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CALAMITIES—WHY PERMITTED

"There were present at that season some who told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

"Or, those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."—Luke 13: 1-5.

Noble and good in the sight of both God and man are the generous impulses of charity and sympathy, awakened by great calamities in recent years. And when this is said, it leaves little more to be said favorable to calamities or their influence.

While these charities should not be misconstrued to signify that God's consecrated saints are rapidly multiplying—for many of the charitable are not the consecrated, and some are even infidels—yet they are an evidence that at least some of the original God-likeness of our race remains; that it has not been wholly obliterated by the degradation of the fall, nor wholly poisoned by the bad theology of the dark ages. While we live in a period, perhaps, as selfish and money-loving as any known to history, yet millions of dollars are generously poured forth to aid suffering humanity. And yet many who in times of calamitous distress show that they have a tender spot somewhere in their hearts, would and do at other times lend time and brain and skill to the arts of war, and in designing the most horrible implements of warfare; and on occasions when bitter passions are aroused would relentlessly and pitilessly slaughter a thousand times as many as meet death by the accidents of nature. Yet, for all this showing of the two elements in the same men, we rejoice that the God-like element of sympathy exists, as a partial offset to the devilish qualities of selfishness and heartlessness, which, under the degrading influence of man's fallen state, have grown strong during the past six thousand years.

Preparatory to looking carefully, reasonably and Scripturally at the question, Why does God permit calamities? let us note some of the absurd views of some Christian people, who should know God's Word, and character much better than they seem to know them. Some, whose hearts in the presence of great calamities overflow with sympathy and God-like love (which proves their hearts better and more sound than their theology), declare that God is the director and cause of all disasters and troubles. Hence, whatever men may do to alleviate such distresses would, according to this false view, be so much done in opposition to God; and whatever love and sympathy they feel, is so much sentiment opposed to God's sentiments—which are thus made to appear malicious.

But it seems a very slight thing to charge the Almighty with causing earth's calamities—in comparison with the general thought of Christendom, that God had premeditated, planned, from before the foundation of the world, their everlasting torture—the direst calamity imaginable. Tornadoes, earthquakes, epidemics of disease, would be mercies and kindnesses in comparison with such diabolical schemes and preparations as are accredited to the Lord by the vast majority of his children, who suffer still from the superstition, ignorance and blindness of the "dark ages," and its creeds. Alas, that such false conceptions of the justice and love of our Creator should ever have gained a foothold in our minds—to distort our every conception of every right and good quality. O Lord, grant Thy people a great opening of the eyes of their understanding, that we may be able to comprehend with all saints, the lengths and the breadths, the heights and the depths of Thy love and mercy toward Thy creatures through Jesus Christ, our Lord! The difficulty is that men have been led to consider the very Bible which declares God's true character of love and justice as authority for these devilish doctrines; and these false interpretations were originated in the "dark ages" by those who instigated or assisted in burning, and otherwise tormenting, real Bible believers.

God's Sympathy—How Shown.

When we declare that whatever there is of love and sympathy in man is only the remnant of the original divine likeness in which Adam was created, not wholly effaced by six thousand years of degradation in sin, it

*See "What Say the Scriptures About Hell." Price 15c post paid.

at once arouses the question: In what way does God manifest his sympathy and love in such emergencies, when even the hearts of fallen human beings are touched, with sympathy and love—to acts of kindness and succor?

A correct answer is, that God is represented in every act of kindness done, whether by his children or by the world; because their actions under such circumstances are the result of their possession of some measure of his character and disposition. This answer is not full enough to be satisfactory; but, thank God, a fuller investigation, in the light of his Word, reveals a boundless sympathy on his part—providing an abundant succor, which is shortly to be revealed.

But why does not God immediately succor his creatures from calamities? Or, to go still further back, why does he, who has all wisdom to know and all power to prevent, permit calamities—cyclones, earthquakes, tidal waves, destructive floods, pestilences, etc.? And while we are about it, we may as well include all the evils which God could prevent, if he would—all the forms of sickness and pain and death; every manner of destruction—wars, murders, etc.; everything which causes pain or trouble to those willing to do and to be in harmony with God? The answer to one of these questions will be the answer to every question on the subject; for all human evils are related and have a common source or cause.

To comprehend this cause fully, we must go far back to the very beginning of sickness, pain, death and sorrow—to the Garden of Eden, where neither famine, pestilence, cyclone, earthquake, nor death in any form was permitted; where man and his surroundings and conditions were pronounced "very good," even by God himself, and must certainly have been greatly appreciated by man, who had to be driven out and prevented from returning by the fiery sword which kept the way of access to the life-sustaining fruits of the Garden.

And this Creator, who so graciously provided for the life and comfort of his creatures, and who communed with them and gave them his blessing and the promise of everlasting life upon the sole condition of continued obedience—how came it that he should so change in his attitude toward his creatures as to drive them from the enjoyments of those Eden comforts and blessings, out into the unprepared earth—to toil and weariness and insufficient sustenance, and thus to death?

We must remember that the Creator specially or miraculously "prepared" in advance the Garden of Eden, only, for man's comfortable enjoyment of the favors of life, and a fitting place for his trial. God foresaw the fall of his creature, and provided that the penalty of sin, "dying thou shalt die," instead of being suddenly inflicted, as by a lightning stroke or other speedy method, should be served out gradually by conflict with the unfavorable conditions (of climate, sterility of soil, storms, miasma, thorns, weeds, etc.), of the unprepared earth; the preparation of which would require seven thousand years more to entirely fit it for the habitation of perfect, obedient, human children of God.

Man a Convict.

Adam and Eve, therefore, went forth from Eden convicts, under sentence of death self-convicted under the most just of all judges, their Creator and friend. The convicts esteemed it a mercy to be let die gradually rather than suddenly; while to the Creator and Judge this was expedient because of His plan for their future, in which such experience with imperfect conditions would be of great value—a plan for the increase of the race, and for its discipline and final redemption and restoration.

The death penalty, inflicted in this manner, God foresaw would, through experience, furnish man such a lesson on the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its baneful results as would never need to be repeated—a lesson, therefore, which would profit all who learn it to all eternity; especially when Christ's Millennial reign of righteousness shall manifest in contrast the fruits of righteousness. God also designed that the exercise of man's mental faculties in coping with the disturbances and imperfections of his surroundings and in inventing reliefs, and the exercise of his moral faculties in combating his own weaknesses, and the calls upon his sympathy, should prove beneficial.

