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THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT.

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Our issue of July 15 contained an article on this subject which should be put into the hands of all of "Rev." John Alex. Dowie's followers, who give evidence of sincerity;--peradventure they might be recovered out of one of Satan's snares. Remember the words of the Apostle.--James 5:20.

We printed an extra edition of that issue in order to give you this opportunity for service. Order free, as many as you will promise to use judiciously. Or send us the addresses and we will mail them direct.

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THOSE PROPHETIC CHARTS.

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We now have a good supply of the Prophetic Charts--very neat, 35 inches long, with hangers. Price 25 cents, including postage. One of these and one of the "Silent Sermons" should be on the walls of every WATCH TOWER reader's home.

We have a number of these charts very slightly soiled which we will send free to any on our list who cannot afford to purchase, and who will send a postal card request. We will include one of "Silent Sermons," and prepay the postage, which will be 10 cents each. Order at once. We are anxious that all should have them.

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BALANCING EARTHLY GOOD WITH DIVINE FAVOR.

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"Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee."--Psa. 63:3.

LOVING-KINDNESS, in our text, has the signification of favor. The Prophet, in speaking, represents the Church--the Christ, Head and body. The words are applicable to no others. None but the saints esteem divine favor more precious, more valuable, than the present life--than earthly good things. If we ask the world to balance this matter, to weigh on one side of the balances earthly interests, earthly pleasures, family ties, social position, pride, worldly aspirations, and to put on the other side of the balance divine favor, the reply would be that the earthly good things have all the weight; and that divine favor has none, for the worldly know little or nothing respecting divine favor. They have indeed heard that some people believe in a God, believe in his providential care, believe in his love, believe in

a future life, etc., but as for themselves they conclude that such things may be, while the earthly things are certainties; and they would not think for a moment of exchanging present certainties for unknown and intangible matters, called divine favor.

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If we even ask the average nominal Christian to weigh this matter, and tell us if willing to exchange, --putting in the one side of the balance all the good things, hopes, ambitions, family ties, social position, churchianity, petty office and esteem of men, and putting into the other side of the scale God's favor,--he will hesitate and eventually decide that he will do nothing of the kind. The reason with many is that they do not appreciate divine favor. They have heard and believed certain things respecting the Almighty, some of them true and some of them false; and the misrepresentations of God's character have so neutralized and offset and made non-effective the truths which they have learned, that they lack confidence in the unseen: with such, worldly interests outweigh appreciation of divine favor ten to one. The truths they learned were respecting God's love and his gracious provision for his fallen creatures through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; and that he willeth not the death of him that dieth, but would that all should turn unto him and live, in the enjoyment of endless blessing.

These truths are found in the sure Word of God; the untruths which they have learned came from a human source, or rather more remotely, from the great Adversary himself, Satan, "the god of this world," as the Apostle calls him. As he tells us, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not"--blinded them to the real character and plan of Jehovah, and deluded them into thinking of him most unkindly, most disreputably, we might almost say most blasphemously. He has blinded them into thinking that the Almighty, while declaring that he has all power, has declared also that he will exercise this power beneficially only over a mere handful of earth's teeming millions--that he will take out this sample to show his power and what he could have done for all if he had wanted to, and exercise his power in hurling the great mass of his creation into eternal torment;--that he made provision to this end before the creation of mankind,--prepared a great and awful place of torture,--prepared the fuel for eternity,--and prepared the devils to see that nothing was lacking in the worst form of torture.

Is it any wonder that those who have thus received human traditions instead of the Word of God, those who believe such terrible things respecting the

Creator and his plans, things which outrank in cruelty the doctrines of the heathen, received from the same Satanic source, should doubt the love of such a God? It is no wonder that such find themselves unable to reconcile such human theories with the plain Scriptural declaration that God is love, very pitiful, very merciful, and that his mercy endureth forever; and that he doth not willingly afflict the children of men. The two thoughts are in violent conflict; the one represents God as loving and kind; the other represents him as a demon of the worst imaginable character; and it is no wonder that those who have in their minds this mixture of human traditions which make void the Word of God, are unable to see God from the right standpoint implied in our text--unable to see his loving kindness, so great, so good, so beneficent, toward all of his creatures,--unable to reconcile such human theory with the Scriptural declaration, that Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man, and that this grace of God in Christ is yet to be testified in due time to every creature, and that thus all are eventually to come to a knowledge of the truth, and thus all eventually to have an opportunity for life everlasting.--1 Tim. 2:4.

Is it any wonder that those who entertain so mixed a conception of the Almighty's character, when they attempt to balance the loving favor of God with earthly good things, find that the scale weighs down toward the earthly things, because, altho they appreciate some features of the divine character, these are practically neutralized by such misrepresentations of the Adversary through false theories. Well does the Apostle explain the object of this blindness on the part of Satan, saying, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4.) Ah yes, here it is! The goodness of God, the loving kindness of God, God's favor, does not shine into the hearts of many, and while it does shine a little into some hearts, thick darkness of error hinders their hearts from receiving the full benefit of the light, and its blessing and joy. Such as are in this position find it impossible to love the Lord with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their being, with all their strength; because from all that they know of him, through this false representation of his character, he is not worthy of much love. The fear of the Lord might operate upon them under such circumstances, and might be balanced against the world and its good things, but his "loving kindness" has comparatively little weight in their lives.

Are we to suppose, then, that there were no saints in the past, because in the past these false ideas of

God held full sway amongst his professed children?  
Are we to suppose that Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli,  
Calvin, Knox, the Wesleys and others, were not saints,  
and not joint-inheritors with Christ in the Kingdom?  
No; on the contrary, we presume that these were  
saints, and that they laid down their lives in the Lord's  
service; and we merely mention these prominent  
names as illustrations, and not by way of saying that  
they were the only saints of their times, and not disputing  
either that there were saints before them, all  
through the dark ages, as well as in the primitive  
Church.

What we do claim, however, is that the mixed  
theology, which represents God as half love and half  
devil, never produced the sanctifying effect which we  
see in the lives of the class we have mentioned. We  
hold that all those who reached the point of saintship  
described in our text, and who were able to balance  
the present life and its earthly good things with the  
loving favor of God, and to prefer God's favor rather  
than life, so that they were willing to sacrifice earthly  
interests, that they might have the divine favor, both  
as respects the life which now is, and that which is to  
come,--these never reached this position through their  
mixed theology, but attained this grand position only  
in proportion as they were able to forget or ignore the  
human and Satanic blasphemies respecting the divine  
character, and to think of God from the standpoint of  
pure justice and love. Some of them have told us in  
their writings how terribly this devil-inspired theology  
weighed upon them; how they found the theory  
so antagonistic to all their conceptions of divine justice,  
mercy and love, that the only thing they could  
do under the circumstances was to shut the eyes of  
their minds to the nightmare of hell and devils and  
torments, and to say to the Lord, O Lord, I cannot  
understand this, but I accept thee as a very God of  
love and of justice, and I know that when I shall see  
thee as thou art, and when I shall see all the works of  
thy great and wonderful plan, then I shall realize, as  
I cannot now realize, wherein divine justice and love  
are compatible with this awful theory of eternal torment  
for all except the little flock, the elect.

Thus by shutting their eyes to the error, and  
opening their eyes by faith to the real character of  
God, substantiated by so many declarations of his  
Word, the class we refer to, through all the darkness  
of the dark ages, was indeed enabled to love God supremely,  
so that they counted not their lives dear unto  
them, that they might have his favor; they were  
willing to lay down life and earthly advantages and  
hopes and favors, that they might have the divine  
favor now and everlastingly. And if God's people in  
the past were enabled to triumph in spite of blindness,

what shall we say respecting our position today, now that the due time has come for this veil that was spread over all nations to be taken away, so that the true light of the knowledge of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, should shine into our hearts and give us to see through his Word, and freed from human tradition and Satanic misrepresentation, the justice and the loving kindness of our God!

How shall we today balance this question of earthly life and its advantages and privileges and hopes and aims with the favor of God? Well, it will be a test to us, as it has been a test all through the ages. Those who are merely glad to find out that there is no eternal torment, and whose hearts are not touched with the "loving kindness" of God, will go on in the world, rejoicing that they have been delivered from a bondage of error, but not returning to give glory to God and to offer themselves in his service. And these, alas! are the majority; like the ten lepers who were cleansed by our Lord, of whom only one returned to give thanks and to become a follower of Jesus. Thus the test goes on today, as ever; for the Lord is now seeking only the Kingdom class, only the little flock, and he wishes to have in it only such as love him supremely--only such as, having tasted that the Lord is gracious, desire to and do feast upon his favor, enjoying it, relishing it, appreciating it far beyond any earthly pleasure, any earthly hope, any earthly ambition, any earthly love.

This class today and at all times has been the same,--of one spirit with their Head. The Apostle Paul voices their sentiments; speaking on this very subject, and weighing the earthly life with the divine favor, he says: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him....That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and

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the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead." (Phil. 3:7-11.) The Apostle's sentiment is that of all the saints; it is that of all who will be accounted "overcomers," and who will be accounted inheritors of the promise of joint-heirship with Jesus. Nothing short of this will do.

We must appreciate the loving favor of God as better than earthly life, else we are not worthy of him and not of the kind he is seeking. And it is with all who have the Lord's spirit just as it was with the Apostle; the moment they begin to weigh and contrast fellowship

with God and the eternal hopes associated therewith, in contrast with earthly loves and family ties and earthly ambitions and pleasures, the latter all seem to be quite insignificant in comparison, dross as compared to pure gold. And from this standpoint they gladly renounce all, giving up life itself for the favor of God.

#### ATTAINING CHRISTIAN MATURITY.

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But this full development is not at the beginning of the Christian experience with us, nor was it at the beginning of Paul's experience. It is development attained by growth. At the very beginning, however, it was necessary, before either Paul or we could be accepted at all of the Lord, as begotten of the new nature, that we should first balance the loving favor of God with the earthly good things, and the balance must be settled on the side of divine favor, so that we would give up the other,--earthly life, earthly hopes, earthly aims, earthly pleasures, consecrating them to sacrifice, in such measure as may be necessary in order to maintain divine favor and blessing. From the time the scale was thus turned to the Lord's side, and our hearts were consecrated to him, earthly things began to lose their weight and to lose their value, to lose appreciation in our eyes, as our eyes began to open the wider to the heavenly things; and the latter became more and more weighty with us, more and more real, until we could see with the eye of faith him who is invisible to the natural sight, and the crown of glory, and the exceeding great and precious things which God has in reservation for them that love him, and be more and more strengthened thereby. And so with some it may have been after weeks or months or years that they reached the position attained by the Apostle when he wrote, as above, that all earthly things were henceforth but as loss and dross when weighed in comparison with Christ and God's loving kindness or favor toward us in him.

This loving favor of God, so much appreciated by the saints that they consecrate their earthly all to obtain it, is not merely a favor as respects future prospects and hopes--not merely as respects the Kingdom to come and the glory and the honor and immortality then to be granted to such as are in divine favor, but it extends to the present life. Gradually we come to appreciate fellowship and communion with the Father to such a degree as to produce misery of soul if this communion is interrupted. And this sentiment is beautifully expressed in the hymn which we sometimes sing:--

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,  
I know no night when thou art near;

O let no earth-born cloud arise  
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes."  
The true child of God will be in such close fellowship  
with the Father, and with the spirit of truth

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and righteousness and love, that anything which would interrupt or hinder this fellowship would be esteemed a calamity, however sweet or precious it might be to the natural man. The new creature is willing rather to cut it off, if it were dear as a right hand; to pluck it out, if it were precious as a right eye; than to allow any earthly thing to intervene between him and the divine loving-favor which he has learned so to enjoy that he considers it better than all the rest of life.

"THEREFORE WILL MY LIPS PRAISE THEE."

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Many Christians, confused with the Babylonian din of false, contradictory theories, have felt that they would desire to show forth the Lord's praise; but then to offset this there arises in their minds the terrible errors which, as a great nightmare, darken their souls and hush their lips, so that as a rule few are found ready to speak of the Lord and his matters except those who speak either from a sense of duty or from a love of money and worldly position. And so it is that today, were the emoluments of honor and salary taken away, and were it necessary in order to be a minister of Christ to follow the example of the Apostle Paul, and to labor, working with their hands, in some sort of tent-making, nearly all of the ministers of Babylon would cease preaching. As it is, the ablest and most intelligent of them can only be retained in the service by making it pay them better in money and honor of men than any other occupation which they know of.

On the other hand, those who have tasted of the Lord's grace, those who have come to realize his favor as better than life, and who have joyfully laid upon his altar every earthly good thing, and hope and ambition, rejoice to tell the good tidings to others; they rejoice to tell forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. The message is too good to keep; they not only do not require to be hired to tell it, but they are willing that the telling of it, and the enjoying of God's favor in connection with the telling, shall cost them something--cost them trouble, cost them money, cost them the loss of earthly friendships, cost the straining if not the breaking of some of home ties, cost the frown of the world and of churchianity;--yes, they rejoice, saying, in the



language of the Prophet, "He hath put a new song into my mouth, even the loving-kindness of our God!"

Some one, perhaps, will say this is exaggeration; it will not cost earthly friendships nor home ties; it will bring with it respect and honor of men, and a salary. We answer, No! The Lord's Word is still true; he is still the example to all who will walk in his footsteps. For what did the Master suffer the loss of social position? Why did the Doctors of Divinity of his day, and the notables of the religious people, hide as it were their faces from him? Why did they finally become so embittered against him, and so hate him, that they crucified him? Was it because of evil-doing on his part? Nay, but "he went about doing good." It was because he told the truth--truths which they believed in great measure, but with which they had mixed "traditions of the elders," which blinded them and made them children of darkness. Our Lord gives us the key to the situation when he says, "The darkness hateth the light." The darkness does not hate the light so that it will not wear a garment of light to deceive, and so the Adversary, in inculcating the darkness of misrepresentation of the divine character, takes care that this false doctrine shall always have associated with it, to some extent, as a sugar-coating, a garment of love and charity also. He associates a blasphemous misrepresentation of the divine character, which teaches that God is hurrying the masses of poor, frail humanity into the hands of demons for eternal torture, with moral platitudes and church-work, and on the other hand satisfies the human cravings for better lives by instituting hospitals, asylums, orphanages, etc., thus giving mankind the suggestion that they are really better than God, for they would care for and assist the poor and the weak and the fallen, while the Almighty would deliver them over to demons and torment, and foreknew and purposed it so from the beginning--this is their theory.

