

page 29

VOL. XVIII. FEBRUARY 1, 1897. No. 3.

CONTENTS.

Special Items..... 30
 "Ye are Bought with a Price"..... 31
 The Salt of the Earth and the Light
 of the World..... 35
 "The Spade and the Bible"..... 37
 Concerning the Epistle of James..... 38
 Was Mother Eve Ransomed?..... 38
 Lying to the Holy Spirit..... 39
 "Obey God Rather than Men"..... 41
 Letters from Distant Colaborers..... 42

page 30

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

--ADDRESS TO--

TOWER PUBLISHING CO., BIBLE HOUSE, 58 & 60 ARCH ST.,
 ALLEGHENY (NORTH PITTSBURG), PA., U.S.A.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, \$1.00 A YEAR, IN ADVANCE,
 INCLUDES A SUBSCRIPTION TO "THE OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS"--QUARTERLY.
 MONEY MAY BE SENT BY EXPRESS, N.Y. DRAFT, MONEY ORDER,
 OR REGISTERED. FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES BY FOREIGN
 MONEY ORDERS, ONLY. SPECIAL TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR, AS FOLLOWS:

Those of the interested, who by reason of old age or accident, or
 other adversity are unable to pay for the TOWER will be supplied FREE,
 if they will send a Postal Card each December, stating their case and
 requesting the paper.

READERS, PLEASE TAKE NOTICE.

When you write to us, please begin by giving your full address.
 We cannot possibly keep in memory the streets and numbers of our
 many correspondents.

* * *

When you order your address changed, state the old as well as
 the new address.

* * *

Those who sent in their subscriptions before the end of 1896, should

find the date on the address tag changed accordingly. Those who have sent in renewals since, will please not expect to see the date changed until March 1st issue, as this is our busy season, and some renewals are delayed that long.

PATENT BINDERS FOR YOUR WATCH TOWERS.

We supply these at sixty cents each, holding two years' issues of ZION'S WATCH TOWER--each issue to be added as received. These are very convenient. Price includes postage.

=====

R2097 : page 31

"YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE."

--1 COR. 6:20.--

WHAT different sentiments these inspired words awaken in different hearts! To the heart of the natural man these sentiments are very objectionable; but to the heart fully in harmony with God and the divine plan they are precious words, full of comfort and joy. The unregenerate heart, full of pride, convinces itself that it did not need to be bought; that it did not need to be redeemed; that it had no very serious ailment of sin. It is perhaps ready to admit, and would surely find it difficult to dispute, that it is imperfect; that tried in the balances of justice it would be found wanting; but to itself these lacks of perfection are very slight, and deserving of but trivial punishment of some kind, and that punishment it expects to bear and believes that it does bear to the full in earthly troubles. The natural heart believes in a Great First Cause, of some kind, which it calls God: it believes also in certain laws of nature which it holds are irrevocable and unalterable. It denies that there is forgiveness. It is therefore wholly out of harmony with the gospel proposition of a "Sin-offering," a "ransom for all," and consequent forgiveness of sins under the terms of the New Covenant, to whomsoever will accept the conditions.

This class of unbelievers is in many respects the most hopeless; because they have a sort of worldly-wise philosophy which so fills their minds that it hinders them from seeing the beauty of the true Bible philosophy. They are usually blind to the very simplest logic that could touch this question as presented in the Scriptural declarations, "The wages of sin is death," and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." While they cannot and do not claim perfection, it seems never to have occurred to them that all imperfection is unrighteousness, sin, and that the judgment of a perfect

God would properly and naturally be the destruction of that which he does not approve, and the blessing and perpetual continuance of those things only which are acceptable in his sight, perfect things and perfect beings. Not until this view is grasped are any properly prepared for the message of the gospel--the message that God is operating in Christ for the reconciliation of the world unto himself. Only as the natural man learns that "the wages of sin is death" does he appreciate the fact that eternal life is a gift of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord; so that "he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" eternal.--1 John 5:12.

But our inspired text gives offense to the natural man, and to the man fallen from grace, in another respect; it hurts his pride. It implies that he is being treated as a mere slave, or chattel, to be bought and sold. What could be more galling than such a thought to the proud, unregenerate heart?

Nevertheless, this thought is kept up throughout the Scriptures, and the meek, the humble-minded, alone are able to appreciate it. They hear the apostle's statement that all were "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14), and they realize the truthfulness of the declaration. They find abundant evidence in themselves and in the entire race that all mankind are "slaves to sin;" they find "the law of sin in their members" and in others. They find the power of Sin so strong that it cannot be broken by any; that, although it may be fought against, nevertheless it holds over all mankind a mastery which the enslaved ones cannot fully overcome. They see thus, in the apostle's words representing Sin as a great task master ruling the world, a very grim but very

R2097 : page 32

truthful picture of the facts. They inquire of the Word of God, How comes it that God, himself good, pure and perfect, has brought forth human children under such a bondage to Sin through imperfection? They inquire, Do not the Scriptures declare of God, "His work is perfect?" Why then this imperfection, why this subjection to the power of Sin? An answer can come from one quarter only--the Word of God; and that answer is the only satisfactory answer, the only one which meets all the requirements of the conditions as they are known to men.

That answer is, that, although God's work was perfect in the creation of man, yet the creature, being endowed with free moral agency, rebelled against the law of his Creator and thus by self-will, self-gratification, brought himself under the sentence previously prescribed,--"Dying thou shalt die." This deliberate act on the part of our first parent not only brought himself under this penalty, but since his posterity proceeded from himself, all of his posterity shared in his

subjection to death, and in the slavery to Sin consequent to his alienation from God and his failing powers as he gradually passed under the power of death. So then the fact that father Adam sold himself and the posterity yet in his loins to Sin, for a momentary gratification of self-will, meant not only his own enslavement, but also that all of his posterity would be born in such slavery to Sin. And such are the facts of the case: all of his posterity can say with one of old, "I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Here we come to the thought which was evidently in the minds of some of the early reformers when they promulgated the doctrine of Total Depravity, which is held by many at least theoretically, but from which we must dissent. We hold with the Scriptures that as a result of Adamic transgression there is a general depravity which extends to every member of the human family, so that "there is none righteous, no, not one;" but we deny that this depravity is a total depravity; we deny that any individual of the human race is totally, hopelessly, in every particular, wholly without anything that is good or commendable. The only sample of total depravity of which we have any clear knowledge is Satan himself,--the father of lies and of every wicked work.

But general depravity is general enough; and, being general, no man should have any difficulty in finding to some extent the portion of it which he himself has inherited, as well as discerning it in others. True, although the depravity is general, it is not alike general. Some are more depraved than others; some have the original moral likeness of God less blurred and defaced than others. In harmony with the Scripture statement that we are born in sin, every discerning person whose eyes have been opened to what depravity is can note the evidences of it even in childhood. Self-will and passionate obstinacy are often to be noted in infants but a few weeks old, and very patient should the parent be, as well as very attentive and thorough the correction of his child, when he remembers that the very traits which need correction have come down to the child from himself. Thus the Christian parent should be not only the most thorough in the matter of training up a child in the way it should go, but also the most patient, considerate and kind in giving this correction.

We have then before our minds the fact and general prevalence of sin and whence it comes; and we see the force of the apostle's words when he personifies Sin as a tyrant master, and represents mankind as his slaves, to whom he pays his wages--death. "The wages of sin is death." We have seen that God is not blameable for this enslavement, but, as the Scriptures declare, it was by one man's disobedience that all were brought under the power of Sin and subjected to the wages

which it pays. While the extreme wages only are mentioned --death--yet, before the payment of the full wages, we all received, incidentally, many of the aches and pains and difficulties, mental, physical and moral, imposed by this great task master, Sin. And as a groaning creation travailing in pain together under this hard task-master and suffering from his cruel lashes, all long for deliverance, and some of us have cried out to God for help--for salvation from sin and death, into righteousness and life.

God wishes us to learn very thoroughly the lesson of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," of its gall and bitterness, and of the hopelessness of any deliverance, except that which he will provide. Personal experience has proved to us that we cannot deliver ourselves from this slavery, that, in order to overcome the wicked one and his wiles and arts, which take firm hold of us because of the weaknesses of our flesh and through the fall, we need a power that we do not by nature possess. Finding ourselves powerless to help ourselves, we would naturally look to each other for aid; and indeed might get some aid from each other; but we all know how little aid can be given or received from natural sources. And when we learn the lesson which the Scriptures teach that all are slaves, that all were sold under sin, that "there is none righteous, no, not one," then we see the utter helplessness of our condition as a race. All who realize the situation and feel the bondage and seek deliverance may thus see that the only hope is in God. If they reflect that it was God himself who pronounced the sentence of death, and that he could not annul his own sentence nor transgress his

R2097 : page 33

own laws, let them reflect also that as he has superior power to ours, he has also superior wisdom, and that he may know how to do that which to us would seem an impossibility.

And this was the case: When there was no eye to pity and no arm to deliver, then God pitied and his arm (power--in Christ) brought salvation. (Psa. 69:20.) But how? How will God deliver? How can God himself continue to be just and yet release his condemned

R2098 : page 33

creatures from the sentence of his own law? Our text answers: God provided that these slaves of sin, sold into slavery by disobedience of their father Adam, are to be delivered by a great savior, who first of all would purchase them and afterwards set free all who will accept freedom upon his terms and conditions.

The price in the original sale was disobedience, and its sentence death; the price of the purchase was obedience unto death. Not only so, but, this is

expressed in the meaning of the word "ransom," a corresponding price: the redemption price by which the race is purchased must correspond in all particulars to the original sentence. The purchase price, the ransom price, must in every sense of the word correspond to that which was forfeited by the transgression. Adam was perfect as a man before he sinned, hence, whoever will be his redeemer must be a perfect man. A perfect angel would not do, nor would a perfect arch-angel be a suitable price; they would be as inadequate as a sacrifice to meet the conditions, as an imperfect man would be, or a lower animal. God has placed the matter in such a form by his own law and sentence, that only a perfect man could be a ransom, a corresponding price, for the perfect man who sinned, and in whom the whole race of mankind had been sold under Sin and under its penalty, death.

It was in order to prepare the great sacrifice for sin, and in harmony with the divine wisdom and plan, that the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, full of perfection, submitted himself to the Father's will, that he should humble himself to (without dying) be transferred or translated from his high and glorious nature and condition to a lower nature and condition, lower than that of the arch-angel, lower than that of ordinary angels, down to the condition of man; --not to the condition of sinful man, but to the proper condition in which God had created man (in which Adam was before he sinned). Obedient to this arrangement, our Lord Jesus "was made flesh," became of the same nature as the race which had gone into the slavery of sin, but he did not share in its sin nor in its imperfections. The apostle's declaration is that, in harmony with this divine purpose, our Lord, the only begotten of the Father, left the glory of his original nature and "was made flesh" and dwelt among us, and that for the purpose "that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." When, therefore, our Lord appeared in this humble condition, divested of the glories of his original spirit nature,--humbled to human conditions--it was not that he had died to his previous spiritual condition, for, although he came to die, he had not yet died. It was the man Christ Jesus who gave himself our ransom in death, and not the spirit being who previously became the man: the humbling from spirit conditions to human conditions, laying aside of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and becoming poor for our sakes, was only incidental to his great sacrifice begun at Jordan and finished at Calvary. But the man Christ Jesus was the same one who previously had been rich in spiritual nature and glory, and who could and did say, "Before Abraham was, I am"--thus particularly emphasizing the fact that he had not ceased to exist at any time in the transfer of his being from the higher to the lower condition.

Had our Lord been born as the son of Joseph, or received his life from any other human source, he would have been a partaker of the sentence upon our race, and of the weaknesses of the fallen flesh, and of the slavery to sin through that weakness. And the Scriptures are very careful to point out to us that his life did not come through such a channel and that it had none of this imperfection, declaring that "in him was no sin." He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners; although partaker of human nature, he was not a partaker of a fallen human nature, but of its perfection. If it is inquired whether he did not receive contamination, sinful nature, etc., through his mother, we reply, No; and we are ready to support the testimony of the Word of God by showing its reasonableness upon philosophical principles. But for this phase of the subject we must refer our readers to an article under the caption, "The Undeified One," in our issue of July '90.

He who came to be our Ransomer, our Purchaser, to pay for us the debt on account of which we were all made slaves to sin and death, was in fullest sympathy with the divine purpose, and made haste so that at the very earliest moment possible he began the work which the Father had given him to do. Since Adam at the time of his transgression was a perfect man, and since under the law manhood was reckoned as beginning at the thirtieth year, therefore, it was needful that our Lord should delay the work of sacrifice on our behalf until he had become, in the full legal sense, the man Jesus; then he began the work by consecrating himself even unto death, baptism in water being the symbol of this; and during the three and a half years which followed he was but carrying out that covenant of

R2098 : page 34

death, dying daily; and at the close of three and a half years he could say upon the cross, "It is finished."

What was finished? the release of the slaves of Sin? No; the slaves of Sin for whose redemption he gave his life were still in bondage, their slavery was not finished. What was finished? The sacrifice was finished, nothing more; it was not yet even accepted. The presentation of that sacrifice on our behalf and its acceptance by the Father did not take place until nearly fifty days after he who redeemed us had been raised from the dead by the Father's power, thus giving assurance to all that his work was well and satisfactorily done, and that it would be accepted in due time. And he ascended up on high, and, as the High Priest, appeared before the Father and applied his merit on our behalf as believers. The sacrifice offered, the price paid, is sufficient; it covers every member of the human family. For, since all men came under the slavery of Sin and under the sentence to death through

the transgression of Adam, now that the corresponding price has been paid for Adam, it implies full satisfaction for all the posterity of Adam, the sharers of his sentence. The race had been bought; and, more than this, the world had been bought, including the earth itself, because the earth was given to man as his inheritance, and when he himself became a slave, all of his possessions passed with him into the slavery of Sin, and so the curse has rested upon the world. And now that Adam and his race have been bought, how could it mean less than the redemption also of the earth from the dominion of the curse?

But we see not yet the earth's release from the curse, we see not yet mankind delivered from the slavery to Sin, we see that still the race is going down daily into death; "Dying thou shalt die" is still written against the race of Adam. Why is this so? The Scriptures, and the Scriptures only, answer this question.

They declare that God is at present selecting the "royal priesthood" and "joint-heirs with Christ," who shall by and by share with him in the Kingdom which shall break off the shackles of sin and open the prison doors of death and set free all the captives who long for freedom upon the divine conditions. This, we remember, was our Lord's declaration on this subject: He declared at his first advent that the ultimate result of his work would be "to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18.) As we gladly accept the divine arrangement and realize it to be best, so we must also accept the divine times and seasons, and realize that they are wisely ordained; and indeed all whose eyes are anointed with present truth may already see much of this wisdom.