Had the sentence of God (in addition to a loss of Eden's comforts and experience with sin and death) condemned his creatures to an eternity of torment and anguish, as so many now believe and teach, who could defend such a sentence, or call the Judge just, or loving, or in any sense good? Surely no one of a sound mind!

But when it is seen that the Scriptures teach that death (extinction), and not life in torment, was the penalty pronounced and inflicted, all is reasonable. God has a right to demand perfect obedience from his perfect creature when placed under perfect conditions, as in Adam's case. And the decree that none shall live everlastingly except the perfect, is both a wise and a just provision for the everlasting welfare of all God's creatures.

There is a depth of meaning in the Creator's words, as he sent forth his fairly tried and justly condemned creatures, among the thorns and briars, to labor and pain, and sorrow, and disease and to be subject to the casualties and calamities of nature's unfinished work. He said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake"; i.e., The earth in general is in its present imperfect condition for your profit and experience; even though you may not esteem it so. Adam would have sought to retain continual access to the garden fruits, to avoid severe labor and to enable him to fully sustain his vital powers and live forever; but in loving consideration for man's ultimate good, no less than in justice, and in respect for his own sentence of death, God prevented this and guarded the way back to the Garden; in order that the death sentence should not fail of execution, in order that sinners should not live forever and thus perpetuate sin.

The children of the condemned pair inherited their fall, imperfections and weaknesses, and also the penalties of these; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" The whole race, therefore, as convict laborers, have not only been learning what sin and evil are, and their undesirable results, but by their labor and skill they are serving to prepare the earth and bring it as a whole to the full perfection designed for it, and illustrated in the condition of Eden—ready for a further purpose of God of which none but his children (and not all of them) are made aware through the Scriptures.

We can see, then, that labor and toil were prescribed for man's good. They have kept him so employed that he could not plan and consummate evil to the same extent that he otherwise would have done. And as the earth becomes more fertile, approaching perfection, man's vitality becomes less; so that now, with greater leisure to plot and scheme and grow wise in evil, the period of life in which to do so is shorter. What a mercy in disguise is present shortness of life, under present circumstances! Were some of our "shrewd business men" who accumulate millions of money, and grasp great power in a few short years, to live 930 years, as Adam did, what might we expect but that one man, or at most a syndicate or trust, would own every foot of land, control every drop of water and every breath of air, and have the rest of the race for their dupes and slaves?

God's action, then, in exposing his creatures to death, pain and various calamities, it must be seen, was, first of all, one which related only to his present life on earth, and to no other; for of any continuance of life, in any other locality, God did not give him the slightest intimation. On the contrary, the words of the penalty were: "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return"—"dying thou shalt die."—Gen. 3:19; 2:17, margin.

True, God gave promise that, somehow and at some time, a son of the woman should accomplish a deliverance. But it was then vague and indefinite, merely a glimmer of hope, to show them that though God dealt severely with them, and on lines of law and justice, yet he sympathized with them, and would, ultimately, without violating justice or ignoring his own righteous sentence of death, bring succor.

God Just, Yet the Justifier of Sinners.

Paul tells us that God adopted a method for the recovery of man from that original sentence of death that came upon all as the result of Adam's fall, which would show the justice of his sentence and the unchangeableness of his decrees, and yet permit such as are sick of sin to use their experience wisely, and to return to harmony and obedience to their Creator and his just and reasonable laws and regulations.

This Divine Plan, by which God could remain just and unchangeable in his attitude toward sin and sinners, and yet release the well-disposed from the penalty of sin (death and disfavor), is stated by the Apostle in Rom. 3: 24-26.

In brief, this plan provided that another man who, by obedience to the law of God, should prove his worthiness of eternal life, might, by the willing sacrifice of the

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life to which he was thus proved worthy, redeem the forfeited life of Adam and of his posterity who lost life through him; for it is written, "In Adam all die," and "By the offence of one, sentence of condemnation came on all men."—1 Cor. 15: 22; Rom. 5:12, 18.

The Redeemer.

Since the condemnation to death was thus upon all men, and since another man newly created and inexperienced as Adam was, though just as favorably situated, would have been similarly liable to fall, God devised the marvelous plan of transferring his own begotten Son from the spiritual to the human nature and thus provided a man fit for sacrifice—"the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all"; "who, though he was rich [though he was possessed of glory and honor and riches and wisdom and power above both angels and men], nevertheless for our sakes became poor (humbling himself to a lower nature, that of a man, becoming obedient even unto death) that we through his poverty might be made rich."—1 Tim. 2: 5, 6; 2 Cor. 8: 9.

Thus the one first created, "the first-born of all creation" (Col. 1: 15), "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3: 14), the one who had known God's character longer, more fully and more intimately than any other being, the one in fact who had been Jehovah's chief and honored, intelligent and active Agent in the creation of angels as well as of men, the one by whom all things were made, and aside from whom not anything was made (John 1: 3; Col. 1: 16, 17)—this great being Jehovah's Prime Minister, and next to himself in dignity, the Almighty entrusted with the great work of redeeming and restoring mankind.

To redeem them would cost the sacrifice of the Son's own life as their ransom price, with all that that implied of suffering and self-denial. To restore them (such of them as should prove worthy—whosever wills) would require the exercise of divine power to open the prison-house of death, and to break the fetters of sin and prejudice and superstition, and give to all the redeemed the fullest opportunity to decide whether they love good or evil, righteousness or sin, truth or error—to destroy all who love and work iniquity, and to develop and perfect again all who love and choose life upon its only condition—righteousness.