Those who were deluded by Satan at our Lord's first advent so hated the glorious message which he brought, and so hated his purity and truthfulness, that they called him the prince of devils, Beelzebub, and he told his followers that if he was thus treated they must not marvel if they shared a somewhat similar experience. And as his persecutions and oppositions came not from the world, the Gentiles, the heathen, but from the professed holiness people of his time, so all through the dark ages, and at the present time, those opposing the Lord and the truth are not worldly people, but sectarians whom Satan has more than half blinded with his false doctrines and misrepresentations. We are not, therefore, to be surprised that we find it as the Lord declares, that wherever his truth goes it will be like a sword to separate, and that especially in the home and the family. And as he declared, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake."--Matt. 10:22.

These experiences are for the very purpose of testing us, as the Lord's experiences were for the purpose of testing him. He consecrated his life fully and completely at the beginning of his ministry, when he reached thirty years of age, and symbolized his consecration in baptism. So fully did he appreciate the

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Heavenly Father's loving kindness and favor that it required not a moment's hesitation for him to decide that it was better than life--to decide to sacrifice the earthly life; and immediately he began to proclaim the truths respecting the divine love and provision. And well he understood from the beginning how this would bring the hatred of nominal professors of Judaism, and that in thus letting his lips praise the Lord he was doing so at the cost of his earthly life, and all the blessings and privileges associated therewith.

Likewise with those who walk in Jesus' footsteps in the narrow way; however much it may surprise them, they find that the proclamation of good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people--the loving favor of our God, manifested in Jesus Christ our Lord--told in its fulness, brings the hate, the scorn, the persecution of nominal Christendom of today. Those who love the present life close their lips and refrain from speaking his loving kindness; but those faithful to their covenant, and appreciative of the Lord's favor as "better than life," will show forth his praise at any and every cost of an earthly kind.

The "harvest" message of good tidings which is now revealed to the Lord's consecrated people, by which they discern the loving kindness of God, which they feel they must tell forth to others, not for money, nor for reputation, but at the cost of worldly reputation, at the cost of financial loss, at the cost of home trials and difficulties--this message is the "new song" mentioned by the Prophet, that the Lord has put into the mouths of his consecrated ones. It is the same new song that is mentioned by our Lord in Revelation, which none others might sing except the elect 144,000, who have the Father's name in their foreheads --publicly professed. If others hear of the song they cannot sing it, because it costs something to sing this song. "Because thy loving favor is better than life [more esteemed by us, more than all of earthly life and its good things] therefore will my lips praise thee."

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GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM REITERATED.

--GEN. 15:1-18.--AUG. 11.--

"I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

LOT had not lived a great while in Sodom when king Chedorlaomer descended upon the Sodomites with an army and took away many persons and great spoils of flocks, herds, etc., including Lot and his family and possessions. Word of this affair reached Abraham, who armed his own servants, 318, and with two associates pursued the victors, who, doubtless expecting no army or night attack, were careless as to their defenses, and being surprised by a night attack were routed; and Lot and his family and goods, and the Sodomites and their goods were released. The conduct of Abraham in connection with this matter was most noble and unselfish. Not only did he inconvenience himself and all his affairs for the sake of others, but subsequently he refused any share of the booty which he had saved. Would that the children of God could fully appreciate such benevolence and copy it more in the little affairs of life! Much of the distress prevailing in the world is the direct or indirect result of selfishness, and all of the Lord's people should be on the alert to practice and to exemplify the opposite spirit of benevolence in the little things as well as in the great things of life; and should remember that selfishness is a depravity, which needs to be fought against, and to be, so far as possible, overcome by the new nature.

One would have supposed that Lot's vexatious experience in Sodom, and after experience in his capture and subsequent deliverance by his uncle, would have led him to desire a reunion with his uncle, with a keener appreciation than ever of the fact that God was with his uncle, blessing him and guiding his affairs and interests. But this does not seem to have been the case: he was still willing to cast his lot with the ungodly. He reminds us of the words of the Psalmist, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." (Psa. 1:1) Lot did not pursue this course, and hence failed of a blessing. It was not sufficient that his righteous soul should be "vexed" continually by the misconduct of those about him; his love for righteousness should have been such as to lead him to the sacrifice of temporal interests on behalf of his own heart and on behalf of the interests of his family. Let all of the Lord's people who may find themselves in a similar position remember the Apostle's words, "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."--Heb. 12:13.

It was directly after his experience in the delivery of Lot and the defeat of Chedorlaomer, and while Abraham was evidently feeling somewhat disheartened or

discouraged, that the Lord again manifested himself to him. We do not know the cause of the discouragement, but may infer that he realized that in his attack upon, and defeat of the army and the military

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forces behind it, he had probably incurred a displeasure which could not be wiped out by anything short of the destruction of his own camp. As ever, Abraham was peaceably disposed; and the battle he had just won implied the straining of his whole nature. He had done what he considered to be his duty in the interest of justice, and especially in the defense of his own ward, Lot; but now that the excitement was past the reaction set in, and with it certain gloomy feelings and forebodings. So also some of the Lord's people today have moments in which for various reasons the flame of faith and hope smokes, and darkens the eyes of their understanding and the clearness of their perception of the divine character and plan; but if they still hold firmly by faith to the hands of divine providence they will find, as Abraham did, that even the trials and difficulties and discouragements of life will be overruled for good to them.

It was while Abraham was downcast that the Lord appeared to him in vision and said to him, in the language of our Golden Text, "Fear not Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Apparently this was the great lesson that God was teaching him and which he was learning by the experience permitted, much better than had the Lord not delayed some of the promised favors. Abraham was now 84 years old; and, altho wealthy and highly favored of the Lord, he was a pilgrim and a stranger, away from kindred and home through his respect to the divine call and promise. He had no children to cheer and enliven and comfort his home, and even his nephew, Lot, whom he had not detained unwillingly, had preferred the companionship of the wicked and had left him, and even when rescued from his enemies, at the cost of danger and sacrifice, he had not appreciated the matter fully, and still preferred the strangers.

No wonder poor Abraham felt as tho his life, passing quickly by, was a comparative failure--no wonder he felt discouraged. How the words of the vision must have brought new thoughts, new sentiments to his heart; God was his shield--to protect him, to guard him from the anger and power of all the kings of earth and their armies, and able and willing to make all things work together for his good. What a comfort was in this thought. How it reminds us that God is our shield also; our protector from every evil thing and power. The thought is beautifully expressed in one of our hymns:--

"Shield of my soul, tho tempests rage,

And 'gainst me hosts of foes engage,  
My refuge and my fortress thou;  
Before thee every foe must bow."

The latter part of the message is no less striking: the fact that, nor flocks nor herds nor servants nor children nor friends, were to be the prize upon which his heart should be set; but that God himself was to be his reward;--the having of God for a friend and counselor and guide was to be esteemed far beyond every earthly interest and blessing. And so it is also with the Church of the Gospel age. We may have blessings or adversities or both, as respects the present life. We have promises which pertain to the life that now is and also to that which is to come; but all of these together are inferior, subordinate to the one great thought that God, the great Creator is ours,--our Father, our God, our Friend.

Undoubtedly Abraham's heart was comforted by this message; and yet his reason was still operative, and hence his inquiry of the Lord, How can you bless me and fulfil to me your gracious promises, seeing that I go childless--seeing that my servant Eliezer and his children are the only heirs apparent for my estate? Is

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it wonderful, Lord, that I should feel discouraged, seeing that apparently the most indispensable part of your promise is unfulfilled for now fourteen years, and that Sarah and myself are growing old; and that even my nephew, Lot, who might have perpetuated the family and been the heir of my estate, cares not for me and has gone from me? The Lord was not displeased to have Abraham use his reason in this manner, for it was not a reasoning of skepticism or doubt as respected the divine power, but merely the proper questioning of faith as to how the promises on which he had left his home could be fulfilled; and a request for guidance in understanding. And so may we inquire of the Lord respecting his gracious promises. Indeed, he invites us to reason, saying, "Come, let us reason together." In Abraham's case the Lord merely repeated and amplified previous statements to the effect that he should have a child of his own who should be his heir; and leading him out from his dwelling in the starry night, he assured him that his children would yet be multitudinous as the stars of heaven. This feature of the promise evidently applies to the spiritual Seed--the Christ, the elect of God, Head and body, as explained by the Apostle. (Gal. 3:29; 1 Pet. 1:2.)

The other expressions,--"as the dust of the earth," and "as the sands of the sea," represent, not the natural children of Abraham, but the whole number of the human family who, under the blessing of the spiritual Seed, during the Millennium, shall ultimately attain to the faith and obedience of Abraham, and full human

restitution and the Lord's reward for these--life everlasting.  
--Rom. 11:12,15,32.

The record is that Abraham believed on the Lord  
--his faith in God triumphed over every obstacle and  
rested securely, confidently;--his doubts and fears fleeing  
away. The faith of Abraham is the particular point

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of his character prominently set before us in the Scriptures  
for the encouragement of our faith, for our example.  
Abraham was not perfect, even as others of  
our race are imperfect,--"There is none righteous, no,  
not one." (Rom. 3:10.) But we are told that God  
so highly esteemed Abraham's faith that he counted it  
as making up for his natural blemishes and imperfections.  
"It was counted [reckoned] to him for righteousness."  
(Rom. 4:3.) He had faith in what God  
had told him, and, as James (2:22) points out, he manifested  
his faith by his general conduct. We of the  
Gospel age are also justified by faith--righteousness is  
reckoned to us through the exercise of faith--but not  
faith in the same promises.

God does not promise us earthly children nor an  
earthly inheritance in the land of Palestine as he did  
promise to Abraham; hence we are not to have faith in  
the same things. As the Apostle says, God has given  
unto us "exceeding great and precious promises"--  
promises much greater than those given to Abraham:  
heavenly, instead of earthly promises. We are to believe  
the promises given to us and to act upon them as  
implicitly as Abraham believed the promises given to  
him and acted upon them. The promises made to  
Abraham were attested by the Lord's word and by his  
oath, and similarly, tho on a still higher plane, the  
Lord has made known to us, has attested to us, his  
love and power, and his willingness to perform for us  
all the good things promised.

In answer to Abraham's request the Lord attested  
his promise in connection with sacrifices, after a manner  
that was probably customary at that time, as described  
in our lesson. The sacrificed animals, part  
over against part, were separated by a narrow path along  
which between the parts passed a small furnace enveloped  
in smoke, out of which shot a flame of fire. In connection  
with the weird scene the Lord revealed to Abraham  
that his posterity would not come into the land of  
promise for some four hundred years after his son  
should be born, but would have affliction as a people,  
even as Israel experienced this in Egypt. The four  
hundred years being a statement in round numbers,  
otherwise more explicitly stated as four hundred and  
thirty years, included the wanderings of Isaac and  
Jacob before going down into Egypt, as well as the  
captivity in Egypt. The revelation further pointed out  
the fact that the deliverance of Israel from Egypt would

be with great wealth, and that in connection with it judgments of the Lord would come upon Egypt, and that meantime the Amorites, who then resided in Canaan, would fill to the full the measure of their iniquity, and fully deserve to lose the land of promise; and at that time Israel would be brought in to inherit it.

As God's favor and faithfulness toward Abraham were attested by the sacrifices and revelations of the divine plan, so do they testify to his faithfulness in this Gospel age, that we also may have strong consolation, and full assurance of faith. He testifies to us the fulness of his favor and love by showing us the better sacrifices for sins, through which the New Covenant is sealed, ratified, made operative. He has shown us through his Word that darkness must prevail for a time, and that the Christ (Head and body) must be brought in contact with the fiery furnace of trial and affliction, the smoke of which might well represent the incidental confusion and darkness that necessitates our walk by faith and not by sight, while the flame of light would represent our guidance by the holy Spirit. Being thus assured by the Lord of his love for us, and of the bountiful provision made for our welfare, and of the necessity for trials, persecutions and difficulties during the time of the great darkness, we are strengthened in our faith and enabled to endure as seeing him who is invisible, and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

It was at this time that the Lord revealed to Abraham that the great blessings already promised him were to have a far distant fulfilment--for it was here indicated that he should die and his children not inherit the land for some four hundred years: and that he would not see the fulfilment of the promises, altho a part of the promise was that he, as well as his seed, should inherit the land, and join in the work of universal blessing and uplifting of humanity. Abraham was thus indirectly taught to hope in the resurrection, for this last revelation clearly implied that he could have neither part nor lot in it except God would raise him from the dead. And this was in full accord with the subsequent words of Stephen. (Acts 7:5.) It was no doubt for Abraham's good that the Lord did not tell him that it would be about four thousand years before the full blessing would begin;--did not reveal to him that the natural seed could not inherit all of the great promises;--that the likeness of his seed to the stars of heaven and to the sands of the sea were two different figures;--the first representing the spiritual and heavenly seed, and the other an earthly or human seed. It was to his advantage not to know that so long a time would elapse before the completion of the spiritual seed, of which Christ is the Head and the Gospel Church the body; and that through this Seed, glorified, must come the blessings upon the earthly seed, and through

the latter to all the families of the earth during the Millennial age.

But God has revealed these things to us, and we may well feel that we have more advantage every way in connection with the divine promises and plan than

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even faithful Abraham, whose trustfulness under very adverse conditions is a stimulus to all of God's children. We have not only his example, but many other noble examples, including that of our Lord and his apostles; and we can see, under the guidance of the Word, as revealed by the spirit, that all things have been and are yet working together harmoniously for the development of the Lord's great plan for man's salvation, briefly summarized in his promise to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Nothing is more evident than that God's promises to Abraham have not yet been fulfilled. Abraham reasoned that they would not be fulfilled in his day; Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets reasoned that they had not been fulfilled during the Jewish age; and the Apostle declares that the whole twelve tribes of Israel were still waiting for the fulfilment of those promises in his day. (Acts 26:6,7.) Those promises have surely not been fulfilled during this Gospel age, as we all are witnesses --the natural seed of Abraham has been outcast, persecuted and without divine favor, while the true ones of spiritual Israel, though possessed of divine favor and rejoicing therein, have been persecuted and caused to suffer for righteousness' sake, and thereby to learn lessons of patience and experience to prepare them for the great work they are yet to do in fulfilment of the divine promises to Abraham.

