

Incidentally we remark that these are the "spirits in prison" mentioned by Peter (1 Pet. 3:19), and that although restricted as respects their powers of fellowship with the holy angels, and with mankind, being no longer privileged to appear as men, they still seek human fellowship, endeavoring to gain possession of human beings who yield up their wills, and who are then said to be possessed of devils or "obsessed." It is but a preliminary step toward thus getting possession of the individual that these wicked spirits appeal to humanity to become their mediums (spirit mediums), through whom they to some extent communicate. And they personate dead human beings, because they know well that humanity would shun them and fear them if their real identity were discovered.*

"NOAH WAS PERFECT IN HIS GENERATION"

From this standpoint, which we hold is the only reasonable, consistent and Scriptural one, the reason and necessity for the deluge is quite apparent. The reason is Scripturally given, that the whole world had become corrupt—the original Adamic stock had become confused and intermixed with another life. The divine purpose of redemption, blessing and restitution was confined to Adam and his family; that as by one man's disobedience sin came into the world, even so through the obedience of one many may be justified to life. Although foreknowing the condition of things God made no provision for the mixed progeny of the angels—that was out of his order, out of harmony with his arrangement, and hence as soon as it had demonstrated itself and taught its lesson the flood swept all away, except the one family of Noah, of whom it is declared, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation." (Gen. 6:9) Not a perfect man, for he was a fallen man, as were all of Adam's children, but he was perfect in his generation—he was not of the mixed seed, he was pure Adamic stock. The Hebrew word here rendered *generation* is *toledaw* and signifies *descent, family*.

The lesson taught by this failure of the angels and its result to mankind was that any deviation from the divine plan and arrangement would work injury instead of good to those participating in, as well as to those affected by it. The angels who fell from their noble work and condition, and became groveling and sensual, manifested clearly in their own course the downward tendency of all transgressions of the divine law. Then their children, who might have been expected to be brilliant, talented, able, and who were all these in many respects ("men of renown") possessed their abilities in connection with a sinful and alienated condition; and it was proper that both angels and men should see that the greater the ability possessed, out of harmony with the divine arrangement, the greater would be the injury instead of blessing which would result. Thus we see that these renowned men, with their great abilities, physical and mental, tended, not to the promotion of godliness, peace, joy, happiness in the world; but to strife, to oppression, to violence.

It may be thought by some that we are straining the illustration, when we affirm that we see today in the world something that is in many respects analogous to this evil condition which led to the dissolution of the first world or dispensation; that we see that somewhat similar conditions producing somewhat similar evils are leading on rapidly to the great catastrophe with which "this present evil world" shall pass away, in a great commotion, symbolically called "fire" of anarchy,—giving place to the new order, the Millennial king-

* See *What Say the Scriptures About Spiritualism? Proofs that it is Demonism* 10 cents this office

dom. The analogy is as between humanity and the new creatures in Christ, who are Scripturally called "the sons of God." The influence of these sons of God upon the world of mankind should be instructive, elevating, helpful, showing forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light,—transformed by the renewing of their minds, etc., they should be letting their light so shine before men that men would see their good works and glorify the Father in heaven. But the influence of mankind upon the church seems to have been stronger than the influence of the new creatures upon mankind—not in all cases, but in some cases, just as it was with the angels. The sons of God (the church), enlightened beyond their fallen and unregenerate neighbors, are men of renown, and the civilized world of today, Christendom, represents the influence of this combination of the spiritual with the natural in Babylon—Confusion. It has lifted up humanity wherever it has gone; it has sharpened, it has broadened, it has civilized; but instead of this combination working for the highest benefit of mankind in all cases, we find, rather, that the tendency is to combine the higher intelligence with human selfishness, and the result of this union is the bringing forth of giants in the earth,—corporate giants—which very shortly will give mankind a great deal of trouble and fill the earth with violence.

Are not the trusts and combines, now rapidly developing throughout the world, the offspring of this union of heavenly light and intelligence with the selfish depravity of the fallen race? and what hope can mankind have when once these giants have reached their growth and strength, and when their necessities combined with their selfishness, shall influence them to exert their power in the world? Will it not lead to violence? Will it not bring about the time of trouble which Scripturally is described as being a period when "every man's hand will be against his neighbor"—when selfishness will be in control in every direction and amongst all classes except those who, like Noah and his family, are in the Ark of safety—under the Lord's special and protecting care? We would not press the figure too far, but we do see some analogy as between the end of the first world or dispensation and the end of the present dispensation, the second world.

The printed lesson deals particularly with the going forth of Noah, his thankfulness to God, his worship, as expressed in the building of the altar, and the offering of the sacrifice, typifying man's reliance upon God and the great sacrifice for sin securing the return of divine favor which would be accomplished in due time by Messiah. The offering was accepted by the Lord, who declared that the earth should nevermore be visited by such a catastrophe, and that nevermore should every living thing be smitten; and in this we see another evidence that the coming trouble will not destroy all human life, although it is represented symbolically as fire: the fire of that day will burn against all wickedness, against all sin, to destroy it root and branch, yet the Lord, through the Prophet, declares that after the fire of his anger shall have burned in fierceness against the world of mankind, he will subsequently turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent—thus indicating that while the symbolical fire of that day will destroy the institutions, arrangements, peculiar to this time, it will not destroy all the people, but prepare them for the reception of the Lord's message of favor and blessing, for it is written, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."—Zeph. 3:8, 9; Isa. 26:9.