While all mankind, therefore, have been bought, so far as our Lord Jesus' sacrifice is concerned, it being once for all, nevertheless, the only ones who are yet received of the Lord, who are yet brought into relationship to him through Christ, are those who recognize his sacrifice, and who, whether they understand the subject philosophically or not, believe what the Scriptures so distinctly declare, that we were bought with a price--the precious blood of Christ. It is this class that the apostle addresses; these who realize that they were slaves of Sin, and who now realize that they have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, and who having accepted of him and his power to save, are no longer yielding themselves as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but are seeking to yield themselves as servants of righteousness unto God. It would be useless for the Apostle to address any others than these in this manner, but pertinent and forceful is his argument to those who realize the true situation, and who are clinging to Christ as their Redeemer who shall ultimately be their Deliverer. To these he says,--"Ye are not your own." Your time, your talent, your influence,

your money, all that you consider precious or in any degree valuable, all properly belongs to God. It was not only his by right, in that it originally was his creation, because all that we have that is valuable in any sense of the word, has come from the heavenly Father; but now it is his in a second sense, in the sense that he has redeemed or bought it back from the destruction to which by sin our first parent delivered it.

The apostle uses this argument as though it should be a conclusive one with all who are right-minded; and so we believe it is. And those who are rightly exercised by this knowledge of divine grace in Christ not only accept the forgiveness of sins with thankfulness and joy, and with meekness and humility acknowledge that they were slaves of Sin and that they were redeemed therefrom, but they also gladly acknowledge the new Ruler, the Purchaser, and that to him they owe all they have and all they ever hope to be.

R2099 : page 34

Personal responsibility to the Redeemer who purchased, and to the heavenly Father who provided the gracious arrangement, lies at the foundation of all true consecration to God in Christ. As soon as the believing, grateful, justified one hears of the blessing that has come to him, he properly inquires,--Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? He finds that the new Master does not wish for any except voluntary servants, and that, having provided them release from the sentence of death, he nevertheless would permit them, if they chose, to go back and become again voluntarily the servants of Sin, and to receive the wages of sin, the Second death, as the reward for their voluntary submission again to that task-master. He learns that to be the servants of the new Master is a great privilege,

R2099 : page 35

a privilege that is enjoyed by all who have the proper spirit. Such hear the words of the Apostle, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and your reasonable service." They see the apostle's own example, how, laying aside not only the works of the flesh and the devil, but also laying aside earthly ambitions, aims, prospects and hopes, he gave himself, his time, talent, influence and all he had to the service of the new Master, the Redeemer, and thus to God. They read in his living epistle, in his trials and triumphs through faith in Christ, lessons which some of them at least heartily accept; and as a consequence there have been throughout this Gospel age some who have been glad to own themselves as the bond-servants (slaves) of the Lord Jesus Christ and of our God, whose representative Christ is.

At the opening of the new year, what lesson could be more important to us than this one, that we are not our own, but belong to another; that we are not, therefore, to seek to please ourselves, but to please him, nor to seek to serve self but to serve him, nor to seek or obey self will, but on the contrary his will. This means holiness in the most absolute and comprehensive sense of the word (not only separation from sin to righteousness, but separation from self to the will of God in Christ).

=====

R2099 : page 35

THE SALT OF THE EARTH AND THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

"Ye are the salt of the earth...Ye are the light of the world."--Matt. 5:13,14.

SALT and light are two essentials to humanity, and in nature both are abundantly supplied. Salt enters largely into the composition of both animal and vegetable organisms, and its use as a condiment is much appreciated and to a greater or less extent required by both man and beast. At a very early stage of human progress salt became an important element of commerce, and it is believed that the very oldest trade routes were created for traffic in this needful and much valued commodity. Among inland peoples a salt spring was regarded as a special gift of the gods, and so a religious significance began by and by to attach to it; and it was, therefore, as a precious substance, mingled with their offerings to the gods. Homer voiced this sentiment, calling salt divine; and Plato referred to it as "a substance dear to the gods."

In harmony with its uses and its general appreciation the term salt early came to have a generally recognized symbolic significance (which our Lord utilized and perpetuated) to teach important lessons, both under the old dispensation of the law and under the new dispensation of grace. As a savory article of diet, it symbolized hospitality; and as an antiseptic it signified durability, fidelity, purity. Hence the Bible expression "a covenant of salt" (Num. 18:19), as covenants were ordinarily made over a sacrificial meal in which salt was an important element.--"With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." (Lev. 2:13.) The preservative qualities of salt make it, when so used, a fitting symbol of an enduring compact. The purifying property of salt was referred to in its symbolic use by Elisha in his miracle of the healing of the waters.-- 2 Kings 2:20-22.

The symbolism of salt, therefore, in the above

words of our Lord, is clearly this,--that the influence of the true Christian upon the world is a healing, purifying influence, tending always to the preservation of that which is good from the adverse elements of putrefaction and decay. "Ye are the salt of the earth."

How significant the comparison!

These words also indicate a responsibility on the part of Christians toward the world in general. Though they are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world (John 17:16), but separated from it, a peculiar people, chosen of God, they are not to forget that this very separation and exaltation to fellowship, communion and cooperation with God, is, not to cultivate in them a pride of aristocracy, but for the purpose of blessing the world; for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to redeem them (John 3:16), and Christ likewise so loved the world as freely to become the instrument of Jehovah for its salvation.--John 6:51; 10:18; Heb. 2:9; Rom. 5:18,19.

We note further that these statements are in the present tense,--Ye are the salt and the light,--even now, before the time for the general blessing of all the families of the earth through the Church glorified. We call to mind also the exhortation of the Apostle Paul,--"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt," the appetizing salt of purity, righteousness, truth.--Col. 4:5,6.

The proper attitude of the Christian toward the world is thus shown to be, not that of a proud, stoical indifference, but that of a noble, generous, loving benevolence which, while it keeps entirely separate from its spirit, from its unholy aims, ambitions and doings, is ever ready to bless and, by precept and example, to point to the way of life and holiness. It is not that attitude which proudly says, "I am holier than thou,"

R2099 : page 36

but which, on the contrary, says, "I am no better than thou, except for the influences of divine grace, which are free to all who will accept them. By grace, I am what I am; yet still my shortcomings necessitate the merit of my all-sufficient Advocate." It is not necessary that these sentiments should be expressed in words; for actions speak louder than words, and their testimony is much more potent. The testimony of a holy walk and conversation cannot fail to be to the glory of God, to the wisdom and excellence of righteousness, to the reproof of unrighteousness, and to the fact of a coming judgment in which righteousness shall surely triumph.--John 16:8; Acts 24:25.

"Salt is good," said Jesus, referring to its symbolism of purity, righteousness, and to its cleansing, healing and preserving influence; "have salt [purity, righteousness]

in yourselves." (Mark 9:50.) If we have not the salt in ourselves, how can we be the salt of the earth? If we are not truly and sincerely righteous, how can we exert upon others the cleansing, healing influence? Mere outward profession of righteousness will not avail as a substitute for the salt of actual and sincere holiness. Mere profession has no healing properties, and can never fulfil our obligations toward the world. Therefore, let us have the salt of actual holiness in ourselves; so shall we be known and read of men to the praise of God.

Under this same speaking symbol our Lord also adds a word of warning, saying,--"If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." So if the Christian who once had the salt of righteousness in himself should turn again like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire; if he should wilfully and persistently fall away from his righteousness, he is "thenceforth good for nothing." (Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-31,38,39.) How important then that we not only have salt in ourselves, but that we continue to retain its healthful properties!

This same class Jesus also declared to be "the light of the world." Although they do not yet shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of God for the enlightening of the whole world, they are nevertheless luminous even now, and their light may shine within a smaller radius for the blessing of all who will receive it. And the Lord's solicitude for the benighted world, as well as for his saints, is shown in his exhortation to the latter to let their light shine.--"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." He also counsels the setting of our light in a position where it may dispel as much as possible of the darkness of this world. We are therefore not to put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick. Zeal for the Lord needs no further exhortation to this duty and privilege; for, like him, all who have his spirit or disposition in the matter will find in this duty and privilege their meat and drink. It will be their joy to let the light that has illuminated their darkness--the light of God's truth and of his holy spirit--shine out through them upon the darkness of others.

Thus, through the salt and the light of God's people, a measure of blessing comes to the world, even before its day of blessing. And at this end of the age we may with some degree of definiteness sum up their effects. A little observation shows that all the blessings of temporal prosperity included under the term "civilization" are due to the influences, direct and indirect, of those comparatively few people who, during this

Gospel age, have been the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Civilization is simply the indirect result of the measures of salt and light that have been in the world up to this present time. The faithful people of God have held up the light of divine truth as prominently as they could; and from it they have reasoned of righteousness and of a coming judgment; they have endeavored to salt the minds of men with as much as possible of the knowledge of the principles of righteousness exemplified in their own characters, and have urged their adoption; and to the extent to which these have operated the world has been profited.

The Lord, who foresaw the end from the beginning, knew that, with all their salt and all their light, his people would not be able to accomplish for the world in general more than this, until the appointed time for their exaltation with himself to power and great glory. But even this work of civilization is of great value as preparatory to the greater future work of restitution, and also in facilitating the special work of this Gospel age, of taking out a people prepared for the Lord, to be kings and priests unto God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

Then, beloved heirs of the promises of God, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, "have salt in yourselves," and forget not that, being thus salted, ye are the salt of the earth, so that your very presence is a rebuke to iniquity, and its continuance a living testimony to the beauty of holiness and the power of divine grace. Let us endeavor also so to focus the light of divine truth and its holy spirit that from the glowing focus of a chastened and purified character the light may radiate again to the blessing of all who will heed it, to the warning of all who will not, and to the praise of the great center and source of all light--God himself.

MRS. M. F. RUSSELL.

=====

R2101 : page 37

"THE SPADE AND THE BIBLE."

"IT has been tacitly assumed by the critical school that the art of writing was practically unknown in Palestine before the age of David. Therefore little historical credence can be placed in the early records of the Hebrew people. The events not being recorded at the time of their occurrence, the Bible history of them became traditional and mythical before they were finally written.

"Even Renan allies himself to this theory in his 'History of Israel.' He distinctly says that writing was unknown in the day of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and laughs at the mistakes of Moses.

"In 1888, some Fellahin in upper Egypt, while digging for nitrous soil to enrich their gardens, accidentally dug in upon certain clay tablets. It was a discovery, and the scholars were soon on the trail. Several hundred tablets were found. Prof. Sayce, of Oxford, has been at work deciphering these tablets found at Tel El Amar-na, and what do they turn out to be, now that they are deciphered? They turn out to be documents older than the Exodus, and copies of letters between Egypt and the nations of the East. Among these are communications from Palestine. From these tablets Prof. Sayce tells us that he learns that knowledge was far advanced in that early period, and that philosophy and science were common. That ancient period had advanced schools of learning, and many cities had as a possession large public libraries. For example, the old name of Hebron, a town of Judah, was Kirjath-Sepher; this was the name of the town before the Hebrews took it. That name literally means Book-Town, and it was called Book-Town because it was the seat of a public library. That was away back, centuries before the organization of the kingdom of Israel.

"But this is not all. What is more remarkable is this: The site of the city Ur of the Chaldees, the native place of Abraham, has been unearthed, and even there a library has been discovered showing that Abraham's people were a literary people. There are to-day in the British Museum some of the sacred songs which they sung in that far-off age, and also a carved signet which they used for the stamping of deeds and contracts. This marvelously confirms the story in the Book of Genesis and testifies to the correctness of Moses who tells us that Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah from the children of Heth in a business way.

"You see the point of all this. It is this: The credibility of Scripture has been assailed, since the beginning of the present century, on the ground that the narratives contained in it are not contemporaneous with the events they profess to record, because they represent an incredible amount of civilization as existing in the ancient Eastern world, and because they are inconsistent with the accounts of classical writers, and because writing was little known or practiced at so early a date. Discoveries show that there is absolutely no ground for such adverse reasoning, and that its premise is wholly false. There was a high civilization back there; the art of writing was well known, and the state of things was precisely what the Bible represents and requires. The spade has actually uncovered the old civilization, and we see it. Its products are before our eyes, and seeing is believing.

"Sargon's name occurs but once in the Old Testament. (Isa. 20:1.) As no trace of Sargon could be found in classical writers, he was objected to as fictitious. The finger of the skeptic pointed to the name 'Sargon' in ridicule, and the Bible was charged with putting off fiction as history. How strange! The quaint old tablets of Nineveh have been exhumed, and with them the history of Sargon. It is found that so far from being a fiction he was one of the greatest monarchs that ever ruled in Assyria, and that his reign lasted seventeen years. The very event recorded by the prophet Isaiah, in connection with which his name is mentioned, is recorded in Sargon's annals, and unexpected light is thrown upon the Scripture.

"In the Bible there are several allusions to a people called the Hittites. Objectors to the historical truth of the narratives of the Old Testament, like Professor F. Newman, declared that these allusions destroyed the credibility of the Bible. There was no reference to this people anywhere in classical writers. The Bible stood alone in affirming that they once existed. It had no witnesses to confirm or corroborate its statements. Thus it was until a few years ago. But now Hittites' monuments, disinterred, are in all the leading museums of the world. This lost kingdom has been reclaimed. Its very wealth has been dug up, and it is found that it existed before the days of Abraham and long after his days, and was equal in greatness and civilization and in military progress to Assyria and Egypt. Whole volumes full of real thrill have been written during the past ten years, upon this wonderful find of the Hittites.

"Take one other case. In 2 Chron. 33:11, it is said that when Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, took Manasseh captive, he carried him to Babylon. For a long time the objectors to the Bible pointed their fingers at this record and said, here is one of the mistakes of the Bible. 'It could not be, for Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, and not Babylon.' In his excavations of Nineveh, George Smith unearthed a whole library, in the palace of King Assur-banapal. It is called the stone library, for its books were clay tablets baked into stone. On these clay tablets he found written the very story of the Chronicles, and written there as it is written in the Bible. And more than that he found it explained how it came that Esarhaddon carried Manasseh to Babylon and not to Nineveh. To keep down discontent in Babylon, which was a province of Nineveh, the king built a palace there and made it his second capital, and carried prisoners of war to it and thus honored it.

"Even in the nineteenth century God keeps on confirming his own Book by unexpected surprises. And what is noticeable is this: These surprises come as needed rebuttals of specific objections against the Bible. Now remember this, that every wonderful answer to

the scoff and objection of the skeptic which exploration gives us is not only a foe of skepticism, it is at the

R2101 : page 38

same time a friend of faith. A solid and irresistible answer to an objection against the Bible is a solid and powerful argument in support of the Bible.

"As we behold the nineteen centuries after Christ confronted, by means of the pick and spade of the explorer, with the nineteen centuries before Christ, and learn for the first time how to answer objections, which for ages seemed to be unanswerable, and to explain difficulties which until now seemed too inexplicable, may we not learn a lesson of faith and of patience? Learn patience, and wait for God's own time as to the removal of difficulties that are still unsolved. Learn faith, and sit down as calmly in the presence of acknowledged objections as you do in the presence of objections which have been reconciled and which you now call harmonious facts. By means of the story of the past learn to trust the Bible for the future.

--Dr. David Gregg."