The Apostle Paul clearly sets this matter forth in Gal. 3:16-29. He tells us that Christ is the Seed of Abraham--the spiritual Seed; and are not we "members of the body of Christ," over whom, as the Scriptures declare, Jesus Christ is the head forever under God's blessing? (Eph. 1:22,23.) And so the Apostle declares (vs. 29), "If ye be Christ's [members], then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise."

And if the Lord's saints are still heirs of that Abrahamic promise, assuredly it proves that the promise has not yet reached fulfilment. Thank God that we are still privileged to be heirs of that wonderful promise, "heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." Let our faith be strong, trusting in the promise and in him who made it, who is able to do for us, and for all who trust in him, exceedingly abundantly more and better things than we know how to ask or

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expect. Let us through patient perseverance, based upon an undimmed faith, complete our sojourning here; and by the Lord's grace make our calling and election sure to a share in the promised glory, honor and immortality, and in the opportunity to bless, which the Lord purposes to give to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

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#### ABRAHAM'S AGE ON ENTERING CANAAN.

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We are in receipt of a number of letters, calling attention to what seems to the writers an error in the Chronology given in the MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., relative to the date of Abraham's birth, his entrance into Canaan, etc. For the sake of these, as well as others who may have the same difficulty, we here enlarge upon what is stated in VOL. II., pages 44-47.

Gen. 11:32, says that at his death Terah's age was two hundred and five years; Acts 7:4 says that then Abraham removed into Canaan; and Gen. 12:4 states that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Hence Terah's age at Abraham's birth must have been one hundred and thirty years.

But is not this out of harmony with Gen. 11:26, which says: "And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor and Haran?" We answer, No. The point of confusion is in the fact that Haran, the eldest, is mentioned last, while Abram, the youngest, is mentioned first--possibly because of his greater prominence in the narrative, or possibly, as a little stumbling-block to hinder us from seeing the facts except as guided by the Lord, in his due time.

That Haran was the eldest of the sons of Terah is quite evident from the recorded facts. His son Lot was old enough to be the companion of his uncle Abraham. Lot and Abraham were probably nearly of the same age, as each had his own flocks and herds and herdsmen. When Sodom was destroyed Lot had two daughters of marriageable age and others already married. This was before Isaac was born, Abraham being then ninety-nine years old.--Gen. 17:24; 18:1,16; 19:8,14.

Again, notice the likelihood of Haran's being much the oldest of Terah's sons, and Nahor the second, thus, --Nahor married one of his brother Haran's daughters (Milcah--See Gen. 24:15), whose grand-daughter, Rebekah, became the wife of Abraham's son, Isaac.-- Gen. 24:67.

Our reckoning as given in the DAWN is, therefore, sustained by all the known facts, as well as by the exact statements of Scripture.

QUESTIONS ON THE RESURRECTION HOPE.

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WHAT IS GUARANTEED BY THE RANSOM?

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Question.--Would it be correct for us to say that our Lord Jesus by his death canceled the sins of the entire human family, so that there is now no condemnation to any?

Answer.--No; this would not be a correct statement. The Scriptural declaration is, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." There is still condemnation upon all who have not yet come into Jesus through faith in the precious blood and through a reformation of life in harmony with that faith. This is directly implied by the Apostle's words. Again, he says, "We were children of wrath, even as others [are], but we who believe [who have accepted Jesus] have escaped the condemnation that is on the world." These Scriptures imply that the condemnation was still on the world at the time of

these letters, after our Lord's death and resurrection.

Consequently the death of Jesus did not cancel the condemnation, it did not remove the sins, and all the world of mankind not only have continued under the condemnation, but also under its sentence of death, and have died, the same since Jesus died as before --except in the case of the Church, whose death is reckoned as being no longer Adamic death, as a penalty for sin, but as "being dead with him," as joint-sacrifices, participators in the sin-offerings.

That our Lord's death did not cancel sin is again attested by the Apostle Peter's declaration to some at Pentecost (after our Lord's death and resurrection, ascension, etc.): "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ [at the Second Advent]." This Scripture shows that the blotting out is a future work, just as the Apostle elsewhere shows that the sins of those who are in Christ Jesus are now covered from God's sight, to permit us to have present blessings and privileges, prior to the time when the sins shall be blotted out. The sins of the Church will be blotted out, and no more record will appear of them forever, as soon

as the first resurrection shall have taken place, for all who have part in it will have perfect bodies, without a trace of sin, blemish or imperfection in them. And as for the world of mankind in general, the blotting out of the world's sins will be during the "times of restitution"--a gradual work, as implied in the word "blotting." Every one who accepts Christ and the Kingdom, and endeavors to live in harmony with the Lord under the terms of the New Covenant, will, during the thousand years of Christ's reign, find his sins, his blemishes, mental, moral and physical, gradually giving way, yielding to perfection, and they will thus be in process of blotting out until, at the close of the Millennial age, there shall no sin remain unblotted out for any one who has desired to have them blotted out, and who shall have availed himself of the abundant privileges of that time.

Thus we see, by two lines of demonstration, either of which would be sufficient, that Christ has not canceled the sins of the whole world, nor the sins of any, and that he has merely covered the sins of the Church, preparatory to the cleansing time, while the world's sins are not even covered. To make these two proofs the more conspicuous we will state them thus: (1) The fact that God's Word speaks of the world as being still under condemnation, and children of wrath, is a conclusive proof that their sins are not blotted out. (2) The fact that sin, and its wages of death, including pain, sickness, etc., are still inflicted upon humanity, is a second and indisputable proof that the sins are not blotted out, for if they had been blotted out it would be wrong on God's part to punish for sins no longer recognized.

Question.--If Christ's death did not effect the cancellation of man's sins, wherein lies the fault? Does it imply that the sacrifice was not sufficient to cancel the sins, or does it imply that God has not been just toward the sinners, but has accepted a payment from Jesus and is also requiring a payment directly from the individual sinner, as tho he had not accepted Christ's ransom sacrifice?

Answer.--Neither of these is implied by the fact that the world's sins are not yet blotted out. The Scriptural statement of the matter is that our Lord bought the whole world with his own precious blood. (1 Pet. 1:19.) There is no statement anywhere in the Scriptures to the effect that the sins of the whole world were canceled by Christ's death, nor that God ever purposed to cancel the sins of the world as an offset to the sacrifice of our dear Redeemer. On the contrary, the Scriptures everywhere hold out the thought that neither the blotting out of sins nor even their covering, is possible, except as the sinner shall first of all accept of Jesus through faith. Thus we read that God arranged the plan as he did arrange it, in order that "he might be just, and yet be the justifier

of him that believeth in Jesus." There is no proposition in this text, or in any other, to justify any others than believers--no proposition to justify the world in sin, but merely to justify those who desire to escape from sin and its penalty, accepting of Christ as the Savior.

The statement of 2 Cor. 5:19 is in full accord with this. It represents a work begun by God in Christ, but not yet concluded. The ministry of reconciliation, committed to the Church, will not be finished until the close of the Millennium; and whoever of mankind shall by that time have failed to accept the reconciliation, proffered by God in Christ, will "be destroyed from among the people."--Acts 3:23.

The statement that our Lord Jesus was a propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, implies that his death was sufficient in merit to meet the penalty against every individual and to satisfy the claims of divine justice against each individual. However, the canceling of the sentence which Justice had decreed against Adam and his progeny would include and imply nothing of restitution whatever. It was merely a sentence that Adam could not live, having forfeited his right to life. The fact that after this sentence came upon Adam, and while under it, he and his race decayed mentally and physically, and became morally leprous, has nothing whatever to do with the

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original sentence--the degeneracy of the race is a side issue. It resulted from the sentence of death, but was not a part of it, and the removal of the sentence of death need not mean a recovery from the fall.

The sentence of the divine law against Adam and his race, prohibiting them from the privileges of life, having been paid by the Lord Jesus' sacrifice, and the payment having been accepted by the Father, there can be no objection now raised on the part of Justice to hinder the sinner and his race from having eternal life if they can now demonstrate their worthiness of it. Had such an offer been made to father Adam the day after his transgression and expulsion from Eden, he would doubtless have gladly reentered Paradise and stood a fresh trial, and with better hopes of success, having learned something, at least, by his experience. But after six thousand years of falling and degradation under the dominion of sin, Adam and his race are in no condition to profit by the removal of the sentence of Justice which was against them, being unable, in their fallen condition, to comply with the divine requirements, if granted a new trial by the Father. Hence this proposition is set aside at once as infeasible, and instead God turns over the entire race to his only begotten Son, their Redeemer, that the

Son may institute amongst those whom he redeemed processes of restitution, which will be helpful to them in bringing them up again to the grand perfection originally enjoyed by father Adam. And when this work of restitution shall have been accomplished, the world, furnished with a large experience both in the fall and their restitution from it, will be ready for final testings or judgments preparatory to acceptance of those who stand the tests to eternal life which were set before father Adam, but which he failed to attain through disobedience.

In order to make this restitution process of the largest advantage possible to mankind, the divine plan is that step after step of the journey upward from degradation to perfection shall be attained only through the cooperation of the restored ones with their Redeemer and Restorer. To this end it is called a period of judgments or discipline, under which every effort for righteousness will bring its meed of blessing, and every dereliction bring its stripes or punishments. Thus day by day and year by year during these "times of restitution" the lesson on the desirability of righteousness and heinousness of sin will be given to the world of mankind, with every encouragement to those who will to do right; but with the rod, and eventually "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," to all those who, under those favorable conditions, love iniquity and serve it rather than righteousness.

Thus seen, Christ's death became the offset and cancellation of the legal sentence against man, but it did not and was not intended to remove his degradation. Man's sentence, recorded in the race, mentally, morally and physically, is still in evidence all about us, and will continue in evidence even after the Millennial reign has begun, and until the gradual processes of "blotting out" these sins shall, by the close of the Millennium, have completely obliterated them. The record of sin is in every human being, and the blotting out of those sins will mean the full restoration of that being to the image and likeness of God. This blotting out of sins, therefore, was not accomplished by the satisfying of the claims of justice and the removal of the sentence of death, but must be accomplished, if at all, in the divinely arranged manner, by processes of restitution to the image and likeness of God--to which none will attain except as they cooperate with the great Restorer--the life-giver, Christ.

Suppose an illustration of this matter of the canceling of the sentence in respect to an earthly criminal sentence by an earthly court. Suppose a criminal had been sentenced for life, and that fifteen years after sentence he was pardoned and set at liberty. In those years he might have changed quite considerably, might have contracted disease and have become bald-headed and crippled with rheumatism. But no one

would suppose for an instant that in pardoning him the court would undertake additionally to give him back his hair, his strength, his health, and the fifteen years of life which he had lost in prison. Neither does the remission of the original sentence by the heavenly court in any sense of the word promise or imply restitution of the things which man lost while under the sentence of death. The promises of restitution through Christ, while all based upon the ransom, are separate and distinct from it--the operation of love and mercy, and not in any sense of the word the operation of Justice, on man's behalf.

In regard to Rom. 5:18,19. The world could not be on trial before a court which had already condemned it, unless the condemnation were lifted; but in the case of man there is a transference of the case to a new court, of which not the Father, but the Son, is the Judge; as it is written, God "hath committed all judgment unto the Son." In one sense man starts in his new trial, under the new Judge, free from condemnation, that is, free from the judicial feature of his condemnation; but not free from the actual degradation which, in another sense of the word, is the curse or condemnation which rests upon our race. Justice will have nothing against the culprit, and makes no objection to his being awakened and assisted back to perfection by the new Judge; but neither

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Justice nor the new Judge will release the culprit from the difficulties under which he labors, called the curse, the fall, etc., except as he exercises both trust and obedience in the new Judge under the terms of the New Covenant; and the new Judge will only release him from this curse or condemnation little by little, as he shall, by obedience, give evidence of transformation of his character from that of a servant of sin to that of a servant of righteousness.

In a word, the sentence or degree of death which came upon Adam, and through him upon us, was merely the judicial sentence, not the degradation which followed it as a consequence; and the removal of the judicial sentence by the payment of a price and the transfer of a sinner to the jurisdiction of Christ, for a fresh judgment or trial, secures merely the release of the original judicial sentence, but secures no release from the fall and degradation which followed the original sentence. The ruined sinner, whom justice would not permit to live, and who has degraded himself since, may now know that through Christ the demands of justice have been met for him, and that if he were back again to the condition in which father Adam was when he fell he would now be able to keep the divine Law perfectly. However, having fallen into degradation, and sin, he is now on so low a plane mentally,

morally and physically, that altho the sentence be lifted, he is quite powerless to accomplish anything of consequence for himself. He first needed a Redeemer to ransom him, to pay the redemption price for him; he now needs a Savior, a Life-giver, to deliver him from the death-conditions, mental, moral and physical, into which he fell while under the divine sentence, and this will be the gracious work of the Kingdom, of which Christ will be the Head and King, and the elect Church his joint-heirs in the Kingdom, and under-representatives in the work of judging and uplifting the race.

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#### THE FERVENT PRAYER OF ABRAHAM.

--GEN. 18:23-32.--AUG. 18.--

Golden Text:--"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."--Jas. 5:16.

ABRAHAM at the time of this lesson was ninety-nine years old. He was camping at Mamre with his family and household, servants, herdsmen, etc., over 1,000 persons. His faith still rested in the Lord's promise, which he evidently believed would be fulfilled through his son Ishmael, at this time thirteen years old. As he rested in the door of his tent three men approached him, and, after the manner of the sheiks of that country today, he arose to meet them most hospitably, and provided for their entertainment tho they were strangers to him. By and by he ascertained that his visitors were heavenly beings, who for the occasion had assumed human form--one of them being a special representative of Jehovah himself, either one of the chief angels, or, we think still more likely, the Lord Jesus in his pre-human condition. How glad Abraham must have felt when he learned who his visitors were, that he had entertained them so kindly and hospitably. The Apostle calls this matter to the attention of the Church and urges that the Lord's people always be on the alert to show hospitality, and citing this case he says, "Thus some have entertained angels unawares."--Heb. 13:2.

