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"IT REPENTED THE LORD."

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth
 and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only
 evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had
 made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart; and
 the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created,
 from the face of the earth."--Gen. 6:5-7.

THE question naturally arises, If God is omniscient,
 knowing the end from the beginning, how could
 he repent of his course in creating man?

The word "repent" means, according to Webster,
 "To change the mind, or course of conduct, on account

of regret or dissatisfaction with what has occurred." The question then is, Did God change his mind [plan] or his course of conduct? We claim that, knowing the end from the beginning, God's mind could not change; hence "repent" in this text must signify change of conduct. That is, God did change his course of dealing with man because of man's wickedness which grieved him, but he did not need to change his mind or plans, because these plans had from the very first recognized the corrupting and degrading tendency of sin, and provided (in purpose of mind) the Lamb of God-- "slain from the foundation of the world," as the redemption price.--Rev. 13:8; 17:8.

It is difficult for our finite minds to comprehend this, because for us to change our course of action usually means to change our minds or plans as well-- because of our shortsightedness. To comprehend Omniscience and Omnipotence is as difficult as to comprehend eternity or the infinitude of space. But what no one can fully comprehend, we, as God's children, may at least apprehend by faith, guided by his revelation to us. To those whose eyes are anointed with eyesalve (Rev. 3:18), the fulfilments of the prophetic statements of God's Word, in both the Old and the New Testaments, now discernible, give ample proof that God does know the end from the beginning; that he changes not from his original purpose. (Mal. 3:6; Isa. 14:27.) God's plans were perfect before they began to be executed; hence all the changes of God's course or conduct are working out the accomplishment of his original purpose which contemplated these very changes. Those who recognize the gradual development of God's original plan can see clearly that the various changes in his course or dealings, as displayed in the Jewish, Gospel and Millennial Ages, do not at all indicate so many changes of his mind or plan, though they are doubtless so misunderstood by many.

It is asked, Why then is this passage so expressed as to give the impression that because God's heart was grieved by reason of man's wickedness, his mind as well as his action changed? We answer, This matter is stated in a manner suited to convey to the general reader as much as he is able to comprehend of God's reasons for the change. God was very much grieved and displeased by man's rapid progress in wickedness; that, instead of loathing his sinful condition and looking to God for relief, he took pleasure in still further

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degrading himself; and God, according to his original purpose, changed the course of his dealings and ended that age by blotting out of existence for a time those who were so unworthy, that their gross depravity should not interfere in the further development of his plan.* Thus also when God speaks of the sun as rising and

setting, he addresses himself to men according to their comprehension; as is the custom of both the learned and unlearned to-day.

It was then, and still is, impossible for the fallen natural man to clearly appreciate and realize these matters; and God's purpose seems to be to prove to man the Omniscience as well as the Justice and Love of his Creator, rather than to tell him of them.

*Under the strict discipline of the Millennium, those who then will not even attempt righteousness will be compelled to conform to it and to taste of its advantages over sin and its results, so that there will be no excuse for the failure of any to choose life and live forever.

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EVIDENT INVALIDITY OF THE APOCRYPHA.

BY REV. F. W. FARRAR, DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

"IT is a matter of real astonishment that outside the circle of the canonical gospels so few reminiscences are preserved of the Perfect Man, who, though he was the Son of God, yet lived as a living man among living men. There are multitudes of historical celebrities respecting the incidents of whose lives endless details and anecdotes have been recorded and preserved. It is little short of amazing that neither history nor tradition should have embalmed for us one certain or precious saying or circumstance in the life of the Savior of mankind, except the comparatively few events recorded in four very brief biographies. St. Paul has preserved for us the one deep word of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and it is just possible that the rule, "Approve yourselves trustworthy moneychangers," quoted by several of the Fathers, which, after all, is little more than an epitome of the parable of the talents and the pounds, may be a true recollection of his words. Many of the "unrecorded sayings" of Christ (the *agrapha dogmata*) are profound and forcible, and it is far from improbable that some of them may be a true echo of what he said; but there is not one of them which adds a new thought or a new lesson to those contained in the authentic discourses and parables. It is quite certain that neither from the apocryphal gospels, nor from any other source, do we derive one anecdote or even one hint upon which we can rely as expressing a single new feature of his example, or a single additional particular of his life.

"WHAT WAS CHRIST'S APPEARANCE?"

"We could not have a more signal proof of this failure of tradition than the astounding fact that, not only at this day, but even in the early centuries, there was not even a dim remembrance as to the physical appearance of the King of Glory. Was he of beautiful features and commanding aspect, or was he of marred visage and mean appearance? We might surely have anticipated that so much at least might have been remembered. But it was not. The descriptions of Christ, which for centuries haunted and dominated the numberless endeavors of Art to represent him during and since the Middle Ages, were late forgeries, not earlier than the seventh and eighth centuries. As early as the fourth and fifth centuries it was disputed whether he was 'the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely,' 'fairer than the children of men,' and 'endowed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;' or whether he was smitten and stricken and ugly and dwarfish. The earlier view that he was exceptionally unbeautiful in appearance prevailed mainly in consequence of the false conception of life, and the revolting glorification of dirt and unnatural asceticism, which invaded Christianity from Paganism and the East, and upheld before Christians the ideal of yogis and fakirs. The belief that there must have been 'something starry' in the look of Christ, and that one who is repellent in aspect could never have won the passionate adoration of multitudes, commended itself to the opinion of many in the fourth century, who, further, rightly argued that his outward form could not but have been translucent with the moral and spiritual beauty within. But the remarkable thing is that neither party of those who treated the subject from opposite points of view was able to claim the slightest authority of tradition for their opinion on a subject so full of interest. They argued exclusively a priori, from what they regarded as most fitting, or a posteriori from their interpretation of passages in Isaiah and the Psalms. Nor did the earliest efforts of Christian art afford them the smallest assistance. For nearly five centuries it was generally regarded as profane, among the greatest writers and thinkers in the church, to attempt any naturalistic representation of Christ at all. The sweet and simple artists of the catacombs, with no exception before the fourth century, and with but few exceptions for two or three centuries later, only idealized him as a radiant boy; and men like Eusebius, Epiphanius and Asterius were even shocked and scandalized by any wish or attempt to paint the human Christ in any naturalistic method, or otherwise than by way of symbol.

"Now, if tradition could not even tell the Christian inquirer of 1,000 or 1,700 years ago whether the lineaments of Jesus were beautiful or ill-favored, it is

supremely unlikely that it should have preserved any other particulars. In point of fact, the Apocryphal Gospels do not represent tradition at all. They are for the most part poor, valueless, ill-guided and to a great extent heretical figments.

"Happily their authors, some of whom wrote as late as the seventh and eighth centuries, had not the audacity to pretend that they could reproduce any of Christ's essential teaching. They occupied themselves exclusively with the invention of imaginary details about his infancy, or about his cross or his passion.

"OF WHAT VALUE ARE THE APOCRYPHAL ACCOUNTS?"

"Several answers may be given apart from the fact that it is always interesting to watch the tendency of human speculations about sacred things. First of all, they furnish a melancholy proof of the sort of way in which many Christians had begun, as time went on, to form most distorted and erroneous opinions about the person and character of Christ. Secondly, they furnish us with a striking gauge of the unapproachable and immeasurable superiority of the Canonical Gospels. Thirdly, they show us that such was the unique divinity of Christ that he stood infinitely above all the capabilities of human invention. Whenever men venture to give the reins to their imagination respecting him, even with the intention to exalt and magnify, they do but instantly dwarf and degrade his sinlessness and supreme majesty.

"Passing over the many legends of the Virgin-- which, however, are not yet due to Mariolatry, but to the desire to glorify Jesus through her--we come to the pretended anecdotes about Jesus as a boy.

"STORIES ABOUT THE BOYHOOD OF CHRIST.

"1. Many of them are mere translations into hard prose of the metaphors of the prophets and psalmists.

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Thus, since we read in the Psalms, 'Praise the Lord upon earth, ye dragons and all deeps,' we are told that when Jesus was a child, dragons came out of a cave and worshiped him. If we read in the Canticles, 'I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its boughs,' we have the story that during the flight into Egypt Mary longed to refresh herself with ripe dates, and Jesus commanded the palm branches to bow down to her, rewarding their obedience by sending a palm branch to heaven by the hands of angels, and making

it the sign of victory. If the prophet says, 'The idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence,' the prophecy is transformed into the tale that, as the Holy Family entered the city of Hermopolis, the 365 idols of its temple all fell with their faces to the earth, in consequence of which the priests and all the people were at once converted.

"If we read in Isaiah, 'The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib,' and in another verse, 'In the midst of the years shalt thou be known'--with the mistranslation of the Septuagint, 'in the midst of two animals shalt thou be recognized'--we are furnished with the tale, reproduced in so many thousand pictures, and even in the Catacombs, that, as Jesus lay in the manger, the ox and the ass worshiped him.

"2. Another large class of the apocryphal stories of the infancy consists in a multiplication of meaningless miracles. There is not a single miracle of the gospels which does not teach us deep lessons: there is not a single miracle invented in these fictions which does. In the gospels, the evangelist's every miracle is a revelation; but the apocryphal miracles of the infancy are mere startling thaumaturgy. The boy Jesus drops all kinds of robes into a single dyer's vat, and when the dyer is vexed, he pulls them all out dyed with the different colors required; he 'profanes' the Sabbath by making sparrows of clay, and when he is reproved by the scribes he claps his hands and makes them fly. Breaking a pitcher, he brings back water to his mother in his robe. While working in the carpenter's shop he sees Joseph vexed because the two beams for a couch

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are of unequal length, and Jesus pulls the shorter one to the requisite size. He is accused of having pushed a boy from a housetop, and killed him; he therefore leaps down from the roof, raises the boy to life and makes him acknowledge that it was another lad who had given him the push. He changes into kids some boys who had hidden themselves from him when he wanted them to play with him; and then, at the entreaty of their mothers, transforms them into boys. It is needless to touch further on this prodigality of superfluous and unmeaning portents.

"THEY PRESENT A FALSE PICTURE.

"3. But, worse than this, the Apocryphal Gospels, from the ignorance, and probably, in most instances, from the heretical opinions of their writers, make the boy Jesus positively repulsive in character. He is implacably revengeful and cruelly remorseless. He becomes the terror of the neighborhood in which he lives,

so that, because of him, his parents live in perpetual disquietude and alarm. He is pert, petulant and intolerable to his teachers, and instead of listening to their instructions, lectures them on 'physics and metaphysics, hyperphysics and hypophysics.' Let one or two instances suffice.

"1. 'When the Lord Jesus was returning home with Joseph in the evening he met a boy who ran to thrust him so violently that he fell down. Jesus said unto him, 'As thou hast thrown me down, so shalt thou fall and not rise.' And the same hour the boy fell down, and breathed his last.'