To know the Father's plan and his privilege of co-operation in its execution, was to appreciate it and joyfully engage therein. Willingly our Lord Jesus laid aside the glory of the higher nature which he had had with the Father from before the creation of man. (John 17: 5; 2 Cor. 8: 9). He was "made flesh" (John 1: 14; Heb. 2: 14), became a man at thirty years of age, and then began the great work of sacrifice, the sacrifice of himself, for the cancellation of the sin of the first man, to recover Adam and his race by dying on their behalf, as their Redeemer. By giving Justice the price of their liberty from Divine condemnation, he secures the legal right to cancel the sentence of condemnation to death against them, and hence the right to resurrect or restore to life and to all the lost estate and blessings, "whomsoever he wills." (John 5: 21.) And he wills to restore all who shall prove worthy. And to prove who are worthy of everlasting life will be the object of the Millennial reign.—1 Tim. 2: 4; 2 Peter 3: 9.

This fact that our Lord's mission to earth at the first advent was to die for the race, that he might undo the results of Adam's transgressions, and to secure the right to resurrect them and restore them, is clearly stated by the Apostle.—See, Rom. 5: 6-12, 16-19, 21; 1 Cor. 15: 21-24.

By His Knowledge.

Though tempted in all points like as we (his "brethren") are, he ignored his own will (Luke 22: 42; John 4: 34; 5: 30) and all suggestions from others contrary to God's plan (Matt. 16: 23; Luke 4: 4, 8, 12), and obeyed God implicitly. And therein lay the secret of his success. Temptations did not overcome him, as they did even the perfect man Adam, because of the fullness of his consecration to the Divine will and plan; and this fullness of consecration and trust was the result of his intimate knowledge of the Father and his unbounded confidence in his wisdom, love and power. He had knowledge of his previous existence as a spirit being with the Father (John 17: 5; 8: 12, 13). Our Lord's success, then, was the result of being rightly exercised by his knowledge of God; as it is written, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, while bearing their iniquities."—Isa. 53: 11.

The suggestive thoughts here are two: First, that even a perfect man failed in trial because of the lack of full appreciation of God's greatness, goodness and resources. Secondly, the knowledge (as in Satan's case) would be valueless, if unaccompanied by sincere love and consecration to God's will. A lesson further, to Christ's "brethren," is that knowledge and consecration are both essential to their following in the Master's footsteps.

Among men he and his mission were not really known; even his most ardent followers and admirers at first supposed that his mission was merely to heal some of the sick Jews, and to advance their nation to the rulership of a dying world, and to be a teacher of morals; they saw not at first that his mission was to lay the foundation of a world-wide empire, which should include not only the living, but also the dead, of Adam's race, and which should insure everlastingly peace and

joy to all the worthy, by eradicating, forever, sin and all who love it after fully comprehending its character in contrast with righteousness. Even his friends and disciples were slow to realize these grand dimensions of his work, though he continually repeated them and bore witness, saying: "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many"; "Verily, verily, the hour is coming* when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear [heed] shall live." "The Lord hath sent me to preach deliverance to the captives [of death] and recovering of sight to the [mentally, morally and physically] blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised"—injured by the Adamic fall.—Matt. 20: 28; John 5: 25; Luke 4: 18.

The sacrifice of the Redeemer's all, as man's ransom price, was offered at the time he was thirty years old—at his baptism. And there the offering was accepted by Jehovah, as marked by his anointed with the spirit. Thenceforth, he spent the three and a half years of his ministry in using up the consecrated life already offered; and this he completed at Calvary. There the price of our liberty was paid in full. "It is finished!" It holds good; it is acceptable by the grace of God, as the offset and covering for every weakness and sin of the first man, and his posterity, resulting either directly, or indirectly, from the first disobedience and its fall. All that is necessary since, for a full return to divine favor and communion and to an inheritance in the Paradise of God, which the great Redeemer in due time has promised to establish in the entire earth, as at first in the Garden of Eden, is a recognition of sin, full repentance, and a turning from sin to righteousness. Christ will establish righteousness in the earth by the Kingdom of God, which he has promised shall be established and for which he has bidden us wait and hope, and for which he taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven."

"YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH."

Death, in whatever form it may come, is perishing, ceasing to exist. All mankind, through Adam's transgression, came under condemnation to loss of life, to "perish," "to be as though they had not been." And only one way of escape from that condemnation has been provided (Acts 4: 12). Because of Christ's redemptive work all may escape perishing by accepting the conditions of life. During Christ's Millennial reign those whom Pilate slew, and those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and all others of the race, sharers in the death penalty now upon all, will be released from the tomb, brought to a knowledge of Christ, his ransom work, and their privilege of repentance and full restitution to divine favor—life, etc. Thus seen, the Adamic death penalty was—to perish; but it will be cancelled by Christ's Ransom, so far as it relates to those who, when brought to know the Redeemer, shall forsake sin. No longer should it be regarded as a perished condition, but as a "sleep" (John 11: 11-14; Matt. 9: 24; 1 Thes. 4: 14; 5: 10), from which the Redeemer will awaken all, to give each who did not have it before being overtaken by Adamic death, a full, individual opportunity to escape perishing and live forever. Yet, finally, all who shall fail to repent and lay hold upon the gracious Life-giver shall perish; they will fail to obtain the full restitution provided; they shall never see [perfect] life [full restitution] for the wrath or condemnation of God will abide on them, condemning them to death as unworthy of life. As this will be their second condemnation, and an individual one, so the penalty will be the Second Death, which will not be general to the race, but only upon such individuals as refuse God's favor of reconciliation and life.

Under that blessed and wise rule of Christ as King of nations,* all the evil, depraved tendencies inherited from the fall and from the six thousand years of degradation, will be restrained, held in check, by superhuman wisdom, love and power; and all being brought to a clear knowledge of the truth in its every phase, all will be fairly and fully tested. The lovers of righteousness will be perfected and given control of the perfected earth, while those loving unrighteousness under that clear light of knowledge and experience will, as followers of Satan's example, be utterly destroyed in the Second Death. The first death is the destruction to which all were subjected by Adam's sin, but from which all will be recovered by the Lord Jesus' sacrifice; and the Second Death is that destruction which will overtake those who, though redeemed by Christ from the first death, shall, by their own wilful conduct, merit

*Sinaitic MS. omits the words "and now is."

*Not visible in flesh, however, for he is no longer flesh, having been highly exalted again after he had finished the flesh life by giving it as our ransom price

and receive death again. This Second Death means their utter destruction, without hope of another redemption or resurrection, for Christ dieth no more. Nor could any good reason for their further trial be assigned; for the trial granted during the Millennial age under Christ, as Judge, will be a thorough and fair and individual and final trial.—1 Cor. 15: 25.