DAWN VOL. V, IN GERMAN

Our German friends are urging that DAWN, VOL. V., be published in their language for the benefit of those who cannot so clearly, or at all understand the English language. We submit the matter to you and inquire now,—How many consider this advisable? Say how many copies you will want at

12½c in paper covers postpaid in America, or 25c in cloth plus 10c postage anywhere. If we obtain a sufficient number of orders to meet one-half of the expense we will publish it. You need not send the money now, but merely say how many copies you will take if it is published.

"BEHEADED FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS"

"And I saw the souls [persons] of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4.

All constituting the kingdom class are here referred to as beheaded—every member of the glorified church must, eventually, have this experience, whatever it signifies. But we reflect that our Lord was not beheaded and, so far as history shows, few, if any, of the apostles were literally beheaded; indeed, very few, if any, of the Lord's saints, from

Pentecost to the present time, have died by decapitation. We are to remember, however, that this statement is from the symbolical book, and is therefore a figure of speech, a word-picture, and its meaning must be sought for accordingly.

The Apostle gives us the key, saying, "The head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man;

and the head of Christ is God." (1 Cor. 11:3) As a woman who becomes a wife accepts her husband as the head of the family, so the church accepts Christ as its Head, and each member of the church thus comes into relationship with the Lord as a member of his body—not the Head; and all of these, to be acceptable as members of the figurative body of Christ, must be will-less, headless: their own wills must be surrendered, so that, like their Lord, they can say, "Not my will, but thine, be done." They must be headless in the sense of ignoring their own wills, being dead to self and actuated henceforth by the will of the head of the body, Christ Jesus. His will, his mind, his Spirit, must dwell in each member of the body, and abound, if it would abide a member of his body, the church. Thus, as the wife loses her own name, and accepts the name of her husband and his headship, so each member of the bride of Christ must lose his or her individuality in order to be accepted as the bride of Christ. It is this self-surrender to Christ on the part of his church that is represented in the symbolism of the text before us.

One of the prime hindrances to Christian growth is the failure to discern the completeness of the sacrifice requisite in those who would be accounted as members of the elect church, the body of Christ. No one can be of this elect number, to live and reign with Christ in his Millennial kingdom, who has not been thus beheaded. We often think of this when we hear well-meaning Christian people say, "I have a mind of my own; I do my own thinking." It is certainly better, in many instances, that one should do his own thinking than that he should let another man or another woman do it for him; than that he should allow a body of men to make a creed for him, even tho' that body of men, professing to be his head, be called a Synod or a Presbytery or a Conference, and desire that the individual shall submit himself to its headship, and become a member of some earthly church. Such sectarian systems—heads and members—are false bodies of Christ, which the real Head never recognized.

It is required of every one who would be counted in as a member of the true church, that he should be not only beheaded (lose his self-will), but that he shall be *united to the true Head* of the church and recognize himself as a member of the *true body of Christ*—"the church of the living God, whose names are written in heaven." Membership in the Presbyterian *body*, or in the Methodist *body*, or in the Lutheran *body*, or in the Baptist *body*, or in any other human institution, does not count anything, for the simple reason that Christ never recognized any of them, never founded any of them, never joined or agreed to join any of them as *their head*. There are not *many* bodies of Christ, but only *one*, the church of the living God—there is one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. The Lord is not the head of these human institutions, which call themselves his bodies, and membership in them will avail nothing as respects the reward of joint-heirship with Christ in the kingdom; but rather (as intimated in the words of this verse which we have omitted), the worship, reverence, of these human systems, when once they are seen to be counterfeits of the true body, would be a barrier to a place in the true body and in the kingdom glories.

As Jesus was not the founder or institutor of these bodies, neither is he their head; neither were the apostles members of any of these human sects or parties, and all of the Lord's true saints who, under Satan's misrepresentations, have been led to consider these human institutions as bodies of Christ, and to join them, while really in heart holding an allegiance to Christ as far above them, as the only true authority and Head—these are now urged to come out of all these various systems; and the light of present truth is for the purpose of showing them where they are, and permitting them to renounce their allegiance to the human systems, and to declare their allegiance only to the *one* Head and to the *one* "church which is his body." These systems are so numerous, and their theories so diverse and confused, that the general term "Babylon" (confusion) is applied to them as a general or family name, and God's true children are admonished, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. 18:4.

In Israel God gave a typical representation of his church in Aaron, the high priest, and his sons, the under priests. So, says the Apostle, we are "a royal priesthood," and again, "Consider the high priest of our profession [or order of priesthood], Christ Jesus." Now, be it noted, that in the type the beheading of the under-priests was fully illustrated in the fact that the under-priests were required to wear "bonnets," while the high priest alone was without the bonnet and

wore the mitre. The high priest was thus proclaimed to be the *head* of the priesthood, and in covering their head, the under-priests said in the type, We are headless; look to the high priest, he is our head. So, in the antitype, the spiritual royal priesthood must all be headless, must all, in the language of the hymn, say—

"O to be nothing, nothing,
To him let all voices be raised;
He is the fountain of blessing,
He only is most to be praised."