"2. Again Jesus had been making some pools and channels of water, and 'the son of Annas, the scribe, was standing there with Joseph, and took a branch of willow and spilled the water which Jesus had collected. And when Jesus saw what was done, he was angry and said to him, 'Wicked, impious and foolish one, wherein have the pools wronged thee? Behold now, thou shalt also wither as a tree.' When the parents complained, his mother came and entreated him to be less wrathful. 'But he said, 'He was worthy of death because he destroyed the works which I had wrought.' Therefore his mother besought him saying, 'Do not, my Lord, because they all rise against us.' And he, not willing that his mother should be grieved, spurned the body of the dead with his right foot, and said to him, 'Arise, O son of iniquity, for thou art not worthy to enter into the rest of thy father.' Then he who was dead arose and departed.

"3. Again, when he is sent to a teacher to learn his letters, the master begins imperiously to teach him, saying, 'Say Aleph.' But Jesus said to him, 'First tell me what Beth is.' The master, being angry, struck him with a rod of storax-wood; and soon after he smote him he died. And Jesus returned home to his mother. But Joseph being afraid called Mary to him and said, 'Know truly that my soul is sad unto death on account of that boy.'

"THE AUTHENTIC ACCOUNTS ENOUGH.

"It is, then, abundantly clear that the spurious James, and Matthew, and the others, have not only nothing genuine to teach us about Jesus, but that the picture of him which they represent is utterly debased. The genuine gospels were written for our learning, not for our amusement; to promote our salvation, not to gratify our curiosity. Their very silence is eloquent with truth. What do they tell us of the infant and the youthful Christ? They give us the narrative of his birth; they present us with the picture of the sweet, submissive years spent in the shop of the carpenter at Nazareth; but from his early return from Egypt to

Galilee, up to the commencement of his ministry, when he 'began to be about 30 years old,' they preserve but one anecdote and one word. The one anecdote is the story of that visit to Jerusalem; and this to show us how, in his earliest years, he loved his Father's house of prayer. The one word is 'the carpenter,' in the disdainful question of the vulgar and the ignorant, who thought that they had abolished his claims when they asked, 'Is not this the carpenter?' That one word tells us all that is to be told of more than twenty years, during which he grew 'in wisdom, and stature, and favor with God and man.' A scanty record? Not scanty for its purpose, for in that one word is revealed to all mankind nothing less than the sacred dignity of labor, and the blessed truth that the true grandeur and meaning of human life depend neither on rank nor fame, neither on the glare of publicity nor on the entourage of power, nor on the multitude of things which a man possesses."

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RESTITUTION, FAITH CURES, PRAYER CURES AND

THE GIFT OF HEALING.

--(CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST.)--

PROOF-TEXTS CONSIDERED.

Although we have already considered the principle proof-texts for Faith Cures, it may not be amiss to examine a few more passages of Scripture supposed to imply that it is the duty of Christian people to pray for their recovery from sickness and not to resort to medicines.

(1) Psalm 103:2-4. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction."

It should not be forgotten that the great work begun at Calvary (and which in its ultimate effects is to bring blessings to every member of the human family who will accept of them upon God's terms), has not yet reached its completion. The sacrifice for sins is "finished," "once for all;" and those who believe and obey the gospel, the "saints," have their sins "covered" under the robe of Christ's righteousness, so that they may have access to and communion with their Heavenly Father; but their sins wait to be "blotted out" (Acts 3:19) until the end of the "better sacrifices" of this antitypical "Day of Atonement;" when

their sins shall be completely blotted out--new unblemished spiritual bodies being granted them instead of the present imperfect ones upon which the marks of sin and imperfection are all too manifest. The work of Christ for the Church, of blotting out sins and healing all blemishes or diseases of mind and body, will not be complete until the Millennial morning; and this Psalm must be understood from this standpoint. It cannot be understood from any other standpoint, for in no other way is it true. Those who have received physical healing either by "gifts" or "prayers of faith" have never yet been completely healed of all their diseases. At very most they receive a temporary blessing and must wait until the "Morning," when the Redeemer shall heal all the diseases of all his people by giving them the bodies prepared for those who love God.

So long as the "night" continues, disease and discomfort will continue. Not only does the whole creation groan and travail in pain together until now, but "ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body [the Church, the body of Christ]." (Rom. 8:23.) "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning."--Psa. 30:5.

(2) "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."--Matt. 8:17; Isa. 53:4.

To apply this passage of Scripture as our Faith-Cure friends do is utterly wrong; a total misapplication of the words, and a violation of the context. This passage is quoted to prove that none of the saints should have sicknesses and infirmities. But the Evangelist, to the contrary, affirms that these words of the prophet have had their fulfilment. He says that the fulfilment took place in his day, at the first advent, in the healing, not of the saints, but of the multitudes.

A comparison of Isa. 53 with Heb. 4:15 and Mark 5:30 and Luke 6:19 shows us clearly that this prophecy was completely fulfilled; and that the object was that our Lord should suffer pain from the infirmities of those whom he relieved, because, being without sin, he was also without sickness and pain, except as he thus "took" and "bare" it from others that he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

Those who misunderstand this passage ask: If Christ bore our sins and sicknesses, why should we have them to battle with? We answer: He bore the penalty of our sins in order that in God's due time he might justify and, by a resurrection, deliver from death all who accept his grace. And he was touched with a feeling of our infirmities in order that he might be a faithful and sympathetic high priest, and that we might realize him as such.

(3) The case of Hezekiah's healing in answer to his prayers and tears is cited as a proof of a proper course.--2 Kings 20:1-7.

We reply that it is not denied that God at sundry times has been pleased to grant miraculous answers to prayers as evidences of his own power. But nothing about Hezekiah's case indicates that such healings were common occurrences. On the contrary, the prophet did not pray with him, nor suggest prayer, but evidently was surprised when sent back to inform Hezekiah

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that he would recover. Moreover, Hezekiah, although very sick, does not seem to have prayed for healing until told that death was near. In the healing, a lump of figs, a human instrumentality, a poultice, was used; but many who believe in faith healing today would object to a fig poultice or any other human instrumentality.

(4) King Asa was diseased in his feet, "yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians; and Asa slept with his fathers"--died. (2 Chron. 16:12.) This is cited to prove that to call a physician was a sin, and that therefore Asa died.

Not so, we reply. The whole case must be kept in memory, if we would understand this portion of the

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record. Israel was separated from the nations of the world by divine providence, and a special agreement made between God and that nation, called The Covenant of the Law. This was instituted formally at Mt. Sinai in the wilderness of Zin, after God had brought Israel out of Egypt. While that Covenant made nothing perfect and none of the Israelites got or could get eternal life under its provisions, until Christ who as the Prince of Israel fulfilled all of its requirements and inherited its reward of eternal life, it had special provisions relating to the physical health and prosperity of Israelites. (See Deut. 7:11-15 and 28:1-12,15,21,27,28,37-42,45-53,59-61.) If faithful to God, they would be blessed in temporal things above all other nations; but, on the contrary, if Israel would not obey the Lord, they were to receive extraordinary punishments.

Asa, as the king or representative of this nation, was specially subject to the foregoing conditions. He had sinned (See preceding verses: 2 Chron. 16:7,10), although in general a worthy king (See 2 Chron. 15:16,17,18); his sickness was in the nature of a punishment for his sin according to the Israelitish covenant with God. His heart should have repented and turned toward God, but instead he imprisoned God's servant, trusted to physicians, defied God and was cut off according to the covenant.

Thousands of Israelites were destroyed by plagues, sometimes for national sins, under the operation of their covenant above cited. On such occasions the

rulers understood that it was a punishment and made no effort to use medicines nor to stop the plagues by sanitary laws or arrangements, but offered sin-offerings and prayed for divine mercy.--See 2 Samuel 24:12-15-25; Joshua 7:7-11-25,26; Numbers 21:5-7-9.

But such a course would not be the proper one for the rulers of other nations, then or now. It was the proper course for Israel because of God's special covenant with that nation. They were slow to learn this lesson, and inclined to think of their calamities as similar to those of other nations; and hence the Lord more than once through the prophets reminded them that, so far as they were concerned, if they had his good favor, it was manifested in their prosperity; if they had his disfavor, it was manifested in the calamities (evils) under which they suffered. (See Isa. 45:7.) He assures them (Amos 3:6) that, if there were in their cities calamities or plagues or disasters (physical evil things of any sort--not moral evils), he was their author. But this does not apply to other nations. Consequently the intelligent people of to-day are quite right in not regarding as manifestations of special divine anger the London plague and the Chicago fire and the St. Louis cyclone and the Chinese floods and the Japanese earthquake and tidal-wave and the Russian famine and coronation disasters and the Egyptian cholera and other less natural disorders and disasters and accidents by rail, water, fire, famine, fever, consumption, etc., etc.

Not only has God no such covenant with the nations of the world to-day, but he has never made such a covenant of temporal prosperity with his saints. Quite to the contrary, they are called to walk with God by faith and not by sight--not by outward evidences of divine favor. The Gospel Church is specially told that her calling is to suffer with Christ for well-doing. She is invited to sacrifice present prospects and earthly favors, and is offered instead heavenly joys and blessings--a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. She is to look not for the things which are seen, but for those which are unseen and eternal. She is to realize the divine wisdom and submit gladly to such experiences of prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, as the Lord may see to be to the highest interests of her members, all of whom, as true members of the body of Christ, are dear to the Bridegroom Head who promises, graciously, that he will not suffer his members to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but will succor them, cause all present experiences (bitter and sweet) to work for their good, and no really good thing withhold from them.

(5) Romans 8:11 is sometimes cited as a proof that Christians are to expect physical healings. This is as much of a mistake in one direction as some well meaning Christians make in an opposite direction, when they understand this verse to teach the resurrection of our present identical bodies (in exact

opposition to 1 Cor. 15:37,38). The expression, "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you," should be interpreted in harmony with the context. Verse 10 declares, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead"--not literally dead, but reckonedly dead, in that the human will has died and the will of God in Christ has been accepted instead. The will is dead to sinful things; it does not love nor practice them, as it once did. The Apostle's argument is that such a deadness to sin, although desirable, should not be satisfactory to us; we should not stop there; we should by God's grace seek to get alive to righteousness and active in its service as once we were alive to sin and its service. He proceeds to show that this, although a great change, is possible to us; and he tells us how. He says that the mighty spirit of God which could and did resurrect our Lord from literal death is able to quicken (make alive) to the service of righteousness these very bodies once alive to sin but now by God's grace mortified, killed, "dead to sin." He therefore urges all who have the spirit of Christ not

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only to be dead to sin but to permit the spirit of Christ in them to make them alive to holiness and in general to God's service. He shows them further that the new spirit (mind) of Christ which they have received is a spirit of adoption into God's family as sons, and that if they are sons they not only are "free" but must have fruit unto holiness, and that their joint-heirship with Christ as sons depends upon this quickening of their mortal bodies--"if so be that we suffer with him [Christ], that we may be also glorified together."