=====

R2100 : page 38

QUESTIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

CONCERNING THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Question. I notice in the columns of the WATCH TOWER frequent reference to the Epistle of James, applying its statements to Christian believers, the same as the other New Testament writings. In the October '96 issue you called attention to the remarkable fulfilment before our eyes of a prophecy by James (5:1-8); and his exhortation, "Be patient, brethren," you applied to Christian believers. Also frequently you have quoted James 1:18, applying it to Christians. In the TOWER discussing Faith and Prayer Cures, etc., you cited James 5:14-16, claiming that it referred to Christians seriously sick as a chastisement for sins of omission or commission, and that the prayer should be for the forgiveness of confessed sins and the restoration of the transgressor to divine favor, as in verse 16;--and that the word "if" of verse 15 would be better translated though, etc. And finally, in the January 1 issue (page 7), discussing the true Israel, you apply James 1:1, as meaning the true Jews residing in various parts of the civilized world, to whom the gospel was preached "first" (Acts 3:26) and

who believed--many of them at and shortly after Pentecost.

Now my question is, How can we harmonize these teachings with an article which appeared in the WATCH TOWER, representing the Epistle of James as addressed not to Christians but to Jews?

Answer. You are correct in supposing that the two positions are antagonistic and not harmonizable. The article to which you refer last, as being in conflict with our general presentations, was not an editorial article. Nevertheless, the Editor does not claim that his negligence in the matter is a sufficient excuse. It is a part of his duty to be critical, and to exclude whatever his judgment does not approve; and he now promises that by the Lord's grace he will hereafter be still more careful of his stewardship,--to the end that ZION'S WATCH TOWER may ever speak as an oracle of God.

Now that this matter is corrected a weight is lifted from our conscience. Had the article in question been an editorial we would have corrected it long ago.

WAS MOTHER EVE RANSOMED?

Question. If it be true, as you seem to prove that the Scriptures teach, that the man Christ Jesus gave himself as the ransom or corresponding price for Adam, and an ungenerated race in his loins for the ungenerated race of Adam in his loins at the time of his disobedience and which since born has shared, naturally, every feature of his sentence,--how would it be with Mother Eve? She was not in Adam at the time of transgression, but was a separate individual accountable for her own deeds and the first to participate in the sin of disobedience and hence a sharer before Adam in the sentence of death. How was her ransom paid? Or was it ever paid, and will she ever be released from the sentence?

Answer. Originally Eve was a part of Adam's body; and after she was separated from him physically she was not separated from him actually; but, as he expressed it, she was still bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh;--they were not twain but one flesh. Adam was not given to Eve to be her help-mate, but she was given to him to be a help meet (suitable) for him. Not that this signified a right on Adam's part to treat Eve as a slave, or to be cruel, or abusive, or even unkind to her, as some of the fallen race today seem to suppose. Quite the contrary, Adam was a true man and loved, planned for and cared for Eve "as his own body." In the divine division care had been taken to adapt each to the other's necessities. Adam, the stronger physically and mentally, enjoyed having just such a helper as needed his care and love. Eve, as the "weaker

vessel," possessed delicacy of mind and manner as well as of physique which drew toward her the tenderest and noblest sentiments of her royal husband, whose pleasure it was to grant her a share in all the blessings and honors of his realm, as a queen.

But they were not twain, but one; and of that one Adam was the head. In dealing with them God did not recognize them separately but as one. Adam represented not only his own individual person but also his wife's person; for she was "his own body," "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh;"--she was part of himself.

R2100 : page 39

Hence it is written, "All in Adam die:" Eve's identity was so linked with Adam's that, even if she had not sinned in partaking of the forbidden fruit, she would as part of him, as his partner, have shared his penalty--death. And, similarly, although Eve was "first in the transgression," her act did not imperil the race; because the race was not in her, but in Adam. (1 Cor. 15:22.) It was "By one man's disobedience" that "sin entered into the world and death by [as the result of] sin."--Rom. 5:12-19.

Moreover, it is evident that, the accountability being in Adam as the head of the family, Eve's deception and transgression need not necessarily have brought death even upon herself: she probably would have been disciplined, however. The principle of this judgment is shown by the Lord under the Law Covenant, which, formulated by the same Creator, upheld the same arrangement and recognized the husband and father as in every way the head and representative of the family. For instance, if any man vowed a vow to the Lord he could not escape it; but if a wife or a daughter vowed a vow unto the Lord it was void except as ratified by the husband or father. (Num. 30:2,5,8,13,16.) In other words, God has not only established the family relationship by the laws of nature in adapting the man to be the head of the family and the woman to be his helper, but he clearly expressed this in the Law given to Israel which is "honorable," "just" and "good."--Rom. 7:12.

Looking along these strongly marked lines of divine providence we can see clearly that Eve had recognition of the Lord only as a part of Adam: hence we can see that this not only involved her in his transgression and its penalty, death, but also that the redemption of Adam implied also the redemption of Eve as a part of Adam, "his body." This close relationship between the husband and wife in the divine order is clearly stated by the Apostle Paul.--Eph. 5:22-33.

* * *

Now many marriages are not after the divine pattern. The fall of the race, mentally, morally and physically,

has affected its various members, some more and some less. All men and all women have lost more or less of the noble character possessed by the first perfectly adapted pair. It is not surprising, therefore, that there are now many mis-fit unions and consequent unhappiness; especially when the divine order of adaptability is not recognized. Following the divine model a man should avoid marrying a woman who is his superior as much as one who is his inferior: because in the inferior he could not have real fellowship, she being unequal as a mate in life; while with the superior there would be a continual conflict because of his incapacity to fill properly the office of husband or head to a superior. Likewise a woman should guard specially against marrying a man her inferior, whom she could not look up to as a fit husband and head of the family according to the divine command, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the savior of the body."--Eph. 5:22,23.

R2101 : page 39

As man has sunken into barbarism, woman sank with him; as man has risen in civilization, woman has risen with him; so also have man's subjects, the lower animals, and the vegetable kingdom, been cursed or blessed by his degradation or elevation. It is the operation of the divine law. The schools and seminaries for girls are the provisions of the men as truly as are the schools for boys. The gradual changing of the laws, adapting them to the advancing civilization, takes cognizance of woman's rising conditions as well as of man's, yet these laws are framed by men.

Human laws, based upon divine laws, take cognizance of the husband and father as the representative not only of his wife, who is a part of himself, but also of his minor children, in matters of general welfare, just as it was with Israel, and just as it was before sin entered Eden. The endeavor in modern times to destroy the unity of the family and to make husband and wife twain instead of one is in harmony with other delusions after which mankind are clutching in the hope of thereby remedying present evils. The mothers who have no influence upon their husbands and sons, and the sisters who have no influence upon their brothers and fathers, thereby prove themselves unworthy of a franchise. Those who have such an influence have no need of a franchise, are better in harmony with the Lord's order, and generally realize it.

=====

R2101 : page 39

LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

--FEB. 7.--ACTS 4:32-5:11.--

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."--1 Sam. 16:7.

THE number of believers in Jerusalem was now considerable. Their new faith broke down the walls of prejudice and tended to bring rich and poor to the plane of common brotherhood in Christ. This is always the tendency with those who receive the gospel of the Lord Jesus into good and honest hearts: they are "pitiful," "kind one to another" and "love as brethren." Experience teaches us, however, that so long as there are hypocrites, who follow merely for the loaves and fishes, and so long as we are without the inspired

R2101 : page 40

apostles, possessed of superhuman wisdom in discerning spirits and rebuking them, and so long as

R2102 : page 40

even the true-hearted have such various developments of character and judgment, it is unreasonable to expect that believers could dwell together harmoniously and to mutual benefit. The incapable ones always feel themselves the most capable, and are the least willing to be guided by the judgment of others. The most capable are the most humble, the least disposed to grasp authority and to "exercise Lordship" such as would be necessary for the proper control of the incompetent. Hence, Christian people of experience and judgment have reached the conclusion that general communism of goods such as was practiced for a time in the early Church as narrated in this lesson could not be profitably practiced by Christian people in any age or country, for the same reasons that it was unsuccessful in the early Church. When that which is perfect shall have come, it will be possible for those possessed not only of perfect hearts (wills) but also possessed of perfect brains and bodies, to use communistic principles properly and to their general advantage. But all people of judgment and experience know that this time has not yet come. The failure of this early Church community and the failure of scores of communities since then is ample proof of this.*

(33) Evidently the chief subject of discourse with the apostles was the resurrection of our Lord Jesus from the dead and the proof which this afforded of several things: (1) That he was approved of God, that he was what he claimed to be, the Messiah, and not an impostor; (2) that his death was the great sin-offering, the ransom price for the whole world; (3) that in

his name was forgiveness of sins and all power for reconciliation with the Father; (4) that a New Dispensation of grace, mercy, forgiveness of sins had displaced the Law Dispensation of Justice, and that, now, not only could there be acceptance with God through Christ, but a high calling to jointheirship with the Messiah in his Kingdom soon to be established, in which all the families of the earth shall be blessed. The apostles hung the entire weight of their testimony upon this one matter--the resurrection of our Lord. And the Apostle Paul's preaching, later, is no less emphatic upon this than the Apostle Peter's at the time of this lesson, for he declares,--If Christ be not risen your faith is vain, our preaching is vain, ye are yet in your sins, and we (apostles) are false witnesses, because we have testified that God raised up Christ from the dead, whom he raised not up, if so be that the resurrection of the dead is an impossibility.--1 Cor. 15:15-18.

(34) The true spirit of Christ is indicated by the fact that the needy were not suffered to lack while the others had plenty. The Apostle James calls attention to this matter, saying, He who seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion against him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? And again, we are told by the divine Word, that it is not sufficient that we should express sympathy and good wishes, saying, Depart and be fed and clothed, but give not those things which are necessary to these ends. Undoubtedly, it is the design of the divine plan that the inequalities of the present time--poverty in the midst of wealth--shall be to some extent an opportunity to those who have this world's goods, and a test to them of their faithfulness as stewards. And the Scriptures pertinently inquire, If ye love not your brother whom ye have seen, how can ye love God whom ye have not seen? Hence, the Lord's work and the Lord's poor are permitted by him to be in need sometimes, in order to furnish opportunities to test those who have means entrusted to them. He who is unfaithful as a steward of earthly wealth need scarcely expect to be entrusted with spiritual riches.

It appears from the account that the apostles did not institute the community of goods in the early Church, rather it was the spontaneous sentiment of the believers; and the apostles under the divine guidance did not hinder it, evidently to the intent that an object lesson might be furnished and the importance of consecration illustrated in the story of Ananias and Sapphira. The writer first mentioned instances of those who honestly consecrated all of their property to the general good. Notable amongst these was Barnabas who afterwards was the associate of the Apostle Paul in doing a great work. The principal figures in the lesson, however, are Ananias and Sapphira. None had been commanded of the Lord to give all their property to the general treasury; nor had there been any request to do

so, although it is only a reasonable service for all who realize that they were "bought with a price." But God wants only a free-will consecration. Ananias and his wife saw others do this and were probably anxious for the honor and praise bestowed upon such liberal givers, and concluded that they would make a reputation for themselves among the believers; and at the same time hold back a sufficiency for future requirements. There was nothing necessarily wrong in such a provision, reserving for their own personal use a portion of the proceeds of the sale of their property. The wrong came in the attempted deception of the Church, in the attempt to have the apostles and the fellow-believers think that they were exercising all the faith and practicing all the self-denial, which some others had practiced. The Apostle Peter indicates that this was not merely lying to the Church and attempting to deceive

*See article, "They Had All Things in Common," in our issue of Sept. 1, '95.

R2102 : page 41

the Church, but more, it was an attempted deception of the Holy Spirit.

The penalty was death to both the participants, for husband and wife alike united in deception. The Lord would evidently thus teach the Church, (1) that while men might be deceived, it was impossible to deceive God; and (2) that such a fraud is a very heinous sin in God's sight.

The question naturally arises, Was this death of Ananias and Sapphira merely a prompt infliction of the Adamic death, under whose sentence they already were? Or, was it the infliction of the Second Death, and does it teach us that the attempted deception of the Holy Spirit is punishable by the Second Death; and that there is no hope in any sense of the word for Ananias and Sapphira. No one, we believe, can satisfactorily answer this question, because the facts relating to the matter are too indefinite. For instance, we do not know whether they had "passed from death unto life" (reckonedly from the Adamic death to life in Christ). We do not know that they had more information on this subject than some who followed the Lord and to whom he said, "Ye follow me, because of the loaves and the fishes." Ananias and Sapphira may never have been true converts at heart, but merely, yet in their sins, have been struck with the possibilities of the growing community, and acquainted with some in it; they perhaps thought it a good opportunity to fix themselves for future days, and in order to have a standing and place in the community were willing to give part of the proceeds of their property. If this was their

state of heart, if they had never really received the grace of God, then we believe that their death was merely a sooner accomplishment of the general sentence of the Adamic death and not Second death; and we should expect that the due time will come in the Millennial Kingdom, when the blinded eyes of their understanding would be opened, and they should see matters in a full, clear and proper light with the opportunity of either accepting or rejecting God's provision. But if they had come to a clear knowledge of the truth, had tasted of the heavenly gift and had been made partakers of the holy spirit, and then sinned willfully in this matter, we should understand that their death was the Second death, the penalty for their own willful transgression. The particulars are not stated, nor was it necessary to the narrative. The lesson to the early Church and the lesson to us is the same in either case; namely, that it is impossible to deceive God who discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This entire lesson brings forcibly to our thought the fact that every "new creature in Christ" has consecrated something to the Lord. Our offering should be not merely a portion of our substance, but all of it, including ourselves--time, influence, possessions--and these we may lay not at the apostles' feet, but at the feet of our Lord, in consecration. We cannot refrain from the thought--How many who have consecrated their all to the Lord are attempting not only to deceive the Lord, but to deceive also themselves, and to give a portion only of that which they have consecrated?

This is the great point of this lesson to all who are of this consecrated class; and the Apostle Peter's words to Ananias should be carefully weighed and applied by each one who has professed full consecration to the Lord--"While it [thy possessions] remained was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" We may apply this to ourselves, and say, The Lord did not compel my consecration; it was a voluntary thing, even though admitted to be a reasonable service; and as we have hitherto seen in the Lord's estimation, it is a very serious matter to make vows and afterward to re-consider, or attempt to take back, that which we have consecrated to him.

No wonder great fear came upon all the Church--the feeling of responsibility; a feeling that in contracting with the Lord they were engaged in serious business. And so the Apostle says to the consecrated, "Let us fear, lest a promise having been left us, any of you should seem to come short of it."

=====

THE phenomenal success of the gospel under the apostles' preaching, in the power of the holy spirit, soon awakened bitter opposition on the part of the rulers of the Jews. In a previous lesson we saw that they did not hesitate to put the apostles in prison; and how they sought to convict them of crime for healing the lame man, in the name of Jesus. Their opposition, instead of dying out, increased as they perceived the wonderful strides of progress made by the new doctrine. They felt compelled to make another attempt to head off what they considered the heresy of the Nazarene.