As our Lord Jesus used the calamities of his time as illustrating the just penalty against all who do not flee sin and lay hold upon the Redeemer and Life-giver, so we use them. We declare that destruction, perishing, is the just penalty of sin taught in the Scriptures. We denounce as un-Scriptural the eternal torment theory, so generally believed by God's children, as one of Satan's blasphemous slanders against God's character. And we proclaim that only by faith in the Redeemer, repentance and reformation, can the gift of God, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, be obtained. Whoever hears the offer of life is responsible to the extent that he understands it; and according to God's promise and plan all mankind shall, at some time, either during the Gospel age, or during the coming Millennial age, be brought to a full, clear appreciation of these conditions and opportunities, with fullest opportunities for repentance and life.

Calamities, then, are to be regarded, generally, as accidents, attributable to human imperfection and lack of experience, or to disturbances incidental to preparation of the earth for its more quiet and perfect condition during the Sabbath, or Seventh Thousand years (the Millennium), and for its state of absolute perfection forever after the Millennium, during which, under Christ's direction, it shall be given its finishing touches and be made fully ready for the redeemed race, which his reign shall prepare also to rightly use and enjoy and rule the perfected earth. And man is exposed to these calamities and accidents, and not defended from them by his Almighty Creator, because, first, man is a sinner condemned to death, and is not to be spared from it, but must be allowed to pass through it; and secondly, by the present experiences with trouble and sorrow and pain, all of which are but elements of death, mankind is learning a lesson and laying up in store an experience with sin and its awful concomitants, sorrow, pain and death, which will be valuable in that Millennial Age, when each shall be required to choose between good and evil. The evil they now learn first; the good, and its blessed results and rewards, but dimly seen at present, will be fully displayed then—during the Millennium.

Special Provisions for the Saints.

But some one inquires, If this be God's plan for redeeming the world by the death of his Son, and justifying and restoring all who believe in and accept of him, and obey and love righteousness, why did not the Millennial reign of Christ, with its favorable conditions and powerful restraints, begin at once, as soon as Christ had given the ransom-price at Calvary; instead of compelling those who would follow righteousness to "sail through bloody seas" and suffer for righteousness' sake? Or else, why not have postponed the giving of the ransom until the close of the six thousand years of evil and the inauguration of the Millennial reign? Or, at least, if the present order of events is best in the Divine wisdom, why does not God specially protect from calamities, accidents, sorrow, pain, death, etc., those who have fully accepted of Christ and who have sacrificed and are using their all in the service of righteousness?

Ah, yes! The subject would be incomplete were this point left untouched. The consecrated saints, the Church of the Gospel Age, are a "peculiar people," different from the remainder of the race; and God's dealings with them are peculiar and different also. Calamities, great and small, continually involve God's saints as well as the worldly, and seemingly as much by accident. But herein the Lord provides tests for our faith—intended either to turn us back, if we have not sufficient faith to permit further progress, or to develop and strengthen and increase our faith if we have it, and will exercise it under Divine direction.

The Lord's assurance to his truly consecrated, spirit-begotten children is, that all things shall work together for good to them. (Rom. 8: 28.) God assures them that having entered into a new relationship with him, all of their affairs are henceforth his affairs and concern. Consequently, they may realize fully, that however the world may be subject to accidents, incidental to present imperfect conditions under the curse, God's "little ones" are his peculiar care. Not a hair of their heads may suffer injury without his knowledge and consent. (Matt. 10: 30; Luke 12: 7.) How wonderful! And yet how reasonable when we recall the assurance that, "Like as a father, pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him."—Psalm 103: 13.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

"He preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection." (Acts 17:18.) "And when they heard of the Resurrection of the dead some mocked." (Acts 17:32.) "If there be no Resurrection of the dead . . . then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain . . . then is not Christ raised, and . . . ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."—1 Cor. 15: 13-18.

When we remember that the word "resurrection" is used no less than thirty-seven times in the New Testament, besides various other words of similar import; and when we remember that all the prominent creeds of Christendom declare faith in a resurrection as an integral and essential part of Scriptural doctrine and of the hope of eternal life—in view of these facts, and of the strong language of the texts above quoted, whose inspiration is conceded by all Christians, it may seem strange that we should ask any Christian the question, Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead?

Nevertheless, we have serious reason to doubt that a belief in the resurrection of the dead prevails amongst Christians to any considerable extent; and it is because

we believe the resurrection to be a very important doctrine in its connection with other doctrines of Scripture (throwing light upon other doctrines), that we desire to call general attention to this subject and to invite an examination of our question in the light of facts and of Scripture; our hope being that after a careful examination of the subject many more of God's people will come to believe—consistently, logically, Scripturally—in a resurrection.

Resurrection Rarely Chosen Now as a Subject for Sermons.

"Like priest, like people," is an old adage, which implies that the views of the teaching or clerical class on any subject may safely be considered an index to the views of their parishioners. It is not difficult to ascertain the views of the clergy of all denominations on the subject of the resurrection of the dead; for, although that topic is rarely chosen for discourse, except upon Easter Sunday, it is, nevertheless, indissolubly attached to every funeral service; and these numerous occasions, we believe, amply justify us in the statement that both the clergy of all denominations and their people have little or no faith in a resurrection of the dead.

True, it is customary on every funeral occasion to read the words of the Apostle Paul, in which he sets forth the resurrection as the Christian's hope (1 Cor. 15), but this seems to be a mere concession on the part of the officiating minister. He feels it to be his duty to read something on the subject, but his remarks following the reading prove most conclusively that, so far from believing that the person whose corpse is about to be buried is dead, he believes, and instructs his hearers that they should believe that their friend and neighbor is "more alive than he ever was." Frequently, indeed, he plays directly into the hands of the "Spiritualists" and "Christian Scientists," by telling the audience that the spirit of their dead friend is with them in the room, hovering over them; and that if permitted to speak he would say to them, "Dry your tears; weep not for me; I am far better off in glory."

To Many Death has Become a Delusion and Not a Reality.