All who catch the real sense of the passage will see that it has no reference to physical quickening and immunity from sickness and pain, but to a quickening or energizing by the Lord's spirit so as to be, not only willing, but glad, to "suffer with him." Nor could it possibly refer to a literal resurrection of the mortal body, for not only are we assured that the body which is buried is not the one which will be raised, but we know that the spirit of Christ does not dwell in dead bodies: it is "the body without the spirit [of life that] is dead."

(6) If sickness cannot come upon God's consecrated people contrary to his permission, would not the taking of medicine be putting ourselves in conflict with God's will?

No. It is God's will that every member of the "body of Christ" should be touched with a feeling of the world's infirmities, in order that, when exalted to the Kingdom, they may be very tender, sympathetic and generous, when, as the royal priesthood, they shall

judge the world. (1 Cor. 6:2.) Our Lord and Master, who had none of the imperfections of the fallen race, but was holy, harmless and separate from sinners, needed to take from men their sicknesses and infirmities (Matt. 8:16,17), in order that he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities and be a faithful High Priest. It would be thoroughly illogical to suppose that the lessons necessary to the preparation of the High Priest for his office and service are not necessary to the underpriests who are called to suffer with him and to reign with him.

Hence, those who see their high calling should not expect immunity from sufferings and trials and difficulties; and the usual aches and pains--headaches, toothaches, etc., etc.--which come to the Lord's people, as well as to the world, in a natural way, should be treated as the world treats them, but with greater patience and cheerfulness: that is, they should be avoided by reasonable care as to food, clothing, etc., and they should be alleviated by the use of such cures as may come under our notice. We need not fear thwarting God's will; that is impossible: he will take care of that part. See also our comments on this subject in our issue of July 15, page 168.

SCHLATTER, MARK SMITH AND OTHER HEALERS.

From Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Colorado, Illinois, New England and Australia come seemingly well authenticated accounts of miraculous healings of some diseases. Some of the healers pray with the sick, some do not; some lay on hands and anoint with oil, but mostly they merely grasp the hands of the sick. Some get all the money they can from the sick; others, like the Master, will receive no compensation. Some love to be called Rabbi and Reverend, others are plain, unassuming Christians. In answer to many inquiries

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respecting these healers and the source of their power, we answer:--

We believe that some of them are God's agents, thus used in order to make a beginning of restitution work and to break it gradually to the people. It is, however, copied and sought to be offset in its effects by others whose powers are from the prince of darkness, who still endeavors to blind the minds of men to God's goodness and plan. (2 Cor. 4:4.) It is not possible for us to be sure from the meager and often incorrect newspaper reports, which are servants of God and which the servants of the adversary. Nor is it necessary that we should decide; God is at the helm and will direct his own, and whatever of the wrath of men or devils

would not serve some useful purpose, either of trial or sifting, will be restrained.

In thinking of these healers, we draw the line on their profession of faith in Jesus (as their Redeemer and Lord), and the doing of the healing in his name and by his power. Here we are on guard, however, against Spiritists, Christian Scientists and such like, who use the name Christ in a deceptive manner, meaning thereby themselves; i.e., denying any power or authority from Jesus, they claim that his power was merely because he was one of them --one of the Christ class possessed by their spirit, which is really deceptive and anti-Christ,--against Christ and in opposition to a true interpretation of the Bible.

And amongst those seeming to us to be on the right side of the line of faith, we feel that those who refuse to make merchandise of their gifts or prayers and those who reject human titles and manifest most of humility and zeal and faith are most worthy of confidence and respect. But we know of none claiming these healing powers who are acquainted with and accept the divine plan and present truth as we understand it.

Salvation! O ye toiling saints,
By faith ye have it now;
The promise is your daily strength,
While to God's will ye bow.

Salvation! O the blessed theme
Shall fill the world with joy!
When all its mighty work is seen,
Praise shall all tongues employ.

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DAVID'S LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE.

--SEPT. 6.--1 Chron. 22:6-16. Compare 1 Kings 1; Psa. 84.--

Golden Text--"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee."--Psa. 84:4.

AFTER the stirring events considered in our last lesson, David, being recalled by the people, returned to Jerusalem and set about bringing order out of the general confusion into which Absalom had plunged the nation. At the time of his returning a usurper, with some show of success, sought to intercept him and secure the throne for himself; but he was promptly dealt with, and David was again established in his kingdom, and several years of peace and progress followed.--2 Sam. 20:21.

But the king's troubles were not yet ended: again from his own household came the notes of discord, and the experiences with Absalom seemed likely to be repeated

in the rebellion of another son, Absalom's younger brother Adonijah, who had laid his plans and skillfully prepared to seize the throne and thus establish himself as David's successor. (See 1 Kings 1:1-53.) This attempt at usurpation and self-appointment led to the immediate anointing and proclamation of Solomon, whom God had indicated as his choice among the sons of David to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. (1 Chron. 22:9,10; 28:5-7.) So Solomon was recognized as king in Israel in the room of his father David.--1 Kings 1:34,39,40; 1 Chron. 29:22-25.

David had now accomplished nearly all of his earthly mission. He found the dominion small, and now it was much extended. He found it in disorder, and left it thoroughly organized. He found religion at a low ebb, and he had succeeded in greatly reviving and energizing religious devotion and zeal. He found powerful enemies on every side, threatening the destruction of the nation, but he had subdued all the enemies and led the nation to a condition of peace and introduced them to a season of unparalleled prosperity. And not only so, but he had laid the foundation for the more permanent establishment of the service of God and the religious health of the nation in his preparations for the building and service of the temple which God had promised that his son and successor should build, and in the religious zeal and enthusiasm he had aroused on the part of the whole people, so that as one man they were at the service of Solomon in the great work. His life had been an eventful and a troubled one, not without its grave mistakes, but it had accomplished great things in bringing order out of confusion and establishing peace and prosperity on a permanent footing.

The glory of Solomon's reign was but the harvest of David's labors and sufferings. While David was not permitted to build the temple himself, because he was a man of war, this was no reproach against David for engaging in those wars, for he had done so in the name of the Lord and for his people, and not from the unholy ambition of the world's warriors, for plunder and prestige.

To some who think of the building of the Jewish temple as a mere mechanical service, like the building of any other temple, heathen or Christian, it may seem that there was much unnecessary ado about it. How strange, they mentally say, that it should be considered necessary for the whole nation to be at peace before the building could be undertaken! Why could not some be building while others were out fighting the battles? and why should the king be charged with the business? Were there not in all Israel plenty of architects and workmen and men suited to oversee the work, without burdening the king with it?

Let us not forget that the building of the Jewish temple was not a mere mechanical service, the putting together of so much stone and mortar and wood, etc.,

but let us view it from the standpoint of David, who, in charging the congregation of Israel to diligently cooperate with Solomon in the work, said, "Solomon, my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God." (1 Chron. 29:1.) And the sacred edifice was not one of human designing: the plans and specifications were given to David by the spirit of the Lord:--"All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern."

"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God will be with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee until thou hast finished all the work;...also the princes of all the people will be wholly at thy commandment."--1 Chron. 28:12,13,19-21.

Thus it was to be a building into every fiber of which should be worked the religious devotion and zeal of the whole nation, and which should therefore stand as a monument of such devotion and zeal, and a testimony to coming generations which should awaken and preserve the same in them. Thus viewed, the work was indeed a great work; and, since all the people were to be interested and active in it, it was necessary that it should be undertaken only in a time of peace, when the attention of the people was not absorbed in wars and their attendant perplexities and calamities. It is manifestly appropriate, too, that the Lord's anointed king, in preference to any other individual, should have been charged with this important business, since it was a national enterprise, and he stood as the representative and head of the nation.

In this view, as well as in view of its divinely ordained typical significance, it is also manifestly appropriate that its beauty, its costliness and all its adornments should represent the labor and care and sacrifices of the loving hearts and active hands of a people devoted to God. So David expressed it, when he said, "The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries."--1 Chron. 22:5.

In the charge of David to his son Solomon concerning the building of the temple, to which our attention is called, we catch a glimpse of the man after long experience and discipline had mellowed and enriched his character. Now, over every other ambition, his zeal for God predominates, and his chief desire for Solomon is that he may prove true and faithful to God and zealous in his service and that so he might abide in the divine

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favor. Then he bade him be strong and of good courage in the great work before him, assuring him of

abundant prosperity and divine favor if he would only continue to heed and fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel.

This counsel to Solomon may also with equal propriety

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be accepted by every Christian in the service of the Lord,--"Be strong and of good courage." Both strength and courage are necessary to faithful service and to success in the good fight of faith; and both are developed by patient endurance and faith in God under the various trials to which the Christian is exposed. The counsel of the Apostle Paul to the Church also tallies with that of David to Solomon, when he says, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" and again,--"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."--Eph. 6:10; 1 Cor. 16:13.

The prayer and thanksgiving of David to God, recorded in 1 Chron. 29:10-19, ascribing praise to him for the privilege of collecting the materials for his temple and humbly acknowledging that all their gifts were only returning to God that which was his own, expressing his joy in the freewill offerings of the people and praying that their hearts might ever incline to him, and that he would give unto Solomon a perfect heart, is full of touching pathos, reverence, meekness and holy enthusiasm. Read it and underscore its touching phrases, that again and again you may be refreshed and instructed by it. Then mark (vs. 20) how he led all the people to fervently bless the Lord, and how the enthusiasm thus kindled anointed Solomon a second time to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. (Vs. 22,23.) This second anointing was like the grand Amen! of the whole nation to the first anointing (1 Kings 1:38-40), which was, comparatively speaking, done in a very quiet way.

Psalm 84, from which the Golden Text is taken, is another expression of David's devotion and zeal for the service of the Lord. While we thus contemplate the typical temple which kindled such an enthusiasm among the worthy saints of the Jewish dispensation, with what intensity of zeal and fervor should we regard that antitypical temple, the Church of the living God, whose living stones shall to all eternity show forth the praises of him who quarried and polished and fitted them together until it grew into a holy temple for the Lord in which he is pleased to dwell, and of which Christ Jesus is the chief corner stone.--Eph. 2:19-22.

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DAVID'S GRATITUDE TO GOD.

--SEPTEMBER 13.--2 Sam. 22:40-51.--

Golden Text--"The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer."--2 Sam. 22:2.

THIS entire chapter is one of David's songs of praise and gratitude to God for his goodness and his loving providences which had been so manifest toward him ever since his anointing by Samuel the prophet, and doubtless before that as well. It calls to mind another expression of one of his psalms,-- "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) Indeed, the writings of David, and all the prophets and apostles as well, abound in fervent expressions of praise and thanksgiving to God. They not only praise the Lord themselves, lovingly and gratefully recounting all his mercies, but, with impassioned eloquence and holy enthusiasm, they call upon all the sons of men, and every thing that hath breath, and even inanimate nature, to laud and magnify his holy name. The worshippers are also bidden to bring with them to the concert of praise every musical instrument of human device; and grateful reverence exclaims,--"Blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen!"--Psa. 33:2,3; 50:1-6; 72:19. See also Exod. 15:1-21.