And this headless or will-less condition is not merely a sentiment; it must be a reality, so far as the new creature is concerned. All those who are really "members of the *body* of Christ" must in their hearts reach that condition where they can say with the greatest sincerity of heart, The Lord's will be done. Teach me thy will, O Lord. They must reach that attitude of relationship to Christ that will be continually seeking to know the will of the Head, and seeking to do it. True, the new creature must operate through, and think with, the human organism; and the latter being imperfect, through the fall, the result may frequently be an imperfect apprehension of the will of Christ, as well as an imperfect doing of that will. However, the imperfections of the *flesh* are not imputed against the *new creature*, if the heart be loyal in seeking to know and in seeking to do the will of Christ.

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," and the intimation of our text is that it will be fidelity to this Spirit of the truth, the Spirit of Christ working in us, in conjunction with the Word of God, the "exceeding great and precious promises," that will work upon us to effect the change from our own wills to the will of Christ—beheading us, making us dead to self and alive toward God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is no intimation here of dependence upon sectarian arrangements and institutions; each "*soul*" (individual) must be beheaded for himself, and must be individually united to Christ, the Head of the church. There is no intimation of the acceptance of sects and parties. On the contrary, sectarianism, in every sense and degree, is opposed to the Scriptural arrangement of union, direct and complete, between the Lord and the individual alone.

What an honor and dignity are thus given to the Word of God—and the testimony of Jesus,—not in his own words only, but especially in his life and example, the spirit of which all members of the body must partake of, ere they can have fellowship in his sufferings, walking in his footsteps in the same narrow way of self-sacrifice—thus to be made meet for a share with him in the kingdom. However, nothing in this should be understood to imply that there are no helps, no assistances, to be rendered and to be accepted and appreciated in the body of Christ, as between the various members: indeed, other Scriptures show us that if one member of the body rejoices, other members are comforted; and if one member suffers the others share the injury. And the Apostle makes very clear to us that our Lord, the Head, communicates with the members of his body by using certain of their own number as his representatives—so that one member may serve the body as an eye, another as an ear, another as a mouth. (1 Cor. 12:12-31) Nevertheless, we must always consider the headship of the Lord; and the provision which he makes for the body is what in every instance is to be sought, and not what men may scheme or do in self-exaltation and as would-be teachers in the body of Christ.

Dear brethren, let us consider well the force of this strong symbolic statement. Let us ask ourselves, (1) Have I in obedience to the spirit and example of Jesus, and the testimony of God's Word, given up my own self-control, self-will? (2) If I have, to whom did I give it?—to a large denomination, professing to be the body of Christ, or to a little denomination professing the same? (3) Am I looking to these as my head, my instructors, guides to my conscience, the directors of my spiritual energies? Or have I renounced my own headship and fully accepted the headship of Christ Jesus,—to the ignoring of all other contrary heads and authorities—to be taught of the Lord, guided of the Lord, used of the Lord, and given such experiences as his infinite wisdom sees best for me? (4) And am I fully content to be thus a member of *his body*, cut off from all others, and to be used according to his will as I find it recorded in his Word? Or am I, so to speak, a double-headed man, seeking to go through life acknowledging the headship of Jesus, but at the same time having another head or will of my own—and thus what the Apostle James called "a double-

mindful man, unstable in all his ways," attempting to follow my own inclinations at times, and the Lord's directions at other times, and thus unstable, unreliable, as a member of his body, and unsuitable to be used by him, but in a condition to be ultimately repudiated if I do not become entirely beheaded as respects my own will? (5) Or, have I, still worse than this, three heads, or parts of three heads.—some of my own head, or will, not fully cut off; some of the head or will of Christ, incompletely attached; and some of a sectarian, man-made head—a confusion worse confounded, which renders me utterly unfit to comprehend and obey the mind of the Spirit?

Dearly beloved, the time is short, the great prize we seek is near, the "mark" or standard of character to be attained is plainly set before us, and the Scriptures are

luminous with illustrations of the necessity for complete consecration to the Lord,—showing us that it means deadness to self. Shall we not each see to it that by the grace of God every other head and authority is completely cut off and cast aside, and that henceforth, as the Apostle expressed it, "For me to live is Christ"—as a member of the body of Christ, guided by his will as discerned through his Word and providence and example? This is another picture of full completion of character-likeness to our Lord. Did he not fully give up his own headship, his own will, to the Father's will? He surely did; and as that full consecration was rewarded by the Father, so we have the assurance that our full consecration (and nothing less than this) will be fully rewarded by our Lord and Head in the kingdom.

ABRAHAM CALLED OF GOD

GEN. 12:1-9.—JULY 28.

"I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."

Abram received his special call about four centuries after the deluge. The three sons of Noah became the roots, so to speak, of the different branches of the human family—spreading out in different directions. In the words of another, "The world was populated in three different lines by the sons of Noah: Shem, from whom were derived the Jews and other Semitic races; Ham, the ancestor of the colored races; and Japheth, amongst whose descendants are the European nations. To these three, the diverging races and the languages of men converge, as rays of light to their sources."

The four centuries had undoubtedly accomplished much in the way of populating the immediate district which is called the "cradle of the race," in the vicinity of Babylonia. During these four centuries the downward tendency of our fallen race was farther manifested; for altho Noah was evidently a man of faith in God, and his sons and their wives, saved in the Ark with him, were doubtless firm believers in Jehovah God—their experiences attesting his greatness and his wisdom—nevertheless, in a comparatively short time their posterity, lacking faith in God and in his promises that there would never more be a flood, undertook the erection of the Tower of Babel as a protection, little realizing, apparently, the folly of such an attempt to outwit the Almighty.

