter, the Apostle of Christ.'

"All this is hard to say for one who prefers the charity which covers a multitude of faults to the criticism which lays them bare. And in dwelling on this subject we are not insensible to the perversions of another kind which have crept into our non-liturgical bodies. For, so far as we know, the liturgical churches have not fallen into the cooking stove apostacy which is turning so many of our church basements into places of feasting; nor have they been ensnared with the entertainment heresy which sets up all sorts of shows and exhibitions for amusing the unchurched masses into an interest in the gospel. We deplore these things, and here and now lift up our warning against them as another device of the enemy for corrupting and enervating the Church of God.

"But while considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted, we must none the less warn our neighbors against the fatal infatuation of Ritualism. We take up a Ritualistic catechism, and find it streaked through and through with the tinge of the scarlet woman--baptismal regeneration, eucharistic sacrifice, apostolic succession, prayers for the dead, intercession of departed

souls,--we find its eminent author so enamored of the papacy that he draws away from all Protestant bodies and embraces her, declaring that the three chief branches of the holy Catholic Church are the Church of Rome, the Greek Church and the Anglican Church, and that the body thus formed is the true Church Catholic, 'because she endures throughout all ages, teaches all nations, and maintains all truth.' When we find Protestant ecclesiastics so smitten with what the reformers used to call 'the trinkets of Antichrist,' as to allow themselves little by little to be reinvested with the cast-off clothing of Babylon, so that a recent writer describes the Bishop of Lincoln as 'adorned with mitre and cloth of gold, his orpheys so lavishly decorated with amethysts, pearls, topazes and chrysolites set in silver, as fairly to dazzle the beholder'; when we see all these we are moved to repeat with solemn earnestness the warning of Bradford, the Smithfield martyr, 'O England, beware of Antichrist; take heed that he doth not fool thee.'

THEOSOPHY AND SPIRITUALISM.

"Theosophy is the latest religion of transcendentalists. In it, the attenuated unbelief of our times is seeking to find relief from the ennui of denial. How to describe that which takes for itself the name of 'Occultism,' how to give an idea of doctrines which claim to be hidden from all but the initiated, we do not know. It is enough to say that substantially it is Buddhism seeking conquests in Christian lands; 'the light of Asia' offering itself to those who have turned away from 'the light of Christ.' It has its circles in many of our great cities, where its occult philosophy is diligently studied; though its following is small compared with that of Spiritualism, it being the religion of the literary elite, as the other is of the common people. If we question it in regard to its doctrines, it tells us that they are the same as those of 'the sacred mysteries of antiquity.' It inculcates a very attenuated philosophy of evolution; it teaches the pre-existence and the transmigration of souls, and instructs its disciples how by a rigid asceticism they may cultivate what is called

'THE INTUITIONAL MEMORY,'

by which they can enter into profound recollection of what they knew in far distant ages. In a couplet which it is fond of repeating it declares that

"Descending spirits have conversed with man
And told him secrets of the world unknown."

And these words give the most reasonable hint of its origin. For its creed is 'the doctrines of demons from beginning to end.' No personal devil, that which is mystically called the devil being but the negative and opposite of God; no atonement except man's 'unification'

with himself; no forgiveness of sin, souls being required to wear away their guilt by self-expiation; miracles, mysteries, ultimate deification--these are specimen articles of its delusive creed. Its whole character and contents, so far as we can comprehend them, are yet another phase of Satanic delusion. Now if we compare these three systems, counting ritualism as incipient Popery, we find them agreeing remarkably to fill up the outlines of the predicted apostacy. The 'forbidding to marry' realized in the celibacy of Romanism; the enforced continence of Theosophy, and the anti-marriage doctrine of Spiritualism; the 'commanding to abstain from meat' appearing in the superstitious fasts of Ritualism, and the rigid abstinence from flesh enjoined on the initiates of esoteric Buddhism; the doctrines of demons manifested in the magic and idolatry which Ritualism substitutes for the chaste and simple doctrines of ordinance of Christ, and which in many particulars hold a common ancestry with those of Theosophy and Spiritualism; and the fantastic miracle-working

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which characterize them all. All three of these delusions give a practical denial of Christ's second advent--that doctrine at which demons tremble--Spiritualism and Theosophy declaring that in them the promised Epiphany of Christ is taking place; while Ritualism by its doctrine of transubstantiation makes the Communion declare the 'real presence of Christ' in flesh and blood, when the Lord ordained it to declare his real absence 'till He come'--I mean, of course, bodily absence.

AN ERUPTION OF EVIL SPIRITS.

"What now is the prophetic significance of all that we have said? This, it seems to me: that according to the predictions of Scripture we are witnessing an eruption of evil spirits who are again working powerfully along their favorite lines--Ritualism, Superstition and Philosophy.