As we thus consider that, by the voice of inspiration, the whole human race is called to praise and worship and thanksgiving, we are led to consider further the relationship which the spirit of praise has to the Christian or godly character. David says, it is "comely for the upright." But why so? It is because loving gratitude is one of the divinely implanted instincts of a soul bearing the image of God, and one which should therefore be cultivated. It is this element of the intelligent creature that is designed to be responsive to the divine goodness and benevolence; and it is this element of character in man which makes fellowship and communion with God possible. If the goodness of God could awaken in us no sense of grateful appreciation; if we were wholly dead to such sentiments, there could be no pleasure on God's part in manifesting his goodness to us, and there would be nothing in us to call out his love; and so also nothing, of all his goodness and grace, would awaken love in us. But since for the divine pleasure we are and were created (Rev. 4:11), God endowed his intelligent creature with this element of character which, being responsive to his own goodness, institutes a lively and delightful fellowship with himself, which is the chief end of human existence, both on the side of the creature and of the Creator.--Psa. 16:11; Prov. 11:20; 15:8.

Rejoicing and the spirit of praise are thus seen to be indissolubly linked together in the divine economy; and so David links them, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord,

for praise is comely," thus making the two almost synonymous. To see this principle illustrated take as examples the dog and the hog. Neither can have any appreciation of the divine goodness, neither being created in the mental or moral likeness of God, and hence being utterly incapable of knowing or thinking of him. Man is the highest being that they can know in any sense or degree; and that is first, because man is visible and tangible to them, and second, because they have some similar faculties, though very inferior and exercised within a much narrower sphere. The dog has in him to a considerable degree the sense of gratitude: feed and caress him, and he shows signs of gratitude and affection, and a desire to reward you with a manifestation of appreciation. He wags his tail, looks

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kindly into your face, licks your hand, caresses you with his head and watches to see what errand he can do for you. But the hog, on the contrary, makes no demonstration of appreciation: he takes all he can get without even so much as a look of recognition; his eyes are always downward, and his snout continually rooting in the earth for more; and a grunt is the only sound to which he gives expression. A hog, therefore, can have no pleasure in man; nor can man find any pleasure in the hog. There is no bond of fellowship whatever, and man therefore tolerates his existence only until his flesh is fit for the slaughter and the market, while between the dog and his master there is strong friendship which, when cultivated, gives pleasure to both, and they become life-long friends, irrespective of any commercial value.

It is plain, therefore, that in the cultivation of the spirit of praise, thanksgiving and loving appreciation of all the manifest goodness of God, is the Christian's secret of a happy life. And in order to the cultivation of such a spirit it is necessary that we continually call to mind his acts of mercy and of grace; that in our prayers we frequently tell him how all his goodness is remembered, how every fresh evidence of his love and care causes faith to take deeper root and makes the sense of his presence and favor more fully realized; and how through such experiences our love and joy are made to abound more and more. We love him because he first loved us; and every time we see some new mark of his love, our love, if we have truly appreciative hearts, is called out more and more, and we are made to rejoice in God, in whose presence is fulness of joy. It is to this end that our Lord encourages our frequent coming to God in prayer with large requests for his favor, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."--John 16:24.

We observe that in Israel the spirit of praise was cultivated by calling to mind and recounting what the

Lord had done for them. "If I do not remember thee," says David, "let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."--Psa. 137:6. See also Exod. 15:1-21; Deut. 7:17,18; 8:2; 15:15; 32:7; 1 Chron. 16:12; Psa. 20:7; 63:5-7; 143:5,6; 77:10-12.

So must the Christian continually call to mind the works of the Lord, especially his own individual experience of the Lord's leading and care and deliverances from dangers and snares and the wiles of the adversary. If we keep these things in mind and meditate upon them, our appreciation of God and his goodness grows, and the spirit of love and praise takes possession of the heart, and thus we are made to rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything to give thanks. So also the soul is made to hunger and thirst after God and to realize that God alone is its satisfying portion, and to desire more and more of his fulness. Thus, as the Psalmist suggests, our prayer will be, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."--Psa. 42:1.

This same principle of gratitude and praise, which reciprocates loving kindness and generosity, is that which also makes human friendship and fellowship possible and delightful. In our intercourse one with another, if the kindnesses we show awaken no sense of appreciation, receive no acknowledgment, and their repetition is expected as a matter of course, there can, in the very nature of things, be no such thing as fellowship. True, as Christians, we may not relax kindness and generosity on this account; for we, like our heavenly

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Father, are to be kind to the unthankful as well as to the thankful (Matt. 5:44-48); but when this goodness awakens no appreciation, no love, fellowship becomes impossible.

In David's thanksgiving for victories over his enemies we observe that those enemies were the enemies of the Lord and his people, whom David was commissioned of God to conquer. These battles he undertook in the strength which God supplied, and the victories he properly ascribes to God, the rock of his salvation. The words, regarded from the standpoint of the future, are also prophetic of the victories of Christ, of whom David was a type, and to whom Jehovah will grant victory full and complete over all his enemies,--the enemies of God, the enemies of truth and righteousness. The whole strain of thanksgiving, thus viewed in its wider application to the conquests of Christ, is eloquent in its prophecy of his glorious victory, as well as in praise to Jehovah. (1 Cor. 15:27,28.) The prophecy of a future wider dominion, contained in verses 44-46 can only be considered as fully applicable to the wider dominion of Christ.

The Golden Text is a blessed assurance applicable

to all of the Lord's people, and it is amply verified to all those who delight themselves in the Lord, who meditate upon his goodness and render to him the praise that is due to his holy name.--"The Lord is my rock [upon which I may safely build my hopes], and my fortress [in which I may safely hide], and my deliverer [in every time of trouble]."

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INTERESTING LETTERS.

Virginia.

DEAR BROTHER:--I have been thinking much on the covenants lately. It is a significant fact that in all ages God has made Covenants, with visible signs thereof. His first covenant was made for all nations, and called an everlasting covenant, the sign of which he produces. (Gen. 9:12-17.) The token of the next covenant is described in Gen. 17:11. His covenant made with and for Israel at Horeb has its visible sign to be repeated by those under that covenant.--Ex. 31:17; Ezek. 20:12.

Now, I want to ask, what is the visible sign of the New Covenant, if not the Memorials? Does not the Apostle bear out this, by saying, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death," etc.? Does it not show that we are under the New Covenant of love? He said, "Do this in remembrance of me," and, when we "do this," we show our love for him, for, "he that loveth me keepeth my commandments." Would like to hear from you on this. We could not tell whether Israel recognized their Law Covenant or not, were it not for the observance of the Sabbath sign. This, of all the Ten Commandments, was the only one that others could decide as to their observance.

Yours in the blessed hope, M. L. STAPLES.

[In reply: While we believe that symbolic immersion is enjoined as an outward testimony or witness to the true immersion of the will into the will of God, as expressed in Christ; and that the Memorial Supper is enjoined as the proper and helpful remembrancer of our Lord's death, yet we do not regard these in the same light as circumcision to the children

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of Abraham and the Sabbath of the Jew, for they were compulsory as to outward form: ours are obligatory in their essence, but not in their outward form if not clearly seen. For instance, Cornelius was accepted under the New Covenant when he had eaten of the Paschal Lamb by faith and had immersed or buried his will into the divine will, before he ate of the symbolical Memorials (bread and wine), and before he had been symbolically buried with Christ into death in immersion. The same has been true of many since who did not at first, and others who, perhaps for lack of proper instruction, never discerned the relationship between the symbols and the facts.

The Passover and the Sabbath and Circumcision were so strictly enjoined that the man who did not observe them could not be reckoned a Jew; but many are recognized both by God and men as Christians,

under the New Covenant, who do not properly appreciate either baptism or the Memorial supper.

Rather we would say that all the typical things of the past find antitypes under the New Covenant. The Passover lamb typified Christ slain as our ransom price; the eating of the lamb represents our faith-appropriation of Christ's righteousness, and was perpetuated as a type in the bread and wine Memorial. Circumcision typified our putting away the filth of the flesh [selfishness in every form] as new creatures; the Sabbath typified the rest of faith provided for all who come into New Covenant relationship with God. But the seal or mark of the New Covenant is on a wholly different plan: it is the possession of the spirit of Christ.

The manifestations of this holy spirit are three-fold. (1) Love supreme to God and joyful loyalty to his cause even at the cost of suffering. (2) Love of the brethren--unselfish, noble, pure,--a desire for their welfare which is always alert to do them good. (3) Love, sympathetic, for the world, prompting to good works, as opportunity may afford, and to a desire and effort always to live peaceably with all men. Necessarily the foregoing will imply development in patience, meekness, etc.

"If any man have not the spirit of Christ [in some degree, and progressively] he is none of his." His spirit is the bond of perfectness, the seal of the New Covenant.--EDITOR.]

Pennsylvania.

DEAR BROTHER:--Last Sunday at our meeting we had a lesson from Romans 12:1, and among many thoughts brought out from such a prolific subject were some on the use we make of our consecrated time. I am engaged in the grocery business; but the condition of trade in general demands almost "eternal vigilance" at the present time.

The question which has presented itself to me many times is, Should I, as one of the consecrated, put forth such efforts to make and maintain custom as it is now necessary to do? I issue weekly price-lists, many times offering goods at less than cost for baits, and give away many more "gifts" with more profitable goods; not of preference to that sort of dealing, but because all my competitors are doing the same thing, and, to maintain my trade and living (as I am not wealthy), I am compelled to follow suit.

Another objectionable feature about that kind of method is that it squeezes my weaker brother in the same line of business. I am acquainted with many of them; some are widows striving to make an honest living by selling goods, but I am compelled to throw all my better feelings to the wind and "wade in," no matter whom it injures. This is a sad confession for one who is bidding for the position of assisting our Lord in the lifting of mankind out of the chasm of selfishness from which they must be saved in the age we believe to be so close at hand. I am not trying to get you to justify my actions in this matter, but desire your opinion as to the advisable course of God's professed children engaged in business during the present time, when it is a case of the big fish eating the smaller ones. Yours in Christ, _____.

[In reply: The conditions you name are common to nearly every form of business, and prevail throughout the civilized world increasingly. It is a part of the general "trouble" of our times. The increase of machine capacity and the increase of the human family, both contribute to reduce wages and make steady employment more precarious. More men seek to engage in business; and competition and small profits, while

beneficial to the poor, are commercially killing the small store and high prices. In consequence small stores and small factories are giving way to larger ones which, by reason of better and more economical arrangements, permit better service and lower prices. Larger stocks of fresher goods at lower prices and with better service are to the general advantage of the public as compared with the old time little shops with stale goods, high prices and careless service; even though temporarily some poor widows or worthy ones may suffer through mental, physical or financial inability to keep up with the new order of things. And even these, if they can take a broad, benevolent view of the situation, may rejoice in the public welfare, even though it enforces an unfavorable change in their own affairs. They may rejoice with those that are benefited and wait patiently for the coming Kingdom which will make God's blessings more common than at present to all. But only those who have the "new nature" and its love can be expected to view things thus unselfishly. The present commercial competition is not, therefore, an unmixed evil. It is one of the great lessons being given to the world as a preparatory study before entering the great Millennial age, when the business of the world will be largely, if not wholly, on a socialistic footing--not for the wealth or advantage of the individual, but for the general welfare.