It was here that the oneness of the race, exercised injuriously, was effectually broken up by the Lord, by confounding the language of the people. Just how he accomplished this division of language is not explained, nor is such an explanation necessary. The fact is that language is split up not only into great divisions, but into minor dialects, notwithstanding the fact that, as surely as the whole race was originally one, the language at first must likewise have been one. This divergency of language tended to the disintegration of the race and its scattering into various bands or tribes—ultimately into every corner of the world, as at present. And such changes of conditions, in temperature, habits of life, etc., have undoubtedly had much to do with the great variety of types amongst men which we see to-day—these racial changes coming in gradually during the past 4000 years.

Abram, and so far as we may know from the Scriptures, his father and all of his brethren, maintained to a considerable degree a faith in Jehovah; and in harmony with this, enjoyed divine favors similar to those which operated in, and brought blessings to, Noah. But during those four centuries, so far as the records show, the world in general had become idolatrous and morally corrupt.

During all those four centuries there was no preaching of the Gospel, because there was no Gospel to preach, no good tidings authorized to be proclaimed. Nor was there any threatening of men with an eternity of torture, because no such thing is true. The world simply moved along, taking its own course, which, as we have seen, is a downward one. We may safely say that while an individual might for a time hold himself from a moral decline, or might even take a few upward steps toward a better condition, mentally, morally and physically, yet we cannot surmise, from what we know of the race and the tendencies of sin working in its members, that any number would make upward progress: on the contrary, experience proves that the tendencies on the part of the whole is continually downward, in response to some moral force corresponding to gravitation. Observation of the Scripture records as well as observation of life teach us that any particular and extended uplift of our race or its members must come through a power from on high—a power

outside of mankind. And this power of God operates chiefly through the mind, and is conveyed generally through divine promises, which the Apostle declares are designed of God to work in us both "to will and to do God's good pleasure."

Here we find Abram, the youngest son of Terah, living with his father and with his brother Nahor. His elder brother Haran was of the same family group, and is supposed to have left two children when he and his wife died—Lot and Sarah. It was at this time that in some manner, not explained to us, the Lord manifested to Abram his favor, calling him to separate himself; to leave his own country and his father's house, and to expect, in so doing, increased manifestations of divine favor and blessing. Apparently this call, while given before his father Terah's death, was understood by Abram to be a preparatory admonition so that he might respond, as he did, directly after his father's death. Meantime he had reached the age of 70 years, had married Sarah and had considerable possessions in the way of flocks and herds, with quite a retinue of servants and assistants necessary to the care of these. Abram, for his name had not yet been changed to Abraham, was what is called in that country a sheik, and his change of abode in response to the Lord's call meant a great deal in the way of breaking up of established usages, sundering of family ties, etc. How large his camp must have been may be judged from the fact that a little later on (Gen. 14:14), the number of his armed servants born in his own household was 318—implying a general household at least 1,000 persons. Abram was thus a sort of king according to the conditions of that time; or a feudal lord or baron according to later conditions and usages in Great Britain; a sheik, father or ruler, according to his own time and country.

Few seem to get the proper thought respecting the call of Abram: he was not called to escape hell and eternal torment, nor was he called to go to heaven. He was called to leave Chaldea and go forth whithersoever the Lord in his providence might direct. Terah, his father, was not called, nor was Nahor, his older brother. Sarah, who had become his wife, shared with him in the call, of course, but altho he took with him his nephew, Lot, the latter was not included in the call; altho a sharer in God's favors to Abram, he had neither part nor lot in the call and the subsequent promises and covenant connected with it; and this was all right. It implied no injustice on God's part. God had a great and wonderful plan for man's salvation which he purposed to work out largely through human instrumentality, and it was his own business, and no one else's, whom of the fallen race he would elect to use as his servant and as the channel for these proposed blessings—the character of which will be more clearly delineated in future lessons.

During the five years between the time God first called Abram and the time when he started for Canaan, after his father's death, there was abundant opportunity for doubt and fear to do their work in his heart, and to hinder his obedience. Undoubtedly he thought the whole matter over carefully; and from what we know of his general character, we must assume that he decided the matter speedily—his confidence in the Lord being so great he could not question the wisdom of following such a guide. Nevertheless, the time must have come when it would be necessary to inform his friends and relatives respecting his departure and respecting his call of God. We may reasonably surmise their opposition, their lack of faith in the matter, and how they would endeavor to dissuade Abram from going, telling him

he was deceiving himself, and that his chances for becoming great were far better at home than in his proposed emigration. No doubt they taunted him with a call which did not clearly specify where he was to go;—for we have the assurance of the Apostle that he obeyed God, “not knowing whither he went.”—Heb. 11:8.