(17,18) The two principal sects amongst the Jews at this time were the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees made loud professions of "holiness," and did much in the way of outward display, which our Lord, who could read the heart, declared was hypocrisy; while the Sadducees, better educated as a class and less orthodox, were more after the sort called "higher critics" to-day; or even beyond them, they might be termed to some extent agnostic,--their faith considerably resembling that of the "Reformed Jews" of to-day. They believed something of the divine promises, but expected them to be fulfilled in a partial manner

R2103 : page 42

and in a natural way. They evidently did not expect a supernatural Messiah. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They denied that there are angels or any spirit beings not visible to flesh and blood. The chief priest at this time, we are told by the lesson, belonged to this party. He and his sect were filled with indignation against the new doctrine, for in every sense of the word it specially opposed their teaching--much more so than it opposed Phariseism.

The expression, "the high priest rose up," does not signify that he had been sitting or lying down and merely stood upon his feet, but might more properly be translated "the high priest was aroused." He and his party, the Sadducees, had hitherto been content to very generally disdain the masses and their views, and to pay little attention to them as inferior in wisdom and judgment on such questions. But now seeing the interest being taken by the public in the apostles' preaching, which declared not only the resurrection of our Lord, but that through the merit of his sacrifice a resurrection to a future life would be provided for all, they were thoroughly "aroused." In the teachings of the apostles they were meeting with a logic which they had never encountered in arguing with the Pharisees. Accordingly they again sent and laid violent hands upon the apostles and put them into prison.

(19-23) In harmony with the other miraculous

interventions of Providence at that time, for the establishment of the Church, the Lord wrought a miracle for their deliverance from prison; but instead of telling them to flee for their lives, he instructed them to go immediately again into the temple and preach as before; and this they did, going early in the morning. Great was the surprise of the General Synod or Great Council of the Jews, which had been convened for the purpose of condemning the apostles, when they learned that the prisoners were not in prison, but preaching as before in the temple.

(24-26) The officials were in consternation. It was bad enough to have men teach the gospel with such power and demonstration as they could not gainsay or resist, but to find that these men even when shut up in prison got out again by miraculous power, was enough to startle them, enough to make them consider afresh whether or not they might not be fighting against God. But they were self-willed men, not in a condition of heart to be influenced by anything, ordinary or extraordinary, which still left them their place and power. They would continue their investigation and endeavor to stop the preaching of the gospel, consequently the apostles were arrested again; but this time with great moderation, for fear of the people. The rulers were beginning to feel that an impression was being made upon the people and that in proportion as the new doctrine progressed they as teachers and rulers fell into disrepute. Indeed, so clearly did the apostles state the matter that those who believed their teachings could not well regard their spiritual rulers in any other light than that of murderers--murderers of the Messiah, the "Prince of life."

(27,28) The language of the Council to the apostles when they were arraigned indicates that they realized the situation when they said, you evidently "intend to bring this man's blood upon us,"--to make the people think that we are responsible for his death.

(29-32) The answer of the apostles shows that they were courageous men. They did not deny their preaching, nor its logical inference as understood by the rulers, for it was so. They merely said: "We ought to obey God rather than men." God sent us to preach the gospel, to tell the truth about this matter, and we have merely followed divine instructions. How beautiful, how reasonable, how consistent! There was no braggadocia in the apostles' language. They did not say, You brought us more carefully to-day than yesterday; you are getting a little afraid of the people; you have found that you cannot keep us in prison, for our Lord will deliver us; you are perhaps getting a little in awe of us by this time. They did not say, We will denounce you still more before the people and raise an insurrection and overthrow your power as sacerdotal rulers. Nothing of this kind; merely the unassuming statement, We have merely obeyed God in what we did.

Then follows another discourse similar to the one given the previous Council, explaining about Jesus, his resurrection and exaltation to divine place and power, and to be the Savior and pardon the sins of Israel. They wound up their testimony by citing them the holy spirit which operated through them as corroborating their witness respecting our Lord, his character, his resurrection, his present glory, and his power to save unto the uttermost all that come to the Father through him.

There is a valuable lesson here for all servants of God to-day. We too have a commission from the Lord to preach the gospel, and if we would be approved and hear his "Well done, good, faithful servant," we must obey God rather than men. Should faithfulness to God bring us into conflict with the religious great ones, we are to be bold for the truth, but moderate and humble in manner and language. Children of God are never anarchists lawless; and their opposition to human arrangements must only be because moved thereto by higher, divine laws and arrangements.

=====

R2103 : page 42

LETTERS FROM DISTANT COLABORERS.

Russia.

MY DEAR AND BELOVED BROTHER RUSSELL:--At the close of the year I cannot help thanking you for the spiritual pleasure you are rendering me by your esteemed journal, ZION'S WATCH TOWER, which I receive regularly. It is to me like the merchant's ship --bringing spiritual food from afar. My constant prayer for you is that Jehovah our God may preserve you and Sister Russell for a long time that you may be able to continue the King's work to convince many souls of the true, blessed hope the whole world may have in the appearance of "this same" Jesus Christ. We are all well. With Christian love and best wishes to yourself and Sister Russell for a happy New Year 1897.

Ever yours in our Lord, JOSEPH RABINOWITCH.

China.

GENTLEMEN:--Four years ago I was brought into contact with the WATCH TOWER, and, reading a little here and there, I supposed it to be the organ of some

R2103 : page 43

peculiar sort of Universalists, outside the pale of orthodoxy, and threw the papers on one side.

However, I have recently read the three volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN and am again going through the first volume more carefully and prayerfully; and I have been led to feel that, if this is God's truth, I want it at any cost. The Plan of the Ages magnifies the goodness of God ten thousand times more than any other system of interpretation or theology I have ever read.

I now turn up the old WATCH TOWERS of 1892 which I carelessly threw aside, and read them with avidity. I think inquirers should begin with the MILLENNIAL DAWN. I enclose \$6, and wish you to kindly send me what you can for it. Yours faithfully, _____

England.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--We are having some good times here. Our brother Hart has been amongst us and helped us on. Our class is gradually becoming larger. For the last three weeks our room (which holds about 25) has been almost too small for us. Our tracts (which the Tract Society so kindly sent us) are doing a good work. Brother Guard and myself often go to different parts to circulate them, and now and again a request comes for a DAWN. One brother has already had over twenty copies, as the result of a tract left under his door.

As we go about we find that the harvest is ripening fast; but the laborers are very few. Let us pray with all earnestness that the laborers may increase. I think we may want another supply of tracts soon. This is a very poor neighborhood, and we have had to loan many DAWNS. Yours in Him, W. THIRKETTLE.

R2104 : page 43

Australia.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I am deeply thankful to say that we are still holding fast to the truth, and endeavoring to the best of our ability to spread it amongst others. It seems almost miraculous that any should be able to stand, when all the delusions and snares that abound everywhere are taken into consideration; but by the grace of God alone, certainly not by any special ability or firmness on our part, we are thankful to be in the liberty of the truth.

Our work here is moving, though we are not able to chronicle any very remarkable success, if such is to be gauged by the general standard--numbers, etc.; but we are conscious of an increased interest generally, and a joyful acceptance here and there. We earnestly trust the Lord will graciously increase the number, but, dear Brother, as you well know, this is a hard battle; foes within and without are to be met constantly; and we

have the ever present consciousness of our own utter weakness and unworthiness. But oh, what a blessed comfort the truth is! How it makes every cross lighter, every problem luminous, in very truth. I know not how I should live through this present period did I not possess its healing and life-giving support; but the sweetest comfort of all is that God is perfect Master of the situation, and that all things will be brought to the best interests of his creatures. If the eternal happiness or woe of our fellow men were absolutely dependent upon our efforts, what a terrible thing life would be; but God and his blessed Son are a thousand times more anxious for the well-being and happiness of mankind than any mortal. With brotherly love to all the brethren and sisters, from Bro. Flack and myself.

Yours in love and service, ALFRED PEARSON.

Scotland.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--The amount of blessing I have derived from studying the Bible, helped by the DAWNS, I cannot describe. Before I knew of them, I plodded wearily through "Butler's Analogy" and "McCulloch's Calvinism" and, I might truly say, hundreds of other books, in search of something to satisfy me that Christianity was not cant. I must confess that though I had an earnest desire to know God, and though it is many years since I was converted, yet I did not study the Bible, but only read it now and then.

I have been careless of God, but he has not been careless of me; I have been often unfaithful, and he has ever kindly rebuked me. Now I see his love clearer; now I grasp heavenly things more tenaciously and dare not let go even for a moment. I fail in many things: it grieves me to fail in any thing; and I thank God for his many tokens of love and forgiveness of my follies. Blessed be God for the gift of memory which, though it shows me my sins and shortcomings in the past, also points out the many blessings my poor unworthy self has received in Christ Jesus.

In endeavoring to prove to many professed Christians that "hell" does not mean eternal torture, they have nearly one and all triumphantly pointed to the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. Now, in addition to using your arguments, I have often put the following question, in order to prove that Jesus simply used the story as an illustration, and did not tell it as an actual reality: "Was there any member of the human family who died and went to heaven before Christ died on the cross?" I point out that Jesus tells the story of what happened in the past--"There was a rich man," etc. If they say "Yes," I show them they deny that Christ is the only Way to heaven, and this staggers them. If they answer "No," they condemn their own belief and they stand confounded.

Yours in Christ Jesus, STEWART J. BELL.

[Our Lord said, "No man hath ascended to Heaven save the Son of Man."--EDITOR.]

Denmark.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN IN CHRIST:--I was greatly rejoiced over the good news of your dear letter received a few days ago. I have not been so glad for a long while as when I read the statement of my account and saw how good the Lord had been to me that he had put it into some good heart to help me over the great debt I had gotten into. "Thank the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." It was the best news you could tell me just now; and I most heartily thank you for it, and pray that God will bless you and the dear brother who has been such a great help to so many of the Lord's servants. The WATCH TOWER for Dec. 15th received today and most of it read--with delight. I am so glad with the truths it presents and am perfectly in harmony with you; it is so good and grand to me, and I prize it above money or anything else. I thank the Lord that he has ever brought me in contact with the blessed good tidings proclaimed from God's Word. I know it is the plain truth, and it is my heart's desire that I might live in the way that is most pleasing to God, and in all things be subject to the will of God, our blessed Heavenly Father.

R2104 : page 44

It is becoming more and more light for me since I commenced to hold little meetings here in Denmark. We meet every Friday evening and have Bible readings with explanations, prayer and praise, and it has been very profitable to myself as to many of the dear Christians that have been attending. The circulation of Danish and Swedish tracts and DAWNS progresses, and although the results are not so great as we could wish, nevertheless the truth is spreading and finding some of the Lord's jewels. Your brother and fellow-servant in our dear Lord,
 JOS. S. WINTER.

Columbia, Central America.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Your very kind, loving and refreshing letter bearing date of the 19th ult. is duly received; also that containing Invoice, etc. We are truly glad that Brother Maxon arrived safely and gave you a clear description of the state of affairs. We are truly thankful for kind proposition made. We rejoice in Brother Hay's good fortune, of which we are partakers. How blessed are they who, possessing this

world's goods, turn the same to good account.

Now, dear Brother, contrary to misunderstanding through communication concerning preaching, we had properly begun with it among the unintelligent, if by any means they could be aroused to an interest in securing DAWN, which would preach more lasting sermons. Being totally blinded, the people exhibited no appreciation for the truth, and we withdrew. We discern the necessity of associating preaching with the circulation of the Dawn. We gather from "Suggestive Hints to Colporteurs" that a house to house circulation is preferable, though preaching may not be ignored; and we are again preparing to go out preaching. We are experiencing severe storming by the Adversary; but occasionally realizing a gleam of sunshine amid the storm. We are having daily manifestations of divine providence and favor.

Our warfare out here is manifold, having to fight against the depressed state of things, the depravity of our surroundings, our own internal and external conflicts, etc.; so that we must be very often at the throne of grace, to implore the aid of our sovereign Lord and Head. We trust you will not cease to pray for us. We believe that grace will be given God's people equivalent to, or much more than, the evil with which they are surrounded. Thank God, we are growing in grace. The beam is in process of being cast entirely out of our own eyes; then shall we be able to see the motes of others.

It affords us great joy to see the report for 1896 in last TOWER, and to know of the active interest taken in the work by the brethren and sisters everywhere. May we all continue faithful unto the end.

Yours in the hope of the High Calling,

ISAIAH RICHARDS & LOUIS A. FACEY.

[These two brethren were formerly representatives of the American Bible Society. After they got hold of present truth and it got hold of them they could do no less than spread it and are now colportearing for DAWN as "Bible Keys," preaching and circulating O.T. TRACTS. They are full-blooded Jamaica negros.

Brother Maxon, a white man, converted by these brethren last year, called on us recently and gave a most excellent report of their zeal, patience, energy, devotion, ability and full consecration to the Lord.--EDITOR.]

Switzerland and Germany.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Inclosed you will find an order for books. My labors with translations into French continue. Meantime I am using the German literature and making efforts to reach some of the many Germans of Switzerland and Germany itself. I have sent out over 4,000 tracts and, praise God, here and there some are awaking and are writing for more

reading matter. Have also put notices of M.D. into different papers, having received \$15.00 from a brother for that purpose. Several booksellers are now offering it for sale; another puts it into his showwindow; and with another I am corresponding about arrangements.

One editor of a religious Sunday paper printed the notice of M.D. twice free of charge. I sent him the three volumes. In the notice I offered to loan the first to all lovers of the Truth and received many a friendly request for the same, mostly from among the poor. My German correspondence is thus increasing. While my efforts have been chiefly among the Germans of Switzerland, I am of the opinion that there remains much

R2105 : page 44

work to be done on the mainland of Europe.

The whole month of December I had almost daily some orders or requests for the German DAWN; some came from old Deaf Hospital women. It seems that a great hunger and seeking after the truth--to know more about the glorious Millennial day, the dear Gospel of the true Kingdom and the wondrous plan of the ages--is prevailing in Switzerland. Praise the Lord!

A German periodical would be very appropriate at this time, containing TOWER articles and probably answers to correspondents; and thus the bond of fellowship amongst the true believers would be strengthened and the interest, I believe, much increased. There are a number scattered here and there who would rejoice much over such an undertaking and support it according to their means. We hope that something may be done soon. I took the matter to the Lord in prayer. Hope you will think favorably of the suggestion and give us your idea and advice in the matter.

The other day I received a request from a missionary in a neighboring city for the loan of some DAWNS for a number of earnest Christians. Thus the interest increases. Will close with saying that I am always glad to receive the TOWER, and constrained to give thanks for, and pray for the continuance of, the blessings and favors of God our Father and our Lord Jesus toward me and you all and those that are His in every place.

Yours in our dear Redeemer, ADOLF WEBER.