Meantime, however, the selfish competitive strain grows more galling continually to those possessed of noble, generous impulses, whether Christians or not. We are glad to note your own appreciation of the

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subject and your dissatisfaction.

Our advice is that you keep a sharp lookout, and, if you see some other branch of business less beset with competition and therefore more favorable, make a change. If not, or until you find a more favorable business or more favorable conditions, we advise that you continue where you are and modify your course to some extent; i.e., divide matters as evenly as you can between the three conflicting interests--your own, your competitors' and your patrons' or neighbors' interests. If your business is meeting expenses and a reasonable profit, endeavor to keep it there, but do not push it in the endeavor to become "rich;" for "they that will [to] be rich fall into temptation and a snare." (1 Tim. 6:9.) We should avoid any dishonorable competition or meanness toward competitors, and any misrepresentations of goods to customers. Justice and honesty must be carefully guarded at any cost: then add all the "moderation" in favor of your competitor that love may suggest and circumstances permit.

We are not forgetting the injunction, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exod. 23:2), nor counselling the slightest compromise with injustice. Your question, we take it, is not whether you may do injustice, but whether love will permit you to do all that justice would not object to and that custom sanctions. The worldly heart does not scruple about such "trifles:" it is your "new nature," whose law is love, that would prefer to see your competitor prosper, and longs to do good unto all men as it has opportunity--especially to the household of faith. Cultivate this "new nature" by obeying its law of love in every way possible. "If it be possible, so much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,"--dealing generously and according to love. He who is imbued with the spirit of love thinketh no evil toward his competitor, and seeketh not his own (welfare, merely) and would not rejoice in a competitor's

failure.

The difficulty is that the whole world is running on the depraved basis of selfishness, which is quite incongruous to love. With some the plane is higher, and with some lower: some limit their selfishness to the line of justice, others descend in selfishness to injustice and dishonesty, and the tendency is always downward. The "New Creature" in Christ must never go below justice and honesty and must seek as much as possible to rise above this highest worldly standard toward perfect love. It is the fault of the present competitive system that the interests of the buyer and those of the seller are ever in conflict. No power can correct, control and alter all this except the one power that God has promised,--the Millennial Kingdom, which shall enforce the rule of love and liberate from the propensities and bonds of selfishness all who, when they see and know the better way, will accept of the help then to be provided.--EDITOR.]

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FLORIDA LAND FREE--NEAR THE TRACT SOCIETY'S
PROPERTY

Some of the brethren own considerable land in Florida (a portion of which was some time ago donated to the TRACT SOCIETY and sold by it and the proceeds used in spreading the truth). These brethren wish us to say for them that,--

They have no desire to withhold this land from those who would wish to settle on it and cultivate it, but who cannot afford to purchase. They therefore make an offer of a ten-acre plot (sufficient for an early-vegetable farm there) free, to actual settlers.

This land is in the healthiest part of Florida--between the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay, close to the railroad and within four to eight miles of St. Petersburg, which has one of the finest harbors in Florida. The atmosphere there is so pure that fresh meat hung in the open air will not spoil in the hottest weather.

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VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

WE are frequently reminded of the words of the apostles relative to the insidious attacks of Satan that would come upon believers in the last days of this age, as we witness his attacks not only upon every servant of the truth, but also upon the truth itself --the Word of God. What a comfort we have in the assurance that all the true "sheep" will hear and

know the Shepherd's voice, and that none shall pluck them out of his hand,--that the "very elect" shall not be deceived. How this should and does stimulate us to press for the mark of character development which will make our calling and election sure.

Satan seems to know that these attacks will be all the more forceful if they are apparently scientific discoveries, etc., and so he operates along that line. Thank God,--"We are not ignorant of his devices." For instance, Spiritism and Christian Science, having captured their thousands and gotten well established are continued, while other signs and wonders are introduced under the name of Theosophy (already described in these columns); and now later Hypnotism is introduced, not as a religious but as an occult power which will inferentially corroborate and endorse Satan's pseudo religions and discredit the teachings of the Scriptures. Thus, for instance, the visions and revelations granted of the Lord to some of the apostles and prophets (Dan. 7; 2 Cor. 12:1; Eph. 3:3; Rev. 1:1,10) are, by the powers of Hypnotism, made to appear very ordinary, such as may be had by any one who will be put by himself or by a professional into a cataleptic sleep or trance. This, because professing to be non-religious, scientific, will catch some who instinctively fear the trance-mediums and clairvoyants of Spiritism; and yet it will surely pave the way to the latter, and away from God's Word which condemns it and everything akin to it--witchcraft, etc.

One of the latest feats of Hypnotism was the simulation of our Lord's death and resurrection. This was performed both in Europe and in the United States. Hindu Theosophists by the power of Hypnotism put one of their number asleep in London in a coffin, with the understanding that he would be awakened after three days in Vienna, whither, with guards, etc., the coffin was conveyed. On the third day at Vienna the coffin was opened and the fakir found apparently dead. The rigid form was taken from the coffin and placed upon a table, where, to demonstrate that the subject was wholly unconscious, needles were thrust through his flesh, but brought no sign of consciousness. Finally, at the command of the chief Hindu fakir, the hypnotic spell was broken, the man's consciousness returned, and, with manifestations of pain from his long cramped position, he got up and ate and went about his business.

Thus, without directly attacking the Bible account of the awakening from the sleep of death of Lazarus, and Jairus' daughter, and the son of the widow of Nain, their influence is offset by these modern "strong delusions" to "believe a lie." (2 Thes. 2:11.) Nay, more; it goes farther and would even discredit or cast into the shade the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

Similar was the demonstration which took place in the United States, only still more realistic; for the subject was not only put into a death-like sleep, but was

actually buried under three feet of earth through which

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a wooden pipe permitted air to reach the subject, and down which the public looked upon the buried man's face. The New York Journal (Aug. 30, '96) publishes an illustration of the grave, its occupant, and the public gazing down upon him, together with the subject's own account of the matter, and of his feelings, etc.; and the Editor introduces it in the following words:--

"John D. Wyatt has just been resurrected at Indianapolis, Ind., after being buried alive at his own request for three days. No fancied grave was his, for though in hypnotic sleep, he was actually buried under four feet of earth. It was a marvelous experience. No man ever endured one like it."

It is claimed that ere long the public will become accustomed to hypnotic phenomena by their introduction through dentistry, where it will be used in a manner calculated to support the claims of "Christian Scientists," that there is no such thing as pain, but merely an imagination thereof.

Truly, the great Adversary is being permitted to prepare "strong delusions" for those who, having been brought in contact with the truth, either resist it or, by failure to follow the true light loyally, show that they are unworthy of it, "that all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
--2 Thes. 2:11,12.

* * *

Another illustration of Satan's subtle workings is found in the claimed "latest discoveries of science." For two centuries science has been making discoveries which it has claimed completely overthrow the reliability of the Bible narrative; but as often have these scientists been compelled to admit that they have erred. The fact is that scientists are usually infidels, if not openly, then of the "higher criticism" type, who have little respect for the Bible, and who are on the lookout to secure world-wide fame by finding and promulgating something which would do what other scientists had tried to do but failed; viz., to cast discredit on the Bible. It is not remarkable that being thus prejudiced against the Bible, these worldly-wise scientists, going about to disestablish God's Word, and seeking honor one of another, and not submitting themselves to the guidance of faith in their researches, will, in the future as in the past, frequently "believe a lie" and publish it for the truth, until disproved and repudiated later by some other scientists. Our prejudices should be in favor of the Bible, and only positive, unimpeachable evidence against it should be even considered.

The modern field for scientific research is Assyria,

where the ancient buried ruins of Babylon, Nippur, etc., being dug into, furnish relics and records of an early day--antedating all history except that of the Bible.

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So, then, let it be understood that the scientific research, for which our day is noted, is frequently only an effort on the part of those engaged in it to immortalize themselves by impeaching the record of God's Word, if they can possibly do so.

The latest news of this kind is from a party of Armenians, representing the University of Pennsylvania, who have for some time been excavating the ruins of the ancient city of Nippur in the Valley of Babylon. This news is that these scientists, having dug down below the level of the known Nippur, found about thirty feet below it a still older Nippur with valuable relics, tablets, etc.

Immediately Prof. S. A. Binion (who, so far as we are aware, has never seen the excavations at Nippur) hastens to tell the public through the daily press what he don't know about Nippur, and to most dogmatically assert respecting tablets, broken vases, etc., bearing inscriptions, and their supposed decipherment, --"These tablets show that a high state of civilization existed 7,000 years before the birth of Christ, and 3,000 years before the creation of the world as set down in the marginal chronology of the Bible." "Many cuneiform records upon tablets, of Babylonian history, have been unearthed, in an excellent state of preservation. Some of these are 9,000 years old, and are almost as clear today as when the writing was done." Professor Binion very accommodatingly furnished also a "sectional drawing" showing the temples, streets and houses of ancient Nippur, from which thirty-six feet of covering, debris, is supposed to have been removed; and also showing the still more ancient Nippur, from which thirty feet additional debris had been removed.

This drawing covers nearly a page of the New York Journal of Aug. 30, '96, under a full page headline declaring as follows:--

"A BURIED CITY UPSETS THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE BIBLE.

Under the above mentioned picture of the two cities, in large types, appeared the following:--

PREHISTORIC NIPPUR 7000 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST.

THE REMAINS OF THE ASSYRIAN CITY, NIPPUR, BUILT 3,000 YEARS BEFORE ADAM AND EVE WERE CREATED.

(FROM A SECTIONAL DRAWING AND RESTORATION OF THE EXCAVATION BY PROFESSOR S. A. BINION,

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST.)

Every scientist, every editor, every business man, every mechanic and every day-laborer can, if he will but think, see through the fraud thus practiced upon a confiding public by a Professor and an editor. Why, if the University of Pennsylvania had a thousand times as much money as it now possesses, and if it spent every cent of that sum in excavating at Nippur and

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had laborers at work night and day, none of its professors would live long enough to see such a job of work accomplished as Prof. Binion and the New York Journal represent--thirty-six feet of debris removed from off a city of miles in extent, and thirty feet more from off a lower city of similar size.

What are the facts? Simply these: A few years ago the management of the University of Pennsylvania, desirous of fame for their institution, concluded that foot-ball and boat-rowing are not the only outside enterprises in which a modern college may engage, and with commendable enterprise undertook scientific digging into the ruins of Nippur. At the outset Rev. Dr. Peters was placed in charge of the work. Under his direction a shaft or pit was sunk on the principal mound, and some underground passages excavated thirty-six feet from the surface. But to be a successful "scientist" in such a work, a man needs to have a lively imagination and to give it full play, else he will fail to "astound" the world with his "archaeologic" ability in deciphering real and imaginary hieroglyphics on pieces of pottery, etc.; and so Dr. Peters was superseded by a man pretty sure to find something that would cover himself and the University of Pennsylvania with glory and renown--Prof. Hilprecht.