Indeed, it has come to be the general belief among Christian people that death is a delusion, and not a reality; that people merely seem to die, and do not die; that they merely experience a change to a higher form of being; that so-called "Christian Scientists" are quite correct in saying, "There is no death."

Whoever holds such views does not, cannot consistently believe in "the resurrection of the dead"; because if on one is dead, how can there be a resurrection of the dead? Wherein would be the sense in speaking of a resurrection of the dead to life, if they already have life more abundantly than they possessed it before they seemingly died?

But thousands of ministers would answer us, saying, "When speaking of the resurrection, we merely mean a resurrection of the body—the bodies which we bury are all to come forth again from the grave, and the spirits which parted from them in death are to be rehabilitated in those bodies in the resurrection. This is what we mean by resurrection."

Well, well! Who would have supposed such inconsistency on the part of so many learned and well-meaning men! Before taking up the Scriptural side of the question, to show that such expectations are at variance with the Scripture teaching, let us examine the proposition of these ministers in the light of its own inconsistency.

"Consistency, Thou Art a Jewel."

(1) They tell us that the deceased is "far better off" in that he has gotten free from the "fetters of the flesh," and that now "his free spirit wings its flight to God, no longer hampered and hindered by the mortal dust." They go into ecstasies in describing the grandeur and liberty and blessedness of the one who has died, and who, by reason of getting rid of the body, has attained to life more abundant, knowledge a hundred-fold, and blessings indescribable.

(2) In the same breath they quote the Scriptures referring to the resurrection and (wholly misconstruing those Scriptures) tell us that by and by, at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the same bodies of flesh that were buried will be reorganized (Dr. Talmage, in his famous resurrection sermon pictured the resurrection morning, and the entire sky darkened with the fragments of human bodies coming together from various parts of the earth, where a finger, a foot, or a hand had been lost by accident, disease or amputation); they tell us that then the spirit beings which, they say, left those bodies at death, will return to them, as their everlasting habitations. Then, inasmuch as the resurrection is Scripturally set forth to be the grand and glorious result and consummation of our salvation, they feel compelled to go into ecstasies over their erroneous presentation of the resurrection, and to tell how glorious and grand will be the result.

The Man 50 Would be Sadly Handicapped.

They seem to overlook entirely the inconsistency of these two propositions; and they expect that their hearers will be similarly inconsistent and illogical (and apparently their expectations are fully justified, for the majority of their hearers swallow the inconsistency without difficulty...; yea, many of them seem to think that the more inconsistent and unreasonable their belief may be, the more reason they have to congratulate themselves that they have a very strong faith. However, the real fact is that they have a very strong credulity. But they will have no reward for believing unreasonable things which God's Word has not taught, but has contradicted.

Who cannot see, if he will, that the man who dies fifty years old, if in dying he obtains life more abundant and knowledge a hundredfold, and a freedom to "wing his flight," etc., would be sadly disappointed by a resurrection—if it should mean to him reimprisonment in a tenement of clay, with physical restrictions and human limitations? And then, if he had thus for centuries been a "free spirit," roaming at liberty throughout the Universe, untrammelled by a body and bodily limitations, where would be the consistency on God's part of reimprisoning such an one in a human body, whose powers and uses would be entirely forgotten during those centuries of liberty? And if to be without a body is "perfect bliss," as the funeral orators tell, how could there be anything added to perfect bliss by a resurrection of the body, and a reincarceration therein?

From the foregoing considerations we feel that we are justified in our assumption that the vast majority of Christian people do not believe in a resurrection—neither the Scriptural kind ("a resurrection of the dead"), nor in the kind they themselves teach, namely, a resurrection of the body.

The Scriptures Hold Out the Only Hope, the Consistent Hope.

With this preface to our subject we go to the Scriptures to learn from them what is meant by "the resurrection of the dead," and in what manner and why the Scriptures speak of the resurrection as the hope, the only hope, the blessed hope, not only of the Lord's people, who are to have part in the "first resurrection," but of the world in general, who are to

have an opportunity to share in the resurrection of judgment, improperly translated "the resurrection of damnation."—John 5: 29.

Whoever would believe the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection must also believe the Scriptural doctrine respecting death—that death is death, the cessation of life. Then, and not until then, will he be able to understand the Apostle's words in our text, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, . . . then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

Nor is this statement by the great Apostle Paul an exception to or indifferent from the teaching of the Scriptures elsewhere. Their unanimous testimony is that the dead are dead; that "in that very day their thoughts perish." (Psa. 146: 4.) Of the dead the Scriptures further declare, "His sons come to honor and he knoweth it not; to dishonor, and he perceiveth it not of them;" for there is neither wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave whither thou goest."—Job 14: 21; Eccl. 9: 10.

Shall We Believe God or Satan?

Here is a direct conflict between modern teachers and the inspired Word, the Scriptures claiming that the dead know not anything, the modern theologians claiming that they know everything. The Bible claims that the dead are really dead, and have really suffered according to the Divine penalty for sin pronounced against our race—"Dying thou shalt die." The opposers take up with Satan's delusive statement to Mother Eve, "Ye shall not surely die," and attempt to prove that the dead are not dead; that God's penalty against sin did not go into effect, and that death, so far from being the sentence or curse upon our race, is a blessing, a step in a general process of evolution. The two theories are as far apart as the poles, and the two teachers of these two theories, as we have shown, are God, on the one hand, and Satan, "a liar from the beginning," on the other hand. Which shall we believe?

The entire Plan of Salvation is connected with this question. If death was not the penalty of sin, incurred through Adam, then "life and that more abundant" is not the reward and blessing of God secured through Christ by a resurrection. Satan's proposition, which has been so widely accepted by the Lord's people, and which exercises so binding an influence upon their minds, is the reversal, in every sense of the word, of the Divine proposition that death is the curse or penalty of sin; that Christ died to release man from this sentence or curse, and that the release comes by the resurrection of the dead, who otherwise would never have future life, as says the Apostle in our text. Satan's theory declares death a blessing which brings the fullness of life and liberty and joy, and would make of the resurrection a curse, bringing imprisonment and difficulty and restriction and pain and trouble.

Jesus Preached the Resurrection.