[Sister Mattern reports that while as a nurse in a hospital in Hamburg she introduced DAWN and that five other Sisters there are deeply interested in the subject and are having Bible-study meetings and suffering reproaches, being in danger of losing their positions. Sister Giesecke is also doing a good work loaning DAWNS, circulating tracts, etc., in Germany.

All things considered, it has been about decided that we will start a small (4 page monthly) German TOWER. The price will be 12 cents per year for single copies; 5 copies monthly for a year 50 cents; 12 copies

monthly for a year \$1.00. We shall be glad to hear from all of our interested German friends, soon as convenient, respecting their interest in this part of the one harvest work.--EDITOR.]

=====

page 45

VOL. XVIII. FEBRUARY 15, 1897. No. 4.

CONTENTS.

Views from the Watch Tower.....	47
Misfit Ethics.....	47
Wounded by Professed Friends.....	48
Brother Moody's Alarm.....	50
Modern Exegesis.....	50
The Undefined One.....	52
The First Christian Martyr.....	55
Persecution Overruled for Good.....	57
The Ethiopian Convert.....	58
Letters of Interest.....	60

page 46

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

--ADDRESS TO--

TOWER PUBLISHING CO., BIBLE HOUSE, 58 & 60 ARCH ST., ALLEGHENY (NORTH PITTSBURG), PA., U.S.A.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, \$1.00 A YEAR, IN ADVANCE, INCLUDES A SUBSCRIPTION TO "THE OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS"--QUARTERLY. MONEY MAY BE SENT BY EXPRESS, N.Y. DRAFT, MONEY ORDER, OR REGISTERED. FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES BY FOREIGN MONEY ORDERS, ONLY. SPECIAL TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR, AS FOLLOWS:

Those of the interested, who by reason of old age or accident, or other adversity are unable to pay for the TOWER will be supplied FREE, if they will send a Postal Card each December, stating their case and requesting the paper.

R2108 : page 46

THE GERMAN WATCH TOWER.

OUR German friends express their joy at the prospect of having even a small monthly publication devoted to the spread of the truth amongst readers of German. Promises have been made of large subscriptions

for gratuitous circulation. Accordingly we have made a very moderate scale of prices, as follows--

	America.	Germany.	Switzerland.	
Two copies each month, a year	25c	Mk. 1.30	Fr. 1.50	
Five " " " "	50c	" 2.50	" 3.00	
Twelve " " "	\$1.00	" 5.00	" 6.00	

Postage included.

Those of the interested who by reason of accident or infirmity are unable to pay will be supplied free upon application. We believe that divine providence is guiding in the undertaking, and will proceed with it shortly. Let us hear from all who favor it at once.

A TRACT FOR HEBREWS.

We have calls for a tract for Hebrews--to help honest Israelites to find the Lord, Redeemer and Messiah. We would like to hear from all who consider that there is an opening for such a tract; how many they could judiciously use and in what language it would best serve its purposes--English, German, Polish or Jargon.

=====

R2105 : page 47

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

ETHICS OF SAINTS MISFITS ON WORLIDLINGS.

We are living in a day when history is being made as never before. Before us lies an account from the Chicago Times-Herald, stating that at a meeting of the Chicago City Federation, recently, the secretary of the Bureau of the Associated Charities of that city declared that there are 8,000 families in Chicago actually starving to death; and that the President of the South Chicago Relief and Aid Society says, "There is greater poverty here than there was in 1893, for we are less able to care for the poor now than we were then." The pastor of the First Congregational Church declares also that "at every turn one finds an object of misery. People crowd to our services and beg for food for their children. This is the hardest winter we have had. We can get no work for the men."

Another account is from Louisiana, of which Congressman Boatman declares that there are one hundred thousand destitute people in the Northern part of that State on account of the failure of crops in that vicinity.

The London Chronicle sums up a total of eighty-four millions of the population of India affected by the

famine, and says, "We are only at the beginning of the existing scarcity, which must now under any circumstances go on increasing until June next." And the famine has recently been supplemented by the Bubonic plague, which is making terrible ravages.

Before us also are accounts of the now celebrated Bradley-Martin dress ball, at which about eight hundred of the elite of New York City, and indeed contingents from various parts of the world were present in silks, satins, velvets and broadcloth--both men and women ablaze with jewels. The newspaper accounts tell us that this was the grandest affair of the kind ever witnessed on this continent; that the ladies and gentlemen who participated were dressed to represent kings, princes, queens and noble ladies of the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, and that the entertainment as a whole cost \$223,000.

The Rev. Dr. Rainsford, in whose congregation are quite a number of millionaires, found it his duty to warn his hearers that it would be very unwise to attend this ball, giving as the reason that at the present time there are many people in New York city who are in very straitened circumstance and that such a display of luxury and extravagance would surely excite and strengthen the envy and hatred already felt by many of the poor against the wealthy and aristocratic. This started quite a hubbub, and the opinions of many of the prominent ministers were sought and published in the daily press. Some agreed with Dr. Rainsford; some were fearful to express an opinion if they had one; and some took an opposite view, claiming that the expenditure of the money would be a benefit to the poor, etc. The Rev. Thos. Dickson, Jr., was one of the most pronounced in his difference of view, declaring, according to the public press, "If I had millions, would I spend all in charity? No! Why, the position is nonsensical. If I had millions I would build a boat that could go around the world and would spend solid years of my life in rounding out my education. If I should have one million of dollars, and if the public should dictate to me how I should spend it, I would say as did a certain member of the Vanderbilt family, "The public be d_____d."

In these conflicting views respecting the responsibilities of wealth and the proper uses to be made of it, we perceive the grand confusion into which nominal Christianity has fallen, which unbalances its reason

R2105 : page 48

upon every subject. The continued failure in judgment upon such subjects arises from the fact that the Bible lays down certain lines and conditions of Christian responsibility which do not fit a merely nominal Christianity, hence the misfit in attempting to apply the terms and conditions of true cross-bearers to those

who bear none other than diamond crosses--however polite, refined and educated the latter may be. Our opinion of those who patronize such extravagant displays is, that they are Christians merely in name--after the manner of the man who, when asked, Are you a Christian, sir? replied, "Well, I am not a Jew nor heathen; I presume, therefore, I must be a Christian."

Let us learn to distinguish in our minds between nominal Christians and those who bear about in their person the marks of the Lord Jesus,--who are fully consecrated to him; whose will is to do the will of the Father in heaven, and to finish his work. Such being fully consecrated to the Lord will have neither time, nor influence, nor money to spend in such extravagant displays as this bal-masque. The restraining influence upon such will not be the point chiefly suggested by Dr. Rainsford--lest the display excite the cupidity and envy of the poor;--nor will it be merely to parsimoniously save money in the hand, where it will do no person very much good; but the object will be to spend the time and the means in some better channel, calculated to bring greater and more permanent blessings and happiness, both to others and to themselves.

But those who have this consecration of heart, whether they have much or whether they have little, need not feel envious of the rich; nor indeed should they seek or expect to force "the children of this world," who are not actuated by the same motives of consecration to the Lord's service and appreciation of divine things, present and future, to act as they act in such matters. Let the worldly who have wealth spend it in luxury, and in any manner not immoral. This will not only circulate the money amongst the people, better than if it were hoarded in banks, but it will help to manifest more clearly than ever the difference between the consecrated and unconsecrated condition of heart and conduct of life, and thus it will make wider the breach between the true Church and the worldly class which falsely under deception of false teaching bears the name of Christ but is none of his.

WOUNDED IN THE HOUSE OF (PROFESSED) FRIENDS.

Dr. Abbott, of the Plymouth pulpit, Brooklyn, continues to lead along the paths of "higher criticism." In some lectures on "The Bible Literature," recently, he provoked his congregation to laughter by the amusing manner in which he made reference to the story of Jonah and the great fish, which he termed a "fiction," --"the Pickwick papers of the Bible." The worldly-minded newspaper reporters could see through the absurdity of a man pretending to be a Christian minister and yet thus making light of the very basis of Christian faith--the Bible. The reports in the New York papers

put the matter in its true light, and in consequence the Manhattan Ministers' Association took it up at its meeting and strongly rebuked the language. We

R2106 : page 48

are not to forget, however, that probably a large majority of the ministers in New York City, and in all large cities, are already in full agreement with Dr. Abbott along the lines of "higher criticism" and, so far as faith in the inspiration of the Bible is concerned, might be termed rationalists, agnostics or even infidels: there are good reasons for such convictions. We must therefore suppose that the Manhattan Ministers Association were not so much in opposition to Dr. Abbott's agnosticism, called "higher criticism," as to the public statement of this agnosticism in Dr. Abbott's mirthful vein. As a minister of this city once said to the writer, "It is very well for us ministers to study these subjects, but it is not prudent to tell them to the people."

* * *

Dr. Abbott, noting the criticism, made two very significant remarks: (1) "No minister should criticize another minister in public;" and (2) "I have every reason to believe the Plymouth Church is an absolute unit in supporting its pastor." The latter statement shows to what an extent this modern infidelity called "higher criticism" has already taken root and born fruit among the people, the "laity." The former statement shows how ministerial etiquette is expected to intimidate and seal the lips of any disposed to obey the Word of the Lord and lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their sins and dangers. Only those who fear to offend God rather than men will escape this influence which the prophet declares will make the majority like "dumb dogs, they cannot bark" --Isa. 56:10,11.

Meantime, the Rev. J. H. Barrows, D.D., famed as the president of the Chicago Parliament of Religions, of similarly broad and indefinite ideas of the Bible and Christianity, is now lecturing in India, having for his topic, "The Harmony of Religions." Surely, it is these people who have repudiated the Bible, and incidentally all of Christianity except civilization and refinement, who probably see no reason why they should not as truly fellowship the deluded believers in the creeds of the Orient, as that they should fellowship those of us whom they believe to be the deluded believers in the Bible.

* * *

Another bold man who denies the faith and is yet "worse than an infidel" in that he still masquerades

as a minister of the Gospel of Christ, while doing all in his power to undermine that gospel, is the Rev. M. J. Savage, pastor of the "Church of the Messiah," New York City. One would think that few except those "of the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9) would enjoy or support such preaching. From his recent sermon, as reported in the New York Sun we clip the following malodorous morsel as a sample. He said:--

"Archaeology has established that man has been on earth not for a thousand years or ten thousand, but for at least two hundred thousand. Evolution, as developed by Herbert Spencer, and biology, the province worked out by Darwin, are no longer the subjects for debate by educated and intelligent people, though prominent theologians, who show that they don't know what they are talking about by the first words that they utter, will discuss it. Man was not created in the garden of Eden or anywhere else, but began in the ooze of far-off primeval seas. What we know, then, means that there has never been any fall of man, but a continuous ascent. This one fact compels the complete reconstruction of all the theological theories of the past."

It is time that all who have faith in the Word of God and its message of a fall and a redemption by our Savior's precious blood should be no less outspoken than are the enemies of the truth. Whoever denies the fall into sin, denies the redemption from sin and its penalty and such are no more Christians than are Hottentots or Mohammedans or other unbelievers.

We pointed out in 1879, in this journal, that the great "falling away" from the faith predicted of the close of this age would come along this line;--the denial of the need and of the fact of the ransom. The cross of Christ (the great ransom-sacrifice) is to the Jew a stumbling block and to the Greeks (the worldly wise) foolishness, but to us who believe it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.--1 Cor. 1:18-24.

The true light, the true plan of God, is now clearly manifested for the succor of all who are truly his people. The true "sheep," as they realize the confusion, will turn attentively and humbly to the great Shepherd to listen to his voice to guide them. Such only will be guided and kept in his way, led to the green pastures and still waters of present truth. These will be delivered from the great delusions of this evil day, which, if it were possible, would deceive the very elect. All others we may expect will be more or less deluded or blinded. Only a remnant will escape the blinding influence now as in the end of the Jewish age.

CHURCH UNION.

Along the same lines of "union" with anything and everything that will help to support our present social arrangement is a prominent article in the New York Evangelist which after giving a number of reasons for federation and cooperation among Protestants includes also Roman Catholics, and urges peace and fraternity with them, saying:--

"We differ from them in some points, but we cannot deny that they hold the main truths of our religion. [It is, alas! too true that Protestants hold still to many of Papacy's perversions of the truth.--EDITOR.] ...There is another reason why we should have a care how we disparage the Catholic priests, namely, that some day, not so far off in the next century, we may have to call upon them for help against political and social dangers. The late Professor Roswell D. Hitchcock has often said to me that the time might come when the Roman Catholic Church would prove the greatest bulwark and safeguard against the Socialism and Communism which have been imported into our country from abroad. That is what all Europe is afraid of at this moment--a cataclysm, not from above, but from beneath: an earthquake that will yawn so wide and so deep as to swallow up civilization itself. If such destruction sweeps over the Old World, it will not be long in crossing the ocean to the New. Let us be on our guard that we do not break down any strong barrier against it."

Thus we see how one error leads to another, and helps still further to blind and prejudice the mind. How many Protestants there are who are totally unable to see in the Papal system the fulfilment of the prophesied Antichrist,--the result of the great "falling away" from the faith; because, having unscriptural views of the present social economy, they are drawn toward Papacy or anything else which will help to sustain the social structure with which all that they have and are is intimately associated;--their spiritual interests, the nominal Church institutions and their temporal interests. Can we wonder that under the lead of "higher criticism" and under the pressure of the supposed necessity for the continuance of the present social order, the majority of the nominal Church are drifting further and further away from the Bible and from its teachings--respecting Romanism as Antichrist; respecting the Babylon-confusion of sectarianism; respecting the social change to be inaugurated by the fall of present institutions and the erection in their stead and upon their ruins of the Kingdom of God's dear Son? We cannot wonder at the tendency to fall away from "the faith once delivered to the saints." We find a general tendency to lose faith in the Bible and to rely upon human wisdom and the light of conscience merely, except among those who in some manner or

degree are looking for the second coming of Christ and the establishment of his Kingdom.

* * *

A Federation of Churches and Christian Workers has been formed in New York City, including educational and charitable institutions. The New York Journal says, "One hundred and forty churches and eleven such institutions are now included in the membership, and it is expected that the number will be doubled this winter."

R2106 : page 50

BROTHER MOODY SOUNDS AN ALARM.

The New York Independent publishes a lengthy account of what is termed the progress of Christianity during the past year, which makes an extremely favorable showing so far as denominationalism is concerned; but all familiar with such matters know that such reports are quite unreliable, that the lists of nearly every congregation contain names of many who are dead physically and of many others who have departed from all spiritual life and interest and who have not attended meetings for years.

Evangelist D. L. Moody has been looking over the reports of last year, and as a result sent in the following to the editor of the Independent:--

"In a recent issue of your paper I saw an article from a contributor which stated that there were over three thousand churches in the Congregational and Presbyterian bodies of this country that did not report a single member added by profession of faith last year. Can this be true? The thought has taken such hold of me that I can't get it out of my mind. It is enough almost to send a thrill of horror through the soul of every true Christian.