True, circumstances are in many respects different today from what they were in olden times, in that now we have hotels and boarding houses for the accommodation of travelers; hence our responsibilities are lessened; this very fact, we fear, inclines us to be more selfish, less hospitable, than would be to our profit. The Lord's consecrated people will do well to cultivate hospitality, and that of the kind which Abraham showed, --without waiting for it to be requested. A Scripture

statement is, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet,

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but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. 11:24.) Another declaration is, "The liberal soul shall be made fat." (Prov. 11:25.) In practicing liberality we are developing God-likeness, for is not God benevolent; is he not continually giving to his creatures? The greatest of all his gifts was the gift of his own dear Son to die for us--to ransom us. True, all cannot exercise liberality alike--those who are in debt or in poverty are properly to consider themselves hindered, limited in this direction by justice to their creditors, their families, etc. Nevertheless, the spirit of benevolence and hospitality should always abound in our hearts, whether we have much or little opportunity to manifest it; and rarely do those who exercise themselves in this respect fail to profit by this course, even in temporal matters. Where we cannot give all the succor needed, we can at least dispense words of consolation and cheer, which may prove of much greater value than money. Many need the spiritual counsel and advice and encouragement, which every true Christian should be able to give, far more than they need temporal assistance. To have Christ-likeness implies not only a desire to be helpful to the groaning creation and "especially to the household of faith," but it means more,--it means the effort to assist them, even at the cost of our earthly comforts and pleasures.

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It was while partaking of the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah that the Lord and his two companions were made known to Abraham--that they were not ordinary men, and at this time a further promise was made respecting the long-expected son Isaac. "Let patience have her perfect work," says the Apostle, and surely it would seem that this was the case with Abraham, who had waited twenty-five years indefinitely, and now for the first time received a definite assurance of a prompt fulfilment of this part of the promise. Isaac was born within a year, when Abraham was one hundred years old. Abraham's faith and patient waiting on the Lord are instructive to us. The Gospel Church likewise was called to inherit a promise and to perform a pilgrimage while waiting for its fulfilment. The promise to us is our deliverance as sharers in the Kingdom, and ultimately in the work of blessing all the families of the earth, to be accomplished at the second coming of Jesus, who was typified in Isaac, even as Jehovah, his Father, was typified in Abraham. The Gospel Church has had great need of patience and endurance, of trust in God, during the nearly nineteen



centuries since Jesus suffered in the flesh and was quickened in spirit, and going away, promised to come again to receive us unto himself, and to fulfil all the exceeding great and precious promises foretold respecting him and us. The faith of many has cooled so that they are hoping for the long promised Millennial blessings through other channels,--hoping that earthly churches, human organizations, begotten not of the Lord's instruction, but unauthorizedly, like Ishmael, may convert and bless the world without the second coming of Jesus and the establishment of his Kingdom. But all those who have the faith of Abraham will also have the Lord's testimony that the blessing can come only through Isaac.--Rom. 9:7; Gal. 4:28.

At the same time that faithful Abraham and Sarah were consoled and refreshed, at the same time Isaac was begotten, the iniquity of the Sodomites had become great,--the cry of its wickedness calling upon Justice for repression. The Lord and the two angels took their departure from Abraham's tent, going in the direction of Sodom, Abraham accompanying them through courtesy and through a desire to continue in heavenly company. And because he was a faithful servant of the Lord it was revealed to him that the destruction of Sodom and her sister villages was imminent. Thus we see the principles upon which the Lord deals with his creatures--to those who are in heart-harmony with him, full of faith and trust and loving obedience, and yet willing to wait patiently for the various features of his plan,--he reveals his plans not only as respects the coming blessing of all the families of the earth, but also as respects the punishment of the ungodly.

We do not find Abraham rejoicing in the calamities about to come upon his neighbors; on the contrary, we find him generous; and so we should expect to find all who are the Lord's true people, full of generosity, kindness and good wishes toward their neighbors--even toward such as they could in no degree recognize or fellowship. Instead of glorying in the adversities coming upon the Sodomites, Abraham instinctively prayed for them divine compassion. And we are to remember in this connection that he had no thought of their calamity extending beyond the loss of the present life. He knew nothing about an "orthodox hell" with its corps of devils to receive and everlastingly torture them. He merely understood the Lord that the destruction of the people and of their cities impended. If he thought at all of their future, it would doubtless be in connection with God's promise, that by and by all the families of the earth should be blessed through his promised heir.

We notice with pleasure the modesty of Abraham as he petitioned the Lord to have mercy upon his neighbors: "Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt thou consume and spare not the

place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" He was not attempting to charge or condemn the Lord by applying his standards; rather he was wishing to ascertain what would be the divine standard in the matter --how much compassion the Lord could justly exercise in behalf of such as sought at all to walk in his ways. Abraham must have known well the unsavory reputation of the Sodomites;--no doubt being in communication with Lot frequently. It is to his credit, therefore, that he was unwilling to think of those people as badly as they deserved. Actually there were only three worthy of being delivered; yet Abraham, with generosity of heart, assumed that there might be fifty. Benevolent people generally are pretty sure to err in their judgment on the favorable side, when they think of the weaknesses and villainies of their neighbors.

The Lord assented to Abraham's proposition, and the latter's faith thus encouraged, he ventured to lessen the number in his inquiry to forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, ten, and with all his earnest desire he could not think of petitioning the Lord to save those cities from destruction if wickedness had gotten such a hold that only ten could be found loving righteousness. We rejoice in Abraham's mercifulness, as well as in his faith. Had mercy not been a part of his character we may doubt if the Lord would have called him to be the starting point of his plan of salvation. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Such the Lord is seeking, to be his agents and the channels of the mercies he has provided for mankind, to be dispensed during the Millennial age. Only the merciful will be acceptable to the Lord as joint-heirs with Jesus in the Kingdom, and only the merciful of the ancient worthies will share with Abraham in dispensing divine favors to mankind as "princes in all the earth;" representatives of the spiritual Kingdom.--Psa. 45:16.

We contrast Abraham's modest and reverent petition with some which we have heard uttered by those who suppose themselves to be members of the Gospel Church, the body of Christ,--and the contrast is immensely in Abraham's favor. "O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once [more]; peradventure ten be found there [will you have mercy upon the cities for their sake]?" How some can go to the Lord in prayer in rude and dictatorial manner, telling him what they want to have done--how many they wish to have converted, how he shall manage the various features of his work, whom he shall bless and how, etc.,--we cannot tell. Let not such persons think that they shall receive anything of the Lord; let them not think that such praying is either fervent or effectual in any good sense. Let us, on the contrary,

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as the Lord's people, reason how great he is, and how

insignificant we are; how just and true are his ways, and how imperfect are our best conceptions; and let us approach him with reverence to ascertain what are his purposes, rather than to amend or alter them to alignment with our imperfect judgments.

#### SAVED SO AS BY FIRE.

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Evidently Lot's decision to reside in Sodom was for business reasons: he evidently had some children twenty-five years before, when he started out with Abraham, his uncle, and probably his interests in business and his desire for prosperity leading him to reside among the Sodomites was chiefly for the prosperity of his children. Alas, how great was his mistake! Yet he did not seem to fully realize it until, urged by the angel, he fled from Sodom accompanied by his two unmarried daughters, losing all else he had in the world --his wife and married children and grand-children, his flocks and herds and servants and all his personal belongings. He was indeed saved, preserved, from the destruction which there came upon the ungodly; but it was a bare rescue, not an abundant deliverance; he was, so to speak, pulled out of the fire.

We may consider ourselves justified in considering Lot and his daughters who escaped to be illustrations, samples, whose antitypical lessons would apply in this present day. For as Abraham and his patient waiting represented the faithful, the overcomers, so Lot seems to represent a class in the end of the present age, who do not walk sufficiently by faith and who seek not chiefly the Kingdom and its righteousness; but who for the sake of earthly advantage are quite willing to risk their spiritual interests and the highest interests of their children, by choosing fellowship with the world;

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--by commingling to some extent with the world, the flesh and the devil, even tho, like Lot, disapproving their surroundings which vex their righteous souls. Such, the Apostle tells us, shall be "saved so as by fire." (1 Cor. 3:15.) Such the Lord illustrates as coming up out of great tribulation, washing their robes and making them white, and eventually obtaining a blessing, but not the chief one which they might have obtained had they followed faithfully with the pilgrims and strangers, the "little flock."--Rev. 7:9,14.

The story of Lot's haste out of Sodom, and of his wife's transgression of the angel's command in looking back and hankering after the things left behind, are brought to our attention in that part of our Lord's great prophecy relating to the end of this age;--"Remember Lot's wife!" (Luke 17:32.) This reference

seems to corroborate the thought that Lot's experiences were somewhat typical. The Lord's people will be tested along the line of their separation from the spirit of the world. Those who, like Abraham, are the friends of God will be far off from the danger; others not so faithful will be in the full midst of the trouble, yet if loyal at heart to the Lord they will be delivered with great loss, and the sufferings which such disappointments and losses will imply; yet in the end such will gain the heavenly, spiritual, life for which they started out. None, however, will be delivered if they remain in the city of destruction, Babylon. If they do not avoid it at first, they must at least be willing to leave it, and that with great energy, ere its destruction comes; and if they love the things behind, more than they appreciate deliverance--so that they in any degree look back or long for the evil things doomed to destruction in the coming trouble, it will mean that they will not be worthy of having any part or lot in the deliverance.

The record is that Lot's wife became a pillar of salt, and altho infidelity has been inclined to dispute such a miracle, we have every reason to believe the truthfulness of the record; and like all miracles, if explained, it would no doubt seem reasonable enough. An explanation of the miracle has been suggested by a traveler, as follows: "Just as some of the victims of Pompeii stumbled in their flight, and were buried under the ashes, which still keep the outline of their figure, so Lot's wife was covered with the half-liquid, slimy mud." "An atmosphere heavily charged with the fumes of sulphur and bitumen might easily produce suffocation, as was the case with the elder Pliny in the destruction of Pompeii. And as no dead body would ever decompose on the shores of this salt sea, if left in such an atmosphere, it would become encrusted with salt crystals. Pillars of salt are found in the vicinity which have formed from the spray, mist and saline exhalations of the dead sea, and are constantly growing larger."

#### SUFFERING THE VENGEANCE OF ETERNAL FIRE.

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Jude tells us that the destruction of Sodom was intended by the Lord to be an illustration of the fate of the wicked. But it certainly does not illustrate what that fate is generally supposed to be: it does not illustrate perpetual fire, with the Sodomites continually burning and never destroyed, and with demons poking the fires and torturing the victims. Nothing of the kind. The "eternal fires" which God intends for the wicked, and which he illustrated in the case of the Sodomites, signify fires, whose work of destruction is complete and everlasting. It is divine vengeance or retribution against sinners--"they shall be punished with an everlasting

destruction" (2 Thess. 1:9), beyond all hope of recovery. The "lake of fire" of Revelation, and the Dead Sea of Sodom represent in symbol the Second Death --extinction, from which there is no hope by a resurrection or otherwise. None will go into the Second Death on account of ignorance. All who enter it will do so because of wilful, deliberate participation in sin, or because of sympathy with it.

Supposing Sodom to represent Sin, the lesson would be that all finding themselves in an evil condition of life, even tho, like Lot, their hearts be out of sympathy with it, should and must flee from it if they would avert the consequences. They must flee in haste and tarry not in all the plain. Yet it is a comforting thought that as the angel laid hold of the hands of Lot and his daughters and helped, urged and encouraged them to flee, so the Lord's providences will take hold of every one who shall seek to escape from sin, and will so cooperate with their good wills in the matter that they shall eventually be fully rescued from it.

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LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR SHOULD BE SENT TO ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.  
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Those of the interested who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity

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#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR "HARVEST" WORK.

The chiefest service we could commend, open to all who are unencumbered and in active use of their faculties, is the Colporteur work. It is an honorable form of ministering the truth from house to house, as the apostles served. It is a service which the Lord seems to have blessed as much or more than any other for gathering the "wheat." It is apparent at once to all that to sell such books as the DAWNS at 25 cents each, cannot be for money-making: that it is merely another way of preaching the truth. No other religious books are sold at any such price. Indeed few subscription books sell for less than two to three dollars each. Any who can serve in this work are invited to write to us for "Hints to Colporteurs."

#### THE VOLUNTEER WORK.

Many who cannot give their entire time to the service can give an hour or so every Sunday to the "Volunteer" work;-- distributing literature, which we supply free to Christian people, as they return from church services. The Volunteer force this year is a considerable one, including in some places 60 to 80 per cent. of the interested friends--all who can possibly engage in it. All testify that they receive great blessings from the service, and we have good reason to hope that deep and lasting impressions are being made on the recipients.

#### OTHER METHODS OF SERVICE.

Others circulate tracts on railway trains as they travel, or enclose them in letters to their friends. Others purchase DAWNS in quantities and sell, lend or give them away whenever they can find hearing ears. We are ready to cooperate with all who desire to serve in any capacity. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life."

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#### A PROPHET, LIKE UNTO MOSES.

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"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your

God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people."--Acts 3:22,23.

WE AGREE that the time for the fulfilment of this prediction is near, even at the doors; and now one, styling himself "Rev." John Alexander Dowie, heralds himself to the civilized world as being this Prophet. We are not hastily to accept his dictum, and to exclaim, "Verily, this is he of whom Moses, in the Law, and the prophets did write." Nor, on the other hand, are we hastily to decide that he is an imposter, a false prophet, simply because he happens to live in our day. Rather, in view of the fact that we are expecting the fulfilment of this Scripture we should look the subject carefully over, and weigh all the Scriptural testimony, and thus decide as to the truth or falsity of Mr. Dowie's claims. And, doubtless, in doing this, our investigation of the subject from a Scriptural standpoint will prove profitable to us, whether favorable or unfavorable to Mr. Dowie;--whether they prove him the Prophet foretold, or a deceived and deceiving false prophet.