Abram's call very much resembles the call of the elect church. Neither are we called to escape eternal torment. Neither do we at first comprehend the leadings of divine providence, but are to follow and be led and taught of God day by day. Our friends also are in Babylon, in confusion, and they, like Abraham's friends, would dissuade us from the exercise of full confidence in the divine promises—they would persuade us of the folly of leaving Babylon, its comforts and associations: they assure us that our opportunities for greatness, etc., will be distinctly lessened by the course of obedience which we take. Nevertheless we, like Abram, go forth taking all of our possessions with us, great or small—nothing must be left behind to be a treasure in Babylon and to attract our hearts thither again. All things must be brought with us so that not our own lives and talents only, but our influence upon others, must all be made to count—every item of it—in harmony with the Lord's promises.

The Lord's promise to his elect church, designated Israel and children of Abraham, is very similar to the promise made to Abram, as recorded in this lesson. To us the Lord says, “Ye are . . . a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;” yet these promises belong in such a large degree to the future, that only by the exercise of faith like Abram's is it possible for us to appreciate the situation and rejoice in and live up to the privileges of this position.

To us who are united to Christ, the Father's words specially apply, “I will bless thee and make thy name great and thou shalt be called blessed.” The fulfilment has already commenced in our hearts, but that is not the end, not the fulness, not the ultimate meaning of the promise; for by and by this holy nation (the body of Christ, the church), shall be great indeed when filled with the divine blessing and power as God's glorified kingdom. We realize, too, that while it is our blessed privilege to let shine upon others the light which the Lord by his Spirit has graciously shined into our hearts, nevertheless, our time for bestowing the great blessing is still future—that it belongs to the period for which we pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth.” We reason that, altho our name may be now cast out as evil, and the reproaches bestowed upon the Head of the body may fall also upon us, his members, nevertheless, the time is surely hastening when the name Christ, shall be great throughout all the earth, and that being the name of our Bridegroom it will also be our name as his bride and joint-heir. We look forward with joy to the time when the holy nation, now so misunderstood and considered a peculiar people, shall recompense the poor, blinded, Satan-deceived world and nominal church for all the evils inflicted upon the Christ, head and body, by blessing them, returning good for evil in the highest degree—instructing and uplifting all who will to return to divine favor.

It is also true of the spiritual seed of Abraham that the Lord defends their cause, and that those who afflict or injure them, figuratively injure the apple of the Lord's eye, while those who bless them are sure to be compensated. Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water to one of the least of the Lord's disciples shall eventually receive a great reward for the kindness—if not in the present life, then, in the life to come.—Matt. 10:42; Zech. 2:8.

Abraham's experience is recorded as an evidence of his faith. It would have been vain for him to have pleaded great faith in the Lord and to have said, The Lord is as able to bless me and to use me in Chaldea, Babylonia, as in any other place; and since what he seeks is to know my faith, he can just as well see that I have it here. Some who class themselves as spiritual Israel, seem to reason after this manner, but they make a great mistake. It is true that the Lord

looks upon the heart, and that it is our faith, and not our imperfect works, which commends us to him, but he assures us that if we have the faith it will speedily manifest itself in works; and that if we have the faith and fail to act in harmony with it, to the extent of our ability, the faith will die out. Perfect works are not demanded of us, because we are imperfect through the fall; but any who would maintain a justified standing before the Lord, through faith, must manifest works in harmony with their faith to the extent of ability, for faith without works is dead—has lost all its vitality, all its virtue, all its life. It is thenceforth dead, worthless.—James 2:17.

Justification is a free gift, “not of works, lest any man should boast”—it is God's gift through Christ, based upon the ransom. But as it is accounted unto us only for the purpose of permitting us to go on—to sanctification—to self-sacrifice, such results or works must be forthcoming, or it will prove that we have received “the grace of God in vain.”—Eph. 2:9; 2 Cor. 6:1.

After Abraham had thus proven himself obedient, showing his faith by his obedience, the Lord revealed his purposes to him much more specifically than at first, saying, “Unto thy seed will I give this land.” This promise must have seemed quite improbable at that time, for the land was already peopled with strong nations, whose posterity would undoubtedly increase greatly, while Abram, on the contrary, had as yet no child. There was room for doubt in Abram's mind, but there was also room for faith. His faith accepted the promise, and he ratified it by building there an altar, on which we presume he offered sacrifices to the Lord, typical of the great sacrifice of Christ, through the efficacy of which all of God's promises will be fulfilled. Let us carefully notice that the special promise of God given to Abram ignored Lot and his family, and ignored the thousand or more persons of Abram's household. It is proper to call special attention to these matters in view of the very erroneous conceptions of God's elections, which have gained access to nearly all minds, and which need to be gotten rid of if we would rightly understand the divine plan of the ages. Those non-elect were “passed by” and not associated in the Abrahamic call and election, but not therefore sentenced to eternal torment; but, just like the non-elect of this Gospel age, they must wait for divine blessings until Abraham's seed shall bless the world during the Millennium.

There is no suggestion in this promise neither that Abraham was to preach the Gospel to any of his 1,000 camp-followers, and herdsmen, nor that any of them were in any danger of an eternity of torture by reason of such a commission not having been given to Abram. The fact is that the wages of sin is death—including trials, weaknesses and sufferings of the present life incidental to the dying process. The whole world was in danger of this penalty,—more than this, the danger feature was past, for they were already in death;—dying under the original sentence passed against father Adam, and shared by all of his progeny.—Rom. 5:12.