"We hear much about infidelity and communism 'heading up' in a personal Antichrist. Believing as I do, that Antichrist came long ago, and that he was crowned a few years since in St. Peter's at Rome as the deified man--infallible and supreme, I see in the present aspect of affairs his final bodying forth, rather than his ultimate heading up. As in the case of Christ, so in the case of 'the Man of Sin': the head is revealed first, and the body gathered throughout all generations grows up 'in all things into him who is the head'; for the career of Antichrist is the exact parody and evil counterpart of that of Christ. If you say 'the Antichrist cannot be a system, but must be an individual as certainly as Christ is,' I remind you that the word

Christ does not always stand for a single individual in description; for in 1 Cor. 12 the Apostle describes the body of believers, gathered to the Lord through all time, with its divers gifts and administrations, and this corporate whole, with its many members, but 'all baptized by one spirit into one body' he names Ho Christos --the Christ. So that evil system, with its various offices and administrations, yet baptized into unity by 'the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience,' is the Antichrist. The one is the head of the ecclesia, and the other is the head of the apostasia; but [in each case] the head and the body are so identical that they bear the same personal name.

"But he is called the Man of Sin,' you say, 'and therefore must be an individual.' Not of necessity. For the line of believers, extending through all ages, is declared by the Apostle to be taken out from Jews and Gentiles to 'make of twain one new man.'

"I cannot believe that 'the Mystery of Iniquity,' which Paul declared to be already working in his day, has been toiling on for nearly two thousand years in order to bring forth a single short-lived man, and he so omnipotently wicked that the Papal Antichrist, with the blood of fifty millions of martyrs on his skirts, is too insignificant a sinner to be mentioned in comparison. And now I hear the objections coming thick and fast. 'But is he not an open infidel since he is said to deny the Father and the Son?' Search your concordances for the meaning of the word 'deny,' and observe how constantly it signifies the denial of apostacy and false profession. But is he not

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THE INCARNATION OF SATAN

since he is called 'the son of perdition?' Yes; Judas was named 'the son of perdition'; and 'Satan entered into Judas Iscariot'; but so far from atheistically denying Christ he openly professed Him, saying, 'Hail, Master,' and then betrayed him with a kiss. But is he not a godless blasphemer, since he is declared to have 'a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies?' The counterfeit of Christ again, for Christ was twice falsely accused of blasphemy, because in claiming to be the Son of God he made himself equal with God, and because he presumed to forgive sins. The Pope is justly accused of blasphemy on both these grounds; for he profanely calls himself God, and assumes to forgive sins. Said Alexander VI.: 'Caesar was a man; Alexander is a God.' But must he not be a Jew, established in Jerusalem, since it is said that 'He sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God?' No. This particular phrase, 'temple of God,' is never in a single instance in the New Testament applied to the temple at Jerusalem, but always to the Church, the Body of

Christ, to its head or to its members, in heaven or on earth. But could the Holy Ghost call that 'the temple of God' which has become apostate? Just as possibly as Christ could call the apostate Laodiceans whom he spues out of his mouth 'the Church in Laodicea.'

"But does not this view commit one to the year-day interpretation, since the career of Antichrist is three years and a half, and the papal system extends through centuries? Yes, for the one instance of prophetic time which has by unanimous consent been fulfilled, the seventy weeks of Daniel is demonstrated to have been upon this scale, since the period was actually 490 years--a day for a year--and this may be taken as a clue to the prophetic time of Revelation. But if the holy Spirit meant years in the Apocalypse why did he not say years? you reply. Why, when he meant churches and ministers and kingdoms and kings and epochs, did he say candlesticks, and stars, and beasts, and horns, and trumpets? Yet, having used these miniature symbols of greater things, how fitting that the accompanying time should also be in miniature! To use literal dates would distort the imagery--as though you should put a life-sized eye in a small-sized photograph.

"I have said that Antichrist is the evil counterpart of Christ. When Satan offered Christ all the kingdoms of the world if he would fall down and worship him, he refused, accepting present rejection and crucifixion, and waiting the Father's time for the kingdoms of the world to become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. The Papal Antichrist accepted the kingdoms of this world when the temptation was presented him, and proceeded to announce himself the 'King of kings' and that the kingdom had come, and that in himself was fulfilled the Scripture, 'He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from river to river, unto the ends of the earth.'

"The Bride of Christ--the Church--was left in the world to share her Lord's rejection and cross, enduring present suffering and widowhood, and waiting for the return of the Bridegroom. But the harlot bride of Antichrist accepts an earthly throne and a present glory, boastfully saying, 'I sit a queen and am no

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widow and shall see no sorrows.' Do we not see that it was this usurpation of the headship of the Church by the Man of Sin; this premature grasping of the kingdom, and the setting up of a mock millennium under the rule of a pseudo-Christ, that destroys the millennial hope of the Church, and has infected generation after generation with

THE DELUSION OF A PRESENT REIGN

and a present kingdom, while Christ is yet absent from his flock? But this enemy of God and his saints must soon come to an end. In Daniel and in Thessalonians this end is predicted in two stages; gradual, and then sudden and complete. 'They shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy unto the end,' says Daniel. 'Whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming,' says Paul in Thessalonians. The consuming process has been going on mightily in our generation by the breath of the Lord's mouth in the worldwide diffusion of the inspired Scriptures. 'And now the devil is come down with great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.' He is putting forth the energy of despair. He is sending his legions to work along various lines, which all centre, visibly, or invisibly, in one head. On the line of sacerdotalism he is seeking to thwart the work of the Reformation by again insinuating popish worship into our churches; on the line of superstition he is aiming to bewitch the godless and curious multitudes through the energy of unclean spirits; on the line of culture he is moving to foist upon the literary elite a diluted Paganism as an extra fine religion. But these things cheer us rather than sadden us, for all the shadows point to the dawn. The Church's salvation means Antichrist's destruction, and the same Scripture which speaks to us so powerfully to-day in the light of evils, 'Yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry,' says also, 'And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen.'

