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ASPIRATIONS OF THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

O, let me give
Out of the gifts Thou givest;
O, let me live
With life abundantly because Thou livest;
O, make me shine
In darkest places, for Thy light is mine;
O, let me be
A faithful witness for Thy truth and Thee.

O, let me show
The strong reality of gospel story;
O, let me go
From strength to strength, from glory unto glory;
O, let me sing
For very joy, because Thou art my King;
O, let me praise
Thy love and faithfulness through all my days.
--Frances Ridley Havergal.

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"RAIMENT WHITE AND CLEAN."

"They shall walk with me in white [robes]; because they are worthy. The overcomer shall thus be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name in the presence of my Father, and in the presence of his angels."
--Rev. 3:4,5.--

UNDER the symbol of white raiment the Lord throughout his Word represents the righteousness of those whom he accepts as his people. Their righteousness in the future state will be a personal righteousness or holiness; and the guarantee of this is the promise that all who are accounted worthy, as "overcomers" of the world to be joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly Kingdom, will in the resurrection be granted new, perfect, spiritual bodies, free from sin and impurity of every kind, and fully in harmony with their new wills or characters developed during the trial-time of this present life. That will be a time of which the Apostle speaks, saying,--"When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." Those who attain to that glorious condition are symbolically represented as being clothed in white linen, representing their personal purity, completeness and perfection at that time: as it is written, "to her [the bride, the victorious Church] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."--Rev. 19:8.

Thus, seen, the Church in glory will stand arrayed in its own righteousness--the "righteousness of the saints;" but at the present time the saints have no righteousness of their own in which to present themselves at the throne of grace. As expressed by the prophet, "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." The very best of humanity, it must be confessed, are so imperfect in thoughts, words, and deeds as to be wholly unfit for a share in God's Kingdom or for any notice or favors at his hands. However, human necessities only made manifest the riches of divine grace and wisdom.

It was for this very reason, because we were all defiled through sin, and unfit to approach into the divine presence, that God graciously provided, through the sacrifice of his Son, our Lord, a spotless robe of imputed righteousness, for all those who accept of him and the covenant of divine grace sealed with his precious blood. When by repentance and faith we desire to forsake sin and approach God, we are, by reason of obedient faith in the sacrifice, reckoned as covered before the divine eyes with the merit of him who "bought us with his own precious blood," which merit is symbolically represented as a linen garment, Christ's righteousness, instead of the filthy rags of our own righteousness. While covered by this robe, we may by faith exercise all the privileges and opportunities, which could be ours if the robe were actually our own --instead of merely a loaned or imputed robe, the property of our Redeemer. So long as by faith we are trusting in the great sacrifice for sin, and seeking to walk worthy of the Lord, this robe is ours, to have and to enjoy; but to lose this faith would be to lose all the advantages which come with the robe, and which continue only to the wearers.

The object of the granting of these robes at the present time (not to the whole world, but only to the true believers) is that they may constitute, for those who accept them, "wedding garments," giving the wearers a right to a place at the "marriage of the King's Son." This "wedding garment" (justification) is a prerequisite to an invitation to the marriage, or rather the receipt of it is itself the invitation to enter in and become participators in the present "sufferings of

Christ" and in the future "joys of our Lord." And as no one can enter in to the marriage without first having received the robe, so any one who subsequently rejects this robe of Christ's righteousness and attempts to stand before his fellows or before the King without it, will be "cast out" of all the privileges and blessings which it secures. See parable of the wedding garment. --Matt. 22:11-13.

This "wedding garment" when presented to us is clean and white, representing the absolute purity and spotlessness of our Lord's holiness; and the instruction to each one who receives the robe is "to keep his garments unspotted from the world." This command is equivalent to our Lord's injunction, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"--a standard to which we are seeking to attain, but whose absolute attainment in an imperfect body, and surrounded by the world, the flesh and the devil, is admitted in the Scriptures

and proved by experience to be impossible. But, as the robe covers all the repented-of blemishes of the past, so it likewise covers the unintentional and unwitting imperfections of the present; so that only those things to which we give more or less of mental consent are reckoned as ours--either good or evil. Thus seen, under this arrangement it is possible for the Lord's people to walk so carefully, so circumspectly (looking all around) at every step, as to keep his garments unspotted from the world. But alas, how few there are, if any, who have ever lived up, in all the past of their lives, to this high standard,--so that at no time in all the past, since they accepted the robe of Christ's righteousness, could it be said of them, that in no sense of the word had they ever, either outwardly or mentally, given any degree of mental consent to anything that was sinful.

Seeing that the vast majority, if not all, have at some time or other given at least a partial mental assent to sin (however regretful and repentant of the thing they may afterward have been), and seeing that any such deflection from purity of heart would constitute a stain or spot upon our robe, we inquire with great concern, Is there any possibility of having such stains or spots removed and getting the robe white again? Thank God, yes; there is a way by which the spots and wrinkles may be removed from our robe and leave it once more as white and clean as at first. The stain remover is the "precious blood." As the Apostle says, "If we confess our sins he is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

While all of our efforts (groaning of spirit, tears, fasting, etc.) could not remove a single stain, which the precious blood alone can remove; yet, nevertheless, it is expedient for ourselves that while realizing our Lord's forgiveness and the cleansing of the robe, we should promptly seek to discipline ourselves in repentance, fasting and tears: otherwise we may expect that while our Lord will hear our earnest prayers and cleanse our robe, he nevertheless would put upon us certain chastisements for our correction in righteousness and for the strengthening of our characters in respect to the points of weakness. The Apostle teaches thus, when he says, "If we would judge [correct, chastise] ourselves, then we should not be judged [corrected, chastised] of the Lord; but when we are judged of the Lord we are chastened, that we might not be condemned with the world."

While our robe covers all our unwilling personal blemishes and uncleanness in our Lord's sight, and in the sight of brethren who see each other from the Lord's standpoint, yet the Lord desires and requires that we shall come into such close sympathy with absolute purity and righteousness in thought, word and deed that we will "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the reverence of

God." (2 Cor. 7:1) And to this end he grants his sanctified (consecrated) and white robed ones the cleansing power of his truth, that thus his elect bride might be cleansed by "the washing of water, by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."-- Eph. 5:26,27.

But oh, how few of the consecrated have so great a love for purity, so great a desire to keep the garment unspotted from the world, that they are thus careful to have every wrinkle quickly removed, and thereafter to guard the robe more zealously than ever. Yet, these, and these alone, walk with the Lord in white and are overcomers, who in due time shall be glorified with him and sit with him in his throne--and it is their names that shall not be blotted out of the Lamb's book of life.

We are to understand from the Master's words that all who do not thus walk with him in white raiment are unworthy, shall not be joint-heirs in his Kingdom, will not be confessed as his bride and joint-heir in the presence of the Father and the holy angels, but on the contrary, will have their names blotted out of the Lamb's book of life--erased from amongst the names of the "elect" Church.

THE "LITTLE FLOCK" AND THE "GREAT COMPANY."

While the number of those who wear the robe of Christ's righteousness is, as compared with the numbers of the world, small indeed, yet how large a proportion of these are not walking in white, but have their robes greatly spotted by contact with the world, the flesh and the devil--by unfaithfulness or by carelessness, worldliness. We do not refer to those who deny the Lord and repudiate the ransom, thus taking

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off the wedding garment and standing with the world (or really in a worse condition than the world, in that they have rejected the grace of God): we refer to the true believers, who have made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, and who for the sake of worldly advantages or earthly hopes or friendships or for the favors of nominal churches, are failing to live according to their covenant and privileges, and are thus, like Esau of old, selling their birthright (as new creatures in Christ) for a mess of pottage. Is there no hope for these, who fail to be overcomers, who fail to walk in white, who fail to gain the crown and the immortality to be bestowed only upon the "elect," "worthy," "overcomers?"

Yes, thank God! We rejoice that there is hope for these, because they have not cast off their wedding

garments, even though they have gotten them sadly spotted and soiled by contact with the world. The class referred to are neither open nor wilful sinners, but those who unwisely are seeking to please and serve the Lord and to please and serve themselves and the world --"foolish virgins." They make a failure in every direction so far as pleasing is concerned: they do not please the Lord, they do not please themselves and they are not half satisfactory to the worldly. The only ground upon which divine favor can continue with them at all and could go after them to reclaim them is the merit of the robe of Christ's righteousness, which they still love and wear, although they have not loved it sufficiently to keep it unspotted. But, he who began the good work in them will continue it and perfect it for all who really love and trust him--even though it be completed in the great tribulation at the inauguration of the Millennium or "the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6.) Since Christ became the surety for all who at heart still trust him, although not overcoming by complete self-sacrifice in full obedience to his instructions, it does not surprise us that he points out in his last communication to his Church how he will deal with this numerous class of his followers and how it will result to them,--altho he made no such proposition in their "call."

After telling of the sealing of the elect class, the spiritual Israel, the peculiar people zealous of good works, the little flock, the bride, the overcomers, a definite, predetermined number, "a hundred and forty and four thousand," gathered out of Babylon before the winds of the great tribulation are let loose upon the world, all of them bearing the seal or mark of God's favor in their foreheads--a noticeable intellectual evidence of divine favor, the impress of the spirit of the truth as well as the word of truth, our Lord shows us the "great multitude" of his followers,

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"whose number no man is able to tell" (that is, it is not a foreordained or fixed number,--none were called to be of this company), who will eventually stand before the Lord "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," crying, "salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb." Who are these who are not of the bride, the elect class, the overcomers, is the question? The answer is "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple."-- Rev. 7:9,10,13-15.

The marks of distinction between this "great company" and the "little flock" are very pronounced, both as respects their present course and their future blessing.

The faithful overcomers watch and keep their garments unspotted from the world. And this is given as one of the special conditions of acceptance as "overcomers" to joint-heirship with the Lord--"they have not defiled their garments." (Rev. 3:4.) They have kept "their garments unspotted from the world." They have not been willing to permit sin to contaminate them and to separate them from the Lord, but have quickly applied for and obtained the precious blood to remove every stain. They are so heartily opposed to sin and so earnest about the keeping of this garment unspotted that the adversary gets no hold upon them--"the wicked one catcheth them not." (1 John 5:18.) All of this indicates a full submission of their wills to the will of Christ--they are "dead with him," and hence could not willingly practice sin. Their reward is the crown of life, immortality, to be seated in the throne, and to constitute the temple of which our Lord is the cap-stone, the chief corner-stone. Now contrast with these the "great company:" lacking the intense love and zeal of the overcomers, they do not keep their garments with sufficient care, and as a result they lose all the rewards promised the overcomers; and, having failed in the race, they would get nothing, if it were not for our Lord's grace.

But God's grace cannot admit to heavenly perfection those who have not robes of spotless righteousness; and hence we are shown that these who have not cared for their garments and kept them white must be put through a severe experience before they can in any sense of the word be sharers of heavenly favors. These severe experiences are shown in the symbol as washing their robes in a great tribulation. But to show that not the penances or sufferings would cleanse the robes, tho these might be necessary as proper punishments and disciplines, it is particularly stated that the efficacy for the cleansing is the "blood of the Lamb." Many will thus be purged, purified, and their garment, now sullied by contact with the world, often in the garb of

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nominal Churchianity, will be cleansed of every guilty stain, when they, realizing the folly of their course, shall repentantly appeal to the Lord and use his help.

But sad disappointments attach to the experiences of this company: it is because they fear the reproaches of Christ that they shirk present privileges and opportunities for walking with him in white in the "sufferings of this present time:" behold, they not only miss the present joy and rejoicing of those who are faithful, but eventually they must come through still greater sufferings, if they would attain even to a lower place. Although loving the Lord and his people they are somewhat ashamed of them and hide, as it were, their faces from them, in the presence of the worldly: and

behold the Master at his coming for his "bride" cannot confess their names in the presence of the Father and the holy angels. The little flock is informed of the Bridegroom's care, and obediently watching she shall be "accounted worthy to escape all those things coming upon the world" (including the great tribulation), but the "great company," although the Lord's people, in that they have not rejected him, must be treated like the hypocrites and pass through the great tribulation in order to their purification. These, be it observed, are not a class who in any sense repudiate the Lord, they are not of those who "draw back" from the Lord, for in such he declares he has "no pleasure" (Heb. 10:38); and the Apostle declares that such "draw back unto perdition"--Second death. On the contrary, these are still "virgins," but foolish in that they are vainly trying to please and serve both God and mammon. They are wasting precious opportunities trying to find an easier way of following their Lord than "being made conformable unto his death."

We rejoice that ultimately these will sing praises to the Lord, and be glad in his wondrous grace. But we notice that even after their robes will be washed white in the time of trouble by the blood of the Lamb and in much tribulation, they wear no crowns as overcomers; but, having finally overcome, they are granted palms as emblems of their victory through Christ; and although they can never be the living temple of which Christ is the Head, we are told they shall be servants in that temple; and although they shall never sit in the throne, they are highly privileged to serve "before the throne." Grand and glorious privileges will be theirs, but Oh, they will lose the great prize, having sold it for the mess of pottage of present seeming advantage, which proves unsatisfying and brings bitter after results. What exhortation to holiness, to complete consecration to his will, could be stronger than this supplied by our Lord's statement of the results of more and of less faithfulness?

Probably the majority of this "great company" of tribulation saints are living to-day; for at no time in the past was there the same degree of knowledge of God and his Word, except in the early Church of apostolic times: never did so many profess to be the Lord's by consecration; and never were there so many subtle seductions from the "narrow way" of self-sacrifice. In centuries past the cleavage between the Lord's people and the world's people was much more distinct than to-day: persecution was more open and recognized, and while fewer named the name of Christ, they counted and appreciated the cost, as the larger number of to-day do not. (We of course ignore the professions and "great swelling words" of antichrist.) However, there was a great time of trouble in the end of the Jewish age in which many unclean may have been permitted to wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

And since then our Lord has not been without the power to bring as many as he chose through great tribulations for purification. Since the "overcomers" suffer with Christ voluntarily and the "great company" suffer because of Christ involuntarily, it might be difficult, if not impossible, for any except the Lord and the sufferers to know whether they suffered as self-sacrificers or as unwilling "tribulation" saints: but in the end of this age it will be different; for the overcomers will be taken to glory before the closing tribulation is fully poured out upon "Babylon."

THE QUEEN AND HER VIRGIN COMPANIONS.