The latter gentleman has not uncovered the entire city of Nippur, but merely removed a few more cubic yards of debris from what is believed to have been a temple; and sinking a shaft or pit thirty feet still lower, through the debris, he found at that level "virgin soil" and some relics of an ancient civilization which it would in every way be to his interest to believe and seek to prove existed 7,000 or 8,000 years before A.D. 1.

Whether or not there are two cities of Nippur, one built upon the other with thirty feet of debris between, nobody can yet say truthfully. It will require vastly more money and labor than has already been expended, to demonstrate the truth or fallacy of the suggestion. The Valley of Babylonia is supposed to have been the cradle of the race; and it is possible that Nippur was a city built before the deluge of Noah's day. If its temple were but sixty feet high, thirty feet of silt and debris would still leave a temple thirty

feet high, whose upper levels may have been used after the flood. Or it may be that the level first recognized, thirty-six feet below the surface, was never a city level but merely one level of the temple.

Prof. Binion describes the written tablets as "in an excellent state of preservation," "almost as clear today as when the writing was done;" but Prof. Hilprecht, now at Constantinople, told quite a different story to the representative of the London Daily News who interviewed him, and who says: "The labor of piecing together the thousands of fragments of vases and other objects, and of deciphering the inscriptions upon them, has during the past winter nearly cost him his eyesight." Prof. Binion is probably mistaken also in saying that these broken fragments are in Philadelphia. According to the "firman" or permit issued to the University by the Turkish government, all findings were to belong to the Turkish museum.

These "scientific" gentlemen who endeavor to discredit the Bible by fraudulent pictorial misrepresentations and descriptions, ask us to take their word for it, that the Bible account, which has time and again come off victorious in contests with "scientists," so-called, and which alone of all histories carries an unbroken line from creation to our day, and is represented by a living race--the Jews--is now utterly overthrown and proved unreliable, by the finding of some broken pottery bearing peculiar letters and symbols which one scientist fondly hopes will raise him and the college employing him to world-wide renown.

As for us, we will hold on to the Bible and wait a few years until another "scientist" equally anxious for renown will refute the present conclusions and show wherein the deductions are false. It has ever been thus. Not long ago Chinese histories were paraded similarly, to prove that China had a civilization and history one or two thousand years older than that of the Bible; but to-day archaeologists concede that the very ancient history of China is mythical, a fabrication.

We have gone into this matter at some length because we have had many inquiries concerning it, and because it serves as a sample of the many ways the Adversary is attacking the Bible, and overthrowing the faith of those who have not put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand in this evil day. (Eph. 6:13.) What a defense against doubt and every attack of the devil is the knowledge of the divine plan of the ages! Praise God from whom our blessings flow!

Professor Sayce, one of the best informed as well as one of the most candid of modern archaeologists, writing upon the reliability of the Babylonian records and their probably faulty interpretation says, under date of June 30, '96:--

"I pointed out some years ago that the length of reign assigned to several of the kings in the first two dynasties is suspiciously, if not impossibly, long, and

that the same high number recurs with too great a frequency. Since then the American excavators in Babylonia have discovered tablets which show that in the early period of Babylonian history records were kept of the events which marked the several years of each king's reign, and it was by these events that the legal documents of the time were dated. I believe that it will turn out that the compiler of the dynastic list supposed in some cases that where two or three events characterized the same year they were to be reckoned as representing separate years, while in other cases the co-regencies of a father and son have been neglected, as they have been in Egyptian and Jewish history."

"ABIDE IN ME."

That mystic word of thine, O sovereign Lord!
Is all too pure, too high, too deep for me;
Weary with striving, and with longing faint,
I breathe it back again in prayer to thee.

Abide in me--o'ershadow by thy love
Each half-formed purpose and dark thought of sin;
Quench, ere it rise, each selfish, low desire,
And keep my soul as thine--calm and divine.

As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own--
So, when thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown.

The soul alone, like a neglected harp,
Grows out of tune, and needs that Hand divine;
Dwell thou within it, tune and touch the chords,
Till every note and string shall answer thine.

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Abide in me: there have been moments pure,
When I have seen thy face and felt thy power;
Then evil lost its grasp, and, passion hushed,
Owned the divine enchantment of the hour.

These were but seasons beautiful and rare;
Abide in me, and they shall ever be;
I pray thee now fulfil my earnest prayer--
Come and abide in me, and I in thee.
Harriet Beecher Stowe.

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SOME BETTER THING FOR US.

"These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.--Heb. 11:39,40.

IN the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Paul's letter to the Hebrews the two classes who are to constitute the two phases of the Kingdom of God (the human and the spiritual*) are brought to our attention. At the time of this writing the heirs to the earthly phase had all run their course, and were awaiting their reward in the resurrection, John the baptist having been the last and most highly honored of all that noble line of ancient worthies (Matt. 11:11); but the heirs to the heavenly phase had just entered upon their course; and, knowing that it would be a long and painful one, the worthy Apostle would have them draw a large measure of inspiration and zeal from considering the faithfulness and patient endurance of the worthy ones who shall constitute the earthly phase of the Kingdom.

His words, while addressed directly to the early Church, apply with equal force to the whole Church, to the end of the age; and in some respects the application will be seen to have special force in the end, or harvest, of the age. In recounting the prominent characters among those to inherit the earthly phase of the Kingdom, beginning with Abel, he shows that it was their faith in the promises of God that nerved them to such endurance and faithfulness, even unto death; and so he would have us consider and, with the same faith, rely upon the exceeding great and precious promises given unto us, whereby, as Peter says, we may "escape the corruption that is in the world" and be made "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4.) He shows how by faith they walked with God; how they ventured upon his promises, doing his will and leaving the results with him; how they overcame great obstacles in the strength of that faith; and how they endured persecution, pain and loss, and then died in faith that what God had promised he was able also to perform, and would perform in his own good time and way. They were such men and women, says the Apostle, as the world was not worthy of. They endured as seeing him who is invisible, so strong and courageous was their faith.

Yet, though the reward of those ancient worthies will fully recompense their faithfulness, the Apostle would have us know that God hath still reserved "some better thing for us;" viz., the inheritance of the heavenly phase of the Kingdom. In so doing, however, God is not rewarding us according to our deserts; for neither our merit, nor that of the ancient worthies, could claim by right an inheritance in either phase of the Kingdom.

Both callings are of his abounding grace. The times and seasons for the selection of these two companies, as well as the conditions of eligibility to them, were fixed by Jehovah before the foundation of the world; and within those appointed seasons those individuals who will have complied with the conditions become heirs of the promised inheritance to be realized in the time appointed. God has a right thus to do what he will with his own, and his wonderful favors will be received with thanksgiving by all his righteous heirs without respect to comparisons; and all will be satisfied when they awake in his likeness, whether it be on the human or on the spiritual plane of being.

The "better thing" reserved "for us" who are called of God during this Gospel age is the joint-heirship with Christ, Jehovah's only-begotten Son and heir of all things, the partaking with him in all his subsequent work for the blessing of all God's intelligent creation. Therefore it is, as the Apostle states, that the

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. 1., Chap. xiv.

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reward of the ancient worthies tarries until first the overcoming Gospel Church is exalted to the throne with Christ in the dawn of the Millennial age, now so close at hand. As soon as the spiritual phase of the Kingdom is established in power the setting up of the human phase will be immediately accomplished. In humble recognition, therefore, of the divine purpose and order in the superior exaltation of the Gospel Church, we repeat the Apostle's statement that "they" --those noble, loyal, righteous, faithful ancient worthies --"without us shall not be made perfect." Their perfecting will be instantaneous with their awakening from death, their trial having been passed successfully, as attested by the Lord's word.

But as to whether we shall be numbered among the "us" depends yet upon our successful running of the race set before us. Surely, no less faithfulness and nobility of character can be expected of us than of those who ran for the earthly prize. And since all the blessings of God's plan,--the exaltation of the ancient worthies, the liberation of the whole world from the bondage of sin and death and the final judgment of angels --await the manifestation of the spiritual sons of God, the Gospel Church, therefore the Apostle in chapter 12, in forceful metaphor, points us back to those ancient worthies as a stimulus for faith and zeal; saying:--

"Therefore also we, being compassed about with so great a cloud of martyrs [Greek marturon--who so nobly witnessed for God and righteousness], let us [emulate them and] lay aside every weight and the sin

which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the [higher, heavenly] race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus, our Ransomer, is also our forerunner and pattern in this race. He ran successfully, and in consequence is even now at the right hand of the throne of God, whither we also may go to him. His way to the crown was the way of the shameful cross, and he said, If any man love me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me: the servant is not above his Lord. Persecution and shame and grief and loss are our portion in this present world, and the exaltation and the glory will follow in due time, if we faint not. Therefore we are urged to consider his example and teaching lest we be weary and faint in our minds under the trials of faith, patience and endurance of this evil day.

Again referring to the ancient worthies and their faithfulness (12:18-24), we are reminded of our much more favored position on the stream of time; for we are not approaching, as were they, the established typical kingdom of God under the typical mediator Moses; but, in point of time, we are approaching the glorious antitype of that--the Kingdom of Christ. How inspiring is this thought of the proximity in time to the glory of the Kingdom! And if this was true of the early Church, how much more is it true of us who are living in the end, the "harvest," of the age?

The Apostle would also lead us to a fuller appreciation of the glory to be revealed in the setting up of the real Kingdom--the antitype--by a reference to the glory that attended the setting up of even the typical kingdom, and the enunciation of its righteous code of divine law. (Verses 18-21; see also 2 Cor. 3:7-11; Exod. 19.) That was a scene whose majesty and glory caused all Israel to fear and tremble; and even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." But, he says, that manifestation of glory was nothing in comparison to the glory that excelleth, which shall attend the setting up of the real Kingdom. That will be the glorious New Jerusalem, the true Mount Zion, the city (government or Kingdom) of the living God, the city for which Abraham looked afar off. It will be the general assembly of the Church of the firstborn in the midst of a welcoming host, "an innumerable company of angels:" it will be the gathering together of the Church unto Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel--not vengeance, but peace, pardon and life,--and unto God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits [lives] of just men made perfect; --first the earthly phase of the Kingdom, and finally the full number of the restitution host.

What a glorious prospect! and how full of solemn import to us specially, who have approached to the very

threshold of this blessed hope;--solemn, in that the overcoming to be done before we reach the goal will tax all our fortitude and faith and test every principle of righteousness to the utmost. To do this will require the greatest humility and dependence on Christ, not only for redemption but also for grace to help in every time of need. If we should allow pride and self-righteousness to come in and our ears to grow dull to the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, we shall no more escape the wrath of God than would an Israelite have escaped it had he disobeyed the voice which commanded that he should not touch the mountain where God appeared unto them and spoke to them through their mediator Moses; for our God is a consuming fire to all who attempt to approach him except through our mediator, Christ, just as, in the type, he was a consuming fire to any who disregarded the mediation of Moses.