No wonder that, blinded by this deception of the Adversary, the majority of the great theologians of Christendom—and rapidly their many followers—are leaving the doctrine of the Atonement, which declares that "as by a man [Adam] came death, so also by a man [the man Christ Jesus] comes the resurrection of the dead; that as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive."—1 Cor. 15: 21, 22.

If the reality of death is denied, it is no more difficult to deny the reality of sin. If it is claimed that Father Adam was not created in the image and likeness of God, but was created a very close image and likeness of the monkey, it follows that in that low condition of intelligence he was unfit for trial for eternal life; and it is only a further step to deny that he ever had a trial and that he ever failed and fell from grace. And if the fall is denied, and, instead, the claim is put forward that man has really been advancing even to the present time—losing his likeness to the monkey and gaining in likeness to God, then it will be consistent also to take the next step, and declare that since man did not fall he did not need to be redeemed from the fall.

And hence, with all such reasoning upon false Scriptural basis, it appears logical to deny the oft-repeated declaration of God's Word, that our Lord Jesus is our Redeemer, and that "He is the propitiation for our sins [the Church's sins], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," giving for us, as our ransom or corresponding price, His own life, that He might buy back the forfeited life of Adam.

We thus see that the leading lights of Christendom today, repudiate both of the cardinal features of the Gospel, which the Apostle preached of old: "He preached Jesus and the resurrection"—Jesus as the Redeemer

of mankind from sin and its curse—death—and the resurrection as the grand result of that redemptive work, by which the blessing secured by the Ransom-sacrifice will be made applicable to and available for whosoever wills to accept eternal life upon the terms of this Age. We are reminded here of our Lord's own words respecting unbelief at the present time: He says, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find the faith on the earth?"—Luke 18: 8.

The Five Senses in Full Accord with the Scriptures.

The Scripture declarations respecting death are in full accord with the testimony of the five senses given us as men by our Creator; and this is what we should expect, though we should be ready to admit the possibility of our senses being in error if the Divine revelation contradicts our senses. But when our senses are contradicted by a human theory, contrary to Scriptural statements, the theory should be rejected and the testimony of the senses held to be true; and when the Scriptures and our senses together unite in one testimony, it is certainly wrong to hold to a theory of human dissolution, which is contradicted by Divine revelation and by our own senses as well. And whoever thus repudiates his God-given (though sin-impaired) senses and the Divine testimony, need expect nothing else than to be led into darkness and stumbling. To-day, as eighteen centuries ago, the blind are leading the blind into the ditch of unbelief and error.

"As Dieth the One, so Dieth the Other."

The testimony of our senses, like the testimony of God's Word, is that death means the loss of life, and not an increase of life. Watch the dying one and note his weakening powers, mental and physical, until the spark of life becomes extinct. You have seen nothing go from him, you have heard nothing but the death-rattle; you have felt the gradual cessation of the pulse, and noted the gasping for breath; and all of your senses which you can exercise upon the subject tell you that your friend, your loved one, is dead—alive no longer. You look about you and study the subject and inquire of others, "What next?" The answer to your senses is, "The next thing is corruption; when the spark of life has gone the corpse must be buried; 'dust to dust, ashes to ashes.'" You note the similarity between the death of your friend and loved one and the death of the brute beast, and your senses can discern no difference between them; and the Scriptures declare, "As dieth the one, so dieth the other; they have all one [spirit of life] breath."—Eccl. 3: 19.

But with a longing for a future life, implanted in your nature by our Creator, you inquire, Is there no hope; hath a man no pre-eminence above a beast? The Scriptures answer your question, assuring us that, physically speaking, man "hath no pre-eminence above a beast." But the Scriptures assure us that although mankind is not possessed of any power of life beyond that of the beast, the Creator has, nevertheless, made a provision for man that He did not make for the beast; and that provision is the very thing for which we long, namely, everlasting life. The Scriptures point out to us that this provision for man's everlasting life was made by the Lord in the beginning—not by implanting a deathless quality in the man's constitution, but by providing in the life-sustaining trees of the Garden of Eden, the means of continuing his life everlastingly; nevertheless, this provision was conditional, dependent upon man's obedience to his Creator.

The Scriptures point out that man's disobedience brought upon him the sentence of death, and that the execution of that sentence was effected by driving him out of the Garden and away from the life-sustaining fruit of its trees. Thus driven out, the sentence, "Dying, thou shalt die," took effect upon Father Adam gradually, and he lived out nearly to the end of the first thousand-year day. His posterity, becoming weaker and weaker as generations rolled by, are to-day (notwithstanding the many advancements in science, and medicine and sanitary arrangements), reduced to an average of about thirty-five years—and if by reason of strength they be forecure years, yet is their strength, labor and sorrow; and they are soon "cut off from the land of the living," to go into "the land of the enemy"—into the great prison-house of death, in which it is estimated that over twenty thousand millions of our races are already—"where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."—Job 3: 17-19.

"Jesus Died, the Just for the Unjust."

The Scriptures answer our inquiries respecting the dead. While assuring us of the justice of the Divine sentence of death, they nevertheless declare that our Creator is a God of mercy and of pity, and that when

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there was no eye to pity and no arm to deliver us, His Arm brought salvation to us. The Scriptures, moreover, point out to us the Lord Jesus Christ as the Arm of Jehovah, stretched down for our relief from sin and sickness and pain and trouble, and for our deliverance from the prison-house of death, and for our restoration to the liberties and privileges of sons of God.

It was in harmony with this Divine sympathy that, in due time, God sent His only begotten Son into the world, for our redemption—to give for us the ransom-price, and ultimately to recover all who will accept of Divine mercy, from all the consequences of the fall by a resurrection from the dead. But Divine Love could not make void Divine Justice; it was necessary that God should be just, if He would be the justifier of them that believe in Jesus; hence the demands of Justice—the penalty for sin—must be paid by our Redeemer, before the work of release and restitution could begin. And here we have the best of evidence respecting what is the penalty of sin, and what is not; because since our Lord Jesus pays for us the just penalty of sin, what He laid down for us will prove what was the penalty against us. What did He do for us? The Scriptures answer: He laid down His life for us; "He died for our sins"; "He died, the Just for the unjust"; "He poured out His soul unto death"; He "made His soul an offering for [our] sin," and "by His stripes we are healed."—Rom. 5: 8; 1 Pet. 3: 18; Isa. 53: 4, 6, 10.