It is appropriate that we should remind ourselves afresh of the beautiful suggestion laid before us through the prophet David respecting the wedding garment of the bride. (Psa. 45:9-14.) Here the Lord, through the prophet, tells us that the bride as the Queen shall be presented before the King in "raiment of fine needle work" as well as in "clothing of wrought gold." The gold clothing, as we have heretofore seen, represents the immortality (an element of the divine nature) with which the Church shall be invested in her resurrection glory. The raiment of fine needle work can be none other than the fine linen garment, clean and white, mentioned in Revelation. But here we have the additional suggestion given, that this garment will be finely embroidered.

The robe that was merely loaned to us at first, and which constituted our invitation to the marriage, to joint-heirship with the King's Son, was not at first our own, it was merely loaned or imputed to us. But it became a permanent gift from the Bridegroom to as many as accepted the invitation to union with him; and examining it carefully, they found upon it in delicate outline a stamping in graceful lines, corresponding to the richly embroidered robe worn by the King's Son. The suggestion of copying his robe was not only thus

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hinted at, but it was plainly declared that all who would be accounted worthy to be his "elect" companions, should in all respects be copies of the Bridegroom. --Rom. 8:29.

The careful setting of the stitches in the embroidering of this wedding garment has been the chief duty and constant occupation of the espoused virgin while waiting for the nuptial feast, at the return of the Bridegroom. True, much of the embroidering now done by us is very imperfect, because of first, our unskillfulness, secondly, our imperfections, and thirdly the disturbing influences about us (the world, the flesh

and the devil). Nevertheless, we can well understand that it is the blessing of experience that is designed, and that every painstaking effort is strengthening character, and bringing us into fuller sympathy with our Lord; and that he, when he inspects his Church, will take pleasure in even our imperfect results, if they give evidence that we have bestowed effort, because desirous of bringing all into conformity with his will; and he will accept of our imperfect work as tho it were perfect, and in the resurrection he will grant us ideal bodies with ideal powers and the ideal character embroidered perfectly upon the new robe, which will be ours through his grace.

And even here, the great company, the foolish virgins, not worthy to be the bride, and hence rejected from that place of the "elect," are nevertheless pictured,

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in verses 14 and 15--"The virgins her [the Queen's] companions that follow her shall be brought to thee, with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought [even tho it be through great tribulation they shall ultimately shout Hosanna!]; they shall enter into the King's palace."

Please read here the poem of page 120, POEMS AND HYMNS OF DAWN.

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FAITH.

"Now faith is a basis of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen."--Heb. 11:1.

THE CHRISTIAN life is a life of faith. Its first step is a step of faith, and its last step is the triumph of faith. All its victories are victories of faith, and its joys are the joys of faith. In the above text the Apostle speaks of faith as a basis of hope, as something substantial upon which hope may build. Hope is not faith; but hope is that buoyant, gladsome thing that is born of faith. A hope that is not based upon faith is a mere idle fiction which has no substantial comfort in it. Faith is the basis or substance out of which the living hope springs and grows naturally. Faith, then, must be a reasonable thing, well founded in that which is fixed, immovable, sure and steadfast, even in the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. --1 Pet. 1:23.

Such faith is not a matter of the intellect alone, altho the intellect has much to do with it. It is

also a matter of the heart--"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." If the heart be not right toward God, the intellect is easily biased toward its own preferences, which, in the carnal mind, are contrary to the righteousness of God; and so, the heart being wrong, the mind gropes in darkness concerning those things which pertain to eternal life and godliness.-- "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7); and, therefore, to such God does not, and cannot, reveal the treasures of his wisdom and grace.

We are taught that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6); and further that "faith without [corresponding] works [which attest its genuineness] is dead." (Jas. 2:17.) "What advantage," inquires James, "has any one, tho he say he has faith, but have not works? This faith is not able to save him." (Jas. 2:14--Diaglott.) And if faith without works is of no advantage, the inference is plain that without works it is equally impossible to please God. Yet, we may have both faith (or what often passes for faith) and works (corresponding with it) and not be pleasing to God. The faith not well founded, together with the works built upon it, is likely to be swept away when the storms and floods of trial beat upon it as upon a house built of wood, hay and stubble and resting on the shifting sand. It is all-important, therefore, that we have the right kind of faith, and that our works should be the outgrowth of that faith.

What, then, is faith? We answer, True faith is the reasonable and accepted conclusion of a logical argument based upon a reasonable premise or foundation. And more, it is the only reasonable conclusion to which such a logical argument could lead. Thus, reasoning on the principle of cause and effect, a principle firmly established in all the operations of natural and moral law, we see in the whole realm of nature the evidences of an intelligent Creator. We know that such effects as appear in the order of nature--as for instance the order of the spheres, the succession of the seasons, and of day and night, the growth of vegetation, etc., etc.--could not be produced without an intelligent first cause. And so undeniable is the basis of fact thus furnished in nature's testimony, and so logical the reasoning from effect to cause, that the conclusion

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--that there is an intelligent, wise and powerful Creator--is so palpable and irresistible that the Scriptures declare the man a fool who does not accept it.-- Psa. 14:1.

From these data alone we have substantial testimony upon which to base faith in God, even if he had given us no written revelation of himself. And no less substantial is the testimony given upon which to base

our faith in his written revelation. For all that God expects us to believe beyond the realm of our senses and observation, he has given us an undeniable foundation of tangible fact, upon which he invites us to use our reasoning powers to arrive at conclusions of which we would otherwise be ignorant. Thus faith is a conviction of things unseen, based on the logical deductions from known facts--a most reasonable thing.

It is also manifest that, since the foundation upon which to base faith, and the reasoning power wherewith to draw logical conclusions from the known foundation truths, and "the spirit of a sound mind," the holy spirit, the spirit, mind or disposition of Christ, to accept in simple sincerity all truth, are all given to us of God, so also, as Paul affirms, the faith thus derived may be considered, as it thus really is, "the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8), while it is also the free exercise of our own volition in obedience to the laws of conscience and of sound judgment.

There is nothing more common or necessary among men than faith. We exercise faith in the laws of nature and act upon it constantly. We till the soil and sow the seed in full faith in a future harvest to be brought forth by the continued operations of natural law, reasoning that the sun which shines to day will shine again to-morrow, that the showers of yesterday will be repeated, and that vegetation will still be true to the old law of development and growth under these favorable conditions. Who thinks of questioning these things?

Surely no one will question them who has become thoroughly acquainted with these methods in the past, and faith in them for the future is reasonable; while, on the other hand, doubt and unbelief would be unreasonable and foolish. The man who would refuse to plant for fear the sun would not rise again or the rain fall, would be rightly considered a fool. Why? Because faith is the only reasonable thing where the ground of faith is so well established. Even a child would laugh at another child who could not trust his parents for to-morrow's necessities when to-day's and yesterday's were abundantly provided for: his lack of faith would be so unreasonable. And just so when we have become acquainted with God, as all may who will study his works and ways in nature and revelation, to doubt is foolish; while full faith, perfect confidence in his wisdom, justice, love and power, is the only reasonable conclusion.

Therefore it is that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Thus faith, being a reasonable conviction of things unseen, becomes a basis of hope for the things which God has promised. As Paul expresses it, "Faith is a basis of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen." (Heb. 11:1.) With the same confidence, therefore, with which we look for an autumnal harvest from our spring time seed-sowing, before

we see any sign of that harvest, we should also look for the fulfilment of all God's promises in due season, even before we see indication of their fulfilment.

There is no difficulty in exercising faith in God and in any and all of his promises, if we acquaint ourselves with his character and in simple sincerity apply our hearts unto the instructions of his Word. Our faith in all God's promises should be as unwavering as our confidence that to-morrow's sun will rise. Thus it was in the cases of some commendable examples to which the Apostle Paul refers (Heb. 11)--of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel, and the prophets, who, by faith in the promises and directions of God, subdued kingdoms, shut lions' mouths, quenched the power of fire, raised dead ones to life, and, in hope of a better resurrection submitted to privations, persecutions and ignominious deaths, having faith in the promise of God, in due time to reward their loyalty to him and to the principles of truth and righteousness. When God declared that a flood was coming and commanded the building of an ark, the reasonable course was to build the ark and to warn men, altho the flood, and every indication of it, tarried for many years.

Similarly, when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, it was reasonable for Abraham to obey the command and to leave to God the fulfilment of the promises which centered in that son. When he commanded Lot to flee out of Sodom it was the only reasonable thing for Lot to do, to make haste and depart, tho the morning was gloriously fair.

These were commendable acts of simple, implicit and reasonable faith. But observe that in every instance of faith commended in the Bible there was good ground for faith; there was a clear command of God, a well defined principle of truth and righteousness; and no foolish imaginations or vague impressions were blindly followed. How foolish Noah would have been to spend energy and valuable time in building an ark and warning the people, if he had only imagined that a flood was coming. How culpable Abraham would have been in laying his son on the altar of sacrifice, had he only imagined that God desired him to do so. And how insane Lot would have appeared in hastening out

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of Sodom that bright morning declaring that the city

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would be destroyed, had he been given no reliable divine assurance of it.

Notice that in each instance of unusual requirement God gave clear evidence of his will according to the methods of that dispensation, either by an angel, a vision,

or some remarkable circumstance--ways, however, which are not now necessary, since the completed Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments form a perfect guide to faith (2 Tim. 3:15-17), and which, therefore, are not now resorted to. And in the instances of suffering and martyrdom cited, God's will was clearly expressed in the principles of truth and righteousness which he ordained, and which were properly recognized as more valuable even than life. These illustrations of faith should be specially marked by very many who claim to have wonderful faith in God, when the chief wonder in it is the ability to believe so much on so slight a foundation.

In many enterprises, too, undertaken under the name of works of faith, and successfully carried on financially, faith has more foundation in the sympathies of philanthropic people, than in the plan, methods and promises of God. If Christian people make public statements that they are starting a benevolent enterprise for the amelioration of the present woes of suffering humanity, they may do it with a large degree of faith in the support of benevolent people; even the worldly are often fully as active in these directions as Christians. For instance, mark the responses to calls for help in great calamities and disasters.

Successes in the direction of popular benevolences are not always proofs of faith in God, tho those so engaged are doing good works, and public appeals for assistance are often right and proper; but a clearer manifestation of faith in God is that humble confidence which espouses his unpopular cause, which perseveres in pursuing it in the face of all opposition and without human encouragement, and which patiently endures whatever of reproach, discouragement, privation and even persecution it may bring, assured of ultimate triumph according to his promise, and finding in his blessed truth and in his approval all the present reward and incentive desired.

One expression of the Apostle Paul should not be forgotten. It reads, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." (Rom. 14:22.) If we advertise our faith and our needs and thus make capital out of them by eliciting the sympathies and assistance of men, we are in great danger of seeking to be pleasers of men. Almost imperceptibly this motive will creep into the heart and become a governing power in our actions, often causing deflections from the straight and narrow path of divine appointment. Beware when all men speak well of you, and when multitudes are ready to line up with your work and your methods; and look well to it that no element of worldly ambition or worldly policy be in it to ensnare your feet and to allure you from the narrow way.--Luke 6:26. See also Luke 4:6-8.

There is much in the way of profession of great faith and in the relating of really improper proceedings and their results as wonderful feats of faith, which often

does great harm to both speakers and hearers.

While a true faith is pleasing to God, what often passes for faith among Christians must be correspondingly displeasing to him. Some, without careful observation and study of God's ways, jump to hasty conclusions, often greatly out of harmony with the spirit of divine truth; and, acting and teaching accordingly, dishonor the Lord and bring reproach upon his cause. Among such, too, are often found the loudest boasters of faith. Their faith is so strong, so rooted and grounded and established in what God did not say, that they have no inclination to hear or heed what he did say. In such instances God would be honored far more by the sealing of the lips. Rather let our faith be expressed to God, and let our confidence be manifest to him; and to our brethren let it be manifested more by our deeds of faith than by our words. Thus was the faith of the ancient worthies attested. Where is boasting then? It is excluded by the law of faith. (Rom. 3:27.) The very nature of pure, true faith is opposed to boastfulness. It is sincere and too humbly mindful of personal weakness and necessary dependence on God to be boastful. In fact, a humble, faithful walk with God excludes every mean disposition, and elevates the character far beyond them.

However, the faith of which we speak is something which belongs only to the children of God. Their hearts being in harmony with God and his righteousness, his Word is unto them the end of all controversy; and their faith in that Word is the basis of their joyful hopes, the inspiration of their activities, and the anchor to their souls through all the storms of the present life.

While faith depends for its earliest existence upon a right attitude of heart toward God and his righteousness, it continues to grow and thrive by a more close acquaintance and intimate communion with God and a continual striving to attain to his righteousness. Faith, in its beginning, is always comparatively weak; but God does not despise the day of small things. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." (Isa. 42:3; Matt. 12:20) So also the Lord's people who are strong in the faith are taught to bear with the weaker ones.--Rom. 14:1; 15:1; 1 Thes. 5:14; Acts 20:35.

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Since faith must necessarily be at the very basis of Christian character and is such an important element in its construction, even to the grand and glorious finish; and since "without faith it is impossible to please God," the effort of every Christian should be toward a continual growth in faith. To do this we must maintain a close walk and fellowship with God in all circumstances

and under all conditions. Does the sunshine of prosperity make glad our hearts? Let us see that we are glad in the Lord; that our hearts are lifted to him in grateful adoration and praise for all his benefits, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. Or, do the clouds gather and the storms of adversity beat upon the soul? then call to mind the goodness of the Lord in times past, and take courage, assured that the sun will shine again when the lessons of this discipline have been learned.--Psa. 77:10-12.

Nothing is more encouraging to faith than to consider the Lord's past faithfulness to us, and his promises that thus it shall be to the end. All our interests, temporal and spiritual, are in his hands, if we are his; and "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose." How often, as the years go by, the children of God can see this! As they realize what the discipline of life, patiently and lovingly submitted to, has already wrought in them, they see, as perhaps they could not see while passing through much of it, how necessary it has been to the developing of character in them; and so they are thankful for the rough and thorny places, as well as for the smooth, because of the peaceable fruits of righteousness, which they have learned to prize above all else.

Christians may often encourage one another's faith by mingling their prayers and praises together, and by speaking to each other of their Christian experiences, of how God has led them and borne them up under trials which otherwise would have overcome them. Such indeed is the will of God, that we should so stimulate each other by loving communion and fellowship one with another in spiritual things, and by unitedly drawing near to God in prayer and praise. This is a means of grace that no Christian who has the opportunity to enjoy can afford to forego. Yet even this must not supersede that still more potent means of grace; viz., secret communion with God, when, alone with him, we can open our hearts as to none else, assured that, even though language be lame, he is able to read the very thoughts and purposes of our hearts. From such seasons of prayer and communion come the answers of peace which strengthen faith into a firm and steady confidence; and thus we are enabled the more fully to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ, and of the fulness of God's loving benevolence toward us.--Eph. 3:16-19.