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"ONLY FOR JESUS!--Lord keep it forever
Sealed on the heart and engraved on the life!
Pulse of all gladness and nerve of endeavor,
Secret of rest, and the strength of our strife."

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THY LIGHT IS COME.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."--Isa. 60:1-3.

THE words of this prophecy have a double application, --first to spiritual Israel, and second to Israel after the flesh. The great and long-looked-for light is the Lord Jesus Christ, the light of the world; and the time indicated is the end or harvest of the Gospel age, when he comes in glory and power to shine as the sun in his Kingdom. That the prophecy had a partial fulfilment to fleshly Israel at our Lord's first advent is true. He indeed was the light and glory of Israel; but as a nation they knew not the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44): the light shined in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:5.) Consequently the glory of the Lord was not then seen upon Israel: they did not know their King, nor enter

with him into his Kingdom, though the privilege was then offered to them. They did not arise and shine, and therefore darkness came upon them; and, as a nation, blinded to their highest interests, they stumbled into the ditch (Matt. 15:14), a great time of trouble, which, beginning with the destruction of their holy city and the complete wreck of their national polity, drove them out of their own land and left them as fugitives in every land and the subjects of more or less persecution even unto the present day.

All this reminds us very forcibly of the words of Jesus to them,--"Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." (John 12:35,36.) But alas! Israel heeded not the light, nor the warning. It was as the Prophet had foretold (Isa. 1:3), "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." However, Behold (says Paul) the goodness as well as the severity of God: on them which fell from their high privileges, severity; but upon you Gentiles, goodness, if you heed and continue to walk in the light, but, if like them you become proud and self-righteous, you also will be cut off from the divine favor and left to stumble in darkness.--Rom. 11:22.

Indeed, that such would be the case with the masses of nominal spiritual Israel in the end of the Gospel age, as well as with fleshly Israel in the end of the Jewish age, was also foretold by the Prophet, who said, "And he shall be for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel." (Isa. 8:14.) Again, in the end of this Gospel age, the Lord of the whole earth has come. He comes not for a sin-offering, as at the first advent, but he comes now in the plenitude of his kingly power to begin his glorious reign and to exalt his faithful Church as his bride and joint-heir to his throne and his glory. He comes while yet darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people, and the glad message to all his faithful saints is, "Arise, shine! for thy light is come." "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Observe that the Prophet calls upon the saints to shine now, and also tells of a glory about to be revealed in them. The thought of the passage is plainly that they have something to do with the shining to which they are exhorted, while the glory to be put upon them is apart from their own doing, a reward from God to the faithful ones who now diligently let their light shine for him.

Jesus said to his disciples in the beginning of the age, "Ye are the light of the world;" and so the true followers of Christ all through the age who have been with Jesus and learned of him have been the lights of the world. (Matt. 5:14-16.) But this prophecy, taking the standpoint of the end of the age, indicates that

greater light is due here than at any previous time. And so we find it. Although the Lord has been enlightening and leading his people ever since the days of his first advent, yet now they are to arise and shine as never before. Within these days of the Lord's presence (since 1874) the light of divine truth has been shining more brightly than ever, so that his people have been able to discover and understand God's deep designs, and to see in his mighty work a grand and benevolent plan of ages, fully worthy of the wisdom, power, justice and love of our God. To use another figure, the table of the Lord has been richly spread with all the bounties of the harvest season, and the Lord himself, according to his promise, is serving.--"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them."--Luke 12:37.

Well may the Church arise now and put on her beautiful garments; for very shortly she is to receive beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness. The time is come when she may lift up her head and rejoice, knowing that her deliverance draweth nigh. (Luke 21:28.) The exhortation to arise and shine is therefore to all who have been enlightened by the harvest message in these days of the Lord's presence. The prophet tells us that this truth which so fills our hearts with joy and gladness is nothing less than the glory of

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the Lord which is risen upon us. How blessed the thought, how precious the truth! The humblest saint who has been brought to a knowledge of it, and who has been thrilled with its blessed inspiration, may rejoice in the realization that the glory of the Lord has already risen upon him.

Is it indeed true that the glory of the Lord is risen upon this humble one who has to fight hard the fight of faith day by day to keep his mortal body in subjection to the mind of the spirit, and who realizes every moment that he stands only in the imputed righteousness of Christ, his own being but as filthy rags? Yes, it is even so; and the fact that the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, that it has thrilled thy soul with a joy unspeakable and full of glory even now, is a special evidence of his love and care for thee. And more, it is an earnest or foretaste of that fulness of glory and blessing promised a little further on, if we are faithful to the light we now enjoy; if, with a holy zeal for God, we arise and let it shine--in our words, in our works and in our characters.

A few more days or years of cross-bearing and trial, a few more days of valiant and persistent warfare with the principalities and powers of darkness that conspire against us to bring us again into bondage to sin,

a few more opportunities to tell the blessed tidings to those who sit in darkness, to bear our loving testimony to the power and grace of our God, and then, by and by, we shall shine in the glory of the Kingdom for the blessing of all the world;--"His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Let us therefore be faithful to the light; let us walk in the light while we have the light; for if we prove unfaithful to it, it will be withdrawn from us. If, after receiving it and being blessed by it, we fail to appreciate it, and seek for the satisfying portion elsewhere, thus plainly indicating our lack of appreciation, it will not continue with us.

While this harvest message comes to all the professed people of God with this stirring appeal, "Arise, shine!" it comes also with an inherent power to separate between the true and the false, the faithful and the unfaithful. Like a magnet, it attracts only its own kind. The spirit of God which is in the truth must also be in every one who receives it: all such, and only such, have an affinity for it and can be attracted by it; and the more they are filled with the spirit of God the more they will prize the treasure of divine wisdom and cling fast to it, notwithstanding the opposition that may be brought against them. Those who have less of the Lord's spirit may not hold to it so tightly, and unless they become filled, sooner or later, they will be overcome by opposition, either open or subtle, and will be swept away. There must be a very strong and close affinity for the magnet of truth to hold fast to it against all opposition. Those in whom the spirit of the world dwells, whether they be professed Christians or not, have no affinity for it, and are not drawn by it. It is no matter of surprise, therefore, that we find the large majority of professed Christians, who are really worldlings, either indifferent or in opposition to the truth; for the nominal spiritual Israel, like fleshly Israel, is to stumble at this stumbling stone, and only the remnant of both houses shall be counted worthy of the Kingdom and its glory. Now, as in the end of the Jewish age, the masses of the professed people of God are blinded and stumbled because their hearts are not in the proper attitude to receive the blessings God has to bestow.

Another thought is prominent in this glowing prophecy and this cheering exhortation to arise and shine. The words remind us of our Lord's counsel to Mary, immediately after his resurrection. Overcome with joy she was inclined to linger in his presence; but gently he reminded her that the good news of his resurrection would be equally good to all the other disciples, and that it was her privilege to bear it to them. The time for his ascension to the Father was not yet, and he would meet with them all again.--John 20:17.

So now, while we are made to realize and to rejoice in the presence of our Lord, the prophet bids us

be mindful of our brethren to whom this joy has not yet come, and to whom it is our privilege to bear these

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good tidings. All who are truly the Lord's faithful covenant people will recognize the glory of this harvest message; they will be attracted by it and rejoice in it. But since we cannot always discern the hearts to know who are the worthy ones, we must expect the repulses of many whose hearts are not yet in condition to receive it. But, nevertheless, let us arise and shine. Let us bear the blessed testimony wherever we have opportunity, especially to them who are of the household of faith.

After spiritual Zion has been glorified with Christ to shine as the sun in the Kingdom (Matt. 13:43) and that true light shines upon the nations, it will be first upon the house of Jacob--the return to them of divine favor, "mercy through your mercy" (Rom. 11:26-31); then this call will come also to them, "Arise shine, thy light is come!"

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QUESTIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

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

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

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

Beginning with those who already have some knowledge, enough to be a basis for faith, he exhorts

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them to add to their faith fortitude (common version, "virtue"); that is to say, he implies that if they hold to their faith against the attacks of the enemy it will develop fortitude, an added grace of character. And when he says, "Add to your fortitude knowledge," we understand him to mean that if faith be held firmly, and

fortitude of character result, this, under the Spirit's guidance, will bring the faithful one to deeper and wider expanses of knowledge; or, as the same Apostle suggests (2 Pet. 3:18), the faithful one will grow in both grace and knowledge, and the holy Spirit, through its begetting, will enable such to know (appreciate) the deep things of God, the things freely given unto such by God, the knowledge of God resulting from our experience in the school of Christ. It is concerning this knowledge, not merely concerning the intricacies of doctrinal matters, but the heart sympathy and communion with the Lord himself, that the Apostle Paul exclaimed, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."--Phil. 3:8.

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

Question.--If our Lord had power to take his life again after having laid it down (John 10:18), would not this indicate (1) that his covenant to give his life a ransom was not binding and (2) that he possessed knowledge and power in hades?

Answer.--This passage should read, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power [or privilege] to receive it again." We understand our Lord to have meant that he was commissioned or authorized by the Father so to do.

Our Lord, born under the Law, was subject to its conditions, and additionally he took fresh responsibilities upon himself at the time of his baptism, specifically consecrating his all to the Father's service, in harmony with the Father's provision for him. But, while his life was consecrated, it was still in his own

hand, it could not be taken from him. To be his sacrifice it must be his own offering in every sense of the word. Hence when he said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legion of angels?" he undoubtedly spoke the truth. (Matt. 26:53.) His request would have been honored. Having violated no law, his life was not forfeited, and we believe could not have been taken from him. But having consecrated his life, and realizing that it was the Father's will that he should attest his obedience by the death of the cross, he kept his covenant with the Father and would not ask for protection, but freely delivered himself up on our behalf. He does not indicate by his language that he could ask for angelic protection and yet retain the full measure of the Father's approval; but, choosing the latter, he refrained from making the request. We remember in this connection his previous prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me-- nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39.) What our Lord did, and what he refrained from doing, we know was the Father's will. To what extent he could have done contrary to the Father's will, or what would have been the consequences to himself, it is not necessary for us to know, and what would have been the results of such improbabilities have not been revealed.

The substitution of the word "receive," a better translation, clears away the difficulty from the word "take." It is distinctly stated that he was raised up by "the glory of the Father."--Compare Rom. 6:4; 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 13:4.

Question.--Several of the brethren here, myself among them, are railroad employees. We have intimation that we will be expected to vote at the coming election, and that for the gold party. What is our duty? Does Colossians 3:22 bear upon this question?

Answer.--The Scripture you quote does not apply to your voting privileges. The "servants" there addressed by the Apostle were bond-servants or slaves; but even in their case he cannot have meant that they should violate their consciences in obedience to the commands of their masters.