"If this is the case with these two large denominations, what must be the condition of the others also? Are we all going to sit still and let this thing continue? Shall our religious newspapers and our pulpits keep

R2107 : page 50

their mouths closed like 'dumb dogs that cannot bark' to warn people of approaching danger? Should we not lift up our voice like a trumpet about this matter? What must the Son of God think of such a result of our labor as this? What must an unbelieving world think about a Christianity that cannot bring forth any more fruit? And have we no care for the multitude of souls going down to perdition every year while we

all sit and look on? And this country of ours, where will it be in the next ten years, if we don't awake out of sleep?

"I wish some of you editors of the influential papers, who are in close touch with the ministers and churches, would tell us what the matter is. Is this the result of what they call the 'Modern Criticism' of the Bible? Is this a specimen of the better times, when we get rid of the old stories about Moses writing the Pentateuch, and the sun and moon standing still, and the fish swallowing Jonah? How much of all this is owing to the politics our ministers have been preaching lately, and the talks on the labor question, and the stereopticon shows on Sunday evenings, and all these other things that have been driving out the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ? When ministers go into preludes on current topics, how can they expect any afterludes of conversions?"

Bro. Moody gives evidence of being awake to the real situation; but all the more, his expressions are thorny to the average minister and Church member, and many are crying out against him. Like some of old they say, "Prophesy unto us good things!" or "Let us alone!"

"MODERN EXEGESIS" OR "HIGHER CRITICISM."

It would appear that the theological colleges are becoming the very hot-beds of unbelief and repudiation of the Scriptures, under what is termed "modern exegesis" and "higher criticism." Professor S. I. Curtis, of the Congregational Seminary of Chicago, is the latest who has made himself a name and fame by some published articles in which he endeavors to refute the application of the so-called Messianic prophecies to Christ;--thus repudiating the interpretations of those prophecies given by our Lord and the apostles as recorded in the New Testament. Professor Curtis simply gives the Jewish interpretation of these prophecies; namely, that they referred to God's dealings with the nation of Israel. The Interior (Presbyterian), criticising Professor Curtis and defending the interpretations of prophecy given us by our Lord and the apostles, says:--

"The situation then is this: It is admitted by this new school of scholarship that the New Testament writers were all of the 'old school of exegetes,' that they all gave the weight of their authority to the exegesis which finds in the Old Testament specific, particular and personal descriptions of our Lord, his deity, his birth, history, sufferings, death and the divine purpose in his incarnation and vicarious sacrifice--and that the authority of our Lord and of the New Testament writers, in affirming this fact, has universally

prevailed for nearly 1,900 years, but is now set aside as 'not in accordance with modern views.'

"They admit that what they denominate the 'old school of exegetes' included our Lord himself and his evangelists and apostles. But they say this exegesis did not originate with our Lord and the writers of the Gospels who found it prevailing among the Jews of their times, and were not able to free themselves from it. Besides, it was to the interest of our Lord and of the New Testament writers to employ the false exegesis which they found in the public mind.

"Thus are the Scriptures plowed, harrowed and sown with the salt of perpetual desolation. But let us remember that salt-plains and bitter waters are found only in arid lands. Where the rains fall and the white snows drift there are none. The showers of spiritual blessing, falling upon the church of God, dissolve and wash away these alkaline destroyers of spiritual life, and leave her fountains of water pure, her trees laden with fruit, and her vales waving with corn."

We are glad to see that the Bible has still some friends in the nominal church and that higher criticism has not perverted the judgments of all.

* * *

Since the so-called higher criticism of the Bible began in Germany, it is interesting to notice its progress there. Reliable authorities inform us that, "In all the faculties of the twenty Protestant Theological Universities of Germany, there is not a single representative of the 'older views' and traditional teachings of

R2107 : page 51

the Church, in reference to the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, the integrity of the book of Isaiah, etc."

Professor Zockler of Griefswald is an acknowledged authority upon this subject. In a recent article in German he expresses himself about as follows:--

The Old Testament criticism is raging now with more intensity than ever before. The contending parties are the liberal or advanced and the conservative. The differences between these two schools of thought have as a consequence become sharply defined, and in some cases quite bitter, and the interest in the struggle is widening. Outsiders also are beginning to appreciate the fact that great issues are at stake; that the new views practically remove from the sacred books of the Old Testament the basis of revealed religion, the historic faith-foundation upon which the Church has rested for more than eighteen centuries. The Church in general is realizing the destructive consequences of the critical teachings of the Wellhausen-Kuenen school of thought. What began as a controversy respecting the Pentateuch twenty years ago has now become a

contest of radical criticism covering the entire Old Testament, and a question of principle for the life of the Church. The professor adds that the defendants of the "old views" are found in the ranks of the ministry only, and none of them amongst the university men.

* * *

Likewise the American college professors are leading in this attack upon the Scriptures. They seem to realize that they might live and die comparatively unknown, except as they may come into prominence by attacking the Bible. Professor Paul Haupt of Baltimore has begun a translation of the Bible in conjunction with certain other professors of this country and Europe.

These gentlemen make such bold statements that not only the world but modest and moderate humble-minded Christians are inclined to suppose that they must have found some very positive information upon which to rest such wonderful and positive claims. They even attempt to indicate when and which certain words, sentences and sometimes paragraphs were added, here and there, at various times and by various persons.

These gentlemen, of course, profess to be more wise as well as more honest than any who have ever undertaken such work before. Their edition of the Bible, they inform us, will be printed in various shades of color and thereby indicate different features of the text. Of course, the world is ready and waiting for any and every thing that would cast discredit upon the Book which has successfully withstood the assaults of its enemies for many centuries. Consequently, it is not surprising that the world-pleasing and success-seeking publishers of New York journals are very willing to advertise such works as these freely. Thus a New York Sunday paper of January 31st illustrates what the new Bible is to be, giving selections from Genesis, showing the coloring of the text as it will appear, heading the whole thus:--

"AMAZING DISCOVERIES CONCERNING THE BOOK OF GENESIS. IT IS A PATCHWORK OF FOUR OR FIVE WRITERS AND IS NOT THE FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLE."

Few of those who read the bald and brazen claims of these modern wise men and their advertisers have any conception of the character of the information possessed by these schoolmen, which authorized their division of Genesis and other Bible Books into "patchwork." Have these gentlemen found the original manuscript of Genesis, and there seen the various additions they claim, in various styles of handwriting, some with more and some with less faded inks? Is it upon such evidences as these that they base their strong statements? No! They never saw the original manuscripts, nor has any one else now living seen them.

Critics have access to nothing to which other men have not access to-day. Upon what, then, do they base their conclusions which they state with such positiveness? may be asked. We answer, They merely fancy that they notice a little change in the phraseology here and there. They find that certain words are used in one paragraph or section freely and that those words do not occur in another paragraph or at least are not so freely used. And on the strength of this flimsy foundation they decide, and declare with great positiveness, and unholy boldness, that the two paragraphs were written by different persons. They not only undertake to say about what time they were written, but presumably men of such keen discernment could almost tell what the men looked like who wrote the different passages.

The Scriptures do not declare that Moses was the author of the Book of Genesis in the sense that he wrote it of his own personal knowledge. It is to be presumed that since much of it was history, covering the two thousand years preceding Moses' day, the record may have been kept and handed down from father to son, some of it from Adam and Seth and Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All that

R2108 : page 51

is claimed for the Book of Genesis is, that Moses was its editor and that he as a servant of God was granted a superior wisdom and grace in bringing together into proper form, thus, the items of past history and of divine revelation which God designed for his people-- "That the man of God might be thoroughly furnished."

It is quite sufficient for those who have learned of the wisdom of God's Book from its internal evidences and harmonies, to know that the records of Genesis

R2108 : page 52

are in complete harmony with the entire Word of God; and that it was one of the Books of the Scriptures at the time our Lord prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth;" that various of its items were referred to by our Lord and by all the inspired apostles, without the slightest suggestion that either the whole or part of it was unreliable or a "mere human patchwork." Anyone who will compare the account of Creation as given in Genesis with any account of Creation given in any of the so-called sacred books of heathendom will be convinced that it is as far in advance of them all as the daylight is brighter than midnight. And we hold that the account of Creation in Genesis, rightly understood, is in full accord with all that science has been able to prove; although it disagrees with some things which science claims without a sufficiency of evidence. The harmony between the

Bible account and the proved positions of science was shown in a series of articles by T. J. Conant which appeared in our issues of Jan. 1, Feb. 1, and Feb. 15, '94.

=====

R2108 : page 52

THE UNDEFILED ONE.

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.--Job 14:4.

THAT the preexistent Son of God "was made flesh and dwelt among us," is clearly stated in the Scriptures (John 1:14); that he was "holy," "undefiled," and "separate from sinners," is plainly stated (Heb. 7:26-28 and Luke 1:35); and that he knew no sin, while all other men are sinners, is also stated. (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:18,19; and 1 Pet. 2:22.) The Apostle's argument, that he was able to, and did, give himself a ransom or corresponding price for the forfeited life and right of Adam (Rom. 5:17-19; 1 Tim. 2:6), proves the same, because the first Adam was perfect until he sinned; hence one who could give a corresponding price or ransom must have been likewise perfect, without sin and free from its condemnation. The same thought is logically deduced from the statement that Jesus fulfilled all the requirements of the Law (Matt. 5:17; John 8:46); for we know that the Law of God was the full measure of a perfect man's ability. Hence the conclusion is irresistible that he must have been a perfect man when able to do what no imperfect man had done or could do.--Psa. 49:7; Heb. 1:3; 4:15; 9:28; 10:5-10; Isa. 53:9-12; John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:19.

But notwithstanding the mass of Bible testimony as to his human perfection, some inquire, Can the possibility of this be scientifically shown? Others assert that it is an impossibility, and that the laws of nature are in direct opposition. They give unbounded weight to their imperfect understanding of nature's laws, and lightly cast aside the weight of Bible testimony.

The question, however, is well worthy of an examination from a scientific as well as from a Scriptural standpoint, in order that the agreement of science and Scripture may be clearly seen. Science and Scripture always agree when properly understood. There is no law against our seeking evidence from every good source, but only egotism, or blindness, or both, will exalt human reasonings above the divine testimony.

We raise the query then: How came it that "the man Christ Jesus" was perfect, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, while his mother was imperfect; a partaker of the weaknesses of the fallen and

condemned race?--Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

Seeking to answer this query, the Church of Rome promulgated the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception:" not the doctrine that Jesus was miraculously conceived by the holy power of God, as recorded by the Evangelists, and hence was immaculate or spotless; but that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was miraculously conceived, and hence that she was pure, holy and free from Adamic sin and imperfection. But the originators of this doctrine could not have been far-seeing, or they would have known that by the same reasoning it must be proved that Mary's mother was of immaculate conception, and so all the way back to Eve, "the mother of all living," whose fall into sin before she bore any children is clearly stated in the Scriptures.--See Gen. 3 and 1 Tim. 2:14.

However, this subject is perfectly clear and plain now, from a scientific as well as from a Bible standpoint.

The Scriptures hold out the thought that all EXISTENCE, LIVING ENERGY, OR BEING, comes from the father and not from the mother. The mother receives the sperm or seed of life from the father, furnishes it a cell-nucleus out of which a form or body is produced, and nourishes the germ of being until it is able to maintain an independent existence; i.e., until it is able to appropriate to its maintenance the life-sustaining elements which the earth and air supply--then it is born.

The word father has the significance of life-giver. Accordingly, God was the "FATHER," or life-giver, while the earth was the mother of Adam, and hence of the human race. (Luke 3:38.) Adam's form or organism was of and from earth (which therefore served as a mother); but his spark of life which constituted

R2108 : page 53

him a man came from God (who thus was his Father or life-giver): and in the male has since resided the power to communicate that spark of life or living seed to progeny.

In harmony with this principle, all children are spoken of as being of or from their fathers, and borne by their mothers. (Gen. 24:47.) Thus the children of Jacob, counted through his sons, were seventy when he came down to Egypt. (But if Jacob or the twelve patriarchs had daughters, which we cannot doubt, the children of those daughters were not counted as Jacob's children; such children were counted to their own fathers.) All of those seventy souls or beings are expressly said to have come out of the loins of Jacob. (Gen. 46:26,27, and Exod. 1:5.) So of Solomon it is said, that he came out of the loins of David. (1 Kings 8:19, and 2 Chron. 6:9.) So also the Apostle Paul and Israelites in general claimed that they all came out of the loins of Abraham; and of Levi it is written that

"he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him."--Heb. 7:5,10.

Thus also the whole race was in and sprang from Adam their father, but not from Eve. And thus it is written that all in ADAM die, but not all in Eve. Because the race came of Adam, it was tried in his trial, condemned in his failure and included under his sentence.

This, which the Scriptures teach, is the latest deduction of science on this subject of Progeneration, as applied to humanity and to all mammalia. Scientists find abundant and conclusive proof in nature that life or being comes always from the male. The simplest form of illustration is a hen's egg; Of itself it originally contains no life; but is merely a cell-germ ready to produce an organism as soon as vivified or fecundated or impregnated with the life-germ or life-seed by the male bird.

The egg contains not only the germ-cell but also the proper elements of nutrition and in proper proportion, adapted to the minute organism begotten in it by the sperm or life seed; and under proper conditions that organism develops. The yolk becomes wholly absorbed into the body, while the clear liquid albumen serves as its later nourishment until it breaks the shell and is able to sustain itself by appropriating cruder elements of nutrition. The principles here involved are the same in human and other animals.

In view of these harmonious testimonies of the Bible and science, it is a reasonable deduction that if the father were perfect, the child would be so. Under even moderately favorable conditions a perfect sperm or life-seed in uniting with the female germ-cell would produce a living germ so vigorous and healthy as to be capable of appropriating the proper elements of nutrition and avoiding, throwing off or neutralizing the unfit; and thus would develop a perfect being; continually throwing off without self-injury, through its perfect functions, all elements not beneficial. On the contrary, if the sperm or life-seed be imperfect, the living germ will be proportionately weak and unable to overcome the unfavorable conditions of its environment, it will appropriate whatever its mother furnishes--good or bad --and will be the prey of disease. Being imperfect, it will be unable to reject wholly the poisonous elements of disease.

This is on the same principle that if two persons eat of strong food, the one with good digestive powers can appropriate its nutriment and pass off its unwholesome qualities, while the other with weak digestion could appropriate little nutriment from the same food and would be injured by its evil qualities.

It follows, then, that had mother Eve alone sinned, the race would not have died. Had Adam remained perfect, his life unforfeited and unimpaired, his offspring would have been the same. And even had death

sentence passed upon mother Eve, bringing imperfections, these would not have impaired her offspring; being perfect, they would have appropriated good elements and have passed off naturally any unwholesome elements without injury.

On the other hand, suppose that Adam had sinned and Eve had remained sinless, Adam's condemnation and death would have affected the entire posterity just the same; however perfect the germ-cells and nourishment provided by mother Eve, only imperfect dying beings could be produced from diseased sperm of life-seed from Adam. Hence the appropriateness of the Scriptural statement that "All in Adam die," and "By one man's disobedience...death passed upon all." (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12,19.) How wonderful the correspondence here between the first and second Adams and their brides. As the death of the race depended not upon Eve but wholly upon Adam, and yet she shared in the bringing of it, so the restored life of the race redeemed depends not at all upon the bride of Christ, but upon Jesus, though by divine favor it is arranged that his bride shall share in the restitution of "that which was lost."