Let us endeavor to have more of that pure, true faith

"Which bears unmoved the world's dark frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
Which seas of trouble cannot drown,

Nor Satan's arts beguile"--

the faith which overcomes the spirit of the world in us and about us, and which will remove mountains of difficulty, and secure all that our hearts desire, since it is written, "Ye shall ask what ye will [our wills being in harmony with the will of God], and it shall be done unto you."--John 15:7.

When we see, thus, how reasonable a thing faith is, how God through his natural and written revelation of himself appeals to the highest faculty of our nature (our reason) and bids us follow its logical deductions of faith in God, and to rest in and act upon its proper conclusions in studying his works and ways, we realize truly that this faith is a firm basis of hope in the things unseen, "which hope we have as an anchor, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth [by faith] into that within the veil"--into the glory of the spiritual condition. --Heb. 6:19. M. F. RUSSELL.

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POST-MILLENNIALISM MAKES A WORLDLY CHURCH.

--By the late A. J. Gordon, D.D.--

"THIS same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" is the parting promise of Jesus to his disciples, communicated through the two men in white apparel, as a cloud received him out of their sight. When after more than fifty years in glory he breaks the silence and speaks once more in the Revelation which he gave to his servant John, the post-ascension Gospel which he sends opens with "Behold, he cometh with clouds" and closes with "Surely I come quickly." Considering the solemn emphasis thus laid upon this doctrine, and considering the great prominence given to it throughout the teaching of our Lord and of his apostles, how was it that for the first five years of my pastoral life it had absolutely no place in my preaching? Undoubtedly the reason lay in the lack of early instruction. Of all the sermons heard from childhood on, I do not remember listening to a single one upon this subject. In the theological course, while this truth had its place indeed, it was taught as in most theological seminaries of this country, according to the post-millennial interpretation; and with the

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most reverent respect for the teachers holding this view I must express my mature conviction that, tho the doctrine of our Lord's coming is not ignored in this

system, it is placed in such a setting as to render it quite impractical as a theme for preaching and quite inoperative as a motive for Christian living. For if a millennium must intervene before the return of our Lord from heaven, or if the world's conversion must be accomplished before he shall come in his glory, how is it possible for his disciples in this present time to obey his words: "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord shall come?"

I well remember in my early ministry hearing two humble and consecrated laymen speaking of this hope in the meetings of the church, and urging it upon Christians as the ground of unworldliness and watchfulness of life. Discussion followed with these good brethren, and then a searching of the Scriptures to see if these things were so: and then a conviction of their truth; and then? The godly William Hewitson declares that the discovery of the Scriptural hope of our Lord's second coming wrought in him a change amounting almost to a second conversion. What if another, not presuming to be named in company with this consecrated saint, should nevertheless set his hand and seal to the affirmation that the strongest and most permanent impulse of his ministry came from his apprehension of the blessed hope of our Lord's second coming?

But how is it that this doctrine, so plainly and conspicuously written in Scripture, could have remained so long undiscovered? In answering this question we see how little ground we have for glorying over the Jews. They did not recognize Christ in his first advent because they discerned in Scripture only those predictions which announced him as a reigning and conquering Messiah. This conception they wove into a veil of exposition and tradition so thick that when Jesus appeared as the lowly and humble Nazarene they knew him not, but "hid as it were their faces from him." And this strong prepossession still obscures their vision so that, "even unto this day, when Moses is read the veil is upon their heart."

With the larger class of Gentile Christians the case is just the reverse. They know Christ crucified, and believing that the cross is to conquer the world, and that the preaching of the gospel in the present dispensation is to bring all men to God, they see no need of the personal coming of the Christ as King to subdue all things under his feet and to reign on the earth. This conception in turn has been woven into an elaborate veil of tradition for Gentile believers and "until this day, remaineth the same veil untaken away" in the reading of the New Testament.

It was not so in the beginning. For three hundred years the Church occupied the position of a bride awaiting the return of the bridegroom from heaven--she meantime, holding herself free from all alliance with this world, content to fulfil her calling in

witnessing for Christ, in suffering with Christ, and so to accomplish her appointed work of the gathering out of the elect body for the Lord "until he come." A strange and almost grotesque conception to many modern Christians no doubt. But it was while maintaining this attitude that the Church moved on most rapidly and irresistibly in her missionary conquests.

Then came the foreshadowings of the great apostasy. The world which had been a foe to the Church became her friend and patron; Constantine, the Emperor of Rome, became her head, and thus the eyes of Christians began to be withdrawn from him who is "head over all things to the church." The great and good Augustine yielded to the seduction and was among the first to teach that in the temporal triumph of Christianity the Kingdom had already come, tho the King with whose return the primitive Church had been wont to identify the appearing of the Kingdom was still absent. Little by little, as the apostasy deepened, this early hope of Christians became eclipsed till, in the words of Auberlin, "when the Church became a harlot she ceased to be a bride who goes forth to meet her bridegroom," and thus chiliasm disappeared. What moreover would have been deemed an apostasy in the primitive Church grew into a tradition and a creed in the post-Nicene Church, which creed until this day largely rules the faith of Christians...

The most eminent living master of ecclesiastical history, Harnack, photographing in a single sentence the Church of the earliest centuries, says: "Originally the Church was the heavenly bride of Christ, the abiding place of the holy spirit." Does the reader not see that here is the same two-fold conception--Christ in-resident in the Church by the spirit; and Christ expected to return in person as the Bridegroom for his bride?...With no power except "the irresistible might of weakness;" with no wealth except the riches of glory inherited through her heavenly citizenship; refusing all compromise with the world, declining all patronage of kings and emperors, she nevertheless went forth conquering and to conquer.

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SURRENDER SELF-WILL--RECEIVE GOD'S WILL.

CHRISTIAN life is too often grievously destitute of real spiritual power and is essentially carnal, and it is the duty and privilege of every child of God to enter at once into the newness of life, and to walk henceforth in the power of Christ's resurrection.

Hence the starting point--instant abandonment

of sin and of every known weight which prevents or hinders progress. Whatever is wrong or believed to be wrong in God's sight cannot be indulged with impunity. It is held up as utterly destructive of all holy living and testimony, as unnecessary [improper?] because wrong, and as making impossible even assurance of salvation.

Secondly, a deadly blow is aimed at self-life in its six forms: self-dependence, self-help, self-pleasing, self-will, self-seeking and self-glory; in other words, a new practical center is sought for all the life to revolve about, and in this way a new step is taken in advance. Beyond the territory of known sin there lies another almost as dangerous, where self-indulgence is the peculiar

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feature. There is a large class of pleasures, amusements, occupations, which do not bear the hideous features of secret or open sin, but which all tend to give supremacy to self.

Thirdly, the surrender of will to God in obedience. Christ must to every believer become not only Savior but Lord. (Rom. 10:9, R.V.) "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the holy Ghost." (1 Cor. 12:3.) Hundreds who accept him as Savior from sin have no real conception of him as the actual Master and Sovereign of the daily life.

Fourthly, the infilling of the spirit. Here, is perhaps the most delicate and difficult part of this teaching. But it is not well to stop on phrases; whether we agree or not on the exact form of words, we must agree on facts, and conspicuous among the facts is this: that thousands of professed believers, like the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19, do not practically know whether there be a holy ghost or not.

Dr. Gordon discriminated between sealing, filling and anointing.

Fifthly, the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the soul as an indwelling Presence.--This is the climax of this teaching. The supreme end of the holy spirit's indwelling and inworking is to manifest the personal Christ as consciously our possession and in possession of us.

Sixthly, beyond these there is always a last stage of teaching--the privileges and victories implied in this higher or deeper life, such as the rest life of faith, power over sin, passion for souls, conscious fellowship with God, growing possession of promises, and prevailing prayer and intercession.

Wherein does this differ from the teaching now common in the majority of our churches, may be asked?

(1) It makes more of Jesus as a Savior who will save us from our sins. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." "Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it."

(2) It magnifies the necessity of surrender to the will of God and breaking with the world. In apostolic times if a man confessed Christ he knew what it meant, for the world would break with him; but now it is not so. Many professing Christians go on hand in hand

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with the world, and their lives are barren and unfruitful in consequence.

(3) It makes much of the abiding presence of Jesus. The heart is opened. He is asked to come in and abide, and faith rests upon his promise to do so. His presence causes the heart to burn as did the hearts of the disciples going to Emmaus; brings peace, as when he came over the waves to the disciples on the sea; drives out evil as he cleansed the temple; and fills the soul with joy as when he appeared to the disciples in the upper room.

(4) While the object sought is freedom from sin and effectiveness in service it makes more of receiving than doing. We must, with a childlike spirit, receive the good things God is ready to bestow before we can be a blessing to others. "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing," the Lord said to Abraham. The disciples must first receive the bread from Christ's hand before they could distribute to others.

Mark Guy Pearse says:--"Some years ago I was traveling in the train; seated in the carriage alone I had the Book open at Acts 1:8. I was thinking of the 'Higher Life,' of which just then we had heard a good deal--vexed and angry at the little headway, and still less heartway, that I could make in the matter. There was a life of which I could conceive, very bright and very beautiful like a star. 'Like a star indeed,' I said, half scornfully, 'a long ways off, and I have neither wings nor ladder long enough to reach it.' Then my eye fell upon the word 'receive.' This was something very different. 'Receive' I said, with my difficulties silenced, and ashamed; of course I can receive. That is what the baby can do--receive. That needs no genius, no goodness, but only want. Any beggar can take a six-pence if it is given to him. I looked out of the window. The showers fell, blessing everything. But just outside the wayside station was a little cottage, and at the corner of it the old woman had set her broken pitcher, and it was filled to the brim. 'My Lord,' I sighed, humble and grateful, 'I bring thee my poor heart--fill it to the brim!' "Ye shall receive"--stay your thoughts upon the Word until it kindle longing expectation, the boldness that claims the promise as your own." --G. C. Huntington.

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APOSTOLIC ADVICE TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

--JUNE 13.--2 TIM. 1:1-7; 3:14-17.--

"From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."--2 Tim. 3:15.

THE WORDS of this lesson, addressed by the Apostle Paul to Timothy, are sound advice to all Christians, especially to such as are young in the truth, and particularly if they have consecrated their lives to the Lord and his service, and are seeking to be useful according to their consecration as his ministers or servants --whether in a public or in a private service, according to their talents and opportunities.

These words were addressed to Timothy, when the Apostle Paul was an old man, a prisoner in Rome, because of his testimony for the Lord. Nor was Timothy a child in years at the time this epistle was addressed to him. Timothy's mother and himself were converts to the gospel of Christ presumably at the time of Paul's visit to their home at Lystra during his first missionary tour. It is presumed that at the time of his receipt of this letter Timothy must have been about forty years of age. Tradition has it that he was about sixteen years old at the time of his own and his mother's conversion to the gospel. When he was about twenty-one years of age, he with Silas accompanied the Apostle Paul on his second tour through Asia Minor, and from that time on for some sixteen years he was closely identified with the Apostle in his service of the truth, until

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left by the Apostle with the Church at Ephesus, that he might help them over some difficulties into which they had fallen. It was while Timothy was thus serving the Church at Ephesus that he received the two epistles which bear his name.

Paul introduces himself not by calling attention to his personal qualities as a logician, nor by boasting of any service which he had performed as the Lord's servant and minister of the truth; but, properly, by reminding Timothy of his apostleship (one of the twelve, taking Judas' place) specially commissioned by the Lord to introduce his gospel, and specially prepared for the work by being made a witness of the Lord's resurrection, having been granted a glimpse of his glorious person on his way to Damascus and commissioned to declare the conditions for the fulfilment to men of God's promise of life, provided in Christ Jesus.

Altho the Apostle had no natural children of his own, his tender address to Timothy as his "dearly beloved son," and his invocation upon him of a divine blessing, shows that he lacked none of

those fine, noble and endearing sentiments, which belong to a true parent. Indeed, the very fact that he had no natural children seems to have broadened the Apostle's sentiments to such an extent that figuratively he took into his affections, as his own children, all who accepted the gospel. We remember that he frequently used this figure of speech, "Altho ye have many teachers, ye have not many fathers in the gospel" --"I have begotten you in my bonds." On another occasion he represents his efforts for a development of a fully consecrated Christian life amongst the believers under the figure of a mother travailing for her children. This being true of the Apostle's general sentiment toward the household of faith, it would be much more true in the case of Timothy who had so nobly and truly filled the part of a son to him.

Incidentally the Apostle here points out the purity of his conscience toward God, before his eyes were opened to a recognition of the Lord Jesus, while making mention to Timothy that he prayed for him day and night with great desire to see him, and a remembrance of Timothy's tears, when they parted company at Ephesus in the interest of the truth. It was not according to the personal preferences of either that they had separated, but both had sunk personal convenience and preference in the interest of the Lord's cause.

We note with appreciation the Apostle's care over this younger brother in the truth, in whom he sees such great promise of present and future service. He realizes, perhaps better than Timothy does, the snares of the adversary, by which one placed in so prominent a position is likely to be assailed. Would he become heady and high minded?--Would he lose his faith in the cross of Christ?--Would he fall into the snare of some of the philosophies, falsely so-called?--Would he become vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, and get to feeling himself to be a "somebody"?--Or, would he, on the contrary, be a faithful soldier of the cross, meek, humble, gentle toward all, an example both in faith and practice to those with whom he came in contact? And withal, would he hold fast to the Scriptures and be apt to teach others to look to this divine source of information? He remembered that heretofore Timothy had been so close to himself in the work that he had been measurably shielded from many trials to which he would now be exposed; and yet, no doubt he realized that, if Timothy would be prepared to take the work of a general minister, which Paul the prisoner and growing old must shortly lay aside, it was time that he was learning how to stand, complete in the strength which God supplies through his Word, without leaning so particularly, as heretofore, upon any earthly prop.

These reflections no doubt had much to do with the Apostle's prayers for Timothy "night and day;"

and he now writes with a view to strengthening him along these lines, reminding him of the genuine faith and piety which he had inherited both from his mother and his grandmother, and assuring him that he believed that this had laid a deep foundation of true piety and faith in Timothy's own heart. We pause here to notice the fact everywhere kept prominent in the Scriptures that according to the divine arrangement not only are the sins of the parents visited upon the children for several generations, but also that the faith and godliness of the parents, when rightly based on the Word of God and the true promises of that Word, lay the foundation of character in their children, upon which there is the greater hope that a life of godliness and usefulness may be built.