The safe plan is to take no part in politics; and to tell inquirers with whom you are intimate that, although an ardent admirer of this as the highest type of human government, you are, as Cromwell expressed it, "a fifth monarchy man"--waiting for and talking for "the Kingdom of God's dear Son;" for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

The Quakers take note of the fact that God's people are not to engage in carnal warfare, but they overlook the fact that when they vote for a government they ought to support it by words and deeds. Thus our Lord said, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight."

Of course if "the powers that be" should ever compel us to vote or to fight, it would be our duty to act

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with the side most nearly approved by our consciences.

Some will take knowledge of you--especially if your daily conduct support well your profession; others will ridicule you; but few will injure you, "if you be followers of that which is good," and faithful to your duties. And if you should sustain injury, God is able to make it work for your good. But, whatever your conscience may dictate, obey it.

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Question.--In the May 15 issue, page 116, you refer to the withdrawal of the Roman army under Vespasian from the siege of Jerusalem, A.D. 69. It is claimed by some that this retirement was by Cestius in 65. Will you please explain?

Answer.--Both statements are correct. Cestius Gallus with a Roman army first undertook the subjection of the rebellious Jews. He was defeated in 65 A.D., and Vespasian was sent to conquer them. The latter having reduced the principal fortresses was just ready to attack Jerusalem when the death of Nero stopped him until he should get orders from the succeeding emperor. Disorders at Rome and his own proclamation as Emperor hindered the war for about a year, when the army returned under Titus, and Jerusalem fell. It is quite probable that the majority of those who recognized the Lord's prediction and escaped availed themselves of the first of these two opportunities.

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WHOLESOME COUNSEL.

--SEPT. 20.--Prov. 16:22-33.--

Golden Text--"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."--Prov. 16:25.

THE most important thought of this lesson is expressed in the Golden Text. It is a solemn warning against self-deception--against pursuing a course of conduct which is radically wrong, being opposed to the spirit and intent of the divine law, and yet which may be made to seem right by a line of false reasoning, suggested by the will of the flesh and apparently founded upon the Word of God, yet denying its fundamental principles of righteousness. The delusions of Satan also greatly help along such deceptions,

and thus the blinded one is urged along in a course which seems to him to be right, but the end of which is death.

Christians should above all things guard themselves against the folly of this way. To do this, let us ever remember that, even though through Christ we have a reckoned standing of justification before God, the human heart which we still have is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9), and that it requires constant watching and purging to enable us to put in practice the Apostle Paul's rule.--In simplicity and godly sincerity have your conversation in the world. (2 Cor. 1:12.) To do this requires humility, sobriety, godliness. If the heart be puffed up with pride, or ambitious for vain glory, or if it be selfish, or in any measure intoxicated with the spirit of the world, then beware; for there is great danger of getting into that way that seemeth right, to a man because blinded by his own perverse will or fleshly mind.

The best safeguard which a Christian can have against the snares of Satan is that understanding which is here (vs. 22) described as "a well-spring of life unto him that hath it." Such understanding is not merely that of the head, but of the heart specially; for, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and "out of the heart are the issues of life." If the heart be wrong, the head will seek to justify it, and in so doing will pervert judgment and truth. Therefore, take heed, and "keep thy heart with all diligence."

Not only will the "wise and understanding heart" keep the feet in the paths of righteousness, but also "the heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips" (verse 23), so that he shall speak forth "words of truth and soberness," words of wisdom, of kindness and of love. How important that the fountain should be sweet, that thus the stream that issues from it may be healthful and refreshing to all within the range of its current! Truly, "pleasant words [of wisdom, of counsel and of loving kindness] are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones [in that they refresh and comfort and stimulate courage and thus fortify the soul and strengthen it to noble deeds]."--Verse 24.

How different is the picture of the ungodly man! (Verses 27-29.) "An ungodly man diggeth up evil [apparently finding a morbid satisfaction in searching for it], and in his lips there is a burning fire. A froward man soweth strife, and a whisperer separateth chief friends. A violent man enticeth his neighbor, and leadeth him into the way that is not good. He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips, he bringeth evil to pass." Thus, as Isaiah says, "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."--Isa. 57:20,21.

But blessed is the man that hath learned the right

ways of the Lord and walketh therein with a perfect heart. Such a one, unlike the wicked who go about digging up evil, delights himself in doing good and in speaking forth the words of truth and soberness. He is slow to anger, and studies carefully how to rule his own spirit, which is surely a great work and worthy of the ambition and effort of every Christian. (Verse 32.) How blessed (vs. 31) are the closing years of a long life devoted to this most worthy end of ruling one's own spirit in harmony with the principles and precepts of the Word of God; when, as Mr. Whittier has beautifully expressed it,--

"All the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angels of the strife
Are rounding into calm;"

and when the hallowed influences of ripened Christian graces are manifest to every beholder. Truly, "the hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness." But if not, it is but a monument of folly and its ripened evil fruitage is most undesirable.

The statement of verse 33 is to the effect that God's overruling power takes cognizance of even those things which men may regard as mere chance, and that nothing can come to pass without his knowledge and permission,

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and that eventually all things will be overruled to the accomplishment of his purposes.

SEPTEMBER 27, REVIEW LESSON.

Golden Text--"The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe."--Prov. 18:10.

The earnest Christian of many years has had this assurance amply verified by blessed experience. Let those younger take heed, apply their hearts unto instruction, learn to trust the Lord with implicit faith, and he will make you also to realize the blessedness of this refuge, and the sweetness of abiding in him. Let the language of our hearts continually be, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."

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ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS.

Washington.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER:--The enclosed Postal Order is a thank-offering to the Lord for an especial favor. The occasion is, that I have recently completed the perfect memorization of the Book of Isaiah; and I desire with a humble heart to thank God for the preservation of my memory, for its power of rapid reception and the tenacity with which it retains that which has been stored in it. Please do not think me boastful, for I fully realize that it is God's gift, and I feel very humble in view of the fact that I have so misused it in the past.

The book was more than half learned in detached portions before I dreamed of making it a complete subject; then it was completed much sooner than I had expected it to be. It has been mostly the work of my morning hours. I rise habitually at four and leave home for the shop at seven. Breakfast and other duties occupy part of the time, but I get from an hour to an hour and a quarter for reading and study, and that is the best time I have for it. This is the only entire book of the Bible which I have memorized, except the first epistle of John, which I had learned before meeting MILLENNIAL DAWN.

I know that it is one thing to fill the mind with a collection of words, and another to understand their meaning; and I ask your prayers that God's holy Word may not be to me as the words of a book that is sealed, nor I as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, but that I may have the seal of understanding and the stamp of obedience on my heart. Pardon me if I seem egotistic, but God's mercy to a weak old man fills me with the desire to tell some one of it, and I have no one here to whom I can talk about these things and who can sympathize with me in them. The memorial which I send is small, but it is nearer in its proportion (as coming from me) to the widow's mite, than it once would have been; and I trust you will accept it in the spirit in which it is offered, and that the Lord will use it, as he does many small things, to his glory. Yours in love and sympathy, _____.

[When the memory is thus stored with the words of divine revelation, what food is furnished for prayerful meditation, what a ready

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weapon of defence is at hand against every attack of the adversary, what words of wisdom, counsel, instruction, comfort, consolation, warning, encouragement and cheer will spring up in the mind as necessity may require. We commend the brother's course to all to the extent of their ability and opportunity, remembering the counsel of the Lord, "My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart."-- Prov. 7:1-3. See also Deut. 6:6-9; Psa. 1:2.

Such storing of the memory with heavenly "food," if it be but one verse a day or one verse a week should not be neglected: the results will be surprising in even one year. "Thy word was found and I did eat it."--EDITOR.]

Maine.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--The following item from a religious publication shadows forth the wide-spread feeling that to accomplish any purpose, even to subduing the earth and crowning the blessed Christ, only the unity of Christians is necessary. It reads:--

"The time has quite come to beat the sword into a plow-share, and the spear into a pruning hook. This age has the courage and the faith, if applied in the right direction, to grasp the mighty contents of prophecy and hurry its fulfilment, thus quickly bringing on its blessings.

"God is willing that something should be done for him on a scale as magnificent as for war or international display. The Christian nations are well equipped with ships for destruction and tremendous engines of war. Let the Church of Christ drop its differences, and bury them to the centre of the earth; then unite to do this thing. The angels will again throng the skies, with their song, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men.' From heaven itself mighty, unseen forces will move to help on the work of crowning Jesus King of kings. May there not be found somewhere a man, who will be as great for God, as Napoleon Bonaparte in war, as statesmen have sometimes been for their country, as many now are for the simple purpose of making money?"

Strangest of all is the idea that it is in the hands of men to accelerate or retard the accomplishment of God's great and glorious designs. It seems to me that the assertion that this age has "courage and faith to grasp the mighty contents of prophecy," is little better than the incoherent mutterings of one in deep sleep. Who can grasp the mighty contents of the prophecies unless God reveal them? God declares that he reveals them only to his humble, watchful children; and we know that the boasted numbers of Christendom have no such characteristics. And to hurry God's movements: what comment is adequate to such towering pride?

We can know what God wills to be done only by his revealing it; and nowhere has he revealed that he would have a grand display of earth's pageantry to usher in the kingdom. Truly, the "outer darkness" is very great; but my heart rejoices to walk the lowly vale with the self-sacrificing One.

W. F. EATON.

[REPLY. Very true; and yet it is well to remember that most of us who now rejoice in God's "marvelous light" were once in the same darkness. There is every reason why we should think charitably and even hopefully of such blind reasoners. They are on the Lord's side at least, and longing for the better day, however ignorantly. A zeal not according to knowledge is far more pleasing to God than a knowledge without zeal. The zeal shows the state of the heart, and the knowledge the condition of the head to some extent. It was because Saul of Tarsus had the proper zeal that God corrected his knowledge and made him the great Apostle Paul; while it is declared that "unprofitable servants" who have knowledge, and who do not have the loving zeal to use it, will be cast out of the light into the "outer darkness."

A man, such as the writer of the above, who respects "the contents of prophecy," is a much more hopeful subject for effort than the many who know not and care not for the prophecy, and who disbelieve the promise of a coming Kingdom of God in which God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

The eyes of such may be profitably anointed with a few facts as follows:

(1) This century has witnessed the greatest missionary efforts ever put forth.

(2) Some sanguine people reckon the converts from heathenism during this century as high as one million souls.

(3) Statistics show that during the same period the numbers of the heathen have increased about two hundred millions.

(4) It does not require a great mathematician to see that there is no

hope for the conversion of the world, unless God interposes supernaturally.

(5) These facts should awaken all who are truly God's people to a study of God's Word, to see what is the "hope of the groaning creation;" and they would find it to be the Kingdom of God--the glorified Church, whose Lord and head is Christ Jesus; and that his Kingdom is to be introduced by divine power and judgments in a great time of trouble now nigh, even at the doors.--EDITOR.]

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