BEWARE OF THE STRONG DELUSIONS OF ANTICHRIST.

"All this which I have set forth I have declared with unutterable sorrow. All this I can think of only with weeping, crying, 'O Bride of Christ, how are they increased who would rob thee of thy chastity!'"

"Men and Brethren: We are here for a candid and courteous discussion of certain great prophetic questions. Among these none are more important as affecting our present testimony than the one upon which I have just now touched.

"I need not remind you that one of the first tasks which the Ritualistic leaders fifty years ago felt called upon to undertake was that of getting rid of the Protestant interpretation of Antichrist as headed by the Pope of Rome. How desperately they wrought at this task will be apparent to those who read Newman's essay on 'The Man of Sin,' and observe especially his earnest wrestling with the ominous saying of Gregory the Great, that 'Whosoever adopts or desires the title of universal bishop is the forerunner of Antichrist.'

"If I must take sides between parties on this question,

my sympathies will be with Latimer and Cranmer and Bradford, whose vision was clarified by the fires of martyrdom, to recognize their persecutor and call him by name, rather than with Manning and Newman, whose eyes are holden by the charm of mediaevalism.

"But our appeal is not to man, but to the sure word of prophecy. I speak rather of The Book than of any human books, and avow my conviction that the Papal 'Man of Sin' was accurately photographed on the camera of prophecy thousands of years ago; that no detective searching for him to-day would need any other description of him than that which is found on the pages of the Bible. Taking those photographs of Daniel and John and Paul, and searching the world upside down for their originals, I am confident that this same detective would stop at the Vatican, and after gazing for a few moments at the Pontiff, who sits there gnawing the bone of infallibility, which he acquired in 1870, and clutching for that other bone of temporal sovereignty which he lost the very same year, he would lay his hand on him and say: 'You are wanted in the court of the Most High to answer to the indictment of certain souls beneath the altar, who were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they bore, and who are crying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?'

"My brethren, let us search the Scriptures anew, and let us be sure that they do not require it of us before we silence our testimony against the Man of Rome [system] as Antichrist."

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

"IS COME" OR "COMING"?

Question.--Some quote 1 John 4:2 and 2 John 7 as evidence that our Lord Jesus is to return in the flesh, claiming that the verb "is come" should be "coming." Is this claim well founded?

Answer.--In reply we give, by the kindness of Bro. J. M. Blose, a written opinion on these two texts furnished him by J. R. Rinehart, Ph.D., Professor of languages in Waynesburg College, a thorough scholar.

After quoting the above passages in Greek, Prof. Rinehart says:--

"(1) The foregoing quotations are from the Emphatic Diaglott of Wilson, purporting to be from the original Greek text of the New Testament. The word *eleluthota* is the accusative, singular, masculine, of the second

perfect participle of the verb *erchomai*, having the same relation to this verb that any other perfect participle has to its verb. It stands with the verb *homolegei* in indirect discourse, and represents a finite, perfect tense, according to ordinary Greek syntax.--Goodwin's Greek Grammar, Nos. 1588, 1288.

"The following translation of the first quotation is, therefore, essentially correct. 'Every spirit that confesseth

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that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is of God.'

"(2) The word *erchomenon* in the second quotation is the accusative, singular, masculine, of the present participle of the verb *erchomai*, and is subject to the

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same rules of syntax as the word above. Its relation to *eiselthon* through *homologountes*, as well as the context, justifies its translation as of past time.--Ibid, No. 1289.

"The translation of the second quotation, therefore, is properly given as follows: 'For many deceivers went forth into the world--those who do not confess that Jesus Christ did come in the flesh.'"

In our issue of March, '87, we published a report from the Professor of Greek in Rochester, N.Y., to the same effect. Indeed, we have never known a Greek scholar to take any other view, and do not believe that any Professor of Greek in any creditable University would hesitate for one moment to pronounce the above and our Common Version rendering correct. Only those who have first of all formed the opinion that our Lord's second advent will be in the flesh find anything whatever in these texts over which to confuse and stumble themselves and others.

TABLETS AND CHRONOLOGY.

Question.--In the TOWER for June 1, '94 (page 2), reference is made to the "Tellel-Amorna tablets" and the deductions of Rev. T. Harrison in "Science," that these corroborate the Bible account.--"The date fixes that of the Bible." You then cite 1 Kings 4:1; Josh. 10:3; and 11. Now my question is,--Do these tablets corroborate your chronology? Or in what way do they fix Bible dates?