Analyzing our text, we perceive that its expression, "like unto," has the sense of antitypical; hence the Prophet to be expected must be much greater every way than Moses, as an antitype is always far superior to its type. Moses was the Mediator of the Law Covenant, and thus stood between Israel and God, as we read in reference to the sealing and delivery of the Law Covenant: "The Lord our God made a covenant with you in Horeb....The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of fire. I stood between God and you [a mediator, or go-between], at that time, to show you the word of the Lord; for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount." (Deut. 5:2-5.) From this we see that Moses, the typical prophet, was very great, very influential, had a very high office; and this would signify that the future Prophet whom God had in mind, and whose coming was foretold thirty-five hundred years ago by Moses himself, and further pointed forward to by the Apostle Peter in our text, must, as the antitype of Moses, be wonderfully great, wonderfully powerful, a still greater Mediator between God and men, a still mightier Law-giver whose word would be omnipotent, and violation of which would eventually mean destruction;--as it is written "Every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23.) Even at first glance every unprejudiced mind would say that Mr. Dowie, and every other man on earth, seems far too insignificant, far too small to fill the requirements. Not only too small for the antitype, but far inferior even to the type.

Turning to the record of Moses' words in the Old Testament, we find them in Deut. 18:15-20, and here we see that the particular feature of Moses' work as a prophet and law-giver to Israel, which is here referred to as typical of a greater work to be accomplished by a greater Law-giver and Prophet, was the work which he performed for Israel as the Mediator of the Law Covenant at Mount Sinai, in the district called Horeb, already referred to. At the time of the giving of the Law, Israel witnessed a wonderful manifestation of divine power. "All the people witnessed the thundering and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and

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when the people saw it they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exod. 20:18,19.) In response to this their request God appointed Moses to be their Mediator or representative. Moses communed with the Lord in the mount, and received from him the Law, and came to the people and communicated the Law to them, and obtained their assent to the Covenant; and then, as a representative both of God and of Israel, Moses sealed the covenant;--ratified it by taking the blood of bulls and of goats and sprinkling first the book of the Law, or tables of stone on which the commandments were written, as representing Jehovah, and sprinkling, secondly, the people, as binding them. Thus the covenant between God and Israel was established at the hands of Moses, the mediator. It was at this time of the recognition of Moses as the Mediator of that Covenant that the Lord impliedly

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taught that the time would come when he would make a new and better Covenant, and establish it in the hands of a new and greater Mediator (the Christ); saying, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words into his mouth."--Deut. 18:18.

The Apostle assures us of this;--that the Law-Covenant was a type, an illustration of a greater and more wonderful covenant, between God and his people in the future. He points out to us that as Moses was a type of Christ, the great Prophet, so the animal-blood he used in sealing that typical Law Covenant represented or typified the blood of Christ--the blood which seals, makes binding, ratifies, the New Covenant. Our Lord referred to the same thing in connection with his death, and the institution of the Memorial Supper, when he said, "This is the blood of the New Covenant, shed for many for the remission of



sins."--Matt. 26:28.

We are sure that we are right in this application; because the Apostle, in Heb. 9:19,20, refers us back to the sealing of the Law Covenant, saying, "When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you." The entire tenor of the Apostle's argument shows us that he understood and taught that the antitype of this was to be found in Christ, in his sacrifice for sins, and not in Mr. Dowie, or any work that he might do. Continuing the same argument, into the next chapter (Heb. 10:16), the Apostle shows that the work of our Lord Jesus in offering up himself, as the ransom-price for mankind, was sealing the New Covenant, the antitypical covenant, which God had promised through Moses, and through all the prophets, saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord."

The Apostle evidently understood that the covenant which Moses, the prophet, instituted, typified the better covenant, which the greater Prophet, Christ, would institute in due time. Proceeding to compare these two prophets, the typical Moses and the antitypical Christ, the Apostle says, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy;...of how much severer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the [New] Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:28,29.) The Apostle's argument evidently is that if God puts so much dignity upon the typical prophet, Moses, that violation of his covenant would mean death, we might reasonably expect that a severer punishment would come to all those who shall be brought under the benefits of the New Covenant, and who shall then spurn them, not appreciating the fact that they were secured by the precious blood of Christ, the antitypical Prophet.

Continuing the same line of thought, viz., a comparison of the two mediators, and the two covenants, the Apostle draws to our attention the fact that Israel could not endure the terrible manifestations of divine power and justice at Mount Sinai, although they were only typical; and that as the typical Israelites needed and desired to be dealt with representatively instead of directly, through a mediator and not personally,-- to be in the hands of the mediator, and not in the hands of God. So, says the Apostle, in respect to the New Covenant, and in respect to those who have apprehended that it was sealed with the blood of Christ, and that it is in operation now, and that we have the

benefits of it conferred upon us.--If we should repudiate this New Covenant it would mean that we would thereby repudiate Christ (not Mr. Dowie), as our Mediator, and would fall into the hands of the living God, to be dealt with directly by him, and that without mercy. The Apostle clinches his argument, by saying, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."--Heb. 10:31.

It would be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, not because God is unjust, but because he is just; and because we are imperfect, and therefore could not hope to meet the requirements of the law of absolute justice. Divine justice would be to

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us as a consuming fire, destroying us, because we could not comply with its requirements. It is for this reason that God has appointed for us a covenant of mercy, of which Jesus is the great Prophet and Mediator, --not Dowie. God having appointed this one channel of mercy it is for us to accept it as he proffers it, or, rejecting it, to fall into the hands of Justice, and to meet our desserts, utter destruction. Those who reject Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, will suffer more than those who rejected the typical mediator, Moses; for the latter lost merely the present life, but will have share in the restitution blessings of the next age; while all who intelligently and wilfully reject the Mediator of the New Covenant will die the Second Death. This is in full accord with the statement of our text, "The soul that will not hear [obey] that Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people."

Having seen from Moses' own words and their context that this use of the word "prophet" signifies teacher, law-giver, mediator, between the people and God, and that this declaration looked forward to the giving of a greater law at the hands of a greater mediator and prophet and law-giver, we now turn to the words of the Apostle, which precede our text. (Acts 3:19-21.) We find Peter discussing the second coming of Christ, and under the power of the holy spirit explaining to the people that with his second advent would come great blessing, "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," but that the heavens would retain him until those blessed times of restitution should be due. He connects this argument with the words of our text, showing that Moses' prophecy of the great Prophet, of whom he was but a type, would have its fulfilment at the second advent of Jesus, in the power and great glory of his Kingdom--"whom the heavens must receive, until the times of restitution. ...For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto [antitypical of] me."

This leaves no room for question, at the bar of any reasonable mind, that the Prophet like unto Moses, announced for centuries as being the very center of the divine plan for the blessing of all the families of the earth, could not be fulfilled by Mr. Dowie, nor by any other ordinary or extraordinary man, but by him of whom Moses, in the Law, and the prophets did write--the Christ.

The more we will examine the subject the more we will find it to expand, and the more we will appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine plan. The Prophet like unto Moses, the great Law-giver, the great King, the great Mediator, will be the foretold "Seed of Abraham," in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed--through the divine laws which he will enunciate, and the regulations he will enforce. And this Seed of Abraham, as we have already seen, as the Apostle has most clearly set forth, consists of our Lord Jesus, as the Head, the chief, and all of his faithful elect Church as members --as his body, "which seed is Christ....

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."--Gal. 3:16-29.

In this view of the matter our Lord Jesus was raised up eighteen centuries ago as the "Head" of this great Prophet. He was raised up amongst his brethren, "a first-born among many brethren." He is not ashamed to call us "brethren," although he is the sanctifier and we the sanctified; he is the head over these brethren; and as such he has been raised--how high? Let the Apostle answer: "Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. 1:20-23); and the promise to his faithful followers is that they shall be counted with him as his "Bride," or, under another figure, as his "body,"--"members in particular of the body of Christ." (2 Cor. 11:2; 1 Cor. 12:27.) They also shall be raised, up, up, up. Already these are raised above the condition of the world, in that they have been favored of God, and called with a high calling, a heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. Already they have been raised up, in the sense of being transformed by the renewing of their minds, that they may prove the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Already they are reckonedly risen with Christ, and walking in newness of life. And these, the members of the body of Christ, have the promise that they shall be raised up still further in due time--that they shall "have part in the first resurrection," to glory, honor and immortality; that they shall be like Jesus, their Head and Lord, and see him as he is, and share his glory, far above angels, principalities, and powers, and every name.--Eph. 2:6; Rom. 2:7; Rev. 3:21.

Thus we see that the great work which God began in the person of our Lord Jesus, and in the sacrifice which he made for our sins and in his own exaltation

in resurrection power, has not been lying idle since; but a work has been in progress in behalf of the world. Jesus personally has exercised the office of High Priest to and for the under priests, his "body," during this Gospel age, selecting, instructing, fitting and preparing them for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the future in behalf of the world. And we can easily see also that this work of raising up the great Prophet (Head and body) from amongst mankind, to a higher nature, even to be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4) will soon be accomplished. Then what glory! What

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blessing, when this great Prophet, Priest and King shall exercise, in the name and spirit of Jehovah, the authority of earth, to bless mankind, to cause the social uplift which the whole world so greatly needs, but which can come from no other source; to restrain, and ultimately to completely overthrow, the powers of evil, of darkness, and of sin, and thus to purify and cleanse the world and bring in the glorious time promised, when there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more pain, no more death,--because the former things of sin, and its penalty, death, will have passed away! All who remain at that time, after that glorious reign shall have completed its work, will be in full harmony, mentally, morally and physically, in deed and in truth, with Jehovah God, and the righteous laws of his empire--all who would not obey the great Prophet, and thus come into accord, having been destroyed from amongst the people according to the divine declaration.

Hallelujah! What a Savior! What a wonderful and comprehensive plan is this, which our great Creator has mapped out, of which we are, first, the subjects,

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and afterward, by his grace, his active agents in bringing to the world of mankind. O, there is a grandeur in the divine plan which Mr. Dowie evidently has never seen--a grandeur to which he is blind, because the Lord hath not revealed it unto him, because, even now, in the dawning of the morning, the god of this world still blinds his mind.

A lesson in connection with this subject which is applicable to all of the Lord's consecrated people, is the lesson of humility. Only as we are in a humble attitude of mind can we get a view of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine plan. Otherwise we would continually find our view of God and of his Word and plan obscured by self. Thus the Lord declares that he resists the proud and showeth his favor unto the humble. Let us, therefore, dear

brethren, instead of thinking of ourselves as great ones, on the contrary remember that we are dust, and that as the poet has expressed it,--

"My highest place is lying low  
At my Redeemer's feet;  
No real joy in life I know  
But in his service sweet."

"He that exalteth himself shall be abased; he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (Luke 14:11; 1 Pet. 5:6.) Let us seek to be servants of the Lord and of the flock--faithful servants, ready and willing to lay down our lives for the Lord, for the truth, for the brethren.

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ISAAC, THE PEACEABLE.

--GEN. 26:12-25.--SEPT. 1.--

Golden Text:--"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."--Matt. 5:9.

ISAAC signifies "laughter." Abraham laughed with pleasure when informed that he would have a son that would be born in his old age. (Gen. 17:17.) Sarah laughed with incredulity when she was informed on the subject. (Gen. 18:12.) And again she laughed in joy and appreciation at the time of Isaac's birth: hence he was named Laughter, or Joyous. His life, as recorded in the Scriptures, was rather an uneventful one. As might have been expected from the fact of the age of his parents, he appears to have been rather a quiet, thoughtful, non-resistant child and man, with less of the fire and aggressive energy than displayed by some others. Our lesson covers a considerable period of his life, and the chief points of character which it brings to our attention are, first, his meek, patient, peaceable disposition; and, second, his abiding faith in God and in the promises made to Abraham, his father.

As Abraham, in the time of drouth, went southward into Egypt, so Isaac similarly went southward, but stopped in the land Gerar, the king over which was Abimelech. The Lord's blessing was so manifestly with Isaac that Abimelech and the people of that land urged him to move elsewhere, as his prosperity, they imagined, was somewhat at their expense. It is not amiss that we here note the fact that the Lord's blessing upon Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants--Israel according to the flesh--was manifested in temporal prosperity; whereas divine

favours to spiritual Israel of this Gospel age are manifested in spiritual prosperity. And since the two prosperities, under present conditions, can rarely exist side by side in the same individual's experience, it follows that those who are in line with the spiritual promises of the present time are generally, in temporal matters, "the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom." "Not many wise, not many great, not many learned, according to the course of this world, hath God chosen."--Jas. 2:5; 1 Cor. 1:26,27.

It is not a little remarkable that, even in their cast-off condition, the natural seed of Abraham (to whom still belong certain as yet unfulfilled promises of God, which will surely be fulfilled as soon as the spiritual Israel has been selected), are nevertheless so kept and guided by divine providence that in all parts of the world they are comparatively successful in the commercial and literary competition of the world; so that, as Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go from us, for thou art more mighty than we," the various nations of earth feel toward and act toward Isaac's posterity--the Jew is continually asked to move on, because, even though alienated for the time being from the chief blessing of the Abrahamic promise, the Lord's hand is with him, and he prospers in his undertakings.

The experiences of fleshly Israel in having no continuing city or country, but being pushed hither and thither throughout the earth for now several centuries, should have produced in at least some of that nation a spirit of humility and of patient waiting for the Lord, and his fulfilment of his gracious promises to them. And we are glad to hope that such will be found thus exercised and ready for the Kingdom at its inception; and yet amongst the Jews, as a people, we notice comparatively little faith and comparatively little meekness--especially amongst their wealthy ones. Evidently, the majority are not Israelites indeed, and will not be prepared for more than the average blessings upon the world at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. Nevertheless, we may hope that a goodly remnant of that people are in the condition of heart in which they will be ready to welcome Messiah's Kingdom, when the eyes of their understanding shall open, and to join with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the holy prophets of their brethren, who will then be princes in all the earth (Psa. 45:16), in constituting a nucleus of a holy nation, gathered about the earthly phase of the Kingdom,--through which shall proceed to Israel and to all the nations the heavenly laws and blessings dispensed by God through spiritual Israel, then glorified with Christ at its head.