Nothing is more evident than that our Lord Jesus did not suffer an eternity of torment as the price of our redemption; and hence, if the matter needed proof we have here the proof that eternal torment was not the penalty for our sins. On the contrary, the fact that our Lord Jesus died for our sins, and that the Heavenly Father accepted of that sacrifice of His life on our behalf, proves that it was our lives that were forfeited by sin; that the full penalty of the Divine Law against us as a race was the deprivation of life. The whole race under sentence of death, has gone down to the great prison-house of death—the grave, sheol, hades. And so our dear Redeemer, when He gave up His life for us, went also to sheol, hades, the grave. He took our place, and suffered for us the penalty for our sins.

But if Jesus' death ransoms man from the sentence of death, so His resurrection from death became the assurance of the justification of all who accept and obey Him. The Heavenly Father gave evidence that the Ransom price was entirely satisfactory; and our Lord, who was thus obedient to the Father, was raised from the dead and, as the Father's Agent and Representative, will soon begin the work of blessing the entire world redeemed by His precious blood.

The Prison-House of Death to be Opened.

The blessing of the world means the breaking open of the prison-house and the setting at liberty of the captives, who for six thousand years have been going into the prison-house of death. For this reason our Lord is called the Life-giver, because His great work will be to give back life to the world of mankind, who lost life in Adam. And since the restoration of life to mankind will mean the removal of pains and sicknesses and troubles, which are a part of the dying process, our Redeemer is styled the Great Physician.

The prophecy which mentions the breaking open of the prison-house of death, and the setting at liberty of its captives (Isa. 42: 7), was applied, and unquestionably correctly, by our Lord to Himself; but He did not break open the prison-house of death, and set all the captives free by resurrection immediately upon His own resurrection. He tells us when this work will be done, saying (John 5: 25-29), "The hour cometh in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth"; "and they that hear [obey His voice then, Acts 3: 22] shall live."

Our Lord thus passed over the interim of the Gospel Age, and pointed to the grand consummation of His work in the incoming Age because such was the Father's prearranged Plan. "The Father sent the Son," and the Son willingly undertook the work of redemption, at a time sufficiently in advance of the "Times of Restitution," or resurrection, and the general blessing of the world during the Reign of Messiah, to leave the interim of this Gospel Age for another work, namely, for selecting from the world a "little flock," a "royal priesthood," a "peculiar people," a "holy nation," to be joint-heirs with Christ Jesus their Lord in the honors of the Mediatorial Kingdom. These shall be associated with the Redeemer in the grand and glorious work of destroying the Prince of Darkness and breaking open the prison-house of death, and setting at liberty the captives of sin and ignorance and superstition; and in fulfilling generally all the provisions of the gracious promises of God made to Father Abraham, that in His Seed (Christ, and His elect Body, the Church), "all the families of the earth shall be blessed."—Gal. 3: 8, 16, 29.

"Blessed and Holy Are They Who Have Part in the First Resurrection."

This brings us to the Scriptural proposition, that there is a first, a chief or special resurrection, and a general one later. The first or superior resurrection includes the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the entire elect "Church which is His Body"—no more, no less. "Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the First Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be kings and priests unto God and shall reign on the earth"—the Messianic Kingdom class. Those who will share in this First Resurrection will experience an instantaneous "change" from the human nature to the Divine nature—the highest of the spirit natures; not human, not flesh and blood, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." Their trial and perfecting of

heart takes place beforehand, and only the "overcomers" will receive this blessing. Some of the characteristics of their change are indicated by the Apostle as a change from weakness to power, from dishonor to glory, from corruption to incorruption, from a natural [human] body to a spirit body.

The time for this best, or chief resurrection, is everywhere in Scripture indicated to be at the close of the Gospel Age, at a time when the entire Gospel Church will be completed. This includes the living members, whose "change" to spirit nature will be instantaneous, so that the moment of their dying as human beings will be the moment of their "change" to perfect spirit beings. Meantime, the Scriptures declare that the Lord's people who have died, like the rest of mankind, are really dead, as human beings, and know not anything but inasmuch as God has provided for their resurrection, and inasmuch as they have been informed respecting it, and have hopes therein, therefore they are spoken of as being merely asleep—resting from their labors; waiting for "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only," as the Apostle declares.

The General Resurrection to Be a Raising Up by Judgment.

And likewise the world of mankind, even though they know not of the Lord as yet, are spoken of as being "asleep in Jesus," because, as the whole world was under condemnation of death through Adam, and that without knowledge or volition on their part, at the time of the sentence, for they were then in the loins of their father, Adam, so now, since Jesus laid down His life a Ransom for all, and because they all shall be awakened from death, therefore it is proper for all those who are aware of the Divine provision for the awakening, by faith to speak of the interim figuratively as a sleep.

Thus the Apostle exhorts us to trust and hope in the resurrection as respects all our dear friends who go down into the prison-house of death and not merely as respects those who were sanctified in Christ Jesus, which would include, as a rule, only a small proportion of those for whom we would be inclined to sorrow. He says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [all our sleeping friends], that ye sorrow not even as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died [a Ransom for all] and rose again [that He might be Lord and Life-giver to all] even so [let us believe as truly that] those also which sleep in Jesus [all whom He purchases with His precious blood] will God bring by Him [from the prison-house of death]."

But as the First Resurrection is the resurrection of the blessed and holy, of the sanctified in Christ Jesus, His Body, so the general resurrection, which is for the world, is designated as "a resurrection of judgment," mistranslated in our common version "resurrection of damnation." It is styled a "resurrection of judgment" because, while all the preparation has been

made, so far as God is concerned, for granting to the world of mankind a full resurrection or restitution back to all that was first given to Adam, and lost by his disobedience, to be recovered by our Saviour's precious blood, yet there are certain conditions attached to this blessing upon which it depends, namely, the conditions of the New Covenant.

God does not propose to give eternal life through Christ to any others than those who earnestly desire it, and who are in heart sympathy with the principles of righteousness which must always be the Law of the Divine Government. Hence when the world is awakened from the sleep of death, it will not signify resurrection, but much less; for resurrection, in its full, complete, Scriptural sense, signifies a complete raising up, out of sin and out of death, to perfection of being, perfection of life.