Answer.--The word "date" is indefinite and does not indicate any particular moment, hour, day, year, or even century. It would have been better had we said, "The record corroborates that of the Bible." Read the references cited and you will see that none of them give dates. Nor do the "tablets" mentioned give dates. As already pointed out in MILLENNIAL DAWN,

VOL. II., Chap. 2, and again in the WATCH TOWER of May 15, '96 (pages 104-106), dates were not attached to ancient records (sacred or secular),--"The first effort to bring time-order into the world's general history was in the second century of the Christian era." The hitching together of the broken pieces of the world's history is mere guess-work back of the first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536. The Bible chronology which we present, and for which we give chapter and verse, connects from Adam down to Cyrus, 536 B.C., and thus we get the chronology which we present but which is not ours more than yours. God's Word is for us all.

Keeping these facts in memory we should understand Rev. T. Harrison to mean that these "tablets" mention the names of certain prominent generals and kings in Israel and the surrounding nations. These corroborate accounts and names mentioned in the Bible and thus corroborate Bible records (rather than fix Bible dates).

SERVANTS RENDER SERVICE.

Question.--In the WATCH TOWER for March 1, '96, in the treatment of the Sunday School lesson for March 22d, you pointed out "that servant," "his fellow-servants" and the Lord's general "household" in what seems to me an orderly manner; but you failed to particularize whom you understand to be represented by the three parties mentioned--"that servant," "his fellow-servants" and the "household." I can readily recognize the "household" as meaning the believers of this time; and his "fellow-servants" would seem to be associated servants engaged in serving truth to the household; but who is "that servant?" Your article does not say who "that servant" is, and I am somewhat puzzled over it. Could it refer to ZION'S WATCH TOWER? or to the Tract Society?

My second query is,--Should we understand that "that servant" must be divinely inspired, so as to be infallible; and that "his fellow servants" and the "household" would be cut off by his service from fellowship with the Lord through the Scriptures?

Answer.--(1) We purposely avoided making an application of "that servant." We merely corrected a former too careless criticism of the lesson; and showed that the language of the Scripture was so carefully chosen as to leave no room to question its reference to some one servant (animate or inanimate) whom the Lord would specially use in the present time to dispense the present truth to "his fellow servants" as well as to the "household."

The account contains no suggestion of either the inspiration or infallibility of "that servant." This distinction belongs only to the Lord, the Apostles and

the prophets. The whole force of the statement shows "that servant" to be merely a special channel for distributing the truth. His business is not to make truth, but to circulate it;--to put it into the hands of "his fellow servants" and the truth-hungry "household." There certainly is no intimation that the "household" is cut off from access to, or feeding on, the Word of God; neither by "that servant" nor by "his fellow servants." None of the "servants" are to come between the "household" of faith and God's Word. On the contrary, each one of the "household" is to prove all that he accepts as spiritual food, whether he gets it from the Bible himself or from "that servant" or from "his fellow servants." None of these servants are "lords over God's heritage"; their highest privilege will be to serve, and the only difference between

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"that servant" and "his fellow servants" will be that his service will be more general, a wider service.

More perhaps than any other servant, ZION'S WATCH TOWER has opposed the thought that the Church of Christ is composed of a clerical class commissioned to teach, and a lay class not commissioned to teach the divine Word: it specially has held up the inspired words, "all ye are brethren" and "one is your Master"; and has pointed out that all consecrated believers are of the "royal priesthood" each fully commissioned, not to "lord it" over others, but to sacrifice himself in the service of the truth, doing good unto all, especially to the household of faith. So with the servants of Matt. 24:49; service is their only commission, not lordship or self-appointment.

All the members of the "body" are "anointed to preach" the gospel, and instructed to search the Scriptures, as we have heretofore clearly shown. This has been true ever since Pentecost, and is as true as ever to-day. But the plan of the ages, as a general arrangement and "feast," provided by God for his people, was not provided until its due time. Each one who is served with the present truth may invite others to sit down while he joins the servants in ministering to them. There is abundant opportunity for all who desire to be "servants"; for the majority of the household of faith have as yet barely "tasted that the Lord is gracious"--not yet tasted of "the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus our Lord."

IS INTEREST USURY?

Question.--A brother desires your views on Rom. 14:23. Does this apply to other acts of this life? For instance, the brother had a small sum left him, invested and bearing interest. This interest he has collected and used, the principal not being available. Now, from

Ezek. 18:8; Psa. 15:5, and other Scriptures, he is inclined to think he should not receive interest or increase, but not being fully persuaded, he is in doubt. He wishes to know if it is sin to him, as it is not of faith. Please answer privately or through the TOWER.

Answer.--No: we would not think that the brother's case comes under Rom. 14:23. His mind is merely in a quandary. He is merely questioning the subject with a view to doing whatever he considers to be the Lord's will. If he is using reasonable energy to reach a decision, it is not to be considered that meantime he is in the condition of the doubter of Rom. 14:23. But if after he has reached a conclusion in his mind, he violate his conscience, and does not act in accordance with his belief, he will then be under condemnation as a violator of his conscience.

We do not understand the taking of a reasonable interest to be usury. The laws of God under which the Jews were placed left very little room for judgment on their part in any sense. It was decided for them beforehand what they should eat and should not eat, what they should do and what they should not do, and their consciences and judgments of right and wrong were ignored. In the present age, in God's dealing with the Christian Church, it is wholly different. Everything is left to the judgment and nothing is particularized. Upon them that are in Christ Jesus and who are walking not after the flesh but after the spirit, God imposes no special regulations concerning their financial dealings, their food, etc., except such as are implied in the general principles of the New Covenant; namely, truth, righteousness and love.