Not only does the Apostle strengthen Timothy's mind by a remembrance of the goodly heritage of faith and piety received from his mother and grandmother, but in addition he reminds him of the grace of God specially conferred upon him (Timothy) at that certain time when he made a full consecration of himself to the Lord, to be God's servant; when the Apostle, exercising his power as an Apostle, and as was common in those days, communicated to Timothy by supernatural power an outward gift or token of the holy spirit, through the laying on of his hands. The Apostle had evidently either heard or surmised that Timothy was allowing the fervor of his zeal for God to die out, and hence here he urges him to "stir up the gift of God which is in thee." The Greek word here rendered "stir up" has the significance of re-ignite: as tho the

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Apostle said, Reignite your gift by renewed energy.

The next verse enforces this view, implying that the Apostle thought that Timothy was in danger of being overcome by fear, so as to allow his zeal to abate. And hence he reminds him that the spirit of the Lord imparted

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to his people is not a spirit of fear, but on the contrary a spirit of power, energy, zeal awakened by love;--loving devotion to God, and a desire to please and serve him; loving devotion to the truth, and a loving devotion to God's people and a desire to build them up in holy things, and to do good unto all men as we have opportunity. And yet, lest Timothy should get the thought that the spirit of God led only to a zeal or energy--that might at times be unwise in its exercise and do more harm than good,--the Apostle adds that the spirit of God which he bestows upon those who are begotten as his sons is a spirit of a "sound mind;" --a mind that is fortified and strengthened by the Word

of the Lord on every subject, and hence, while thoroughly fearless of man, is wise in judging of times, seasons and methods for using the energy of love which burns as a fire within the consecrated heart. O that all of God's children might appreciate, and more and more obtain, the spirit of a sound mind, by which all of their talents might be used, not only fearlessly but wisely, in the Master's service.

Continuing his exhortation (3:14-15) the Apostle impresses upon Timothy two things: (1) That he had been taught of God, and (2) that this teaching of God had come to him through the Scriptures, which, he assures him, are sufficient to bring him all the way to the complete realization (in the resurrection) of that salvation which God has provided through faith in Christ Jesus. It will be well for us all to remember that all the graces of the spirit, all the progress in the knowledge of divine things to which we already have attained, that may have really helped us nearer to God and to holiness, have come to us through the Scriptures of the Old Testament and through the words of our Lord and his inspired apostles: nor will it ever be necessary to go to other channels for the true wisdom which would prepare us for the salvation promised.

Proceeding the Apostle shows (Vss. 16,17) that the Scriptures which God inspired are profitable in every direction, and quite sufficient for the man of God. Needing no supplements of visions or dreams, either his own or other men's. They are profitable for doctrine, containing the full statement of the divine plan; and no human authority is competent to add thereto.-- Who hath known the mind of the Lord?--Who hath been his counselor? They are useful also for reproof toward others: No words that we can use in correcting the errors of others either in word or doctrine could possibly be as forcible for reproof, as the inspired words of Scripture. They are useful also for "correction," literally, "to bring up and establish one in the right." No standard of morals or of discipline can so thoroughly search out the heart and correct its waywardness as the Lord's Word.

Not, however, that God's Word is merely a statement of platitudes and moral instruction: it is far more than this; it searches the heart, the motives, the intentions, the thoughts, the ambitions, the aspirations. It pronounces a blessing upon the "pure in heart," those whose intentions are upright, honest, clean. The Word of the Lord as a correcter "in righteousness" takes hold upon all the affairs of life, and to those who are exercised thereby gives not only the spirit of a sound mind so that they are able to weigh and appreciate things from the true standpoint--God's standpoint of righteousness; but it also inculcates a righteousness toward God, and the propriety of seeking that holiness of which God is the perfect example.

Moreover, it reaches down to the relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and neighbors. If permitted, it settles every matter for us on lines of justice and love.

The Apostle assures us, accordingly, that God's teachings through the Scriptures are given--"That the man of God may be furnished completely unto every good work."--Revised Version.

Here the Apostle has reference to perfection of character (he makes no reference to perfection in the flesh, elsewhere assuring us that even in his own case he realized "in my flesh dwelleth no perfection"). The perfection of character here pointed out as the proper and desirable aim of all Christians, and prepared for by the Lord through the giving of his inspired Word, should be the aim, the mark, toward which all the soldiers of the cross running in the race for the great prize should bend their energies. Perfection of character was exemplified to us in the person of our dear Redeemer, whom God has exalted to the right hand of majesty and power; and we are informed by the Apostle that the Father has predestinated that all of the "little flock" who will share the Kingdom with Christ must be conformed to this glorious image of his Son-- must have perfected characters, hearts, minds, fully submitted to the will of the Father and to all righteousness, in all things;--however imperfect the earthen vessel may be, and however incompletely we may be able at our best to carry out in every thought and word and deed all the desires of our hearts and the endeavors of our transformed minds,--new characters, the earnest or beginning of the new natures which will be completed in the first resurrection.

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PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

--JUNE 20.--ROMANS 14:10-21.--

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is ensnared or made weak."--Rom. 14:21.

IN THIS lesson the Apostle brings forcibly to our attention the fact that amongst those who have accepted Christ as their Savior, trusting in his precious blood and consecrating themselves to him, there should be permitted the greatest liberty of conscience. We need, however, to discriminate between liberty in the matter of conscience, and liberty in the matter of faith. These two very different things are very frequently confounded; and the Apostle's words in this lesson are made an excuse for fellowshipping any faith

or no faith. On the contrary, the Apostle very emphatically shows elsewhere, in this very same epistle, and in all his writings, that matters of faith and of divine instruction are not matters of conscience at all; and our consciences (otherwise our judgments) are not to determine in reference to what we shall believe, in the sense of deciding our faith: on that subject the entire Church of God stands upon one platform; and whoever does not stand upon that platform is not related to the Church of God in any sense or particular.

St. Paul declared that platform emphatically when he said, "I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received [first of all] how that Christ DIED for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was raised again on the third day for our justification." Whoever received this testimony (that his sins have been atoned for) into a good and honest heart, accepting Jesus as his Redeemer, and seeking to live separate from sin and in harmony with God, and accepting from the risen Christ the robe of his righteousness, such a one was thereby "justified" from all things, from which the law could not justify. It is not, therefore, for one to say, "You may be justified through faith in the Redeemer, through faith in the precious blood, and I will be justified by works of the law;" nor for another to say, "I will be justified, not by faith in the blood, but by walking in the footsteps of Jesus." No; there is only the one name given under heaven, only the one faith, only the one door, only the one way of access into the justified state or condition. We are not, therefore, to excuse differences on this fundamental doctrine, by calling them matters of conscience, for conscience has nothing to do with the matter. These are faith differences. He who has the faith rightly based is justified, and he who has not the properly based faith is unjustified and is yet in his sins.

Neither can this question of conscience excuse from obedience to any of the matters which are clearly and distinctly taught by the Lord and his apostles, by word and example. For instance, our Lord enjoined love of the brethren: it is not the province, therefore, of any man's conscience to judge that in his case love of the brethren is unnecessary. Again, Christ and the apostles enjoined upon the Church that we should not only symbolically eat his flesh (appropriate the merit of his sacrifice) and drink his blood (share his death--be dead with him), but our Lord provided an outward symbol of this to be commemorated annually and said, "Do this, in remembrance of me." And the apostles set us the example of doing this on its anniversary. It is not, therefore, a matter of conscience, but a matter of obedience, whether we do it or do it not. Similarly, our Lord declared the immersion (burial) of his will into the Father's will and the real baptism into death, saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished,

"finished," at Calvary; but in addition to this, the real baptism, our Lord at the beginning of his consecration symbolized it in a water immersion at the hands of John, saying, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."--Matt. 3:15.

The apostles also enjoined this, explaining that water baptism was "not the putting away of the filth of

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the flesh," but simply "the answer [outward declaration] of a good conscience toward God:" they instructed (Rom. 6:2-6) that the real baptism is a baptism or burial of the will into the will of Christ, whereby the believer becomes dead to his own will and alive to the will of Christ;--dead with him to the world, its aims, ambitions, hopes, fears, etc., and henceforth alive with Christ, to the hopes and promises set before us in his gospel. Yet, while teaching this, as the real baptism, the apostles, nevertheless, clearly taught by word and deed a baptism in water, as the outward symbol of this heart-consecration and burial of the will, whereby our good consciences would testify or answer to our faith and obedience in the sight of fellow-believers. It is not, therefore, a matter for any man's conscience to decide whether or not he will obey the voice of the Lord and of the apostles: It is merely a question of knowledge and of obedience, both as respects the real baptism of the will, and also respecting the outward, symbolic baptism in water. It is a fact, that quite a great many (mistaught) have never learned either of the true baptism or burial of the will by full consecration into the will of Christ, nor of the symbolic baptism. And some have learned of the symbolic baptism who do not understand and have never performed the real baptism of consecration. And others have performed the real baptism of consecration, but have never performed the symbolic baptism. We believe that disobedience

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on the part of this latter class in connection with the symbol will quite probably be excused by the Lord because of ignorance: but, we have no hesitation in saying that neither the real baptism, nor its symbol in water are matters that can be set aside or excused as a question of conscience (judgment) upon which each has a right to exercise his own opinion.

In the lesson before us the Apostle points out that those who have become God's people by obedient faith and consecration (so long as they maintain that faith and consecration) are amenable only to God with respect to their views of his will on minor matters respecting which he has not given positive instructions. It is to him that each one is responsible. If really and truly they bow their knee to him, and if really and

truly their tongues confess to him, no human being has either the right or the ability to intervene and to judge of their consciences, in respect to feasts or fasts, new moons or holy days, eating meat or abstaining from meat--none of which things are regulated under the New Covenant. Others have the right to commend or advise on these subjects, but have not the right to command or condemn. The Apostle urges that since each one of us must give an account of himself to God as a consecrated member of the body of Christ, according to his own conscience or judgment of the Lord's will therefore, each is to remember that God is the Judge of all; and instead of condemning one another for conscientious differences with reference to feasts and fasts, etc., each should rather make sure that from his own life he remove everything that would be calculated to mislead or to stumble his brother by a violation of his conscience.

The important point of discussion toward which the Apostle's argument was directed was the eating of meat which had previously been offered to idols--and it would appear that nearly all the meat sold in the market places in heathen countries was so offered. Some of the brethren insisted that therefore they were practically deprived of eating meat at a neighbor's house or at a restaurant, and felt obliged to inquire as would a Jew. And these were inclined to look with discredit upon those who did eat such meat. The Apostle shows that his mind took the broad view, that since the idol was nothing, the meat could not have been injured in any manner. Nevertheless, while he would like to have seen all the brethren fully informed on the subject, he discouraged any attempt on the part of others to shame them into violating their consciences; and he points out to those who are strong, and who could see the matter clearly, that instead of ridiculing the weaker brethren, they should be glad to note their conscientiousness and to help them, for by ridicule and getting them to violate their conscience they might start them in a downward course which would lead to their destruction. Instead of forcing the weaker brother to use a liberty which would violate his conscience, the stronger brother, if he asked the weaker to eat at his table, should be careful to provide meat that had not been offered to idols, that the weaker brother might not be tempted to violate his conscience. Why should we be so bent on using our liberty and forcing it on others when we see that it might lead to the injury of brothers for whom Christ died? Christ left the glory with the Father and humbled himself to man's condition, and even to death, giving up life itself for our fallen race: can we, therefore, if we have our Master's spirit, do less than sacrifice some of our rights and liberties in the interest of the weaker brethren? And by so doing your good, your liberty, your right view of the matter, would not be evil spoken of.

We are indeed the Kingdom of God in embryo,

and as such we are not in bondage, but realize the liberty which the poor world, ignorant of the great Emancipator, Christ, and the great emancipation which he has wrought for those who receive him, does not comprehend. But, urges the Apostle, let us remember, dear brethren, that the advantage of being members of this embryo Kingdom is not merely these liberties, which release us from the Mosaic restrictions with reference to what we will eat and to what we will drink, but it means far more, even in the present life. The most valuable blessings which we have as members of this embryo Kingdom are--righteousness (justification through Christ) and its resulting blessings of peace and joy in the holy spirit. Let us not, therefore, think that in giving up some of our liberties we would be losing the blessings and favors of the gospel: quite the contrary, we have all the best things left to us, and may the more richly enjoy them by copying our Master's self denial in sacrificing these little liberties.

And he that in these things (verse 18) surrenders his own rights and liberties, in his endeavor to serve Christ, serving some of the humble members of his body, is both acceptable with God and approved of men: not only will fellow men appreciate such little sacrifices, on their behalf, but God also will appreciate them. Therefore, instead of contending about our rights and privileges and battling to have these, let us rather follow in the way that leads to peace and the things whereby we may become helps one to another as members of the Lord's body. Do not permit a question respecting your food, drink or clothing to destroy the work of God--either the work of the development of his grace in your own heart, or by breaking down the conscience of a weaker brother, destroy the work which grace has begun in him. Being free from the Mosaic law we understand that all kinds of food are permissible, and none to be regarded as unclean, but if any one thinks that certain food is unclean (forbidden by God's command) it would be a sin for him to eat it, because he thus would violate his conscience.

Finally, brethren, the Apostle urges, it would be a good rule to follow, to refrain from either the eating of meat or the drinking of wine, or any other liberty whose exercise would likely do injury to another, either temporarily or permanently.

JUNE 27TH--REVIEW.

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THE WATCH TOWER IN GERMAN.

Extra editions of the first three numbers of our German paper were printed, and all readers who have German friends are invited to send their addresses for free sample copies. Their contents are very suitable for beginners.

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IMPROVED SPELLING.

The National Educational Association has given its formal approval to the reformed spelling of the following words as here given: program, tho, altho, thoro, thoro fare, thru, thruout, catalog, prolog, decalog, demagog, pedagog.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

MANY were surprised that after the widely published announcement that Archbishop Corrigan (Roman Catholic) would take a prominent part in the recent dedication of the Grant Monument, and that he would pronounce the closing benediction, --he was afterward dropped from the arrangement and took no part. The explanation is now at hand. It appears that two of General Grant's sisters caused the change of program. The Primitive Catholic says:--

"Mrs. Virginia Grant Corbin of Newark, and Mrs. J. Cramer of Orange, N.J., both sisters of General Grant, refused most emphatically to attend the ceremonies, if any Roman Catholic prelate should be called upon to bless the sarcophagus and utter any of his benedictions.

