

If, partially, the consequence be an encroachment upon your time, I know you will forgive, as our dear, gracious Heavenly Father does when we make mistakes.

On your return from abroad we cannot greet you as some others who love you, but let this letter convey to you our glad, loving "Welcome home!"

And now, a few words relative to a little matter upon which I shall much appreciate having your opinion.

Twice, recently, I have met friends who are studying the Truth and show every evidence of love for it.

The question of Spiritism arose, and in each case the friend was not acquainted with the truth on this important Bible subject. I inquired, Would you not like the truth about this matter? Receiving an affirmative reply, I told the one—a brother—of the little book on SPIRITISM and he promised to read it, saying his thought had been to have absolutely nothing to do with the subject.

To the other—a sister—I loaned my own book with the same words, that in this "evil day" it is our business to fol-

low what the dear Lord indicates is necessary to our salvation, namely, the putting on of the "whole armor that we may be able to stand" in this particularly evil period.

When next I met her she exclaimed, "O, Sister Erb, I could not read that awful book! I am sure that our Lord will never allow his children to come in contact in any way with anything so unholy as the demons." She quoted, "He will keep them, that that wicked one touch them not."

I have thought that possibly others are in doubt upon this subject so pregnant with awful possibilities—some, perhaps, who have recently embraced the true faith—and that a word of emphasis from yourself with respect to giving attention to the truth regarding Spiritism would be a help to them.

With one more prayer now, added to the many I have offered at the throne of heavenly grace on your behalf, I will close, hoping before very long to meet and greet you face to face.

Your sister, by the grace of our dear heavenly Father and through our dear Redeemer, MRS. JONATHAN R. ERB.—Pa.

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"WHAT IS MAN?"

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? for thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor; thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas; O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"—Psalm 8:3-9.

The suggestion of the prophet respecting man is one which we believe has occurred to every intelligent being. As one upon the deep looks out upon the vast expanse of water and the riding of the vessel upon it, he thinks, How little is man! How small a speck in the universe! When we look up into the heavens and realize that they represent so much more of divine power, we are still more surprised. When we consider the heavens, and realize that all these stars, except the planets which belong to our own system, are really suns, and that around each of these suns revolve planets, as our earth revolves around our sun, and when we think of the number of these suns and their planets, we are amazed, and we feel our own littleness all the more!

We ask astronomers as to the number of these suns, and they will tell you that there are a hundred millions of them in sight. And if we would average the planets around these hundred million suns at ten, it would be ten hundred millions of planets. And then they tell us, further, that if we could take our stand upon the very farthestmost one of these we would still see before us many more, and as many more.

Our minds are appalled as we begin to think of the heavens, the work of God's fingers, and then consider man, how small a work in God's sight! We have an appreciation then of what the Scriptures say man is like in God's sight—as "the dust in the balance," that is not worthy to be taken into account. We have all been in the grocer's shop and notice that he pays no attention to the dust in the scoop of his scale. So man is so small in the sight of the great Creator that we wonder that God should have any interest at all in humanity.

"THOU MADEST HIM TO HAVE DOMINION"

Except for the Bible we should have no knowledge of God's interest in us, and we might think that God is so great that he would pay no heed to us. But, when God reveals himself to us in the Bible, we begin to see that there is not only divine power exercised and manifested in the creation of all these worlds, but we see also this divine power manifested in God's dealings with us, and also the love of God, which the Scriptures state "passeth all understanding." What wonderful condescension on the part of the Creator that he should give heed to us!

But our text goes on to give us further information on this subject: "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? for thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." Only a little lower is the thought! Of the holy angels the Scriptures give us to understand there are various ranks, some higher and some lower, but all perfect. Then in the world we have various orders of animal life—the beast of the field, the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air—and man, as the highest of these earthly beings; and he stands related to all these lower creatures as God does to the entire universe, and this is the honor with which our great Creator endowed his human creatures!

So we are told in this Psalm, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things

under his feet." What a wonderful creature man is, then, from this standpoint! While he is a little lower than the angels, so far as his nature in connection with the earth is concerned, and whereas as angels are more excellent so far as their natures are concerned, this Psalm speaks of man as being superior in that he has a dominion. The angels do not have dominion over other angels, but all are subject to the great Creator, God.