The whole race therefore, including Abram and Lot and the servants and all the families of the earth, were going down into the great prison house—death. No way of escape had yet been provided by the Almighty on any terms or conditions, and hence there was no Gospel to preach; hence, too, altho the Lord subsequently made known to Abraham that the blessing of all of the families of the earth would in due time come through his seed—the Christ—nevertheless, the proclamation of this Gospel or good tidings of a resurrection—of a recovery of the dead through the merits of the great atonement sacrifice—could not be made, could not be authorized of God, till first of all our Lord Jesus had paid the ransom price with his own life, purchasing the whole world of mankind, and the right in due time to resurrect such of them as will come into full accord with the divine law. It is appropriate, therefore, that the Scriptures tell us distinctly that this great salvation from death “Began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.”—Heb. 2:3.

ABRAHAM'S AND LOT'S TESTINGS

GEN. 13:1-18.—AUG. 4.

“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”—Matt 7:12

Development of character implies a variety of experiences and tests. In choosing Abraham as his agent and channel through whom he would bring to the world his purposed blessings, God chose a good man, but not a perfect one—for there was not a perfect man to choose, as there has not been since, of all Adam's posterity. While God called Abraham, he made him only partial promises until he had manifested

faith by obedience. And it was appropriate that various and severe tests of faith should come before the fulness of divine favor should be guaranteed him. One of these faith-tests came through a drouth in the land of Canaan, and, as a result, a food scarcity, a famine, in the region where Abraham had settled, flocks and herds.

It would naturally be a severe test of faith for him to see

his cattle lean and dying, and to think of the fertile country which he had left, and that this drouth-tricken land was the one to which the Lord had called him. He must go somewhere to find water and sustenance, and concluded not to go back to Babylon, but to journey south-westward into the country bordering Egypt. Egypt was well advanced in civilization, and like Chaldea, his former home, was a heathen land—to the extent that the people had considerably lost sight of the one God and his worship, and had become worshippers of various deities. It was a dangerous experiment: Abram might have become enamored of the civilization, etc., of Egypt and have lost his respect for the Lord's promise in regard to Canaan; yet it did not have this effect, but apparently on the contrary, became a blessing to him; for his experience there convinced him more and more that he could not have true happiness under the prevailing conditions: he would rather wander about and have no continuing city, and not be bound by any of the customs and rules of the world which recognized not God. His experience taught him to look for to hope for, to wait for, the New Jerusalem city or government, which has not yet been established, but for which the Lord's people still pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth."

Abraham little realized how much he needed to pray, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." On arrival he, as a great man, was brought to the attention of the king, and Sarah, his wife, was introduced—but as his sister, or niece, not as his wife. Abraham heard probably about this time of an incident which had occurred with one of the Pharaohs, of which we now know through recently discovered papyrus records—that at the instance of his princes he sent an armed force and took a beautiful woman from her husband for his harem. Sarah was a beautiful woman, and Abraham feared that Pharaoh might kill him in order to have his wife. This difficulty probably did not occur to him when he started his journey, nor until he had arrived there and was called before the king. Thus the Lord's people always find it: if they leave the land of promise, seeking better things in the world, they find their difficulties and trials greatly increased.

Abraham determined that as an expedient for the preservation of his life he would tell but a part of the truth and speak of Sarah as his sister, without acknowledging her as his wife. The transaction was an ignoble one every way, and quite unworthy of the man; but the Lord did not forsake him, but, as the record shows, returned Sarah to him with a rebuke from the heathen king which must have stung Abraham severely, and have served as a lesson for the remainder of his life. Thus all things work together for good to them that love God—even their mistakes and slips become lessons and blessings under divine providence. Having learned his lesson, Abraham quickly retraced his steps to the land of promise, returning again to Bethel where first he had built an altar to the Lord and formally consecrated himself: there again Abraham called upon the name of the Lord. The prompt retracing of his steps is also a lesson for the Lord's people of this Gospel age. If we find that through lack of faith or weakness of the flesh a wrong step has been taken, contrary to the Lord's will and our best spiritual interests, no time should be lost in retracing the steps and in calling upon the Lord. We have an altar consecrated with the precious blood of Christ, far superior every way to that which Abraham consecrated with the blood of typical animals; and the Apostle exhorts us, "Let us come boldly [courageously—full of faith] to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need."—Heb. 4:16.

One of the strongest evidences of the truth of the Bible records, and that they are not the work of priests or knaves, is the fact that the weaknesses and frailties of its grandest and most luminous characters are depicted with as free a hand as their virtues and strong qualities. Had the story of Abraham and the story of David, both men full of faith and after God's own heart, and acknowledged to be his friends, been concocted, they assuredly would have omitted all the blemishes of the present narratives. As it is, the weaknesses of these men, and divine compassion toward them notwithstanding these, and their faith and repentance and reestablishment in divine favor, have been lessons of incalculable value to the Lord's saints throughout the age, many of whom have at times found themselves more or less similarly entrapped, and to some extent stumbled by the great temptations of the world, the flesh and the Devil.