"Then the great men in Washington and New York, the generals and patriots composing the committee on ceremonies, exercised much diplomacy and cunning, animated into activity on account of their cringing fear of offending the popish politicians and their master, but it was all of no avail. Those two American women held out; no compromise was possible with the resolute stand they had taken. The committee was obliged to concede the palm of victory to them and avert a national scandal, consisting of a most flagrant breach of trust, against the memory of the dead soldier, against his family and the nation at large."

PAPACY SEEKING NATIONAL PROMINENCE.

During President Cleveland's administration the Roman Catholic Church requested a grant of space on government ground at the United States Military Academy at West Point for the erection of a chapel. The permission was given, and forthwith foundations for a large church building were begun. But the press protested so vehemently against the providing of church sites by the general government that the permission was recalled and the work stopped.

The matter has come before the new administration, and it has decided that the church may be built; and that any other denomination desiring to build there shall also be granted a site; but the assumption is that not many Protestant denominations will accept the offer, since few of them would care to spend the money to build a structure that would compare favorably with the one now being started.

Romanism has for years been laboring to stamp its character and influence upon this government. To this end it has spent money liberally at our national Capitol--for the great Catholic College and other church institutions. This move on West Point is in the same line; for, altho comparatively few of the Cadets are Romanists, they recognize that influence upon them will be influence upon a class that some day will wield a pronounced influence in governmental affairs. They are zealous, too, in forwarding the interests of Catholic young men for admission to West Point. Protestants seem to think that Romanism has changed within the last century. She has changed her tactics, but not her principles; and that because she was losing her hold: she changed so as to take a fresh hold on the people's liberties. She will be a prominent figure in the time of trouble and will have the cooperation of many "Protestants" in efforts to maintain "the present social order." Both Protestants and Romanists have for some time been moving to have the United States declared to be a "Christian nation;" and having at last unitedly succeeded, as represented in the decision of the United States Supreme Court, Romanism will be crafty enough to grasp her full share of the power.

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HIGH-CHURCH OPINION OF SECTARIANISM.

The rector of St. Ignatius' Protestant Episcopal Church, New York City, Rev. Arthur Ritchie, edits a monthly church journal. In a recent issue of this paper appears an editorial of which the following is an extract:--

"As a matter of fact, could anything be more utterly

contemptible than the great American sects? We do not refer to respectable religions, like the Presbyterian and the Lutheran, the fruit of the travail of the sixteenth century, but such low, time-serving, ignorant superstitions as the Baptist Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the like. In the East these parvenu folk do not dare to raise their heads, or, if they do, they are laughed at for their pains. But no doubt in the West it is different, and quite possibly there a Baptist Minister or a Methodist minister may consider himself as on an equality with the Church clergyman! Should this be the case, a little 'arrogance' and 'superciliousness' would be very useful and highly commendable. Those who boast that they derive their office from the people should be made to know, if not to feel, that they are removed by an infinite chasm from those who derive their mysterious powers from above and are the vicegerents of heaven.

"Of course, in matters non-ecclesiastical there should be Christian politeness shown to every one according to his position in life; but even in such matters dissenting ministers should be made to feel their inferiority.

This minister and editor is not well posted. We can assure him that some Methodist and Baptist congregations have in recent years come nearer to his conceptions of true Christianity,--i.e., become more arrogant and supercilious, and nearer to the Scriptural description of the Laodicean stage of the Church--rich, increased in goods and having need of nothing; and knowing not that they are poor, blind, miserable and naked.--Rev. 3:16-19.

We much regret that all of the arrogance, etc., is not confined to Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Lutherans; and we trust that the truly meek and humble in every quarter of Babylon will give earnest heed to the Lord's words, "Come out of her my people; that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her [chastisements] plagues."--Rev. 18:4.

THE "OVERPRODUCTION OF MINISTERS."

Not long since The Evening Post (N.Y.) published an article advocating "A Society for the Decrease of the Ministry." Some of the arguments for fewer ministers were: "the all-pervasive restlessness and discontent" of the ministry, so great that "a prominent officer of a missionary society is reported to have said that in all his visitations of the clergy of a certain State he had failed to discover a single incumbent who did not wish to make a change;" "the underlying anxiety for prospective bread and butter;" the disgraceful "scramble for place," so that "a certain Congregational church in Connecticut, with by no means an inviting

future, received not less than two hundred and fifty applications, scattered all the way from Maine to California;" the existence of a "dead line" beyond fifty years of age; and the growing "commercial basis of modern church life."

This question, started in England, is being much discussed here also. The World (N.Y.) has interviewed some of the leading ministers and college professors on the subject, and we subjoin extracts from some of their replies:--

The President of Andover Seminary, Rev. George Harris, D.D., said,--"It is undoubtedly true that the ranks of the ministry are at present overcrowded. The number of unemployed clergymen is increased somewhat by reason of the protracted depression of business. Some of the small churches are not able to pay a living salary, and the missionary societies are obliged to reduce their working forces."

Rev. Dr. George Hodges of Episcopal Theological School, Harvard University, says,--"It is true that every desirable vacant parish is pursued by an eager crowd of parsons, some of them being out of employment, others being discontented with their cures. It is true also that after middle life many ministers find the door of opportunity shut in their faces."

"Rev. Lewis W. Mudge, D.D., Princeton, N.J., says,--"The spirit of unrest so manifest in churches and among ministers is seen also in other professions and in business circles, and is the outcome of financial and social conditions."

Prof. Edward L. Curtis, Yale Theological Seminary, says,--"The complaint that there is an over-supply of ministers might be made of any of the learned

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professions as much as of the ministry.

"I do believe, however, that such schools as the Moody School and others of that kind, where only the English branches are taught, have had a tendency to send men into the ministry only partially equipped for the work, and that it has had a tendency to bring about a competition not desirable."

Dr. James O. Murray, Dean of Princeton University, says,--"What the Church wants is a higher intellectual standard. There are too many men in the ministry that could not prosper at anything else and do not succeed here."

Rev. Dr. John Hall said,--"Regarding an over-supply of ministers much may be said that is true, but no more true than of other professions....What we need in the nation is not a reduction in the number of ministers, but an increase of spiritual power, of fidelity to the Master, of the teaching and preaching of the glorious gospel, and of reliance on the guidance of the holy spirit in the hearts of people and pastors."

We agree with Dr. Hall, that there are not too many ministers of the right kind: there are merely too many professional ministers. Every fully consecrated,

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humble Christian is a member of the "royal priesthood," commissioned to minister (serve) the truth to all who have ears to hear; to be ambassadors for God; to show forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. Such were the ministers of the primitive Church, and there cannot be too many of these God-ordained ministers of the Sanctuary, who labor not for filthy lucre's sake, but gather fruit unto eternal life and await the Master's-- "Well done, good and faithful servant [minister], enter into the joys of thy Lord."

The harvest is great and such laborers are far too few. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth more laborers into his vineyard; and seek and pray that you yourself may be one of them. Of such ministers it is written: "They shall be all taught of God."

"SELF-DENIAL WEEK."

The Salvation Army in Great Britain has recently had a "self-denial week," the results of which are announced to be \$124,000. This is the second week of the kind within a year. When returns are received from other parts of the world it is expected that the total will be a quarter of a million dollars.

We greatly admire the zeal of the "Army," and recommend that special efforts be made to put "present truth" before them favorably. We wonder whether clearer knowledge of the Lord and his goodness and gracious plan would lead them as it ought to redoubled energy in the service of so gracious a Master, or whether it would cool their ardor and self-denial. The truth is a crucial test of our consecration, true love and devotion to our Lord. He seeketh such as worship and serve him in spirit and in truth--from love, not from fear. Let each reader ask himself, How is it with me?

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WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT SPIRITISM?

--PROOFS THAT IT IS DEMONISM.--

THAT which we believe to be the truth respecting Spiritism is antagonized from two standpoints.

(1) The majority of people have no confidence in Spiritism, but believe its claimed manifestations and proofs are fraudulent. (2) An increasingly large number are disposed to deny the existence of the evil spirit beings called demons, and of the prince of demons, called in the Scriptures the Devil and Satan.

Rev. Adam Clark, D.D., has well said,--

"Satan knows well that those who deny his being will not be afraid of his power and influence; will not watch against his wiles and devices; will not pray to God for deliverance from the Evil One; will not expect him to be trampled down under their feet, if he has no existence; and, consequently, they will become an easy and unopposing prey to the enemy of their souls. By leading men to disbelieve and deny his existence, he throws them off their guard. He is then their complete master, and they are led captive by him at his will. It is well known that among all those who make any profession of religion, those who deny the existence of the Devil, are those who pray little or none at all; and are, apparently, as careless about the existence of God as they are about the being of the Devil. Duty to God is with them out of the question; for those who do not pray, especially in private,--and I never saw a devil-denier who did,--have no religion of any kind, except the form, whatever pretensions they may choose to make."

If it be asked how Spiritism could do injury to those who consider its claims to be deceptions and frauds and its votaries to be dupes, we answer that a large majority of its votaries are those who at one time thoroughly and heartily denied its claims and considered them impositions. Those who most thoroughly disbelieve in Spiritism are often the most ready to test its professed claims; and when convinced that many of its claims are genuine and many of its manifestations supernatural, these former disbelievers are more liable to become its devotees: whereas, if they had known just what Spiritism is, and how and by what power it operates, they would be on guard, and their judgment would have a support and guidance which it otherwise lacks. It is the lack of the true knowledge of Spiritism (imparted through the Scriptures and confirmed by indisputable evidences from outside the Scriptures) which causes so many to fall a prey to this delusion.

True, there are frauds committed in the name of Spiritism; but these are chiefly in connection with attempted "materializations." That Spiritists have done and can do, through some power or agency, many wonderful works beyond the power of man, has been abundantly proved in a variety of cases--some of them before

scientific men, total unbelievers. Tambourines have been played while in the air beyond the reach of human hand and suspended by some invisible power; chairs have been lifted into the air while people were sitting upon them, and without any connection with any visible power or agency; mediums have been floated through the air, etc. The rapping tests, the table-tipping tests, the autograph tests and the slate-writing tests have been proved over and over again, to the satisfaction of hundreds of intelligent people in various parts of the world. And Spiritism reckons amongst its adherents judges, lawyers, business-men and numbers of women of ability. These people have tested the claims of Spiritism and have candidly avowed their

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faith in it. And it is unwise, to say the least, to sneer at such as fools or knaves--fools if simply deluded by tricks and slight of hand; knaves if they are willingly and knowingly lending their time and influence to the perpetration of frauds.

The writer was inclined to be skeptical with reference to all the various claims of Spiritism until convinced to the contrary by a Christian man, in whose testimony he was justified in having full confidence. This friend was not a believer in Spiritism but, being thrown into the company of some Spiritists for an evening, the suggestion was made, "Let us have a seance." The company present assented; our friend remaining from curiosity. They sat down to a table, placed their hands upon it in the usual manner, and one of the number present being a medium inquired, "Are there any spirits present?" The answer indicated by raps upon the table--one for A, two for B, three for C, etc., spelled out the information that spirits were present, but that they would hold no communication that evening. The medium asked "Why?" The answer rapped out was, "Because new mediums are being appointed all over the United States." The company was disappointed and through the medium asked that as a test the name of some prominent person dying that night should be communicated. The request was complied with and the name of a Russian dignitary, which we cannot now recall, was spelled out. This was before the Atlantic cable was laid, and my friend, anxious to test the matter, kept watch of the newspapers and finally, nearly a month after (the time requisite for Russian mails in those days) he saw the announcement of the death of the Russian notable bearing that very name.

Our friend was convinced that Spiritism was not all a "hoax," and was anxious for another meeting. When it took place, in view of the answer at the previous meeting, the medium inquired, "Are there any mediums present? and, if so, how many?" The answer

was, "Four." The medium asked the spirit to please indicate which four of those present were mediums, and as each one called his name the mediums were indicated by a rap upon the table, by some invisible agent. Our friend was one of those indicated and right proud he felt of the honor. This occurred in Wheeling, W.Va. Shortly after he came to Allegheny, Pa., and visited an aunt, a widow, who with her family resided here. Anxious to display his newly conferred powers as a medium, he asked his aunt and her daughter to join him in a "seance." They were surprised, and the daughter said, "Why, are you a medium? I am a rapping medium also, brother Harry is a tipping medium and mother is a writing and trance medium." Our friend had never witnessed the powers of any but rapping mediums, and was very anxious that his aunt

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should display the powers of her mediumship, and was shown writing done by her which was an exact facsimile of his dead uncle's autograph upon checks. And strange, too, his uncle wrote a fine hand, while his aunt could not write at all, except under this influence.

Wishing to test her powers as a talking medium, the three surrounded a small table, and the aunt called for a spirit to communicate through her. The answer given was that there would be no communication, because there were no unbelievers present to convince. They persisted, however, and got the aunt to call again for the spirit. The answer this time was that her hands were forcibly lifted from the table and brought down upon it with a bang. This was something surprising to them all. The spirits evidently were provoked at the pertinacity of a second call after their refusal. But after discussing the matter for some ten minutes our friend prevailed upon his aunt to call again for the spirits and see what else would happen. She complied, and in response her hands were lifted from the table and brought down with fearful concussion, three times in rapid succession, sounding as tho every bone would be broken; and with her eyes staring out wildly and shrieking Oh! Oh! Oh! she jumped from the table in a semi-delirious condition.

That spirit, whoever it may have been, was evidently angry and wanted it understood that it could not be trifled with. Our friend informs us that never after that would his aunt have anything to do with Spiritism as a medium--she had caution enough to let it alone. But our friend was anxious to witness the powers of a "tipping medium," and in the evening when his cousin Harry came home he insisted on having an exhibition of his mediumship. Harry complied and amongst other tests was the following:--He placed a small, light table in the center of the floor and said, "I call for the spirit of our old dog Dash to come into this table." Then

addressing the table he said, "Come Dash!" The table balanced itself on two feet and hobbled after him around the room.

I should here remark that our friend who vouches for these matters will no longer exercise any of his powers as a medium. He is a prominent Christian man now living in this city: his views with reference to Spiritism are now the same that we are here endeavoring to present.

The claim of Spiritists is, that these manifestations and communications from unseen intelligences are from human beings, who once lived in this world, but who, when seeming to die really became more alive, more intelligent, freer, and every way more capable and competent than they had ever been before. It is claimed that the purpose of these manifestations is to prove

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that the dead are not dead, but alive;--that there is no need of a resurrection of the dead, because there are no dead;--the dead being more alive than ever, after passing into what is termed death. We shall not stop here to show how inharmonious all this is to the testimony of Scripture upon this subject, but merely cite the reader to the Word of the Lord; reminding him that, "If there be no resurrection of the dead,...then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."-- 1 Cor. 15:13,18; Job 14:21; Psa. 146:4; Eccl. 9:5,6.