The peaceable disposition of Isaac is exhibited in this lesson by the fact that although he recognized

himself to be the divinely appointed heir of that land, who should ultimately inherit it; and although, with his large retinue of servants, King Abimelech himself

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had recognized his superior power; nevertheless, rather than have strife and contention, Isaac moved his encampment a considerable distance away from the place of strife, abandoning some of his rights for the sake of peace. And it was after he had thus relinquished his rights, trusting to God to give him the land in his own due time and manner, that the Lord appeared to him (in what manner is not explained), and reiterated to him the substance of the covenant already made with his father Abraham, saying: "I am the God of Abraham, thy father [I still recognize him; he is not extinct; he still has a place in my gracious arrangements and purposes, although he sleeps with his fathers; I am abundantly able, in due time, to resurrect him, and to fulfil to him and to his faithful posterity all my gracious promises]: fear not, for I am with thee [I recognize thee as associated in these promises and an heir with him--I approve also the element of faith in thy character, and thy submission to my times and seasons and arrangements --I appreciate the fact that thou dost not strive to attain the things I have promised, until the time that I am pleased to give them to thee], and I will bless thee and thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake [--in harmony with the one covenant made with Abraham: you will understand that I am not making a new covenant with you, but merely confirming the original one]."

Many of the spiritual children of Abraham need to learn the lesson of patience--patient waiting on the Lord for the fulfilment of his gracious promises. With quite a good many there is a disposition to hasten matters, to force things; and even questionable methods are sometimes adopted and commended, with the thought that the aggressive ones are more acceptable servants to the Lord than others; but instead of such aggressiveness, as the carrying of the gospel into China or Africa or India with the sword,

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being the evidence of a zeal which God approves, it should rather be considered an evidence of lack of faith in God, without which it is impossible to please him. A proper faith in God will lead to a careful study of his Word, of the promises; and a careful study of the promises would show that the present is not the time for conquering the world, but the time for calling out, proving and testing, the elect Church, which in due time, as the seed of Abraham, shall be

fully empowered and fully commissioned to be both kings and priests, and to conquer the world in righteousness. A proper condition of faith in God must lead his faithful ones to wait patiently for him; praying the meanwhile, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth;" and to expect that when the due time shall come Emmanuel will take the control of the world's affairs, and cause its subjugation and blessing to proceed rapidly and effectively. Now, it is our duty to avoid striving with the world; rather to give place--to permit our rights to be infringed, to wait on the Lord, and to expect that he will provide for us the things and the experiences most helpful to our development as new creatures, and thus to make us fit, "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Two other circumstances in Isaac's life seem to illustrate his attitude of faith, obedience and patient submission, even more than this lesson. One of these we have already referred to,--his submission as a young man, in health and vigor, to be bound by his father as a sacrifice upon the altar. In this complete submission to Abraham, his father, Isaac well typified his antitype, Christ Jesus, and his submission to the heavenly Father, Abraham's antitype, even unto death, even the death of the cross.

The other was the matter of his marriage. Isaac manifested a wonderful degree of patience and trust in the divine providence which he seems to have realized was guiding in all the affairs of his father Abraham, and in his affairs as his son and heir under the promises. He was a full-grown man of forty years when his father Abraham, apparently without consulting him in the matter, sent the servant to select for him a wife, who, when she came, he accepted with full loyalty of heart, as being the Lord's choice for him. We are not setting this forth as an example in all respects for the fathers and sons of our day. On the contrary, we believe that some of these matters in ancient times were arranged with a view to the typical lessons embodied in the various circumstances and affairs of life. Isaac, as the type of Christ, was fully submissive to the will of his father, as a type of Jesus' submission to the divine will respecting the selection for him of the Gospel Church, to be his Bride and joint-heir in the great promises respecting the world and its blessing. Our Lord Jesus is fully in harmony with the Father's will respecting whom, how many, and of what character, shall be the joint-heirs of his Kingdom. The force and beauty of the picture is seen when we recognize the servant Eliezer as representing the divine message, the Spirit of the Word of truth, sent forth of God, to gather during this Gospel age a people, a little flock, who shall constitute the Bride, the Lamb's wife, and thus be members of the body of the antitypical Isaac.--Acts 15:14;



2 Cor. 11:2.

The characteristics of God's dear Son must be found in all those who will be eventually accepted as his Bride and joint-heir. This will include the great faith in the Father which the Lord Jesus exercised, and which was typified in Isaac's full trust and submission.

So, then, it is for us who are seeking to make our calling and our election sure to this gracious part in the divine plan, to be peaceable, peace-loving, gentle, willing rather to retire and be non-resistant, where no principles are at stake, where no command of the Lord is to the contrary. We can well afford to sacrifice earthly interests, since the promises to which we are heirs belong to the future, and are so exceedingly abundant, more than we could ask or think, that their attainment will far more than compensate for any incidental losses or deprivations as respects the present time.

The Apostle says, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise" (Gal. 4:28)--Christ, our Head, and we, his members, are the antitype of him who was called "Laughter," or "Joyous." And do we not have more joy than others, even in this present time? True, we have a full share in the trials and difficulties and sorrows and disappointments that cause the whole creation to groan and travail in pain together: yet we have what they do not have--"the

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peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in our hearts" and enabling us to be "joyful in tribulation also," knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and all the various fruits of the spirit which, when perfected in us, shall bring us to the complete joy and rejoicing of the heavenly Kingdom. And if this name, Joyous, applies to us in such degree in the present time, what shall we say of the glorious future, when joined to our Master in the glories of his Kingdom we shall cause the knowledge and blessing of the Lord to fill the whole earth, and bring laughter and joy to a world of mankind, now weak and groaning under the administration of sin and death? "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

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THE WORLD'S HOPE NOT IN MISSIONS, BUT IN THE KINGDOM.

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FROM time to time we have demonstrated that there is no hope of a general world-blessing through Christ along the lines generally held by Christian

people;--the conversion of the world by present-day missionary efforts. We herewith supply additional evidences on this subject from highly creditable sources--not with a view to casting disrespect upon all missionaries, but in order to demonstrate afresh that this foreign-mission-world-conversion delusion is doing positive and serious harm to the Lord's true people, in leading to false expectation and, consequently, to misdirected efforts.

Foreign missions were undertaken with two convictions; one correct, the other false. (1) The correct Scriptural conviction that the only name by which any can be saved is the name of Jesus;--faith in his sacrifice, and obedience and devotion to him. (2) The false, unscriptural conviction that there is no hope for any who die in ignorance of the only name whereby we must be saved. These intertwined theories have been the cord which has drawn hundreds of noble lives to self-sacrifice, especially during the first half of the past century. It is the cord also which has drawn, and still draws, from sympathetic purses, millions on millions of money. And we need not wonder, if the money has, in turn, drawn some into the missionary work simply for an honorable and easy living.

We are not objecting to the sacrifice of noble lives and consecrated money, either; for we firmly believe that lives and money given with sincerity have been pleasing to the Lord; even though given under some serious and discreditable misapprehensions of the divine character, and plan of human salvation. We object that this mixture of truth and error is very injurious to God's people, in that it diverts their hearts and efforts away from the truth. It draws them away from Bible-study--away from growth in knowledge and in the graces of the spirit. Instead, it inculcates the thought that the chief object of life for all Christians should be the snatching fellow-creatures from the hands of an angry God intent upon throwing them into eternal torment at the hands of demons. Or, if not this, the making and contributing of money which will pay the expenses of those who do the snatching.

As a result, Christian people "have no time" to study the Father's Word; no time for studying the divine plan, cultivating their own hearts, etc. They say to themselves often, and sometimes, unguardedly, to others--Bible-study! Nonsense, we already know enough when we know that millions are perishing--going down to hell. Bye and bye we "hustlers" who have been less careful for our own spiritual development and for Bible study, but more "on fire" and "burdened" for souls, will have brighter crowns than yours--if indeed you "hair-splitting" Bible students are not rejected from heaven entirely.

But a reaction from so unreasonable a position was

bound to come with the advance of intelligence; and it has come. People in general no longer believe in the awful devil-god of the past, seeking for any possible pretext for the torture of as many as possible of his creatures. Reason is asserting itself, and man no longer poses as the sinner's only friend to save him from a malicious God. That is too absurd a proposition for the twentieth century. But men will have theories;--for theories still, as ever, are the basis of action--the rudder of human effort. It has become evident to all thinkers that one or the other of the strands of the original mission-cord is false, unreliable, rotten. Question: Which of the strands will they reject?

We answer that the true one will be rejected; and the false one will be retained. They will continue to believe that all hope ends with death, and will reject the inspired declaration that faith in Christ is the only hope, and this the only name. They have already concluded and are more and more becoming convinced, that although the name of Jesus is a good rallying cry, especially when calling for missionary contributions, it is not the only name for salvation. They conclude, but do not care to declare it in so many words, that "education," "civilization," are, rather, the only names for salvation. And salvation

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at home and abroad is more and more coming to mean, not a personal relationship to him who is the light of the world, and in whom alone is life everlasting; but rather it now stands for social progress, municipal and national reform,--"social uplift." Thus has the false idea of missions and their conversion of the world led God's people farther and farther away from his Word and plan, which, in their zeal without knowledge, they have been rejecting.

To those who are rightly instructed on the subject by God's Word--to those who lean not to their own understandings, but who search the Scriptures daily to be thereby taught of God--the utter failure of missions as respects any hope of ever converting the world to even the imperfect conditions which prevail throughout "Christendom," is faith-strengthening. Because it demonstrates, it proves beyond question, the truth of the Scripture teaching; namely, that God is not yet attempting the conversion and salvation of mankind in general, but is leaving that great work for the future age, to be accomplished by

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the Kingdom of God when it shall be established in power and great glory during the Millennium. It corroborates fully the Bible declaration that the present

work of God is the election of a Church which, finished, polished and glorified with her Lord and head shall, by and by, fulfil the predicted blessings of all the world as Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:29); fulfilling the petition of our Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven."

The following discouraging reports of missionary efforts we clip from the Literary Digest:

#### "A SWEEPING CRITICISM OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

"The missionaries' side of Christian missions in foreign lands has been very fully stated from time to time in Christian churches and in the reports of missionary societies and conventions. Not so much has been heard as to how these missions impress others, except in the occasional private reports given by returning travelers. Reynolds' Newspaper (London) has lately been devoting considerable space to this topic. In a recent issue the results of some investigations by a special correspondent employed for this purpose are given. These investigations cover the missionary organizations in London--the great center of Protestant foreign missions--as well as the results obtained by them in the chief countries of the Orient. In speaking of the great sums collected from the people of England for this purpose, the writer states that the Church Missionary Society (Church of England) has an annual income of about L.404,906 (a little over \$2,000,000). The collection of this money alone costs L.25,843 (about \$129,000); administration costs L.15,917 (about \$79,500); salaries to nineteen clergymen as association secretaries amount to L.5,432 (about \$27,160). The London Missionary Society has an income of about L.150,168 (about \$750,840) yearly, while its foreign secretary, the Rev. M. Wardlaw Thompson, receives L.800 (about \$4,000) per annum, and others receive 'proportionately large amounts.' The missionary income of the Wesleyan Methodists for 1899 amounted to L.133,690 (about \$668,450), out of which four ministerial secretaries received 'large salaries' in addition to extra charges for 'children, rent, rates, taxes, house bill, house repairs, and replacement of furniture, coals, gas, etc.,' amounting to about as much again. The Baptists in 1900 collected L.73,716 (about \$363,580) for foreign missions.

"In commenting on the foreign results received for these vast sums, the special agent of Reynolds' Newspaper gives the following facts, based on his study of the official missionary reports:

"What are the results abroad? In India, with its great population of 350,000,000, the number of converts made by the Church Missionary Society, after more than a century's labor, is to-day 35,640,

although no fewer than 3,424 agents are at work. How many of these converts are genuine is a different matter. The above number includes the helpless children. In the year 1889-90 there was a gain of 1,836, mostly the babes of converts. Thus it took two missionary agents and a sum of L.113,000 to secure one 'convert' babe, or adult, in a year. What a farce! This ridiculous result, too, is a falling-off on the previous year. The other societies have even a more unsatisfactory record. Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., on his recent return from India, writing in the Birmingham Daily Post, February 14, 1889, thus sums up his opinion of the attempt to 'Christianize' India: 'Educated India is looking for a religion, but turns its back on Christ and His teaching as presented by the missionary. As far as turning the young men they educate into Christians their [the missionaries'] failure is complete and unmistakable.' A writer in The Contemporary Review for February, 1888, gives his Indian experience as follows: 'Christianity has taken but a poor grip of Hindu India. Its votaries are nowhere really visible among the population. A traveler living in India for two years might leave it without full consciousness that any work of active proselytism was going on.'

"And the alleged converts? The Church Missionary Society for 1900 says: 'At present there is a rather low standard of Christian living.' It is the same as was told some years ago by the Rev. Sidney Smith, that the native who bore the name of Christian was 'commonly nothing more than a drunken reprobate, who conceives himself at liberty to eat and drink anything he pleases, and annexes hardly any other meaning to Christianity.' The London Missionary Society in the 1896 report (p.186) ask subscribers 'not to despise the low ideas and motives with which they [the converts] come to us.' And, again, at page 145: 'A very large proportion who profess themselves Christians, and are baptized, are so very ignorant that great care and patience are required to make them intelligently acquainted with the fundamental truths of Christianity.' Among the Malay Christians, which the 1899 report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions states 'furnish us with the great majority of our converts' (p.76), a lady worker writes: 'When one questions them by themselves, the one appalling factor that forces itself upon one is their unimaginable ignorance. In most, the anxiety for the daily bread is the largely bulking factor for their consciousness.' Extracts of this description might be indefinitely multiplied.

"In China, the missionaries are now thoroughly disliked, although they have not been interfered with unless their zeal has outrun their discretion, for the Chinese, says Professor Douglas in his book on China (p.370), are 'singularly tolerant of faiths other

than their own.' In the Report of the Church Missionary Society for 1900 we are told that 'churches' have been organized by Chinese for the purpose of affording protection in law cases, such as the payment of debts. In 1869 our Foreign Office (Parliamentary paper on China, No.9, 1870, p.13) wrote as follows as to Protestant missionaries in China:

"There is good reason to suppose that the animosity which has lately been more intensely shown toward missionaries on the part of the ruling authorities in China is in a great measure to be attributed to the injudicious conduct of the native converts to Christianity....There seems sufficient reason to believe that converts assume and have acted on the assumption that by embracing Christianity they released themselves from the obligations of obedience

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to the local authorities and from the discharge of their duties as subjects of the Emperor, and acquired a right to be protected by the European power whose religious tenets they have adopted.'