Under our covenant (according to our understanding) it might sometimes become our duty as well as our privilege entirely to give something away, principal and interest, where love and righteousness would seem to our judgment so to dictate. In another instance it might be entirely proper to loan to another for use and for profit money which we could not use as advantageously ourselves, and it would be proper also to stipulate for a share of the profit, and that share might be either a larger or a smaller share, depending upon the amount of risk involved and the amount of profit made by the user. A reasonable proportion of the profits made would not be "usury" in the sense of oppressive interest or extortion.

On the other hand there might be circumstances under which the acceptance of even a small interest might mean oppression and injury to the neighbor.

If the brother is loaning his money at a high rate of interest, taking advantage of the necessities of the borrower (as pawnbrokers are represented to do), then it would be in the nature of injury. But if the party using the money is making something out of it, and paying a portion of that profit to the brother, it is not usury in the sense of oppressive charge, but interest in

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the sense of reasonable profit. This is the sense that our Lord commended in the parable of the pounds and talents, when he said to the servant, "Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, that at my coming I might have received mine own with usury."

The meaning of the English word "usury" has somewhat changed from early times, and now is always used to indicate oppressive interest. Formerly its meaning was simply interest.

ARE SOME SPARED TO COMPLETE THEIR TRIAL?

Question.--The recent death of a relative has set me thinking. I do not know how it is with the truly consecrated in other places; that is, those of them who have accepted the present truth, whether or not they pass away as rapidly as those who are not fully consecrated. I notice that among the denominations frequently

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their best and most faithful workers are taken (die), while the faithful and physically weak among us are spared. Would this mean that we will all go together?

Answer.--We have ourselves noticed and remarked what you mention. It would seem that the testing of those who have come unto the "harvest" light is to be specially severe and prolonged. The test of endurance is one of the severest; but we have the assurance, though "the love of many shall wax cold, because iniquity shall abound," yet "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. 24:12,13.) If we are together approaching some crisis, so much more necessary is it that we improve the present favorable opportunity to put on the whole armor of God that when the "fiery darts" come we shall be able to quench them and to stand. Note the Apostle's very explicit direction as to the articles constituting this armor (Eph. 6:10-18), not forgetting that they cannot be put on at all until the body be washed and clothed in the garment of Christ's imputed righteousness.--2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 4:7,8,24,25.

However, we do not think it probable that all the living faithful will die and be "changed" together.

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"A CUP OF COLD WATER"

The Lord of the harvest walked forth one day
Where the fields were white with the ripening wheat,
Where those he had sent in the early morn
Were reaping the grain in the noonday heat.
He had chosen a place for every one,
And bidden them work till the day was done.

Apart from the others, with troubled voice,
Spoke one who had gathered no golden grain:
"The Master has given no work to me,
And my coming hither has been in vain.
The reapers with gladness and song will come,
But no sheaves will be mine in the harvest home."

He heard the complaint and he called her name:
"Dear child why standest thou idle here?
Go fill the cup from the hillside stream,
And bring it to those who are toiling near;
I will bless thy labor, and it shall be
Kept in remembrance as done for me."

'Twas a little service, but grateful hearts
Thanked God for the water so cold and clear;
And some who were fainting with thirst and heat
Went forth with new strength to the work so dear;
And many a weary soul looked up,
Revived and cheered by the little cup.
--Selected.

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"THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED."

--JUNE 21.--Luke 24:34-53.--

ALTHOUGH the disciples had been informed concerning our Lord's resurrection, they seem to have but imperfectly comprehended his words. At all events, they evidently were not expecting him to rise from the dead, and hence, when he appeared in their midst, they were greatly affrighted and troubled. Our Lord foreknew how they would regard the matter, and had chosen the most favorable manner for manifesting himself, and communicating to them the wonderful fact of his resurrection. He could have appeared to them as the angel appeared to Moses in the burning bush. They would then have seen a flame, as Moses did, and could have heard his voice, and could have been impressed with the dignity of his presence by being commanded, as Moses was commanded, to take off their shoes because the ground was holy. This would have made a deep impression upon their minds, but it would not have made the kind of impression the Lord

desired to make. It would not have convinced them that their Master, whom they had seen crucified and buried three days before, was no longer dead, but risen and alive.

Our Lord could have chosen another method. He could have appeared as a glorious angel and have manifested something of his spiritual glory, as he did later to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:13-18), and as he did to Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus. He was just as truly a glorious spirit being at this time as he was afterward, and as he will be to all eternity. He had been put to death in the flesh, but, as the Apostle assures us, he had also been quickened (made alive) in spirit. (1 Pet. 3:18.) This change had come to him in his resurrection, just as it is promised that a similar change will come to his faithful Church,--"sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15:43,44.) But had he appeared to the disciples a glorious, shining being, as he appeared to Saul, the effect upon them no doubt would have been similar to the effect upon Saul. They would have fallen before him, and perhaps also have lost their sight as Saul lost his. This might have impressed them powerfully, but it would not have led their inexperienced judgments to accurately connect this glorious being with the man Christ Jesus whom they had followed for three years.