Abraham's flocks and herds increased, and the number of his servants. Likewise also did Lot's—tho he was by no means as wealthy a man as his uncle. Prosperity seems as likely to bring trouble as adversity, or more so; and it does

not surprise us to find that a strife broke out between the herdsmen of the two masters, and that apparently the strife extended to Lot. The land at that time was not thickly settled, nor was it owned and controlled by syndicates; hence Abraham and Lot moved hither and thither through the grazing country, merely seeking to find unoccupied pasturage, and as the Canaanites (Lowlanders) and the Perizzites (Highlanders) dwelt in Canaan, it necessarily meant that migratory bands, such as Abraham's, would find the pasturage at times somewhat restricted. Abraham's prompt course for the maintenance of peace is worthy of emulation. His words to Lot on the subject would make a good motto for the home or for the shop; "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee. . . . for we are brethren." The Lord's people are not all peaceably disposed according to the flesh, but peaceableness is a prominent element in the new nature, the new mind, the new will, the new heart; hence peaceableness is to be cultivated and more attention is to be given to it in proportion as we find our natural disposition to be contentious. This is one of the ways the Lord's people are to be renewed in word and in deed;—"By the transformation of their minds."

Abraham was not only peaceable, but generous, as his proposition to Lot shows; for altho he was the richer of the two by far, and his larger herds and flocks required more abundant provision, he nevertheless gave Lot the choice. Here is another lesson for all of the Lord's people: generosity, not an unreasoning and unreasonable generosity which would give away everything, but an even-handed, fair generosity which is well represented in our Golden Text; *mat. 23:23*, the golden rule that we should treat others as we would reasonably wish them to treat us: whoever follows this rule, will, like Abraham, find that in the end it will be profitable—even tho it may at first seem unprofitable.

It would appear that Lot was less generous than his uncle—more selfish; and taking advantage of the latter's liberal proposition he chose the rich, fertile valley of the Jordan—the land of Sodom, of which the record is that it was "like the garden of the Lord" (the garden of Eden), and like the most favored portion of Egypt. Lot was a keen business man apparently, for his choice signified not only the richest of the grazing country, but additionally the best market for his flocks and herds; because the Jordan valley seems to have been a commercial highway frequented by traveling caravans, etc., the best of customers for sheep and cattle. Abraham and Lot together might have taken the Jordan valley at first, seeing its suitability to their occupation: no doubt the reason why Abraham avoided it is found in the fact of the wickedness of the people there, and that he did not wish to bring either himself or wife or servants into close contact with such people, preferring the less fertile district because of their separateness from such associations, with which he could not feel in harmony or fellowship.

Lot possessed much less faith and much less character than his uncle, but was also a good man, and his determination to make the country of the Jordan his home does not signify that he had fellowship with the Sodomites. On the contrary, the record is that their course "vexed his righteous soul." (2 Pet. 2:8) He evidently was deluded, as many of the Lord's people of today are deluded, into association with evil influences for the sake of worldly prosperity. He no doubt persuaded himself that he could live separate from the contaminations of Sodom, and even exercise a moral influence over the unrighteous. How unwise, very unwise, his course really was may be seen in the light of his subsequent history. The wisdom of Abraham stands out in striking contrast, and the two experiences furnish valuable lessons for all who are seeking the heavenly city and praying, Thy kingdom come. Abraham's course illustrates our Lord's words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness and all these [needful] things shall be added unto you." Lot's course illustrates our Lord's words, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world?" Lot's quest for wealth, etc., no doubt brought rich returns, for he became a wealthy and influential man in Sodom, but his wealth and influence cost too much; first, they cost his peace of mind, for "his righteous soul was vexed;" he had no real happiness. Second, it cost him his children, sons and daughters, all but two unmarried ones, and even they apparently were blemished through their contact with evil example. And it cost him also his wife, whose sympathies for her children over-balanced her interest in the Lord and righteousness. It cost him additionally, in the end, all his flocks and herds and wealth, all of which went down in the fire from heaven upon the city of destruction.

There is a great lesson here for us all, especially for such lovers of righteousness as have the care, the guardianship of children: the lesson is that they should think less of earthly advantages, social, political and financial, and think more, much more, of the moral and spiritual influences and advantages obtainable through isolation from the evil which is in the world—so far as possible “make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame [blemished through sin] be turned out of the way [of righteousness].”—Heb. 12:13.

Abraham did not attempt to coerce his nephew; but, properly no doubt, after having advised him to the contrary, he let him take his course, contenting himself with giving the admonition and example to the contrary. Here is another good lesson for the Lord's people; very many who like to have their own liberty are disposed to use force and coercion in dealing with others, and the results are generally bad for both parties. Lack of faith lies at the bottom of such difficulties; self-will attempts to regulate our own affairs, and branching out attempts also to regulate the affairs of others; whereas a consecrated will, resting by faith upon the Lord's promise, permits the Lord to have the helm; to control not only in respect to the believer's personal interests, but also in respect to the interests and affairs of others. Abraham had manifested his faith in God, not only in respect to the future blessings promised, but also in respect to the incidental details of his every-day life. Hence he could afford not only to not interfere with Lot's liberty, but could be generous to the extent of giving Lot his choice, knowing that the Lord would take care of him, and fulfil to him all the gracious promises incidental to his call. And in proportion as we are children of Abraham by faith we should have and should continually exercise similar faith, that we may experience similar blessings under God's providence.