Here is the point of infatuation. As soon as the unbeliever in Spiritism has been convinced that an unseen intelligence communicates through the medium he is all interest. Nothing else offers such proofs from invisible sources as does Spiritism; and many seem not only willing but anxious to walk by sight rather than by faith. Every one has friends who have died, and thousands are anxious to communicate with them if possible, and to receive from them some message or some advice. It is not surprising, therefore, to find people greatly absorbed in these matters, and very willing to be directed by those whom they esteem their truest friends and most competent advisers.

They visit a medium for the purpose of holding communication with the dead. The medium describes the hair, the eyes, etc., and certain little peculiarities, such as a mole or an injured or deformed finger or foot (which the father or son or sister or wife identifies as the description of the loved one deceased) and delivers a message which, however vague or indefinite, is construed to be very important. The novices are filled with a sort of reverent joy mixed with a humble feeling of the inferiority of their own condition, and with a pride that they have been counted worthy to receive communications from "the spirit world," while so many good and great people are not so favored, but are "blind to the wonderful facts of

Spiritism." The feelings thus started are somewhat akin to some kinds of religious feelings, and straightway the "converts" are ready to believe and obey the advice and instructions of those whom they believe to be so much wiser and holier than themselves, and so deeply interested in their welfare, present and eternal, as to leave the joys and ministries of heaven to commune with them and instruct them.

The majority of people have no true Christian faith built upon the foundation of the Word of God: they have a wish for a future life, and a hope with reference to their dead, rather than a faith with reference to either. As a consequence, their minds being convinced that they have had communication with those beyond the grave, everything relating to the future life becomes more real and more interesting to them than ever before. And many such, wholly ignorant of religious feelings, say to themselves, Now I know what it is to have faith, and a religious feeling with reference to the future, and they congratulate themselves that they have received a great spiritual blessing.

But this is only the first lesson, and these comparatively uplifting experiences belong chiefly to it. Later experiences will demonstrate, as all Spiritists will freely acknowledge, that there are "evil spirits," "lying spirits," which time and again deceive them; and the messages and revelations, often foolish and nonsensical, gradually lead the investigator to a disbelief of the Bible and the Creator, while it teaches and exalts "the spirits" as the only sources of knowledge aside from nature; and thus the way is paved toward advanced lessons on "spirit-affinities," "free love," etc. But after the first deception and shaking of confidence the explanation that there are "both good and bad spirits" is generally satisfactory; and the poor victim follows blindly on, because assured that he communes with some supernatural power.

As an illustration of this we mention the case of an old gentleman, a Pittsburger, an avowed Spiritist and an earnest defender of Spiritism. We knew something of his history through a mutual friend; how that, while holding a communication through a medium, supposedly his "evolved" wife, the latter said to him: "John, I am perfectly happy only for one thing; and that is on your account." He answered, "O Mary, do not allow my affairs to mar your bliss! I am comparatively happy for an old man and comparatively comfortable." But the answer came, "O no, John, I know better. I know that you are lonely, very lonely, that you miss me very much, and are suffering from lack of many little attentions; and that your home is comparatively dreary." Mr. N. had full confidence in Mary's judgment, and the message carried great weight; and his home and its affairs gradually grew less happifying, and he gradually grew dissatisfied; and so at a subsequent "seance" he inquired of Mary what he

could do that would relieve her burden and make her bliss complete. She replied that he should find a suitable companion and re-marry. But the old gentleman (seventy years old) objected that even if he could find a suitable companion, such a one would not have him. But at frequent interviews the supposed spirit of his wife insisted, and as he thought further over the matter he grew more lonely, and finally asked Mary to choose for him, as she had so much better judgment than any earthly being could have on the subject. The medium affected great indignation at the answer, and would not communicate it at first. The more she objected to giving the answer, the more anxious Mr. N. became to have it, and finally the medium explained that the spirit of his wife had said that Mr. N. should marry

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her (the medium); but that she was indignant that the spirit should think that she would marry an old man like him.

But the more Mr. N. thought the matter over the more he was inclined to be, as he supposed, led by the good spirit of his wife into ways of pleasantness and into paths of peace; and he urged upon the medium that it was the duty of humanity to obey the behests of their best friends in the "spirit world." Finally the medium consented that if he would deed over to her what property he possessed she would agree to follow the directions of the spirit and marry him. The matter was consummated in legal form, and Mr. N. with his medium wife and her daughter proposed to make the formerly cold and cheerless home of Mr. N. all that his spirit-wife had wished for him. It was a very short time, however, before the poor old gentleman was very glad to abandon home and all, to get free from the two "she-devils," as he afterward knew them.

But did not this shake the confidence of Mr. N. in Spiritism? By no means. He merely communicated with his wife again through another medium and was informed that a lying spirit had misrepresented her entirely and that she had given no such bad advice. Knowing these facts concerning his history when we met him shortly after, and he tried to urge upon the writer the claims of Spiritism, we said to him, "Mr. N., we will admit that Spiritism is backed by some

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super-human phenomena, but we deny that the powers which communicate represent themselves truthfully. They claim to be friends and relatives who once lived in this world, but the Scriptures assure us to the contrary of this that there is no work or knowledge or device in the grave, and that the dead know not anything. (Eccl. 9:5,10.) They declare that the only

hope of a future life is by a resurrection from the dead. You know, Mr. N., that whatever these powers may be which claim to be the spirits of your friends, their testimony is entirely unreliable. You cannot believe their most solemn declarations. They are what the Scriptures term "lying spirits." We proceeded to give him, as we are about to give in this article, the identity of these spirits as set forth in the Scriptures. He heartily assented that some of the spirits were unreliable, "thoroughly bad," but claimed that others were very good, very truthful, and had frequently given good advice which had been very helpful to him.

It is claimed by many Spiritists, especially by novices, that the influence of Spiritism is elevating; but those who have passed through the various stages of experience in this so called religious system have found, and have publicly declared, that its influence is quite the reverse of elevating--it is demoralizing.

The method of operation is explained by The Banner of Light, a leading Spiritist paper, in answer to the query, thus:--

"Q. Where a spirit controls the hand of a medium to write, is the impression always made through the brain?

"A. Sometimes the control is what is termed mechanical control; then the connection between arm and brain is entirely severed, and yet the manifestation is made through what is called the nervous fluids, a certain portion of which is retained in the arm for the purpose of action. But when the manifestation is what is called an impressional manifestation, then the brain and entire nervous system is used."

Explaining the difference between Mesmerism and spirit control, another journal, the Spiritual Age, says:

"Suppose I magnetize you to day; and that I, the mesmerizer, speak, write, act through you, you being unconscious;--this is Mesmerism. Suppose, further, that I die tonight; and that, to-morrow, I, a spirit, come and magnetize you, and then speak, write, act through you; this is Spiritualism [Spiritism]."

The value of Spiritism to the world is thus summed up by the well known Horace L. Hastings:--

"According to the theory of Spiritualists there are a hundred times as many disembodied spirits about us as there are men in the flesh. Among them are all the poets, authors, orators, musicians and inventors of past ages. They know all they ever knew when they were in the flesh, and have been learning a great deal more since; and with their added powers and extended experience they should be able to do what mortals have never done before. They have had free access to the public mind and public press, with no end of mediums ready to receive their communications, and thousands and thousands of inquirers who have anxiously questioned them, and earnestly desired to obtain information from them. They have had tables and slates and pens

and pencils and banjos and pianos and cabinets and bells and violins and guitars; and what have we to show for it all? Their business in this world has been to instruct men, to help them, to make them wiser and better. They have talked and rapped, they have tipped and rattled, they have fiddled and scribbled, they have materialized and dematerialized, they have entranced and exhibited; they have told us many things which we knew before; many things which we do not know yet; and many other things which it was no matter whether we knew or not; but when we come to real instruction, reliable information, or profitable and valuable knowledge. Spiritualism is as barren as Sahara, as empty as a hollow gourd."

WHO ARE THESE SPIRITS WHICH PERSONATE THE DEAD?

We have in the Scriptures most abundant and most positive testimony that no communication could come from the dead until after the resurrection. Furthermore, we have positive Scripture testimony (1) that not only some, but all, of these spirits are "evil spirits," "lying spirits," "seducing spirits." The Scriptures forbid that humanity should seek to these

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for information, and clearly inform us that these demons or "devils" are "those angels which kept not their first estate,"--some of the angels to whom was committed the supervision of mankind in the period before the flood, for the purpose of permitting them to endeavor to lift mankind out of sin; that by their failure all might learn that there is but one effectual remedy for sin; viz., that provided in Christ. These angels, instead of uplifting humanity, were themselves enticed into sin, and misused the power granted them, of materializing in human form, to start another race. (Gen. 6:1-6.) Their illicit progeny, was blotted out with the flood, and themselves were thereafter restrained from the liberty of assuming physical bodies, as well as isolated from the holy angels who had kept their angelic estate inviolate.

The Apostle Peter (2 Pet. 2:4) mentions these, saying, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartarus] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Jude (6) also mentions this class, saying, "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [proper condition] he hath reserved in everlasting chains--under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Notice three points with reference to these evil angels.

(1) They are imprisoned in Tartarus, restrained, but not destroyed. Tartarus is nowhere else rendered

"hell," but in this one passage. It does not signify the grave, neither does it signify the Second Death, symbolized by the "lake of fire and brimstone;" but it does signify the air or atmosphere of earth.

(2) They have some liberties in this imprisoned condition, yet they are chained, or restrained, in one respect--they are not permitted to exercise their powers in the light being "under chains of darkness."

(3) This restriction was to continue until "the judgment of the great day," the great Millennial Day--in all a period of over 4000 years. As we are now in the dawning of the Millennial Day--"the great day"--it is possible that this should be understood to mean that some of these limitations as to "darkness" may ere long be removed, gradually. If so, if the "chains of darkness" should be released, it would permit these evil spirits to work deceptions or "lying wonders" in the daylight (as they are now attempting to do) to the delusion of mankind more than ever has been known since the flood.

These fallen angels, or demons, are not to be confounded with Satan the prince of demons, or devils, whose evil career began long before--who was the first, and for a long time the only, enemy of the divine government; who, having been created an angel of a superior order, sought to establish himself as a rival to the Almighty, and to deceive and ensnare Adam and his race to be his servants; and to a large extent, for a time at least, he has succeeded, as all know. As "the prince of this world," who "now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience," he has indeed a very multitudinous host of deceived and enslaved followers. Naturally he would appreciate the deflection of the "angels who kept not their first estate," and who were restrained at the time of the flood; and hence he is spoken of as their chief, "the prince of devils;" and no doubt as a superior order of being he exercises some degree of control over the others.

These fallen angels, "demons," have probably very little to interest them amongst themselves;--evil beings apparently always prefer to make game of the purer, and apparently take pleasure in corrupting and degrading them. The history of these demons, as given in the Scriptures, would seem to show that the evil concupiscence which led to their fall, before the flood, still continues with them. They still have their principal pleasure in that which is lascivious and degrading; and the general tendency of their influence upon mankind is toward working mischief against the well-disposed, and the debauchery of those over whom they gain absolute control.

We are well aware that many Christian people have reached the conclusion that the Lord and the apostles were deceived, when they attributed to the works of demons conduct that is now considered human propensity and mental unbalance and fits. But all

should admit that if our Lord was in error on this subject, his teachings would be an unsafe guide upon any subject.

Notice the personality and intelligence attributed to these demons in the following Scriptures--"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; devils also believe and tremble." (Jas. 2:19.) Do human propensities "believe and tremble?" The demons said to our Lord, "Thou art Christ, the Son of God! And he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak [further], for they knew that he was Christ." (Luke 4:41.) Another said, "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye?" (Acts 19:15.) The young woman from whom Paul cast out the spirit of soothsaying and divination (Acts 16:16-19) is a good illustration. Can it be claimed by any that the Apostle deprived the woman of any proper talent or power? Must it not be confessed to have been a spirit which possessed and used her body?--an evil spirit unfit to be tolerated there?

Many of those who claim that the demons of the Scriptures were the spirits of wicked men and women who died, and that these are the "lying spirits" acknowledged by Spiritists, have still another difficulty;-- for generally they claim that the spirits of wicked dead

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go to hell-torments, as they wrongly interpret sheol

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and hades to mean.* If so, how could they be so much at liberty?

"Witchcraft," "Necromancy," the "Black art," "Sorcery," etc., are supposed by many to be wholly delusions. But when we find that they had a firm hold upon the Egyptians, and that God made special provision against them with Israel, we are satisfied that he made no such restrictions either against that which is good, or against that which had no existence whatever. The instruction to Israel was very explicit: they should not have any communion nor make any inquiries through necromancers (those who claimed to speak for the dead; i.e., spirit-mediums); nor with any wizard or witch; nor with any who had occult powers, charms; nor with those who work miracles by means of sorcery and incantation.--Read carefully all of the following Scriptures,--Exod. 22:18; Deut. 18:9-12; Lev. 19:31; 20:6,27; 2 Kings 21:2,6,9,11; 1 Chron. 10:13,14; Acts 16:16-18; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; Isa. 8:19,20; 19:3.

The Bible story of King Saul's "seance" with the witch of Endor, a necromancer or spirit-medium, as related in 1 Sam. 28:7-20, is an illustration of what is claimed to be performed to-day. Altho the law with reference to these mediums was very strict and the punishment

death, there were some who were willing to risk their lives because of the gains which could thus be obtained from people who believed that they were obtaining supernatural information from their dead friends--just as with spirit-mediums to-day. King Saul was well aware that there were numerous of these mediums residing in Israel contrary to the divine injunction and his own law, and his servants apparently had no difficulty in finding the one at Endor. Saul disguised himself for the interview, but no doubt the crafty woman knew well the stately form of Saul--head and shoulders taller than any other man in Israel. (1 Sam. 9:2.) Hence her particularity to secure a promise and oath from his own lips that no harm should befall her for the service.

The methods used by the evil spirits through the medium at Endor were similar to those in use to-day. They caused to pass before the medium's mental vision the familiar likeness of the aged prophet, Samuel, wearing as was his custom, a long mantle. When she described the mental (or "astral?") picture, Saul recognized it at once as a description of Samuel; but Saul himself saw nothing--he "perceived," from the description, that it was Samuel. Easily convinced, as people under such circumstances usually are, Saul did not stop to question how it could be that Samuel looked as old and as stooped as he looked in the present life, if he was now a spirit being and far better off; nor did he inquire why he wore the same old mantle in the spirit world that he had worn when he knew him as an earthly being. Saul had been forsaken by the Lord and was now easily deceived by these "lying spirits," who personated the prophet and spoke to Saul in his name, through their "medium," the witch, necromancer, Spiritist.