"And again, Admiral Richards, in an official communication to the British Government (Parliamentary Paper, China, No.1, 1892, p.24), says:

"It seems to be the special aim of missionary societies to establish themselves outside treaty limits; and, having done so, they are not prepared to take the risks which they voluntarily incur, but, on the contrary, are loudest in their clamor for gun-boats, as their contributions to the Shanghai press sufficiently demonstrate....It appears to be necessary, after the lessons taught by these occurrences, that some understanding should be arrived at with regard to missionary societies in China....It seems altogether unreasonable that the societies should exercise absolute freedom in going where they please, and then their agents should look to Her Majesty's Government for protection.'

"The scandals in connection with the present war in China, published in The Daily Mail, and other papers, of missionaries engaging with the troops in looting, and inciting the burning of the houses of the Chinese, must give these followers of the great Confucius --who taught a doctrine in no sense inferior to Christianity, and long before Christianity was known--the notion that missionaries are a kind of barbarian horde, whose real object is to plunder and massacre. The number of 'communicants' in Christian churches throughout China, after half a century's work, is only a few thousands. 'In Ichang,' writes Mr. Little, 'the Bibles that are distributed broadcast are largely used in the manufacture of boot soles,' and, further, that no respectable Chinaman would admit a missionary into his house. In other

parts of the country they [the Bibles] are employed to manufacture papier-mache tables.

"As to Africa one quotation may suffice. Sir H. H. Johnson, our present Special Commissioner for Uganda, and a man of many years' experience in Africa, says in *The Nineteenth Century*, November, 1887:

"It too often happens that, while the negro rapidly masters the rules and regulations of the Christian religion, he still continues to be gross, immoral, and deceitful....They [missionaries] may have succeeded in turning their disciples into professing Catholics, Anglicans, or Baptists; but the impartial observer is surprised to find that adultery, drunkenness, and lying are more apparent among the converts

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than among their heathen brethren.'

And again:

"I regret to say that, with a few--very rare--exceptions, those native African pastors, teachers, and catechists whom I have met have been all, more or less, bad men. They attempted to veil an unbridled immorality with an unblushing hypocrisy and a profane display of mouth-religion which, to an honest mind, seemed even more disgusting than the immorality itself. While it was apparent that not one particle of true religion had made its way into their gross minds, it was also evident that the spirit of sturdy manliness which was present in their savage forefathers found no place in their false, cowardly natures....

"It is not on the spread of Christianity that African missions can at present base their claim to our gratitude, respect, or support....In many important districts where they have been at work for twenty years they can scarcely number in honest statistics twenty sincere Christians--that is to say, twenty natives understanding in any degree the doctrines or dogmas they have been taught and striving to shape their conduct by their new principles. In other parts of Africa, principally British possessions, where large numbers of nominal Christians exist, their religion is discredited by numbering among its adherents all the drunkards, liars, rogues, and unclean livers of the colony. In the oldest of our West African possessions all the unrepentant Magdalenes of the chief city are professing Christians, and the most notorious one in the place would boast that she never missed going to church on communion Sunday.'

"Considerations of space prevent us following the missionary into other fields of his activity. The tale is pretty much the same wherever we turn. But we have said enough to show how grossly deceived the public are with reference to the doings of our missionaries and the result of their missions. Far be it from

us to say that there are not good and self-sacrificing men among them. But we assert that the fruit of their energies is so small, and the work left undone at home so great, that it is nothing less than a criminal act of human folly to give any special encouragement to the missionary movement."

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#### JACOB BECOMES ABRAHAM'S HEIR.

GEN. 28:10-22.--SEPT. 8.

"Surely the Lord is in this place."

ALTHOUGH Abraham had two sons, one of them, Isaac, was made the heir of the most of his possessions, and exclusively his heir as respected the divine covenants and promises. Similarly, Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob, who were twins; but the former, being born a few moments in advance of the latter, was, according to the laws of primogeniture, his father's heir. So far as we know he did inherit his father's estate, flocks, herds, etc. The divine promise to Abraham was evidently highly appreciated, not only by himself and Isaac, but also by Isaac's sons; but Esau, being less religiously inclined than his brother, set more store by his inheritance of his father's possessions than in his rights as the first-born to the divine covenants and mercies pertaining to the future. Jacob, on the contrary, had an opposite estimate of values. He was quite willing that his brother should have every earthly advantage, but he coveted the special blessing of God, promised

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to his grandfather Abraham, and renewedly covenanted to his father Isaac.

Severe have been the criticisms which have been levelled against poor Jacob because of his coveting earnestly the best gifts, which his brother despised. (1 Cor. 12:31.) He is freely described as a thief who stole his brother's birthright, who took advantage of his extremities, etc., and some even go so far as to suggest that his after tribulations were in the nature of divine judgments upon him on account of this transaction by which he became the legal owner of the divine blessing. To us it seems evident that there is a general misunderstanding of this transaction; for we note the fact that Jacob received no reproof from the Lord in respect to this matter, and that none of his experiences and disappointments, while working for his uncle Laban, are even hinted



to have been punishments for a wrong done to his brother Esau. On the contrary, the Scriptures uphold Jacob in every particular; not only the Old Testament records, but also the New Testament records of the transaction complimenting him upon his appreciation of the divine promise, and his willingness to sacrifice every earthly interest in order to secure it. As the course of Esau is held up to reprobation, the course of Jacob is in the same proportion held up for our appreciation and approval--the general feature of his course, if not every particular item therein.

The correct view of the situation, as we gather it from the divine record, is this: Esau loved his earthly interests chiefly; Jacob regretted that he was the second-born, not so much because it would hinder him from being the principal heir of his father's property, but chiefly because it would cut him off from being the channel of divine favor in respect to the future blessings which God had promised in his covenant with Abraham. He well knew that his brother Esau was irreligious and estimated his inheritance of the Abrahamic covenant very lightly. Hence it was, that one day when his brother returned from hunting, weary and hungry, and was attracted by some soup which Jacob had prepared, that he was willing to exchange anything he possessed for the satisfaction of his appetite--possibly, too, he may not have been too honest--he may have thought to sell the birthright for the soup, and to ignore the bargain subsequently. Indeed, this was the very course he pursued.

Esau's chagrin and tears later on, when he found that the birthright had really passed to Jacob, do not necessarily mean that he appreciated the heavenly blessing; but, rather, that he understood that he had disposed of all his rank and inheritance as respected his father's estate. Jacob, on the contrary, cared little or nothing for that part of the inheritance; his ambition being centered wholly upon the divine blessing and covenant. He was, therefore, quite willing to flee from his father's house, leaving all the earthly inheritance to his brother Esau, although it properly belonged to him according to the bargain. He counted earthly advantage but as loss and dross that he might gain the divine blessing. Even when, years later, he returned to the vicinity of his father's home, so far from making a demand upon Esau for the temporal things which he had bought from him, Jacob entirely ignored that part of the transaction, and took from Esau not one solitary thing that the latter really valued. Instead of demanding the pound of flesh, according to the contract of purchase, he sent his brother a peace offering, a present of sheep, etc.

Indeed, the entire course of Jacob, rightly understood, seems to us to have been a most noble one.

The unhappy part of the bargain was the deceiving of Isaac--Jacob's personating his brother Esau. We are to remember, however, that Jacob having bought all of Esau's rights, had become legally his representative, with full authority to take such steps as might be necessary to secure for himself justice;--to secure that which he had contracted for and paid for. In what manner Jacob could have done better to secure to himself that which the Lord's Word concedes he had legitimately purchased, might be open for discussion. But one item connected with it is not open for discussion; that the Lord did not reprove Jacob's earnest coveting of the heavenly promise--which led him, first of all, to the self-denial of giving up his own dinner for its procurement; and, secondly, his willingness to desert all of his earthly interests in his father's house, and to become a pilgrim and a stranger in the world, forsaking all things for this divine promise.

God attested his appreciation of such a character by specially appearing to Jacob that very night, and granting him a vision, in which he talked to him and confirmed to him the original promise made to Abraham and renewed to Isaac, saying, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it and to thy seed;...and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Any man who receives such unqualified divine approval and blessing we shall most surely refuse to call a thief, or any other evil name. On the contrary we shall hold him in high esteem, and shall commend to all of the spiritual seed of Israel to-day that they emulate the spirit of Jacob, and not the spirit of Esau--that they be ready at all times to exchange the pottage of earthly advantage, and to become pilgrims and strangers; outcasts from home and property, and from all earthly things, for the sake of being inheritors of the same heavenly promises --joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Indeed, only to this class will the divine blessings come. Our earthly neighbors and friends may speak slightly of us,--may charge us with ambitious designs, when they learn that we are seeking a heavenly Kingdom and joint-heirship with our Lord. They may charge that this is selfishness on our part. But the Lord makes no such charges. He tells us that he is pleased to see us so appreciative of the heavenly promises that we will be ready and glad to give up to others, to yield our earthly rights in any and every particular, if by any means we may win Christ and be found in him, and be sharers in his Kingdom.

To the worldly mind Jacob did a very foolish thing. He should not have thought of the Abrahamic promise as being anything of special value. He should

rather have sought out for himself the smoothest and easiest way through life, conciliating his brother Esau, etc. He was foolish to leave a home of wealth and many servants and flocks and herds to go out, a stranger in the world, to earn his own living, to begin at the bottom of the ladder. Quite possibly he felt a little of this sentiment himself, as he fixed a stone for his pillow and lay down on the ground to sleep on the first night of his flight. No doubt, he wondered whether or not he were pursuing a wrong course; whether or not the heavenly promise which he had so much appreciated would ever yield adequate returns. But the vision of the ladder reaching from his head up to heaven itself, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, and God at the other end speaking to him and encouraging him, and declaring to him that he recognized him as the heir of the Abrahamic promise, must have fully satisfied the mind of Jacob, and have made him thankful and appreciative of all the steps by which divine providence had thus far led his appreciative and faithful heart. The angels he might possibly understand to mean divine providences--divine care and supervision respecting himself and all his interests and affairs, while the rungs of the ladder would represent the various steps of the divine plan already known to God, by which the promise he had would reach fulfilment.

When he awakened, Jacob was not filled with self-conceit, nor did he say to himself, Evidently I am greater than either father Abraham or father Isaac, for I have never heard that God ever so appeared to them. Rather, he was filled with a spirit of reverence and of awe; and he said, This is a holy place; God is here. I will set up a large stone here as a monument, as a reminder of God's blessing. I may come back this way at some future time, and this stone will remind me, not only then, but afterward, of the great favor which I received of the Lord, in that he was willing to manifest himself to me, and to declare me the heir of his promises. Quite a good many of the Lord's people seem rather to lack the spirit of fear, of reverence, as respects the Almighty. We are not to forget the Apostle's words, that "Perfect love casteth out fear," but neither are we to forget the other Scripture which declares that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Whoever has not first received the spirit of reverence, cannot properly receive the spirit of love; and the love will never cast out the reverence, but rather increase it, casting out only the element of terror, of fright.

The Lord's words to Jacob in the vision, "I am with thee, and will keep thee, whithersoever thou goest,

and will bring thee again into this land," became a strength and assurance, a ballast, as it were, in Jacob's life and experiences; his faith grasped the situation, and he felt strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, in the word of his promise. He was ready now for any and all the experiences which might come to him, knowing that according to this promise all things would work out for his good. And so it is with the Lord's people of this Gospel age--spiritual Israel--the Church, the body of Christ. When we have believed God, and have trusted in his promises to the extent of forsaking all to inherit their blessing, it signifies our full consecration, our self-sacrifice in the divine service. Then it is that God speaks to us through his Word, and gives unto us exceeding great and precious promises, which affect, not only the interests of the life that now is, but also of that which is to come. Then it is that we are strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and that we are able to grasp the situation--that if God be for us the efforts of all who might be against us will prove futile. True, the promises which come to us are not exactly the same as those which were given to Jacob--they are better, grander, higher, than his--heavenly, instead of earthly; and correspondingly we have reason to rejoice, be strong in the Lord and go on our way rejoicing, even more than did Jacob.

Then Jacob made a vow unto the Lord--a promise, a solemn agreement: the basis of this agreement was the Lord's promise we have just quoted, that he should be brought back in safety, and that the Lord would be with him and bless him with the best experiences during his absence. Jacob's vow was based upon the divine proposition above mentioned--that if God would do this for him he would surely be his servant, and that forever. Not only would he worship and reverence him and obey him, as best he could understand his will and do it, but additionally he would honor him with whatever substance he would give him, to the extent of one-tenth.

So it is with the spiritual Israelite; when accepted of the Lord through Jesus, and assured of divine favor and blessing upon his pathway, he says to himself, in the language of the Psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord my God for all his benefits toward me?" What can I do in return? No true, noble mind can willingly receive many and continued blessings without desiring and seeking methods of acknowledgement of these mercies--without desiring to make some return in worship, in praise, in gratitude, in obedience.

To us also comes the desire to honor the Lord with our substance. And here the degree of our love and appreciation are further manifested. Oberlin, the poor French minister, reading of the Jewish

tithes, said to himself: "Well, I am sure that I, as a Christian, have three times as many blessings as the Jews had. If it was right for a Jew to give one-tenth of his property to God, surely I ought to give at least three times as much as that." Another minister has said, "The man who calls himself a Christian, and gives less than one-tenth of his income to the Lord, is meaner than Jacob, and has a lower standard than the king of Sodom, who was ready to give more than that to God's representative."

The standard of giving is one which has apparently perplexed the Lord's people for a long time. Our suggestion is that the divine favor bestowed upon the enlightened Christian calls not only for one-tenth or three-tenths of his property, but, on the contrary, calls for his all. To our understanding he who gives himself to the Lord in consecration gives not only his every mental talent and every physical power, but also gives every dollar that he possesses--yea, most valuable of all, he lays his life at the Master's feet, in harmony with the Apostle's words, "I beseech you,

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brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and your reasonable service." These sacrifices are earthly, and when offered and accepted the newly begotten mind or will is counted as a "new creature;" and at once this "new creature" becomes the steward, the caretaker, of the earthly nature and its affairs;--all that was devoted or sacrificed. Thenceforth it is the business of the "new creature" in Christ to use up in the divine service, as wisely, economically, and yet rapidly, as possible, all the earthly things, interests, hopes, ambitions, etc., that were originally presented to the Lord as a sacrifice. This complete sacrifice, this giving of our all to the Lord, is the Christian standard, and nothing short of this warrants us in considering ourselves footstep followers of our Lord Jesus Christ and his faithful apostles. Surely they gave all that they had. Surely we also must give up our little all if we would be joint-sacrificers and joint-heirs with the King of glory!