While Lot's choice led him farther from the right, Abraham's blessing was increased by his course; for again the Lord appeared to him, in a manner not explained, and gave him renewed assurance respecting the original promise, telling him to look in every direction and to know assuredly that, while this land at the present time was under various rulers, it should in time be given to him and his posterity everlastingly. Yet with this renewal of the promise must have come another testing of faith, because Abraham as yet

had no child. How improbable, therefore, the fulfilment of the Lord's word, that his seed should ultimately be very numerous, hyperbolically “as the dust of the earth!” Yet Abraham's faith wavered not. Likewise the faith of the Lord's people today wavers not respecting his promise—for it has not yet had a fulfilment, as the Apostles Paul and Stephen both declare.

Abraham lived in the land many years and died there, yet was a pilgrim and stranger; a sojourner and not an owner to the day of his death. (Heb. 11:13) Stephen's explanation of the matter is very explicit. (Acts 7:5) He declares that God never gave him so much of the space as would be covered by his foot; and points out that the time for the fulfilment of this promise is future—during the resurrection, the Millennium of Christ's reign, after the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, the glorified church, the bride with the bridegroom, shall have been established in the control of the world as God's Kingdom.—Dan. 7:13, 14; 1 Cor. 15:24.

With each manifestation of obedience on the part of Abraham came fresh blessings from the Lord, fresh repetitions and expanded declarations respecting the divine purpose, strengthening and encouraging him. Nevertheless he understood that the realization of his hope lay in the future, and this was clearly indicated by the Lord's words, “Arise, journey through the land, in the length and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee.” In compliance with this instruction, that he was to be a pilgrim, moving from place to place, Abraham only removed to Mamre, and, doubtless in harmony with his custom at each new stopping place, he built there another altar unto the Lord—another typical acknowledgement of sin, of his own unworthiness, and of the fact that his standing before God, his acceptance with him, was in the merits of a great sin offering which had not yet been made. So with us who are the Lord's people, wherever we are; we are under divine care, and may rest, and may have the peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in our hearts: nevertheless, we are not to be at home, nor to seek to feel at home under present imperfect conditions. We are to continually remember that the Lord has promised us a heavenly inheritance, and we are to seek for and wait for it, assured that it will be ours if we remain faithful to the end of life's pilgrimage.

INTERESTING LETTERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—The article on “Patient Endurance,” in April 1 TOWER seemed most opportune, as we heard a number of our people speak of it particularly; and I may say it is most highly appreciated by myself. Indeed, dear Brother Russell, every number of the blessed TOWER seems fraught with the spiritual refreshment most needed at the time, and my heart is continually lifted in deep gratitude to our Father for the heavenly food furnished through your instrumentality. That you have been enabled to so empty yourself as to be filled with God's precious messages so richly, is a cause of deep gratitude from all the household of faith. In reading over recently the first and second volumes of DAWN, I am astonished at the many things that had previously escaped me, or failed to leave their impression—probably through the pressure of worldly cares. The last three years have brought me riches of knowledge and experience, yet with them such an overwhelming sense of my utter unworthiness and incompetency that I would surely sink, but for clinging to the cross.

I ask your prayers that I may not receive the grace of God in vain, but forget the things that are behind, and press forward to the mark—with patient endurance.

With earnest desire for the continuation of His rich favors to you, and all needed strength, both physically and spiritually, and trusting in the merits of our great Redeemer,

I remain, yours with Christian love,

ALICE E. BOURQUIN,—*New York.*

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL.—We have heard several times from you through Sister Giesecke in Germany, and received your greetings and sent our regards to you. But I feel as tho I should write directly to you this time, to inform you that the Lord has a people even here in Poland, and that a goodly number have been found here in a comparatively short time. There were only three of us when I first came here; but the Lord has blest the testimony and the circulation of the tracts and booklets to such an extent that now we number fifteen, nine brethren and six sisters. And the opposition on the part of those who claim to be faithful Christians, but who do not grasp the truth was, and is still, very severe, not only in this place, but in the entire vicinity, into which the

truth has been carried in a wonderful manner, through various agencies, showing that it is the Lord's work.

We are so thankful that the Lord has counted us worthy to see present truth, delivering us out of the gross darkness of Babylon, and translating us into his marvelous light. And we cannot help feeling that the Lord has condescended greatly in calling us, who in so many respects are much more unworthy than many others whom we know to be blinded and prejudiced against the truth, but who naturally seem to be much more qualified for service if their eyes were only open to the truth.

We have great difficulty in getting literature from Germany, and in fact from anywhere outside the Russian border, especially so of late, on account of the recent ecclesiastical and social troubles, but we are thankful for what we have already received, and are feeding with delight at the richly decked table of present truth. We are glad that you have not decided to discontinue issuing the German TOWER, even tho it comes so seldom and not nearly with the quantity of food the English brethren have furnished them. We earnestly hope that the fifth volume of the DAWN may appear in a German translation, and until then we will endeavor to be satisfied with the grace already bestowed upon us.

We wish you the Lord's richest blessing in your ministries of love, and remember you in our prayers, hoping and praying that we may be remembered also in your petitions. We would be delighted to receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of these lines. And finally we send you hearty greetings. May the Lord bless you! Yours in the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

JOHANN WEINZ,—*Russian Poland.*

The following is from the Bandera, Texas, *Enterprise* of April 11, 1901. We commend the Brother's method of announcing in his home paper the reasons for his withdrawal from a system, whose doctrines he could no longer support, and believe the temperate and careful manner in which he has stated the reasons for his action should be helpful in its influence upon any whom he may hereafter endeavor to interest in the “good news.”—EDITOR.