The fountain, Adam, having become contaminated by sin and death, none of his posterity can be free from contamination; for, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." The reference here must be understood as applying to the man, and not to the woman: none coming from or out of the contaminated fountain can be clean. Hence, "There is none righteous, no, not one;" none can redeem his own life, nor give to God a ransom for his brother.--Rom. 3:10; Psa. 49:7.

R2108 : page 54

It follows, then, that the only obstacle to the generation of a perfect man is the lack of a perfect father to give a perfect life-sperm; and hence the teaching of Scripture, that in the case of Jesus a perfect life-sperm (not of or from the Adamic fountain) was transferred by divine power from a preexistent condition to the embryo human condition, was born "holy" (pure and perfect), though of an imperfect mother (Luke 1:35): That he was uncontaminated with any imperfection--mental, moral or physical--which his mother in common with the entire human race shared, is entirely reasonable and, as we have just seen, in perfect accord not only with Scripture but also with the latest scientific findings and deductions.

Another fact which scientists are demonstrating to themselves, which seems to concur with Scripture testimony, is, that though life or being comes from the father, form and nature come from the mother. The scientific proofs of this are more abstruse and less easily grasped by the ordinary mind; and this, because in

wisdom God has not only separated the various kinds, or natures, but in great measure has limited them, so that they cannot mix or blend beyond certain limits without losing all fecundity. A common illustration of this is the mule.

The old idea that form and nature came from the male is abandoned by modern students of nature, who now agree that the female furnishes organism as well as sustenance--in fact all except the life-seed or sperm, which comes from the father or life-giver. Take as a Scriptural illustration of the foregoing claims, the improper union between "the daughters of men" and those angels which kept not their proper estate or condition. (Gen. 6:2,4; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4.) The angels, when they assumed human form being perfect in vitality begat children far superior to the then greatly fallen race of Adam in mental acumen as well as in physical powers, so that the record is--"the same were men of renown." These wonderful men, let us remember, were born of imperfect, dying mothers, but were begotten by vigorous, unimpaired fathers.

The dying race of Adam would have had hard masters in those superior Nephilim (Hebrew, fallen ones) which had not been recognized by God either by a trial for life, nor by a condemnation to death. It was a mercy indeed which, not having authorized their existence, blotted them from existence in the flood and spared only Noah and his family with the comment--"Now Noah was perfect in his generation," which almost implies that the remainder of Adam's race had become more or less a new race by association with the angels in human form and powers. We say a new race because of their new life and vigor coming from new fathers.

So great was the renown of these "Nephilim," that it is to be found with more or less distinctness in heathen mythologies to this day, and hundreds of years after their destruction in the flood, the false report that some of these were yet alive caused a panic among the Israelites while flushed with the victory of recent battles. (See Num. 13:33; 14:36,37.) No doubt there were some large men in Canaan, as other Scriptures show, but never except in this "evil report" are they called Nephilim.--See our issue of July 15, '94, "Sons of God and Daughters of Men."

Another illustration of this principle that life comes from the father and nature from the mother is found in the fact that Jehovah, himself of the divine nature, has begotten sons of various natures. He is the father or life-giver of those of the angelic nature (Job 2:1; 38:7; Heb. 2:9), and of the human nature (Luke 3:38), as well as of the "new creatures" who shall be made partakers of his own divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4.) The spirit or energy of Jehovah operating upon spirit-substances produced and developed angels; operating upon earthly substances (Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:47), man was produced. And when he would give us a clear conception

of the generation of the new creatures to the divine nature, he represents them as begotten of his word of promise in the womb of the Covenant which he made with Abraham, which he symbolized by a woman, Sarah, telling us that as Isaac was the heir of Abraham and child of promise (by Sarah), so we, as or like Isaac, are children of God, being children of the promise, or Sarah covenant.--See Gal. 4:23-31; 1 Pet. 1:3,23; 2 Pet. 1:4.

The same principle is illustrated in the fact that in the typical Jewish dispensation, prior to the Christian age, a child inherited blessings and privileges of its father, according to the favor and standing of its mother, thus again declaring that the mother's nature, rights, privileges and liberties attached to the child, though not of necessity the father's.--See Gen. 21:10; Ex. 21:4; Gal. 4:30.

The foregoing arguments are clinched by the fact that our Lord Jesus was born of a woman. The "holy thing" born of a woman partook of the woman's nature, i.e., human nature--"of the earth earthy." Though retaining all the purity and perfection of the preexistent (spirit) state, the transferred germ of being (in harmony with this law we are examining) partook of the nature of the mother and was "made flesh" by being "born of a woman." Yet the "clean thing" came not out of the unclean race, but "proceeded forth and came from God" and was merely developed and nourished in Mary.

It is yet further in harmony with this same principle that though Christ has been highly exalted to the divine nature, and is no longer human, yet it is declared

R2108 : page 55

of him that he shall be the life-giver or "father" of the whole human race, while it is also shown that his work for the race is to restore the perfection of human nature, which was lost for all through Adam's sin. Thus, while their "father" or life-giver will be on the divine plane, the children will be on the human plane, born out of a covenant of restitution, illustrated by Keturah, Abraham's third wife.

=====

R2108 : page 55

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR.

--FEB. 21.--ACTS 6:8-15; 7:54-60.--

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."--Rev. 2:10.

APPARENTLY Stephen's martyrdom occurred

not a great while after Pentecost, but the interim had been a period of considerable progress. At the time of the ascension "about one hundred and twenty" were reckoned as being in full and deep fellowship in Christ; ten days later at Pentecost three thousand converts were added; shortly after five thousand more as recorded in our last lesson; later (Acts 5:14) "multitudes, both men and women, were added to the Lord;" still later, "the number of the disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great multitude of priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:1-7.) This period of gathering the ripe wheat and establishing them in the doctrines of Christ was a very necessary prelude to the period of trial, persecution and suffering which shortly followed. The persecution, however, was no less a divine mercy than the previous peace and prosperity: the divine rule for the Gospel Church evidently is that each member shall be "made perfect through suffering." The stoning of Stephen was merely the beginning of the general persecution which in one form or another has continued ever since, and must continue until the last members of the body of Christ shall have proven themselves faithful even unto death and been accounted worthy of the crown of life mentioned in our golden text.

Stephen, it will be remembered, was chosen as one of the assistants of the apostles and was known as a deacon--minister or servant--the original intention being that the service should be chiefly with reference to the temporal interests of the Church. His choice would indicate that he was considered at the time a man of ability, and that faithfulness to the work entrusted to him led on to still greater privileges and opportunities for service. Accordingly we find him in this lesson ministering spiritual things with imbue-ment of the spirit and ability closely approaching that of the apostles. He was full of faith and power, says our common version, and no doubt truly, but the oldest manuscripts render this "full of grace and power." Both were true, because he could not have had the grace and the power without the faith. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith." In Stephen's case the faith working by love had produced zeal for the Lord and his cause; and the faith and zeal blended with the spirit of holiness gave Stephen extraordinary grace and power, as pointed out in verse 8.

And the same combination will produce like grace and power in all of the Lord's people in proportion as these elements of character are found in each.

Tradition has it that Stephen's ability as a speaker (verses 9,10) brought him into special prominence and that as a religious logician he met with the learned men of his time, amongst whom it is said Saul of Tarsus was one. The Jews, while in a general sense one in religious matters, were nevertheless broken up into various little cliques and schools of thought, much after

the manner of the denominations of Christendom today. The classes here mentioned as disputants with Stephen are supposed to have represented the advanced philosophies of that day, combined with Judaism; but all of their philosophy could not cope with the wisdom and spirit of the truth which were with Stephen. Naturally this led wicked hearts to envy, malice and hatred; for those who are not above all things lovers of the truth are always moved to more or less hatred when successfully opposed by the truth.

(11-14) Many have supposed that Stephen met his death at the hands of a mob. But this is incorrect. Those who were his enemies because unable to resist the force of his arguments had no authority to stone him, nor did they wish to appear before the people in the light of persecutors of their opponent. They therefore suborned or procured witnesses outside of their own cliques to bring charges against Stephen before the Sanhedrin and then while he was disputing with them the official representatives of the Sanhedrin came upon him and "caught him" and brought him before the council,--as though caught in the very act of blasphemy.

At the trial the witnesses testified falsely in the sense that they misrepresented the words and arguments of Stephen, putting them in a false light. There was, nevertheless, probably considerable truth in the charge that Stephen said that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy their city and change the customs of Moses. Had they confined themselves to a strict statement of the matter as Stephen represented it, they would not have been

R2108 : page 56

false witnesses; but, evidently anxious to serve those who employed them as witnesses, they exaggerated Stephen's statements to the extent of misrepresentation of certain connecting facts and statements in his discourse.

(15) It is recorded that when the apostles, Peter and John, stood before a similar council, a short time previous, their judges marveled at their courage in view of the fact that they were unlearned men. So also Stephen was courageous. Notwithstanding the fact of his arrest, and that he was on trial, and that if found guilty the punishment would be death by stoning, according

R2109 : page 56

to the law, Stephen was not daunted. Instead of a look of fear and servility, or of anger, malice, hatred and defiance, the record is that they beheld his face "as it had been the face of an angel;"--a face beaming with love, kindness, interest in their welfare, desire to do them good, of purity and holiness of motive, combined with humble confidence in God and fearlessness

of men. We believe that to a greater or less extent this is the case with all who receive the holy spirit, in proportion as they progress in the knowledge, faith, love, zeal and character of Christ their Lord. This change does not come instantaneously; it comes gradually. The spirit of the world places the marks of selfishness and hardness upon the countenances of all the slaves of sin, in proportion as they are faithful thereto. But when the spirit of the truth is received and these become freed from the slavery to sin and become the servants of righteousness, the result is a proportionate displacement of the marks of slavery upon the countenance and an illumination instead, which more and more approaches the angelic. Look the worldly man or woman in the face, and see how the cares and battles of and for sin have left their traces: look then into the faces of those who are fully and intelligently the Lord's, and notice how the marks of care are superseded by a look of confidence and trust and peace proceeding from the hearty acceptance of their new Master's spirit. And this illumination will be found most remarkable and conspicuous when such saints are actively engaged in telling the good tidings, and particularly when opposing the error.

Stephen's discourse before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:1-53) marks him as having been a man of great ability. It reads more like the language of the Apostle Paul than that of any other New Testament writer. And the Apostle Paul, then Saul of Tarsus, is supposed to have been one of his hearers, a member of the Sanhedrin.

The closing of Stephen's address (verses 51-53) laid upon the Jewish people, and especially upon the Jewish Sanhedrin as the representatives of the religious law, the full responsibility for the death of the "Just One"--as his betrayers and murderers. This pointed application of Scripture and facts, as might have been expected, only aroused the evil hearts of the judges. Of those converted by Peter's discourse it was said, "They were pricked to the heart;" but of these it is said, "They were cut to the hearts" by the words of truth--the evil of their natures was aroused to the full, they gnashed on him with their teeth--they were exceedingly incensed.

(55-58) Full of the holy spirit, Stephen was wholly unmoved by their manifestations of anger. He was testifying for God and for the truth, and instead of fear of man his heart was brought into the closer sympathy and union with the Lord. The Lord knew all about the termination of the trial and what the sentence would be, and no doubt gave Stephen a vision of heavenly glory--of the Father, and of Christ at the right hand of his majesty. This no doubt was for the strengthening of Stephen's own faith for the martyrdom just at hand; and perhaps also intended to act as it did upon his unjust judges. His declaration of the vision which he saw capped the climax of their indignation, at his supposed

opposition to God and to Moses and to themselves as representatives of the Law. They construed this to be additional blasphemy--that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they condemned as a blasphemer, and whose crucifixion they had procured, was acceptable to God; and not only so, but made next to the Father--at the right hand of God, or place of power and influence. Using this as a pretext, they terminated the trial and executed the sentence of stoning--stopping their ears as though they would thus say, what no doubt some of them actually felt, that such an exaltation of Jesus next to Jehovah, far above Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets was gross blasphemy which they could not justify themselves in hearing and felt bound to resent by stoning the blasphemer.

According to the Law, those who heard the blasphemy did the stoning; and they laid their outer garments at the feet of Saul, which would seem to indicate that he not only consented to the verdict that Stephen was a blasphemer worthy of death, but that he was one of the leaders in the prosecution, as well as an influential man in the Sanhedrin.

(59-60) Without attempting to dissuade them from their course, Stephen offered up prayer to the Lord, and a beautiful prayer it was--not only for the preservation of his spirit, but also that the sin might not be laid to the charge of his murderers.

Thus he "fell asleep." This testimony respecting Stephen is in full accord with the testimony of other Scriptures. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the prophets "slept" with their fathers in death; and the Apostle, after enumerating some of the faithful ones of the past (who were stoned, etc., in hope of a better resurrection),

R2109 : page 57

grouping them all together, says (Heb. 11:39,40), "These all...received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." They all are represented as sleeping and waiting for the morning--the resurrection morning--the Millennial morning--the morning of which the prophet David spoke, saying, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;" the morning of which the prophet Job spoke, saying, "Hide me in the grave until thy wrath be past [the reign of death during the present age with all of its concomitants of sorrow, trouble and pain, are evidences of divine wrath]. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." Our Lord, speaking of the resurrection morn, the same great day of awakening from the sleep of death, corroborates Job's statement, saying, "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth." (John 5:28,29.) Stephen slept with the others, but as one of the overcomers of the

new dispensation he will have a share in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6), and thus awake earlier in the morning than others not winners of the prize of the high calling of this Gospel age.--Psa. 46:5, margin.

The expression "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" signifies that Stephen understood that the spark of life, the spirit of life, was passing from his control; and by this expression he gave evidence of his faith in a future life, committing it wholly to the care of him who redeemed him from the power of the grave and who is shortly to deliver therefrom all who trust in him.

Stephen's faithful witness unto death was followed in turn by that of many others likewise faithful unto death and heirs of crowns of life according to the promise. The beneficent influences of the gospel of Christ have since Stephen's day so permeated the civilized world, and so affected it, that the followers of Christ are not at present in danger of being stoned to death for preaching his gospel. Nevertheless, the Apostle's words still hold good, "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It is still necessary to suffer with Christ, if we would be glorified with him and share his coming Kingdom. But the persecutions of to-day are more refined than in any previous period. The faithful to-day are not stoned with literal stones or shot with literal arrows or literally beheaded, but it is still true that the wicked shoot out arrows at the righteous, "even bitter words," and many because of faithfulness are reprov'd and slandered and cut off from fellowship--beheaded for the testimony of Jesus. (Rev. 20:4.) Let all such emulate Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Let their testimonies be given with radiant faces like his. Let their eyes of faith perceive Jesus at the right hand of the majesty on high as their Advocate and Deliverer. Let their words be with moderation as were Stephen's, and let it be true of them, as written of him, "full of grace and power" and "filled with the holy spirit."