The fallen spirits are not only well-informed in respect to all the affairs of earth, but they are adepts in deceit. In answering Saul, the manner and style, and as nearly as could be judged the sentiments of the dead prophet were assumed--the better to deceive. (Thus these "lying spirits" always seek to counterfeit the face manner and disposition of the dead.) The response was, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" This answer corresponds to the Jewish belief --that when a person died he became unconscious in "sheol," the grave, waiting for a resurrection. (Job 14:12-15,21; Psa. 90:3; Eccl. 9:5,6.) Hence the representation is that Samuel was brought up from the grave, and not down from heaven; and that his rest or peaceful "sleep" was disturbed or "disquieted."--Psa. 13:3; Job 14:12; Psa. 90:5; John 11:11,14.

Saul was easily deceived into thinking that the Prophet Samuel who had refused to visit him to have any further converse with him while alive, had been forced to commune with him, by the wonderful powers of the witch. (See 1 Sam. 15:26,35.) Saul's

own testimony was, "God is departed from me and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams."--1 Sam. 28:6,15.

Any rightly informed person will readily see the absurdity of supposing that Samuel would hold any conference whatever with Saul under the circumstance. (1) Samuel (when living) was aware that God had forsaken Saul, and hence Samuel had no right to speak to him and no right to give him any information which the Lord was unwilling to give him. And Samuel would not do so. (2) It is thoroughly absurd to suppose that a spirit-medium under condemnation of the Lord and prohibited of the right of residence in the land of Israel could have the power at the instance of a wicked king, whom God had deserted, to "disquiet" Samuel and to bring him "up" out of sheol. Was Samuel down in the earth, or was he afar off in heaven? and had the witch the power in either case to command him to present himself before King Saul to answer his question? Or is it reasonable to suppose that any spirit-mediums have the power to "disquiet" and "bring up" or in any other manner cause the dead

*See "What Say the Scriptures About Hell?" a pamphlet in which every text of Scripture containing the word hell is cited and examined in the light of Scripture and reason, together with other Scriptures and parables supposed to teach eternal torment. Price 10 cents. For sale by WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY, Allegheny, Pa.

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to appear to answer the speculative questions of the living?

The "familiar spirit" of the witch, personating Samuel, foretold nothing which Saul himself did not anticipate. Saul knew that God's word had been passed that the kingdom should be taken from him and his family, and he had sought the witch because of his fear of the Philistine hosts in battle array for the morrow. He expected no mercy for himself and his family, God having told him that David would be his successor. He even anticipated, therefore, the statement which was the only feature connected with this story that indicates in any degree a supernatural knowledge; viz., "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hands of the Philistines." The well-informed demons knew full better than did Saul the strength of the Philistines' position and army, and the weakness of Saul's position and army, and that he himself was already panic stricken and making this inquiry of the witch-medium because he was distracted at the situation. Any one familiar with the warfare of that time would know (1) that one day's battle would probably

settle the question; and (2) that the death of the king and his household would be the only logical result. Nevertheless, the "familiar spirit" erred, for two of Saul's sons escaped and lived for years. It is even denied by scholars that the battle and the death of Saul occurred for several days after the visit to the witch.

It is not surprising that Satan and the fallen angels, his consorts in evil, should know considerably more than do men, concerning many of life's affairs. We must remember that by nature they are a higher, more intelligent order than men; for man was made "a little lower than the angels" (Psa. 8:5); besides, let us remember their thousands of years of experience, unimpaired by decay and death, as compared with man's "few years and full of trouble," soon cut off in death. Can we wonder that mankind cannot cope with the cunning of these "wicked spirits," and that our only safety lies in the divine provision that each one who so wills may refuse to have any communication with these demons? The Word of the Lord is, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (Jas. 4:7.) "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring [angry] lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith."--1 Pet. 5:8,9.

But while able to tell things past and present, these evil intelligences are quite unable to do more than guess at the future. Yet these guesses are often so skillfully stated as to satisfy the inquirer and yet appear true, if the result should be the opposite of his expectation. Thus the oracle of Delphi having been consulted by Croesus demonstrated to him a super-human knowledge of present things, and when he, having thus gained confidence in it, inquired through its mediums, "whether he should lead an army against the Persians," the answer as recorded by Herodotus the historian was, "By crossing the Halys, Croesus will destroy a mighty power!" Relying upon this, Croesus attacked the Persians and was defeated. His own mighty power was destroyed! History is full of such evidences that the demons know not the future; and God's Word challenges all such, saying,--

"Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth and show us what shall happen. Let them show the former things [things before or to come what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods."--Isa. 41:21,23.

But where was Samuel the prophet, if Saul would be with him the day following? Clearly the meeting place would not be heaven, for wicked Saul was surely unfit to enter there (John 3:5); nor could the meeting be in a place of flames and torment, for surely Samuel was not in such a place. No; the "familiar spirit"

spoke to Saul from the standpoint of the general faith of that time, taught by Samuel and all the patriarchs and prophets,--namely, that all who die, good and bad

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alike, go to sheol, the grave, the state of death, the sleep from which naught can awaken except the resurrection power of Michael, the arch-angel (Dan. 12:1,2); --except it were claimed that the witch's "familiar spirit" could awaken the dead in advance,--but this, as we are showing, was a deception, a fraud, the "lying spirit" personating the dead and answering for Samuel.

Of this passage Charles Wesley wrote--

"What do these solemn words portend?
A gleam of hope when life shall end?--
Thou and thy sons shall surely be
To-morrow in repose with me:--

Not in a state of hellish pain,
If Saul with Samuel remain;
Not in a state of damned despair,
If loving Jonathan be there.

One remarkable thing in connection with the manifestations of these fallen angels, or "demons," is that people of ordinary common sense are so easily deceived by them and accept such flimsy proofs respecting the dead, which they would not accept respecting the living. The inquirer will accept through the medium a description which fits to the individual and his manner, clothing and appearance years before, and will hold sacred a message purporting to come from him, whereas the same individual would be more on guard against deception by a living impostor, and his message through a servant.

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The mention in the Scriptures of these necromancers, witches and mediums, leads us to infer that through mediums they were for centuries seeking fellowship with the Israelites. But it is apparently the custom to change the manner of manifestation from time to time: just as witchcraft flourished for a time in New England and Ohio, and throughout Europe, and then died out and has been succeeded by Spiritism, whose tipping and rapping manifestations are gradually giving way to others, clairaudience and materialization being now the chief endeavors, the latter, being very difficult and the conditions often unfavorable, are often accompanied by mediumistic assistance and fraud.

OBSESSION AT THE FIRST ADVENT.

In the days of our Lord and the early Church the method of operations on the part of these demons had changed somewhat from the practices in the days of Saul, and we read nothing in the New Testament about witches, wizards and necromancy, but a great deal about persons possessed by devils--obsession. Apparently there were great numbers thus possessed throughout the land of Israel: many cases are mentioned in which our Lord cast out devils; and the power to cast them out was one of those conferred upon the twelve apostles, and afterward upon the seventy that were sent out. The same power was possessed and exercised by the Apostle Paul.--See Luke 9:1; 10:11; Acts 13:8-11; 16:18.

Mary Magdelene, we remember, had been possessed of seven devils (Luke 8:2), and being set free from their control, she became a very loyal servant of the Lord. Another instance is mentioned in which a legion of spirits had taken possession of one man. (Luke 8:30; 4:35,36,41.) No wonder that his poor brain, assaulted and operated upon by a legion of different minds, would be demented. This tendency of these fallen spirits to congregate in one person indicates the desire they have still to exercise the power originally given them; namely, the power to materialize as men. Deprived of this power they apparently have comparatively rare opportunities of getting possession of human beings. Apparently the human will must consent before these evil spirits have power to take possession. But when they do take possession apparently the will power is so broken down, that the individual is almost helpless to resist their presence and further encroachment, even tho he so desires. Our Lord intimates such a condition (Matt. 12:43-45), suggesting that, even after an evil spirit had been cast out and the heart swept and garnished, if it were still empty, there would be danger of the return of the evil spirit with others to re-possess themselves of the man;--hence the necessity for having Christ enthroned within, if we would be kept for the Master's use, and be used in his service.

Apparently these evil spirits have not the power to impose themselves, even upon dumb animals, until granted some sort of permission; for, when the "legion" was commanded to come out of the man whom they possessed, they requested as a privilege that they might have possession of the bodies of a herd of swine; and the swine being according to the law unclean to the Jew, and unlawful to eat, the Lord permitted them to have possession of them, doubtless foreseeing the results, and with a view to giving us this very lesson.

The same Apostle who speaks of these evil spirits as "lying wonders" and "seducing spirits" (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Thes. 2:9; compare Ezek. 13:6; 1 Kings 22:22,23) tells us that the heathen sacrificed to these demons.

(1 Cor. 10:20.) And so, indeed, we find that in various parts of the world there are demon manifestations. Amongst the Chinese these demon powers are frequently recognized, and sacrifices are offered to them; so also in India and in Africa. Amongst the North American Indians in their savage state these evil spirits operated after much the same manner as elsewhere. An illustration is given by Missionary Brainard in a "Report to the Honorable Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge," explanatory of the difficulties and obstacles to the spread of Christianity among the Indians with whom he had been laboring, as follows:--

"What further contributes to their aversion to Christianity is the influence which their powaws (conjurers or diviners) have upon them. These are a sort of persons who are supposed to have a power of foretelling future events, or recovering the sick, at least oftentimes, and of charming, enchanting, or poisoning persons to death by their magic divinations. Their spirit, in its various operations, seems to be a Satanic imitation of the spirit of prophecy with which the Church in early ages was favored. Some of these diviners are endowed with the spirit in infancy;--others in adult age. It seems not to depend upon their own will, nor to be acquired by any endeavors of the person who is the subject of it...They are not under the influence of this spirit always alike,--but it comes upon them at times. Those who are endowed with it are accounted singularly favored.

"I have labored to gain some acquaintance with this affair of their conjuration, and have for that end consulted and queried with the man mentioned in my Diary, May 9, who, since his conversion to Christianity, has endeavored to give me the best intelligence he could of this matter. But it seems to be such a mystery of iniquity, that I cannot well understand it, and do not know oftentimes what ideas to affix to the terms he makes use of. So far as I can learn, he himself has not any clear notions of the thing, now his spirit of divination is gone from him.

"There were some times when this spirit came upon him in a special manner. Then, he says, he was all light, and not only light himself, but it was light all around him, so that he could see through men, and

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knew the thoughts of their hearts. These "depths of Satan" I leave to others to fathom or to dive into as they please, and do not pretend, for my own part, to know what ideas to affix to such terms, and cannot well guess what conception of things these creatures have at these times when they call themselves all light. But my interpreter tells me that he heard one of them tell a certain Indian the secret thoughts of his heart, which he had never divulged....

"When I have apprehended them afraid of embracing Christianity, lest they should be enchanted and poisoned, I have endeavored to relieve their minds of this fear, by asking them, Why their powaws did not enchant and poison me, seeing they had as much reason to hate me for preaching to them, and desiring them to become Christians, as they could have to hate them in case they should actually become such? That they might have an evidence of the power and goodness of God engaged for the protection of Christians, I ventured to bid a challenge to all their powaws and great powers to do their worst on me first of all; and thus I labored to tread down their influence."--Memoirs of Brainard, pages 348-351.

Three months since the New York Sun published the following account of the experiences of Capt. C. E. Denny, Indian agent for the Canadian Government among the Blackfeet Indians. Capt. Denny says:--

"On my arrival in the northwest territories with the northwest mounted police, in 1874, I was curious to find out how far these "medicine men" carried their arts, and also what these arts consisted of. I heard from Indians many tales of wonders done by them, but it was a long time before I got a chance to be present at one of these ceremonies. The Indians were reluctant to allow a white man to view any of their "medicine" ceremonies. As I got better acquainted with several tribes, particularly the Blackfeet, I had many chances to find out the truth regarding what I had heard of them, and I was truly astonished at what I saw at different times. Many of the medicine feats did not allow of any jugglery, the man being naked, with the exception of a cloth around his loins, and I sitting within a few feet of him.

"All Indians believe in their familiar spirit, which assumed all kinds of shapes, sometimes that of an owl, a buffalo, a beaver, a fox, or any other animal. This spirit it was that gave them the power to perform the

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wonders done by them, and was firmly believed in by them all.

"On one occasion I was sitting in an Indian tent alone with one of the "medicine" men of the Blackfeet Indians. It was night and all was quiet in the camp. The night was calm, with a bright moon shining. On a sudden the Indian commenced to sing, and presently the lodge, which was a large one, commenced to tremble; and the trembling increased to such a degree that it rocked violently, even lifting off the ground, first on one side and then on the other, as if a dozen pair of hands were heaving it on the outside. This lasted for about two minutes, when I ran out, expecting to find some Indians on the outside who had played me a trick, but, to my astonishment, not a soul was in sight, and

what still more bewildered me was to find on examination that the lodge was firmly pegged down to the ground, it being impossible for any number of men to have moved and replaced the pegs in so short a time. I did not enter the lodge again that night, as the matter looked, to say the least, uncanny.

"On another occasion I visited a lodge where a "medicine smoke" was in progress. There were about a dozen Indians in the lodge. After the smoke was over, a large copper kettle, about two feet deep, and the same or a little more in diameter, was placed empty on the roaring fire in the middle of the lodge. The medicine man who was stripped, with the exception of a cloth around his loins, was all this time singing a "medicine" in a low voice.

"The pot after a short while became red-hot, and a pole being passed through the handle, it was lifted in this state off the fire and placed on the ground, so close to me that the heat was almost unbearable. On the pole being withdrawn the medicine man sprang to his feet and, still singing his song, stepped with both naked feet into the red-hot kettle and danced for at least three minutes in it, still singing to the accompaniment of the Indian drums. I was so close, as I have before said, that the heat of the kettle was almost unbearable, and I closely watched the performance, and saw this Indian dance for some minutes with his bare feet in it. On stepping out he seemed none the worse; but how he performed the act was and is still a mystery to me."