The manner chosen by our Lord for revealing himself was much more favorable for the disciples. He wished to gain their attention, and to avoid anything that would unnecessarily excite them, and hinder them from learning the lessons which he wished to impart. Hence he appeared as a man on several occasions,-- once as a gardener to Mary, again as a stranger to the two who went to Emmaus, and on another occasion;

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and in each case, he revealed his identity by his conversation or by his manner so that they recognized him as their crucified Master,--Jesus. But on the occasion mentioned in this lesson he appeared in a body of flesh and bones, similar to that which had been crucified. The body which they saw was not he for he had been "changed" in his resurrection and was now a spirit being with a glorious body such as John and Saul saw. But he appeared to them in a body of flesh and in ordinary garments specially prepared for the occasion, just as angels (using the same power) had appeared as men previously. Just as our Lord (centuries before he became a man) appeared as a man to Abraham, and ate and talked with him, so now, after he had ceased to be a man, and had been changed and was a spirit being highly exalted, far above angels, he again appeared as a man because this was the best means of communicating

to the disciples the grand truths which he wished to communicate. Hence also he assured them, to allay their fears, that what they saw was not a spirit. He at that time was a spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:17), but they did not see him, but merely the body of flesh which veiled yet represented him; and which, as he intended, helped their imperfect faith and knowledge to grasp the important lesson that he was no longer dead but alive for evermore.

Then he reminded them of his own previous utterances on the subject of his resurrection; he quoted to them and expounded the prophecies which bore the same testimony, and showed them the necessity for the great transaction which he had accomplished, saying, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day." All of this discourse probably is not given, but we may presume, reasonably, that he explained to them particularly the necessity for the ransom-sacrifice, and something concerning the wonderful results which must yet flow therefrom to all the families of the earth.

He was present with them for forty days before his ascension, yet was invisible to the "brethren," except during the few times of his manifestation; and these manifestations were but brief; during all this period of forty days none except the "brethren" saw him; and, as we have seen, they saw him only by reason of the miracle which he performed, appearing in their sight as a man; because human beings cannot see spirit beings. In this our Lord fulfilled his statement made before his death--"Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more."--John 14:19.

Those who hold the view that the flesh of our dear Redeemer given for us (John 6:51) was resumed by him, and constitutes his resurrection body, miss the real lesson taught the disciples during those forty days preceding

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his ascension. The lesson of the occasional appearances, and then in different forms or bodily appearances, and of his vanishing after each manifestation was (1) that he was no longer dead but risen; (2) that his resurrection conditions were totally different from those of the man Christ Jesus.

To imagine the care-worn, thorn-marked features and the wounded hands and feet, of "flesh and bone," to be Christ's resurrection body would be thoroughly inconsistent every way. If his marred, fleshly body is his resurrection body, why did the Apostle so carefully explain that "there is an animal body and there is a spiritual body"? (1 Cor. 15:44) And why tell the saints that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be" in the resurrection? (1 John 3:2.) If we shall be like as we are now, with all of our present blemishes and scars, then it doth appear and surely would be very disappointing

to those who have believed the Lord's word that flesh and blood (human nature) cannot inherit or enter the Kingdom of God, and that therefore we, who are alive and remain unto the second coming of our Lord, must be "changed"--that we may "be like him and see him as he is." Originally a spirit being, our Lord humbled himself and was changed to our nature and was "made flesh" "for the suffering of death" as our ransom price. He then was "made like unto his brethren:" but now, having redeemed us, he has been glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was created, and now his promise is that the "brethren" shall be "changed" and made like unto him and share his glory.--1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:41-46,51-53.

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JUNE 28.--REVIEW STUDIES OF THE QUARTER.

Golden Text.--"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations."-- Luke 24:47.

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DAVID, KING OF JUDAH.

--JULY 5.--2 Sam. 2:1-11.--

Golden Text.--"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice."--Psa. 97:1.

DAVID was a man of a high and varied order of natural ability, a combination of the rare qualities of the successful statesman, warrior, musician and poet. His disposition was, in the main, noble, generous, humble, kind, enthusiastic and heroic. He was reverential toward God, and seemed from his youth to have almost implicit faith in the promises and providences of God. Yet David was not a model saint: there were some strange inconsistencies in his character which stand out the more prominently in contrast with the beautiful and noble traits which fill us with admiration. But since these, so far as he was able to see them, were most sincerely repented of, we can appreciate the humility that led to repentance, and regard David from the same standpoint of that loving and merciful consideration from which God regards all his fallen and weak followers who struggle against inherent depravity, humbly acknowledging their shortcomings, and leaning upon his tender mercy. While in his youth,

when God was about to anoint him king of Israel, it was said of David, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14), the same in many respects might also have been said later, notwithstanding his faults, in view of his deep contrition. This

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statement, however, is not to be regarded as a testimony to the perfection of either the youth or the man, but rather to his fitness for the office to which God had appointed him; and as the office was one of great honor and trust, fitness as God's choice for the office implied a high order of character and ability, especially at the time he was chosen. So it was also in the case of Saul at the time of his anointing, of whom Samuel the prophet said, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?"