=====

R2109 : page 57

PERSECUTION OVERRULED FOR GOOD.

--FEB. 28.--ACTS 8:1-17.--

"They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word."--Acts 8:4.

THE tendency of the early believers, as we have seen, was to gather together--to swarm. This was evidently in harmony with the divine program, to foster and establish the Church in the religious capital of the world. Those first few years were evidently designed of the Lord to permit the Church to put on

the armor of God, to grow from babes in Christ, by the use of the sincere milk of the Word, and afterward by its strong meat, up to the stature of Christian manhood;--thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work. This gathering at Jerusalem was in harmony with our Lord's direction before his ascension, when, after instructing them to preach the gospel, he added "beginning at Jerusalem." But now Jerusalem, having had its full period of favor, the Church having been rooted and established, the divine plan led on to a wider work; and the persecution which arose at the time of Stephen's martyrdom became very general in the city of Jerusalem, and very grievous, and led to the flight of many of the faithful who, we are told, went

R2110 : page 57

everywhere--especially throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. The apostles no doubt considered it a part of duty that they should remain at Jerusalem as a kind of center of influence; partly because they had not yet fully learned the lesson that the gospel they preached, although to the Jew first, is also to the Greek and the whole world.

(3) Saul of Tarsus was an energetic man, on whichever side of a question he stood. When an opponent of the Lord Jesus and his Church and gospel, he was its most active enemy, and we cannot doubt that his activity in the matter was backed, as he himself afterward declared, by a "good conscience," which believed that he "verily did God service" in opposing what he considered to be the sect of the Nazarene. God seems to be specially on the lookout for just such earnest characters, and they are far more certain to get the truth than are the cold, listless and indifferent kind

R2110 : page 58

who neither love nor hate either righteousness or sin. Peter and James and John were of this positive and strong character, and they with the Apostle Paul, consequently, were the ones most freely used by our Lord in conveying the blessings of the gospel to us and to the world.

(4-13) It will be noticed that in the primitive Church there was no such distinction of class as there is in the nominal church to-day. There was no division into clergy and laity, but they were "all one in Christ Jesus." The division of the church into clergy and laity took place when the great falling away came, which developed into Papacy; and from that baneful influence many have not yet fully escaped. All of the early Church were preachers, and if persecuted they went everywhere preaching the Word. An instance is given respecting this preaching. One, Philip--not the Apostle--did successful work in a city of Samaria and

was used of the Lord in casting out devils and healing the sick, the means then in use for drawing attention to the gospel. The results of his preaching were marvelous --even Simon the sorcerer became a believer.

Sorcery, witchcraft and enchantments of olden times were manifestations of Satan and demons for the delusion of mankind, and were strictly forbidden under the Mosaic law. The same evil spirits in more recent years have slightly altered the character of the demonstrations, and so-called Spiritualists are their "mediums."

The change is merely made in conformity to the changed conditions, and both are to be reckoned amongst "the works of the flesh and the devil." There can be no fellowship between the power of the adversary working in his agents for witchcraft and Spiritism and the power of Christ working in his agents and representatives and through the Word of truth. The two are in opposition, however much at times the evil may claim relationship to the good. So it was in Samaria, as related in this lesson: the gospel opposed the doctrines of devils propagated through witchcraft and sorcery, the effect was to make the people free, and even Simon the medium was convicted and professed outwardly a conversion and was baptised.

Philip's discourse is but briefly outlined, but it was along the same lines as the discourses of the apostles noticed in the previous lessons. He preached the "things concerning the Kingdom of God." How fully he explained these things--that the Kingdom would be a spiritual Kingdom, that flesh and blood could not enter it or even see it, and that not the Jewish nation would be heirs of that Kingdom with Messiah, but only such as become believers in Jesus, devoted to him and suffer with him, thus attesting their loyalty to the divine plan. We cannot doubt, however, that Philip preached the second coming of Messiah to establish and exalt with himself the Kingdom heirs now being sought out, and subsequently through that Kingdom, to bless the world of mankind. We cannot doubt that he urged them to believe in Christ, and by a consecration to him to become joint-heirs with him in the Kingdom, if so be that they suffered with him, that they might also reign with him. Nor did his preaching omit the things pertaining to "the name of Jesus Christ," and connecting his name as Messiah with all the Kingdom hopes which were before the Jewish mind. We doubt not that he pointed out to them that the names of Moses and of Abraham and of the prophets, although great, were insufficient for salvation--that there is none other name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved.

(14-17) It is worthy of note that Philip the evangelist, although possessed of the holy spirit and possessed also of certain gifts of the spirit, did not possess the power to communicate such gifts to others. Evidently that power resided only in the twelve apostles

--Paul being the twelfth in place of Judas. Consequently, two of the apostles were sent to lay their hands upon the believer and to communicate the gifts of the holy spirit.

After seeing the wonderful gifts and powers which the apostles were able to communicate, and no doubt after he had received a gift from them himself, Simon the sorcerer offered the apostles money in order to be endowed with this apostolic power of communicating gifts of the spirit to others. Hence the name, "Simony," given to any attempt to purchase spiritual powers. Up to this time Simon had passed for a thoroughly converted man; but on the strength of this evidence of his non-appreciation of spiritual things the Apostle Peter tells him with very great plainness of speech that he has neither part nor lot in the matter but is yet in the gall of bitterness--is still unregenerate--merely a spectator and not a participator in the spiritual things.

Alas! how many to-day, like Simon, are associated with spiritual things, but have neither part nor lot in them; who merely give their money in hope of some advantage, and not with an appreciation of the spiritual things.

=====

R2110 : page 58

THE ETHIOPIAN CONVERT.

--MARCH 7.--ACTS 8:26-40.--

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."--Acts 8:35.

WE are not to suppose that up to this time the gospel had been preached to any except Jews. The eunuch, the story of whose conversion is before us, was a Jew. The law made special provision by which an alien could become a Jew, and this Ethiopian evidently had availed himself of that provision. He was

R2110 : page 59

a devout Jew, an Israelite indeed, a man of influence and some wealth; his devotion had led him to the Holy City, to which hundreds of thousands came yearly from various quarters.

His sincerity as a worshiper of the true God was evidenced by his desire to know the will of the Lord, as indicated by his searching the Scriptures. It is to such that the Lord draws nigh and reveals himself: not by whispering to him an understanding of the passage in question, but by sending a Philip to him to expound the Scriptures; just as in the case of Cornelius, Peter was sent to tell him words of salvation that should be for the saving of himself and household.

Philip was evidently a zealous servant of the Lord, and hence was used of the Lord in the especial manner recorded in this lesson; the Lord seems to look out for those who are of a ready mind, emptied of self and filled with his spirit, and zealous, to be used in his hand, and such are his special servants. Let us all more and more be emptied vessels for the Master's use made meet.

Philip's inquiry--"Understandest thou what thou readest?" was a very pertinent one; a question that might be applied to a great many Christian people today who, if they answered truly, would admit that very much of the Scripture is to them "as a book that is sealed"--some claiming that it is sealed, others claiming that they are unlearned and therefore unable to interpret. (Isa. 29:11-14.) Would that more had the spirit of the eunuch--a desire to understand the Scriptures and to avail themselves of such humble instruments as the Lord may be pleased to send to them for their aid.

How the Lord drew the attention of the eunuch to the particular passage of Scripture which perplexed him is not recorded; but no better one could have been found as a text from which to preach Christ crucified, a sin-offering, a sin bearer, a ransom for all. And Philip improved the opportunity to preach Jesus as the fulfilment of this prophecy, the propitiation for our sins, by whose stripes we are healed. Whoever will read over the announcements of discourses for fashionable churches in almost any large city will be struck with the dissimilarity of the themes discussed from those upon which Philip and the apostles discoursed with so much power and with so great results eighteen centuries ago. And who will say that this has nothing to do with the admitted coldness and deadness in the nominal church? The gospel which is the power of God unto salvation is not the gospel of politics, nor of social reform, nor of temperance, etc., but the gospel of salvation from sin and death by a Savior who has bought us with his own precious blood.

Philip's directness of discourse is worthy of note. He did not ride along in the eunuch's company avoiding the principal theme, making inquiries about Ethiopia, the condition of crops, the business outlook, etc., but, as having a particular business to attend to as a

R2111 : page 59

servant of the Lord, he got to preaching immediately. But then, the eunuch was an attentive inquirer. As a Jew he had been waiting and hoping and praying for the Messiah and his Kingdom. He knew of certain passages of Scripture which extolled the glory of that Kingdom and the blessings that would flow from it: other passages which seemed somewhat in conflict he did not understand, and now an explanation had been offered

to him which in every sense of the word fitted the prophetic statement and reconciled all differences. What else could he or any honest man do than accept the facts of the case? Quite possibly indeed he had already heard of Jesus, and possibly had heard this very Scripture referred to as fulfilled in him.

Now that the matter was set clearly before his mind--what it meant and how it was fulfilled--he wasted no time in acknowledging Jesus the Messiah; he straightway inquired whether or not anything hindered his espousal of the cause of the Nazarene and his recognition as one of his disciples by baptism? We should mark also the directness of Philip's answer. He did not say, You will have to go to the mourners' bench and be prayed for, quite a while, before God will accept you; nor did he say, The proper thing for you to do is to join this or the other denomination after you have studied its catechism and made a profession of its lengthy man-made creed or covenant. On the contrary he said, If you believe with all your heart, you may properly perform this symbol of union with Christ, burial into his death.

It is well to note also that Philip did not say to the eunuch, It is sufficient if you have the real baptism, the real consecration of your life to the Lord, the burial of your will into the Lord's will, and you need not perform the outward symbol in water. Philip said nothing of this kind; nor had he or anyone else authority to thus offset the word of the Lord and the apostles, directing all believers to thus symbolize their faith and consecration. It is worthy of note, also, that Philip did not say to the eunuch, "I will go yonder and fetch a little water in the palm of my hand, and sprinkle it upon your forehead;" but the record says that "they both went down into the water" and came "up out of the water."

In what manner the Lord by the spirit caught Philip away is not stated, but we should remember that this was at a time when means of locomotion were limited and when God was pleased to exert his infinite power in various ways in connection with the establishment of his Church.

=====

R2111 : page 60

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

Indiana.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I feel that I owe you an apology for my long silence, and wish to say that it has been more carelessness on my part than anything else. I have felt less the necessity of writing you often since others of our company have written, and in this

way you heard from us, and we from you.

We have just had a week of meetings: meeting every evening for counsel, prayer and song, in which all were benefited who attended, and this included nearly all our number, though some were kept away through sickness and other causes over which they had no control. We all felt the need of a closer walk with our dear Lord, and to this end sought a deeper work of grace in our hearts, and the Lord responded to our petitions by meeting with us and granting to all that sweet subtle communion which every true child of God has experienced and yet cannot describe. I can see the benefits of the meetings already in the increased zeal of those who attended. Some are suggesting that we hold a series of public meetings, and it looks just now as though the way would open up for a series of meetings in Pool's Hall, about 1 1/2 miles east of here.

The churches in Indianapolis are making a special effort now to arouse a fresh interest in religious things. The ministers all seem to realize their spiritual deadness, which has come (as one of them expressed it to me) like a mighty wave over all the churches. I attended the meeting of the Indianapolis Ministerial association the 1st Monday of this month. I noticed by the papers that the subject for discussion was, "Is there a lack of spiritual life in the churches?" and what are the causes? and the remedy? The gentlemen who had the first part of the subject did not even debate the subject but spent the first four minutes of ten allotted to him in reading and commenting on statistics which might well arouse them to greater energy. The next speaker was Pastor of the 1st Presbyterian Church, and said among other things that the increase for the year just closed in four of the leading Presbyterian churches of the city was less than 4 per cent. and that in 1600 (if I remember rightly) of the Presbyterian churches of the country there were no accessions whatever. A dark picture, surely, to all those who believe that all efforts for the salvation of the race will end with this age.

This same speaker mentioned the fact that he had attended Moody's meetings in New York about 20 years ago and that then the Word seemed to go out with power and take hold of the people, especially church people. But that in Moody's recent meetings, which he had attended also, there seemed to be a total lack of power, for which he was unable to account.

The gentleman who took the next phase of the subject, i.e., "What are the causes of this deadness?" after naming various causes, mentioned as perhaps the principal cause a tendency among ministers to speculate on various subjects "thereby dividing the thought and confusing the minds of their audience." He mentioned as a particularly detrimental subject of speculation, "The Second Coming of Christ," and then added by way of apology "that he did not wish to criticise

those who had views upon this subject, as doubtless some present did, but as for himself he had no views at all." Poor "blind leader of the blind!" Had he the least conception of the depth of shame involved in such a confession as this, falling from the lips of a so-called minister of the gospel, he would surely bow his head in shame. But no, as Paul puts it, he seemed to "glory in his shame;" and not a minister present raised his voice in rebuke of such shameful ignorance. The gentleman who took up the last division of the subject, whose business it was to suggest a remedy for existing evils in the church, was a "Holiness man" and, of course, suggested a baptism of the "Holy Ghost." Some seemed to coincide with this view and feel their own deep needs, while others sleepily listened and seemed to think that everything was in a fairly prosperous way, though none of them were very hilariously jubilant. Surely, "the wisdom of her wise men shall perish."

The last speaker mentioned the fact that he too had been present at Moody's meetings in New York 20 years ago, and that he had recently heard from friends in the East who attributed Moody's lack of power to his speculations as to the Second Coming of Christ. Is it not significant that two out of three speakers gave as the most potent factor in producing this "spiritual deadness" and "lack of power" the agitation of the second coming of our Lord? I think it is. It seems to be an index showing how unpopular this subject is among the D.Ds. It seemed so queer to me: everybody addressed every other body as Doctor. I could not help thinking how ridiculous it would sound to say, "Doctor Peter," and what the impetuous old fisherman would have thought. I really felt sorry for these men. But as I witnessed their anxiety and seeming helplessness, I felt like suggesting that preaching the gospel would be an experiment worth trying at least as a remedy for the deadness of their churches.

With Christian love, in which Sister Owen joins,
to yourself and Sister Russell, I am as ever,
Yours in our dear Redeemer, C. A. OWEN.

Ohio.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--We have had some very peculiar experiences of late. We have been holding public meetings (lectures from the chart), and announced them in the papers. At our first meeting a lady attended (a stranger) and at the next brought along four more. After attending four meetings they desired us to fill an appointment at one of their homes, which I did. The room was well filled; subject, "The Church, and Her Steps to Glory;" and they all expressed themselves as well pleased, and have asked for regular meetings.

This is all a great surprise to us. We learned that

there are some fifteen or twenty, nearly all women, who have come out of the churches and are holding meetings among themselves. No objections have been offered to any of our views, but many intelligent questions were asked; reading matter was acceptable, and we distributed a lot of tracts.

Your brother in Christ, S. J. ARNOLD.

=====