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ISRAEL--A PRINCE WITH GOD.

--GEN. 32:1-32.--SEPT. 15.--

Golden Text:--"Men ought always to pray and not to faint."--Luke 18:1.

FLEEING from his father's home, Jacob traveled a distance of nearly five hundred miles to Chaldea, the original home of his grandfather Abraham, where his uncle Laban still lived. His esteem for the promise of God had made him a pilgrim and a stranger, a wanderer from home, just as Abraham's faithfulness to the call had taken him from home in the opposite direction. While the blessings God had promised to Jacob were earthly and temporal, and in these respects differed from the promises which are made to spiritual Israelites, nevertheless, in order to prove Jacob's worthiness of the blessings--in order to test his faith in God's promises, he was permitted to pass through various trying experiences and disappointments. One of these was a love-affair with

Rachel, his cousin, for whom he served his uncle in all fourteen years, seven before he got her as a wife, and seven years afterward; his uncle taking a dishonest advantage of him in the arrangement. Nevertheless, we see Jacob's patience and persistency, and note with pleasure that he never for a moment seems to have doubted the promises of God that he should be blessed as the inheritor of the Abrahamic promise.

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," would seem to apply well to Jacob's career. So energetic was he in Laban's service, so successful in all that he undertook, so persevering, that his uncle soon considered his service indispensable, and

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was glad to make favorable terms with him to have him remain and take chief charge of his property. Shrewdly Jacob bargained for an interest in the increase of the flocks and herds, etc., as his salary, and practically became a partner. There was nothing dishonest in his making a bargain with Laban that all the brown sheep and streaked and speckled goats should be his; nor was there anything wrong in his scientifically increasing the proportionate numbers of these colored and speckled animals. Laban became aware, before long, that he had a very capable and shrewd son-in-law, and, moreover, that the Lord's blessing was with him. He fain would have had him remain permanently in Chaldea, but Jacob's mind was full of the Abrahamic promise and of the reiteration of that promise to himself in the vision at Bethel, and he desired to return to the land of promise. He surmised, however, not without good cause, that his uncle would use force to restrain him from leaving, or to take from him some of the cattle, etc., which were properly his under the contract, and hence he chose an opportunity for leaving when Laban was absent.

Laban was evidently a powerful sheik, having many servants, and indeed Jacob had become so by

this time, as the narrative shows that he was able, shortly after, to give away as a present to his brother Esau, 220 goats, 220 sheep, 30 camels, 50 head of cattle and 20 asses. But when Laban pursued, with the full intention of bringing back Jacob, his family and servants and flocks and herds, God interfered, warning Laban in a dream, saying, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob from good to bad"--margin. In consequence of this dream, and Jacob's subsequent fair statement of his side of the case, showing clearly that he had not wronged Laban, but that Laban had repeatedly dealt hardly with him, he was let go on his way in peace.

If we draw a lesson from these incidents respecting ourselves, as heirs of the promises of God, spiritual Israelites, it would be that while our hearts are full of rejoicing in God's promises we should not expect these to come to us wholly without our effort to secure them. If God has promised us spiritual blessings, we should put forth the effort to attain these, just as Jacob had put forth his efforts to attain the temporal blessings promised him. If adversity seems to go with us, and we meet with disappointments and more or less fraudulent conspiracy to take away from us our spiritual blessings, as Jacob met with disappointment which seemed for the time to interfere with his temporal blessings, we, like him, should patiently wait for the Lord, and trust and hope and labor on, knowing that the Lord will bring out the promised results in the end; knowing that he is on our part, and greater than all they that be against us.

We noticed in previous lessons the peaceable disposition of Abraham, and also of Isaac, and now we note that Jacob not only left home and abandoned his share in the father's house, and family property belonging to the birthright he had purchased, rather than quarrel with his brother, but that similarly in dealing with his uncle he refused to quarrel; he submitted himself; he trusted to the Lord to bring out the results rather than to his own strength for a conflict, either mental or physical. The Lord apparently would have the spiritual Israelites learn this lesson: "Seek peace and pursue it;" "Patiently wait for the Lord, and he will bring it to pass." It is not of God's arrangement that the spiritual Israelites should

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contend with carnal weapons; but rather that they should submit themselves to the powers that be, learning the lessons which accompany such submission; and have developed in them the faith, the trust, the hope in God, necessary to a maintenance of their relationship to him, and growth in his grace.

As Jacob and his caravan approached Palestine his confidence in God, and his reliance upon the Lord's

promise to bless him, did not hinder him from taking a wise, generous, reasonable course for the conciliation of his brother. He did not stand upon his rights, and say: I purchased the inheritance, and was obliged to flee from it, and now I am differently situated, and will seek my first opportunity to take from Esau the cattle and substance which he received of my father's estate which are rightfully mine, and should there be any quarrel in the matter, let him look to his own side, for right is on my side and I may exert as much force as is necessary to obtain it. Quite to the contrary of this, Jacob said to himself: I care nothing for the earthly inheritance, I abandoned that all when I left home, and I do not intend to lay any claim to it, now or ever. I merely got what Esau did not appreciate, and now, if he can come to realize that I am not after the property, it will assuage his wrath, his malice, his envy. On the contrary, I will be generous to him; I will send him a valuable present, thus showing him that so far from wishing to take from him earthly goods I am disposed to give him more. Moreover, I will send such a message by my servants as will show him that I treat him as my superior--my lord, and that I rank myself as his inferior. He shall see that I am neither wishing to take the honors of his birthright nor its earthly emoluments, though all of these were purchased--I resign freely all of these temporal good things and honors, that I may have the Lord's favor, as represented in the original covenant with grandfather Abraham. He carried out his program successfully, and Esau became his friend. The lesson for spiritual Israelites along this line is,--We should not be sticklers for full justice and the last penny in earthly matters. Rather we may use the earthly mammon generously to make and keep the peace, and to forward our spiritual interests. Our readiness to do this will measure or gauge our appreciation of the spiritual interests, in comparison to which earthly blessings, "Mammon" should be esteemed as loss and dross.

#### A MODEL PRAYER.

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Jacob's prayer at the time he was anticipating a meeting with Esau is recorded in this lesson, and may be considered one of the best examples of prayer to be found in God's Word. It is so full of confidence and trust in God. It recounts the original promise to Abraham, its renewal to Isaac, and its second repetition to Jacob at Bethel, and the Lord's promise there given him, that he would bring him again to his home country. It shows the humility of Jacob's mind, which cried out, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shown



unto thy servant; for with my staff [only] I passed over this Jordan [when fleeing from home], and now I am become two bands [great companies]." He tells the Lord of his fear of Esau, yet shows that his fear is offset by his confidence in the Almighty. It was at this time, and doubtless in answer to this prayer, that the angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob, and so full of faith in the power of God, and in the promise of God was Jacob that he laid physical hold upon the angel, declaring that he would never let go until he got a blessing.

Here, the lesson proper, relating to Jacob's struggle with the angel, comes in. The angel appeared as a man, as was frequently the case in olden times; Jacob had recognized him, nevertheless, and laying hold of him urged that he as God's representative, sent to meet him, should give him a blessing. We cannot suppose for a moment that the angel was not powerful enough to release himself from the grasp of Jacob, and hence that the wrestling and struggle between them kept up until the morning light, the angel vainly pleading, "Let me go," and Jacob as persistently holding on and declaring, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." We must suppose, on the contrary, that the Lord was well pleased to bless Jacob, and had sent the angel for this very purpose; and that the circumstances were intended as an opportunity to draw out Jacob's longing desires in this respect; to demonstrate to himself how much he really desired the Lord's favor, the Lord's blessing. And when the desired result had been obtained--when Jacob had evidenced the intensity of his desire for harmony with God and such blessing as God alone could give--then the blessing came--Jacob's victory. Not that Jacob prevailed to get from God, through his angel, something the Lord was not pleased to grant; but that he prevailed to obtain the coveted blessing by manifesting the zeal, the energy, the patience, and the faith which God was pleased to see and reward.

The lesson of the spiritual Israelite in this circumstance is in harmony with our Lord's words, "Men ought continuously to pray and not to faint." God wishes us to be persistent, and our persistence measures and indicates the depth of our desires. If the blessing in answer to our prayer does not come in the moment of asking we are to continue "instant in prayer,"--patiently waiting for the Lord's due time, faithfully trusting him that he is willing to give the blessing which he promised, even though he may for a time withhold it with a view to our becoming the more earnest in seeking it.

Although Jacob was a natural man, not a "new creature in Christ Jesus," nevertheless his prayer is a model one, in that he did not specify even the earthly things which had been promised him. All he asked was a blessing, in whatever manner the Lord might

be pleased to give it. Alas, how many spiritual Israelites seem to have a much less keen appreciation of proprieties in such matters than had Jacob! Many ask and receive not because they ask amiss, for things to be consumed upon their earthly desires--wealth or fame or temporal good things. (Jas. 4:3.) How many forget that the Lord has already promised to take care of the temporal necessities of his spirit-begotten children, and to do for them better than they would know how to ask or to think. How few seem to remember that as new creatures our conditions and desires should be specially for the things that pertain

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to the new creature, and that it is this class of blessing the Lord invites us to ask for and to wrestle to obtain, assuring us that as earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, so our Heavenly Father is pleased to give the holy spirit to those who ask him. (Luke 11:13.) If the Lord's consecrated people could all be brought to the point where the chief aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, what a blessing it would mean! If, then, they should wrestle with the Lord until the breaking of the day their hold upon him would be sure to bring the desired blessing. The Lord has revealed himself to his people for the very purpose of giving them this blessing; nevertheless, he withholds it until they learn to appreciate and earnestly desire it.

Jacob got the blessing and with it a change of name. He was thenceforth called Israel, which signifies "Mighty with God." This new name would thenceforth be continually a source of encouragement to him, an incentive to fresh zeal and trust in the one whose blessing he had secured. All of Jacob's posterity adopted this name. They were all known as children of Israel, or Israelites; for God acknowledged the name as applicable to all of the nation. Similarly, in antitype, we have Christ Jesus our Lord, the true, the antitypical Israel, the one who, through faith and obedience to the Father, has prevailed, has overcome the world and the flesh and the Adversary, and has received the divine blessing as the result of his struggle. He has been highly exalted and is declared now to be prince or ruler of the kings of the earth. He has sat down with the Father in his throne. --Rev. 1:5.

Nor does the analogy end here; for, as Jacob had twelve sons, so our Lord Jesus had twelve apostles; and these, and all who come into Christ through their ministry of the gospel, are accepted as the true, the spiritual, Israel. The same name belongs to all of

these that belongs to the Head. As with fleshly Israel there were some who were "Israelites indeed," and others who were not, but of the synagogue of Satan, in the spiritual Israel there are nominal and real Israelites; and only the latter will ultimately obtain the blessing and be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord. And the name, "Victor," or "Mighty with God," will be a name which will apply to everyone of the Lord's faithful ones in the same manner that it applied to Jesus himself. Each one will be required to manifest his loyalty to the Lord, his faith, his trust, and only those who love the Lord and the promise he has made that they will hold on to his promise, and will not let him go without a blessing--only such will receive the great blessing, only such will be able to overcome the world, the flesh and the Adversary. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith"--in God and in his promises.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING DIVINE FAVORS.

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Jacob had a method of marking the special manifestations of divine providence,--as when he called the place in which he wrestled with the angel Peniel; as a reminder that there he had been privileged to see, representatively, the Lord's face, to receive the Lord's blessing, the light of his countenance. Similarly, it is profitable to the spiritual Israelites that we should make note in some special manner of all the Lord's mercies and providences toward us. Many feel poor as respects the Lord's favor and blessing, simply because they have failed to let them make a proper impression upon their hearts at the time they were received. Divine favors are soon lost from our leaky earthen vessels unless special notation is made at the time, either upon the tablets of memory, or in some other manner to refresh memory. Doubtless we would all have more Bethels and more Peniels did we but follow the course of setting up some kind of monuments, and there entering into some special covenant or vow with the Lord in return for his mercies. Quite in line with this thought, that Christians generally have multitudinous blessings, and favors more than they fully recognize, the Allegheny Church has for some years held "Cottage Meetings" in various quarters every Wednesday evening, for prayer, praise and testimony. And the testimonies called for are not the "years ago" sort, however good, but the fresh living experience of the week. And as each seeks for fresh evidences of divine love and watchcare daily, each finds that he has far more cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving and encouragement than he would have been aware of without such watchfulness and notation. Let us daily and weekly as well

as yearly rear to God our Ebenezers, if we would increase our faith and joy and love.

As Saul of Tarsus, in receiving his blessing of the Lord, received also a thorn in the flesh, which buffeted him continually through the remainder of his experiences, but which he learned ultimately to appreciate as a channel of divine blessing, as a reminder of divine favor, so it was with Jacob. At the very time that he was wrestling with the angel and getting the blessing, he received a wound, a troublesome reminder of the blessing, which continued with him probably through the remainder of his days, causing him to limp. The record is that the angel touched him in the hollow of his thigh, probably touched the sciatic nerve, causing the sinew to shrink and a slight dislocation of the joint. The lesson not only was one for Jacob himself to the remainder of his days, leading him to remember his dependence upon the Lord, and that he owed everything he possessed to the divine blessing, but it served afterward with his posterity as a continual reminder of the same thing; for the record is that thenceforth the Israelites would not eat of this sinew from any animal. Jacob's "thorn in the flesh," no doubt, served to keep him humble, even as Paul's served to remind him that he was what he was by the grace of God, and not in any wise of himself. Similarly, the Lord permits certain weaknesses of the flesh to affect his spiritual children in the present time favorably. Undoubtedly some of our difficulties and trials, physical as well as others, are amongst our greatest blessings, working out for us a better portion in the future, by working in us faith, patience, true reliance upon the Lord.

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