The peculiar experiences of David's early life had much to do toward preparing him for his life work as king over Israel. His encounter with the lion and the bear when a shepherd boy, his later conflict with the giant Goliath, his experience at court with Saul, his acquaintance and friendship with Jonathan and others, his flight from the pursuit of Saul, all served to develop and prepare the chosen man for the office he was to fill after the death of Saul. In this school of experience he learned the valuable lessons of courage, fortitude, reliance upon God, how to act wisely under peculiar difficulties and under severe temptations and trials. He also became acquainted with the circumstances and conditions of court life; and his subsequent seven years in exile among other nations acquainted him with their characteristics, and were doubtless of service to him later in knowing how to deal with them. In his exile there gathered around him a company of discontented people, mostly victims of Saul's oppression. Among these were a number of prominent men of the nation, and these were of service to him later.

Thus God not only chose, but trained, his servant for the duties to which he had called him. And this providence in David's case reminds us of God's providences in general, how wisely he adapts means to ends and guides in all things to the accomplishment of his will. Many of the most comforting psalms of David were the results of his hard experiences in this time of his exile. In fact, the peculiar and varied experiences of the man, and the lessons derived from those experiences as expressed in his psalms, have been the comfort and blessing of God's people in all ages since. In a general way, David's experiences correspond to those of the gospel Church whom God is similarly preparing for the Kingdom of heaven. And doubtless it is for this reason that the lessons of David's experience find an echo in so many of our hearts.

The record of David's course from the time of his

anointing to his establishment in the kingdom shows an implicit trust in God--that he who had called and anointed him was able also in his own good time to bring him to the throne and to establish his kingdom. He took no measures whatever to displace Saul, nor to undermine his authority, even when Saul was pursuing him to take his life. And when Saul was unconsciously in his power, so that he could have slain him, he would not put forth his hand to touch the Lord's anointed. He was willing to wait patiently the Lord's time, knowing that what God had promised he was able also to perform; and so, even after Saul's death, he was not in haste to claim the vacated office, but he first inquired of the Lord to know if his time had come.

The Lord's time having come, David was directed to Hebron with his family and the men that were with him and their families, and there, without ostentation or any assertion of his rights, he calmly waited the further indications of providence. "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah"--thus falling in line not only with the divine anointing, but also with their own preferences. Thus the kingdom came to David, not only by divine appointment, but also by choice of the people.

In David's course in all this and in the course of divine providence with him there is a wholesome lesson for the anointed people of God of this age--the gospel Church. Having been called and anointed of God to be kings and priests unto him, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ of his Kingdom and glory, it is our part to wait patiently the Lord's time for that exaltation; and in the meantime, like David, to patiently endure all the discipline which God in his providence sees to be necessary to fit us for the position of authority and power we are to hold in the future, and to exercise with loving consideration for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

On coming to the throne David's course was marked with the same wisdom and magnanimity that had characterized him previously. Among other wise measures the honor he paid to the memory of his deceased rival and enemy is very notable, and without a precedent on the pages of history. David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead to express his appreciation of their kindness in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the ignominy to which the Philistines had exposed them, and giving them a decent burial. This the men of Jabesh had done in remembrance of a kind service Saul had once done for them. (1 Sam. 11:1-11.) And David said to them, "Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing."

How different is this from that evil spirit which

would triumph over the death of a powerful rival and relentless enemy. Instead of doing so, David seemed to call to mind all the good traits of Saul and to lament the evil spirit that had come upon him in his later years and driven him to such a wicked course; and the memory of the love of Jonathan was ever precious to him. In this, more than in any thing else, David triumphed over his enemy.

While David was thus the acknowledged king of Judah, the other tribes of Israel, ignoring the divine anointing of David, made Ish-bosheth, the surviving son of Saul, their king. In this David set up no opposition claims, and his course with reference to the rival kingdom was merely defensive, not aggressive. However, in various battles and skirmishes his forces were victorious; and his strength and influence grew while those of his opponent declined. Would that the same spirit of forbearance and disinclination to assume authority were general among both political and religious leaders. The usual course is for leaders rather to force themselves upon the people--to seek the office, instead of allowing the office to seek the man.

The golden text--"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice"--is prophetic of that blessed time when the antitype of David's throne, the Kingdom of Jehovah's Anointed, our Lord Jesus, shall be established in all the earth. Then indeed may the earth rejoice; for that king will reign in righteousness, and justice and judgment will be the habitation of his throne.

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ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS.

Michigan.

DEAR FRIEND:--I never can be thankful enough that a colporteur introduced the TOWER and DAWNS to my notice. They are to me like a bright light in a very dark place. I lend and give them where I hope they will do the most good. One good old Congregationalist minister accepted the truth at once, and died rejoicing in the light. Another could with great difficulty be persuaded to read them, but has accepted their teachings, rejoices that he has been enlightened, and now persuades his congregation to believe also.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

MRS. C. W. G.

Kansas.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--In sending this remittance to pay my account, I say as a word of cheer in passing, I know in whom I am trusting, and, having placed all in his hands, I have no desire to draw back. My health is poor, and I often think I will soon pass over; but

I am in my Father's hands, and am content. I am learning to know him as I never did; and oh, how wonderful the knowledge! To know Him is to love Him; and we cannot love Him without knowing Him. I so like the Diaglott translation of Eph. 3:18,19.