Similar feats are performed by the fetish men of India "under control;" and tests given by "spirit mediums" "under control" sometimes include the handling of fire, red hot glass, etc., with bare hands without injury. God has protected his faithful in the flames (Dan. 3:19-27), and it seems that he does not always hinder Satan's use of such power.

Dr. Ashmore, of long experience as a missionary in China, says,--

"I have no doubt that the Chinese hold direct communications with the spirits of another world. They never pretend that they are the spirits of their departed friends. They get themselves in a certain state and seek to be possessed by these spirits. I have seen them in certain conditions invite the spirits to come and to inhabit them. Their eyes become frenzied, their features distorted, and they pour out speeches which are supposed to be the utterances of the spirits."

An old issue of Youth's Day Spring contains a letter from a missionary describing the condition of the Africans on the Gaboon river at the approach of death. He says,--

"The room was filled with women who were weeping in the most piteous manner, and calling on the spirits of their fathers and others who were dead, and upon all spirits in whom they believed, Ologo,

Njembi, Abambo, and Miwii, to save the man from death."

A Wesleyan missionary, Mr. White, says,--

"There is a class of people in New Zealand called Eruku, or priests; these men pretend to have intercourse with departed spirits."

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No part of humanity has been exempted from the attacks of these demons, and their influence is always baneful. India is full of it. So generally accepted at one time was the belief in demon-possession, that the Roman Catholic Church, through her priests, regularly practiced "exorcism," or casting out of demons.

The very earliest recorded spirit manifestation was in Eden, when Satan, desiring to tempt mother Eve, used or "obsessed" the serpent. Mother Eve claimed that she was deceived by the serpent's misrepresentations. God allowed the claim as true, and sentenced the serpent, which there became the symbolic representative of Satan. As the father of lies he there took possession of a serpent to deceive Eve and lead her to disbelieve God's command by the false assurance, "Ye shall not surely die!" so ever since, tho he has varied his methods and mediums, all of them are to deceive --to blind the minds of mankind, lest the glorious light of the goodness of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, should shine unto them.

Thanks be to God for the promise that, in due time, the Kingdom of God shall be established in the earth, in the hands of our Lord Jesus and his then completed and glorified Church, and that one of the first works of that Kingdom, preparatory to its blessing "all the families of the earth," will be the binding of that Old Serpent, the Devil and Satan, that he may deceive the nations no more for the thousand years of Christ's reign; until all men shall be brought to a clear knowledge of the truth, and to a full opportunity to avail themselves of the gracious provisions of the New Covenant, sealed at Calvary with the precious blood of Christ.

While the name Old Serpent includes Satan, "the prince of devils," it is here evidently used as a synonym for all the sinful agencies and powers which had their rise in him. It therefore includes the legions of "evil spirits," "familiar spirits," "seducing spirits."

Spiritism, as a deceiving influence under the control of Satan, is foretold by the Apostle Paul. After telling of the work of Satan in the great Apostacy of which Papacy is the head-center, the Man of Sin, the Mystery of Iniquity,* the Apostle draws his subject to a close by pointing out that Satan, toward the end of this age, will be granted special licence to deceive by peculiar arts, all who, having been highly favored with the Word of God, have failed to appreciate and use it.

He says,--"For this cause God will send them strong delusion [a working deception], that they may believe a lie: that they may all be condemned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness [doctrinal or practical]."--2 Thes. 2:11,12.

We shall not be at all surprised if some later manifestations of the powers of darkness, transformed to appear as the angels of light and progress, shall be much more specious and delusive than anything yet attempted. We do well to remember the Apostle's words,--"We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with princely powers of darkness, with the spiritual things of the evil one."--Eph. 6:12.

In 1842, six years before "modern Spiritism" began to operate, Edward Bickersteth, a servant of God and student of his Word, wrote,--

"Looking at the signs of the times, and the long neglect and unnatural denial of all angelic ministration or spiritual influence, and at the express predictions of false Christs, and false prophets, who shall show signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they should deceive the very elect, and that when men receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they shall believe a lie; I cannot but think there is a painful prospect of a SUDDEN RECOIL and religious revulsion from the present unbelief and misbelief, to an unnatural and undistinguishing CREDULITY."

Satan is the inspirer and supporter of every Anti-Christ; and as he led those who had pleasure in error rather than the truth to the organization of the great Anti-Christ, Papacy, symbolically the "beast" of Rev. 13, and as he is now operating to produce a Protestant "image of the beast" with life, which will cooperate with the chief Anti-Christ, so in combination with these will be the powers of darkness, the powers of the air, the lying and seducing spirits, operating in some manner or in a variety of ways,--Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy, Hypnotism, etc.

"Rev. Father Coppens, M.D. [Roman Catholic], Professor in Creighton University," recently delivered a discourse on "Borderland of Science," from which we extract the following on the phenomena of Spiritism:--

"What must we think of the nature of Spiritism, with its spirit rappings, table-turning, spirit apparitions and so on? Can the facts, which are not imposture, but realities, be explained by the laws of nature, the powers of material agents and of men? All that could possibly be done by the most skilled scientists, by the most determined materialists who believe neither in God nor in demon, as well as by the most conscientious Christians, has only served to demonstrate to perfect evidence that effects are produced which can no more be attributed to natural agency than speech and design can be attributed to a piece of wood. One principle of science throws much light on the nature of all

those performances, namely, that every effect must have a proportionate cause. When the effect shows knowledge and design, the cause must be intelligent. Now many of these marvels evidently show knowledge and design, therefore the cause is certainly intelligent.

"A table cannot understand and answer questions; it cannot move at a person's bidding. A medium cannot speak in a language he has never learned, nor know the secret ailment of a patient far away, nor prescribe

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., chapter 9, pages 267-366.

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the proper remedies without knowledge of medicine. Therefore these effects when they really exist, are due to intelligent agents, agents distinct from the persons visibly present, invisible agents therefore, spirits of another world.

"Who are these agents? God and his good angels cannot work upon these wretched marvels, the food of a morbid curiosity, nor could they put themselves at the disposal of pious men to be trotted out as monkeys on the stage. The spirits which are made to appear at the seances are degraded spirits. Spiritualists themselves tell us they are lying spirits. Those lying spirits say they are the souls of the departed, but who can believe their testimony, if they are lying spirits as they are acknowledged to be? This whole combination of imposture and superstition is simply the revival in a modern dress of a very ancient deception of mankind by playing on men's craving for the marvelous. Many imagine these are recent discoveries, peculiar to this age of progress. Why this spirit-writing is and has been for centuries extensively practiced in benighted pagan China, while even Africans and Hindoos are great adepts at table turning. It is simply the revival of ancient witchcraft, which Simon Magus practiced in St. Peter's time; which flourished in Ephesus while St. Paul was preaching the gospel there. It is more ancient still. These were the abominations for which God commissioned the Jews in Moses' time to exterminate the Canaanites and the other inhabitants of the promised land."

--(TO BE CONTINUED.)--

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THE GOSPEL SENT TO EUROPE.

--JULY 4.--ACTS 16:6-16.--

"The entrance of thy words giveth light."--Psa. 119:130.

AFTER the conference at Jerusalem respecting the obligations of the Law upon Christians, we noticed that Jude and Silas returned with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, to deliver the decision of the Council. After remaining with the Antioch Church for several months the Apostle Paul proposed to Barnabas that they revisit the Churches of Asia Minor, which they had established during the first preaching tour. The Apostle was thoughtful of the interests of the general work, and remembered the necessity of watering as well as sowing the truth. Experience is convincing that this thought is correct, and that it is just as true to day as then that beginners in the Christian way need the careful oversight of those who are more advanced, that they may become rooted, grounded, established and built up in the truth.

The necessity for doing something to center and develop the interest of beginners is very generally recognized to-day, but with many the thought seems to be that the beginner needs to get into the current of what is termed "Christian work," but what in reality is very largely animal excitement. We may be very certain that the Apostle's thought was not with reference to getting up some little excitement and entertainment for the "babes" in Christ, such as strawberry festivals, apron sociables, gossip societies and other entertainments to attract the world, at ten cents a head, for the Lord's cause. These were not the considerations which moved the Apostle to suggest the new tour. He had a more important work than this; he thought of the newly interested believers, the opposition with which they would have to contend among their former friends, the false arguments and sophistries which would be raised by the adversary to combat the truth; the inexperience and perplexities of the Lord's flock, and he needed to go amongst them to encourage, strengthen and establish them in the truth and make of them strong soldiers of the cross.

Barnabas readily assented to the proposed tour; but before they had proceeded far in the arrangement, a difference of opinion arose between the two which, however, has been very greatly exaggerated, we think, by many Commentators. We hold that they did not have a "quarrel, bitter and angry;" that they did not "part in anger;" that it is not true that "neither would yield to the other, and therefore both were wrong." Quite to the contrary, we think that each had a right to act according to his own judgment of the Lord's will in the matter under discussion; and that a sharp discussion, in which each would be positive, should not with Christians signify any bitterness or acrimonious feeling.

The point of the discussion was, whether or not John Mark (cousin of Barnabas and writer of the Gospel of Mark) should go with them on this journey. We saw in our lesson of May 2 that Mark forsook the service of the ministering brethren (Paul and Barnabas) in their first tour, and Paul evidently thought that up to this time Mark had not properly recognized his misconduct on that occasion, and hence was determined that the assistant on this occasion should be some one upon whom they could place greater dependence. Barnabas, on the contrary, stood up for Mark, and as a result they determined that it would be best to make two parties instead of one. The evidence seems to be that Barnabas was rather the loser by not acquiescing with the Apostle Paul's view of the matter; for altho Barnabas and Mark started on a preaching tour, its importance and success were comparatively much less than attended the ministries of Paul: so

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much so that no particular report of it is given, and Barnabas thereafter is almost lost from sight.

That Paul's conduct was not the result of any unkind feeling toward either Barnabas or Mark is evident from the fact that in one of his subsequent epistles he mentions Barnabas most kindly; and a little farther on we find Mark one of Paul's associates in the work. Presumably he had learned the lesson which the Apostle thought he needed to learn. However, as a result of their candid differences of view, as Dr. Stalker puts it, Paul had to part "from the man to whom he owed more than to any other human being; and Barnabas was separated from the grandest spirit of the age." "They never met again."

Paul chose Silas, whose full name was Silvanus, one of the brethren sent from Jerusalem after the conference, to be his companion and helper; and they started northward from Antioch, then turned westward to Derbe, then to Lystra, where the company was joined by young Timothy. Altho Timothy's mother was a Jewess, his father being a Greek he had never been circumcised. Paul, foreseeing that he would be a valuable assistant in the work, recommended that, according to the Jewish custom, Timothy be circumcised, and thus become in the fullest sense a Jew according to the custom divinely enjoined upon that nation.

Paul has been sharply criticised for his course in this matter by some who consider that his action here directly contradicted his testimony to the Galatians-- "If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing." (Gal. 5:2-6.) But these critics fail to notice an important feature; namely, (1) that circumcision was established before the Mosaic Law was given at Sinai; (2) that it was made a national mark, and that any Jew who was not circumcised, forfeited by that neglect

his rights in the Abrahamic promise. (3) The Galatian Christians, who were told that they must not be circumcised, were not Jews, and had nothing to do with Israel's national sign; and for them to perform circumcision would indicate that they were seeking for divine favor by becoming Jews and coming under the Jewish laws and regulations, and that they were not trusting fully to Christ. (Gal. 2:14-16.) (4) A Jew, on the contrary, while trusting in Christ, could properly enough conform to the national usage of circumcision established before the Law.

Having passed from the province of Galatia in which were located the cities of Antioch, Lystra and Derbe, the Apostle evidently here intended going into the province called Asia, a part of what is known as Asia Minor, but the holy spirit hindered them and forbade that course. How this instruction of the spirit was communicated we are not informed; and no matter, since we have confidence that the Apostle was not following mere impressions, but made sure that he was under the divine guidance. They next thought to go into the province of Bithynia, but again they were hindered, and so passed by Mysia; that is, they passed through the province of Asia without preaching therein, and came to the seaport of Troas, thinking there to take shipping, but apparently uncertain as to which direction the Lord would have them go.

Here the Lord's leading was very distinct: in a dream the Apostle Paul saw a man of Macedonia beckoning to him and saying, "Come over and help us." This settled the Apostle respecting the course he should take. The Lord was leading him, but evidently chose to delay the full and clear information respecting his route, that the Apostle (and the Church in general through this account) might realize the more fully how directly God was leading and providentially guiding in the presentation of his truth. The Apostle and his company immediately prepared to go to Macedonia in obedience to the Lord's indication.

Thus the Lord specially directed the word of his grace to Europe. Instead of sending it northward and eastward through Asia--to the millions in Asiatic Russia and India and China, and instead of sending it

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southward to the other millions in Egypt and all Africa, the Lord specially guided his truth northwestward into Europe. Who cannot see that a great question was in the balances, and was here divinely decided?

Let it be remembered, too, that, in sending the gospel into Europe, the Lord chose first of all the most enlightened parts of Europe. Macedonia lies just north of Greece, and their peoples were practically one; their intelligence and civilization were practically on a par. Only a short time before, Greece, under Alexander the

Great, had conquered the world, and Greek civilization and the Greek language and Greek philosophies had thus been spread among all civilized people. And altho subsequently the Caesars of Rome had conquered Greece, they had not destroyed the influence of the Greek literature and philosophy, which still dominated at the time of our lesson. In sending the gospel into Macedonia, therefore, the Lord was sending it to the people most advanced in civilization and the arts. After starting the work in Macedonia and in Greece, the good tidings were later sent to Rome, and from these, then the centers of civilization, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has spread northward through Europe and westward through America, and has been the instrumentality for producing the highest types of civilization that the world has ever known; and this in proportion as the Word of God has been free, and has been received into good and honest hearts.

In Macedonia, by the spirit's leading, they went first to one of the principal cities, Philippi, and there on the Jewish Sabbath they found by the river side a prayer meeting. The women who attended it were probably all Jewesses, and the Apostle concluded that those who were seeking the Lord in worship and prayer would be in the best condition of heart to be approached with the gospel: a judgment which experience since, in every land, endorses as correct. Paul's discourse concerning the hopes of Israel and the fulfilment of these in Jesus the Messiah, and the story of his crucifixion for our sins, found a lodgment in the hearts of some who heard it. This was the start of the Church at that city, to which later Paul wrote--the Epistle to the Philippians.

The brief reference to Lydia, one of the believers, is worthy of notice. Her heart being touched with the message of the gospel, she esteemed it a privilege to serve and entertain those whom the Lord had been pleased to honor as servants in carrying to her his message. We have here a good lesson of thankful appreciation and hospitality.

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