The first work of Christ and the Church in the world, for those who have gone down into death, the prison, will be their awakening to physical conditions, similar to those in which they died. The surrounding conditions of society will then be greatly improved; knowledge will have taken the place of ignorance, and the reign of righteousness and the law of love will at that time have superseded the rule of sin under the law of selfishness; and Satan will be bound, that he shall deceive the nations no more for the thousand years. Under the favorable conditions of that Mediatorial Kingdom, all mankind will be required to make progress in the knowledge of the Lord and in the bringing of their own hearts and lives into accord with His law of Love. Whosoever then will make no effort in the right direction will be cut off from life, in the Second Death, after one hundred years of trial (Isa. 65: 20), although he would then, under the changed conditions, be properly reckoned as only a lad.

But while judgment will thus pass against one who fails to make progress, and will cut short his further opportunity, the same judgment, by the same Judge, will operate favorably to all who will seek righteousness, and make progress in harmony with the laws of the Kingdom; so that year by year they will be growing mentally, physically and morally stronger—approximating gradually the full, complete standard of perfect manhood, the image and likeness of the Creator, as first represented in Father Adam. Thus the resurrection, so far as the world is concerned, will be a gradual work; its first step an awakening from the sleep of unconsciousness and nonentity; its succeeding steps will be along the lines of judgment, the conduct of those who are on trial being either approved or disapproved; and culminating either in their sentence to the Second Death, incorrigible, and unworthy of the gift of God, eternal life—or in their perfection, and their final adjudgment of worthiness to have and enjoy the great boon of Life Eternal, under the blessed conditions which are then promised to prevail—when there shall be no more sighing, no more dying, no more sin and none of the penalties for sin, for all the former things shall have passed away.—Rev. 21: 4.

END OF THE AGE—A PERILOUS TIME

"In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be traitors, heady, . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."—2 Tim. 3: 4.

The expression, "the last days," refers, not to the end of the world as many expect this event, but is a Scriptural designation of the present time, the end of this Age, when the Reign of Righteousness is about to begin. "The Harvest is the end of the Age." (Matthew 13: 39.—Diaglott.) The warning given by the Apostle is that, instead of the world's being converted to God at this time, the reverse condition will prevail. It will be a time of great peril for those who have started out to follow Christ. It will not be so perilous a time for the world.

The only ones who are on trial for life or death are those who have been released from the Adamic condition to these the time described by St. Paul. To these the time described by St. Paul will be one of severe testing. The whole course of the world will be turned aside from the high standard that might have been expected. Men will be traitors. Only as long as it will be of advantage to them to perform a contract will they do so. It will be a time when every man's hand will be lifted against his neighbor. Selfishness will be rampant. There will be manifest headiness and self-conceit. Men will be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." This condition is to be a sign of the end of the Age.

Prevalence of These Conditions.

Every thoughtful person must perceive that this condition of things is prevailing now. Whenever a contract is found to be unsatisfactory—whether it be a marriage contract or a business contract—the dissatisfied contractor is liable to break the agreement. This party to the contract then assumes the attitude of one who declares, "Force me to keep it if you can. The Lord's people will be firm for principle and true to their contracts, even when these prove disadvantageous. This attitude is pleasing to the Lord."

We find headiness of spirit in the world everywhere—a loss of respect for authority. No doubt there has been too much respect for authority in the past. Now there is none. This condition has been brought about by a lack of reverence for God—the inevitable result of loss of faith in the Bible as the Word of God. As people lose faith in the Bible, they lose faith in God, and become more selfish and more self-willed. This condition of affairs has been brought about by false doctrine. People think that God is purposing to do them harm.

The Higher Critics have been seeking to put away what they consider the absurdities of religious thought, and to this end have done away with the Bible. Bible students see that the absurdities have been brought about by the creeds and not by the Bible. But the world, losing confidence in God, are becoming more heady than ever before. Even the reverential fear

which once held them is departing, and there is a disposition to doubt everything. "People are in the condition of mind where they say, 'Let us eat, drink and be merry'; nobody knows about the future; the preachers are all confused. Everything has come about by evolutionary processes. Let us enjoy the present. Let pleasure be our aim in life. This would seem to be the attitude of the world. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

These conditions of our day make it a perilous time for the Church. Do you ask, Would not the Church, on the contrary, be more than ever led to love God? And would this not guard them and keep them from danger? We answer that some of God's people are becoming more and more immersed in the world. The spirit of the world surges all around them. With great difficulty could these come to realize that the whole world is astray in their ideas and ways. The tendency of all such is to have the mind of the world, even though they be spirit-begotten.

This worldly spirit, the Apostle suggests, will affect the Church to some extent. Consequently some of the Lord's people will thus come into special peril at this time, because of neglecting their Covenant with the Lord. Others will watch and pray, and, for this reason, develop in mind and heart. But these are few.

The Great Company class, while still loving the Lord, are becoming immersed in the spirit of the world. Even those who are living nearest to the Divine standard will be more or less imperiled through this spirit, unless they continue diligent in prayer and the study of God's Word. What we see going on about us seems natural to our minds. The way in which other people spend time and money is a temptation to the Lord's people which must be steadfastly resisted.

The Subtle Test.

The Lord's people spend and are being spent in His service, according to opportunity. They are living lives of consecration. The world now has an eight-hour day. The Lord's faithful people would, on the contrary, make theirs a sixteen-hour day. But all these present-day conditions constitute perils. For us to devote to the Lord's service only what the world considers a reasonable day's work, would not be fulfilling our Covenant. Those who seek merely to do right will obtain a place in the Great Company.

But the Little Flock will serve the Lord with such delight that they will scarcely know how to cease their efforts. They recognize that their bodies are fully consecrated to the Lord, and they are daily putting them to death. In view of these perilous times, let each ask himself, To which class do I belong?

*Some are confused by this expression, "flesh and blood"; they fail to see that it signifies human nature; we therefore invite such to examine the use of the same phrase elsewhere, by the same New Testament writers. In so doing they will be convinced that our definition, human nature, is the correct one, the Scriptural one. See the following uses of the phrase: Matt. 16: 17; John 3: 5, 6; 1 Cor. 15: 50.