In the raising of Lazarus is there not an evidence of the great love which Jesus had for him? Dying before his Master he could be only one of the ancient worthies; but dying after him he may be one of the "body." [Yes!]

Well, dear Brother, God bless you in your work. I appreciate it greatly. See Heb. 13:20,21.

Yours in the faith, W. H. HOUGHTELIN.

England.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Just a line that you may rejoice with us in our happiness in the Lord. Our little church met on New Year's eve to draw near the Lord through praise and thanksgiving for having preserved us from harm during the year that is past. Oh, what gladness fills our hearts as we recognize his care and blessing to us through the past year! How he has fed us from his table! We also carried out the suggestion given in Nov. 15 TOWER, with regard to order in the Church, appointing Brother Hemery as "elder" or overseer for the coming year, recognizing in him the Lord's choice.

Before we parted we renewed our consecration to the Lord. Believing the past year to have been a notably prosperous one to us as regards our building up in love and knowledge, also as regards the spread of the truth, we look in faith to the dear Master for his grace in the coming year, believing that he will perfect that which he has already begun. The Church sends greetings.

Yours in His service, E. SHARPLES.

California.

DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER RUSSELL:--I have had it on my mind to write to you ever since coming to California. We are enjoying so many blessings that I like to tell you of them. We are abiding in Christ and rejoicing in his love, and in favor from God the Father. What a gracious plan it is that we may come into this family of God, even though we be poor and unlearned, having nothing to bring. I pray always to God that I may never bring reproach on his holy name. We have every blessing--home and peace and quiet and freedom to give out words of truth on all sides, and are privileged to meet together with God's saints, and to partake with them of the feast spread before us.

I have taken a new interest in my boys. I have come to realize that they are not my boys, but the Lord's, bought and owned by him, and perhaps consecrated to him (they always say they are); so I am trying to be more careful of them, and I feel free to admire them as never before. I can see what precious little souls they are, and how all their intentions are for righteousness. It is pleasing to notice that they are perfectly truthful and always scrupulously honest in all business matters. They are always more interested in spiritual things about Passover time. Laurie (the eldest) made a dollar and twenty-five cents on his rabbits. He says it is not his money, and he thinks God would be better pleased to have his money put into the Tract Fund, so

he asked me to send it in for him. I can see he has some conception of what consecration means.

Here is a blessed little company of DAWN readers. We have two meetings every Sunday; and I don't believe there is one enemy among us, nor one cold one: we do enjoy such freedom and fellowship. In the morning we have some lesson, and in the afternoon we have testimony and singing and prayer and questions. We sisters have started a Wednesday afternoon meeting, and we are going through the second volume of DAWN. I often wish you knew these dear people personally.

May God's blessing rest on you both and the work he has put into your hands. Christian love to all. MRS. W. J. WEBB.

Texas.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Our little Baptismal service came off very nicely last Monday afternoon. We had the use of the baptistry in the Disciple church, and opportunity to speak to a little audience of about twenty. They listened attentively as I reasoned from the Scriptures that the baptism unto repentance and for the remission of sins was applicable only to those who were under the Law Covenant, that the real baptism is into Christ's sacrificial death, that it commenced with our covenant to present ourselves a sacrifice to God, and did not end until our offering was consumed in death.

A noted Free Thought speaker lectured in Denison recently. Two young men from the Y.M.C.A. assisted me in giving out about 400 Do You Know tracts. His talk was against Churchianity rather than against Christianity.

Yours in the Master's service, H. W. DEMING.

[We commend to all, reasonable cooperation with other Christians in any good work. Only let us be careful not to sacrifice principles for the sake of human sympathy or Christian cooperation.]

Indian Territory.

DEAR BRETHREN:--Some one told an infidel that I sold "an infidel book." So he hailed me on the street and bought "What Say the Scriptures About Hell," without looking into it. He was surprised and very glad to learn that the doctrine of eternal torture was not a feature of the Mosaic law. His wife (a Baptist) says she twitted him about "reading that old infidel book and neglecting the customers." When he had read it all, he told her and his mother that if they would read it they might learn something good about the Bible. They also were overjoyed and praised God that he had touched the heart of the honest skeptic.

Our new friend listened like a little child while I told him the old, old story of God's and Christ's love, and bought the DAWN without urging, because he now believes in the Bible. I think the new tract is having the same effect on many others.

My heart is made glad occasionally by the evidence of the Lord's providence in feeding those that hunger for his truth. One evening, recently, I started to a meeting which is conducted by an Evangelist who is quite interested in "The Plan of the Ages." I missed the meeting place, and came upon some campers at the edge of town. One man from Texas was telling them about MILLENNIAL DAWN, and our Bible talk which the Elder interrupted in Sherman. How God makes the wrath of men to

praise him! They were all anxious to know more about it. I offered a passage of Scripture, and another, until he knew me. We talked till 11 P.M.

"The Lord knoweth them that are his." I am glad for this great privilege of sowing the precious truth. Pray for me.

Yours in Him,

H. T. BLATCHLEY.

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