But man, in the likeness of his Creator, has been given a dominion over the lower creatures, and in this respect it is a wonderful honor with which he has been crowned—"Thou crownedst him with the glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thy hands."

It might be asked with great propriety, If God is thus careful of humanity and has so highly honored his human creatures, why should he not have made a still better preparation for them in the world? Why is it that they are subject to the unfavorable conditions under which they now exist? Why are there sorrow, pain, sighing, crying and dying? Why are these tempests, storms, cyclones and tornadoes, famine, drought and pestilence—why all these things if God is so careful of us as his creatures?

We would have no answer for all these questions were it not provided in the Bible. In this wonderful book of all books, we have the key to the matter, the explanation, and that is: God provided originally that man should be subject to none of these difficulties and disasters. Man was made perfect and placed in favorable and perfect surroundings, in a perfect garden, eastward in Eden, with everything necessary for his welfare—no storms, no sickness, no tempests, no difficulties—and he might have lived forever. Such was the wonderful dominion of this human son of God.

Why, then, the change? This wonderful book answers that the change came about because of sin. And so we read: "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world (there was no sin in the world before), and death as a result of sin." (Rom. 5:12.) There was no dying on the part of man until sin came. So all the aches, pains, sorrows and sickness which we experience are parts of this dying process. And so the difficulty with us all is that by nature we are "children of wrath."

Is divine wrath eternal torture? No, indeed! That teaching was handed down to us, perhaps, by our well-meaning forefathers. The wrath of God, we see on every hand; as the Apostle Paul declares, "The wrath of God is revealed"—in our own bodies, our aches and pains, mental imperfections, physical imperfections and moral imperfections—these are all parts of this great penalty for sin. We read that when man became a transgressor God sent a holy angel to drive our first parents out from the Garden of Eden, away from the trees of life that were to sustain them in perfection, out into the unfinished earth.

While the whole earth could just as easily have been made perfect, God left it unfinished, unprepared for man, and merely "prepared a garden eastward in Eden" for the trial of

our first parents, because divine wisdom foresaw that man would sin; and instead of making the whole earth perfect, God left it in an imperfect condition, except the Garden of Eden. So we read that when God thrust our first parents out of the Garden of Eden, he said, "Cursed is the earth (not I will make it unfit, but it is already) for thy sake, thorns and thistles shall bring forth, and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

In other words, the great penalty against our race is a death penalty—"Dying, thou shalt die." (Gen. 2:17) This has been upon our race for six thousand years, from the time that sin entered into the world. So all the pages of history from Adam's day to this are marked with sin and sorrow, pain and sighing, because we are all sinners; and because we are sinners, God is treating us according to his own purpose, "Dying, thou shalt die."

But this is the sad side of the matter. Is there no other side, is there no hope for us? The same blessed book—the Bible—tells us. The Gospel message, which signifies "good tidings," declares that God has some good message for those whom he condemned to death.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL MESSAGE?

We inquire, What is the good message? The Scriptures answer that the good message is that he who condemned us as unfit for eternal life has provided for our redemption; that his Son became our Redeemer; that Christ died, the "just for the unjust," that he might bring all back into harmony with God. O, some may say, but did not Jesus die eighteen hundred or more years ago? Yes, truly. And have we not the same reign of sin and death as then? Yes. Where, then, is the blessing which was to come through Jesus? Well, we answer, a two-fold blessing has been provided. First of all, there is a blessing of hope, which some of God's people enjoy, a blessing of knowledge, that in God's "due time" he will bring in the wonderful things of which this Gospel message tells.

God having provided a Redeemer, there will be a resurrection of the dead; they shall not remain dead, but come forth. There shall be a new dispensation, a glorious morning, in which all sin and sorrow will be done away. So the Scriptures assure us of that time that there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, because all the former things, all the things of sin, the things of death, will have passed away.

"THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION"

And, we inquire, who is so powerful as to overthrow sin and death, and lift up humanity and bring them back from sin and weakness and imperfection and death? The Bible answers this question, that the one who will do this is the Great One who sits upon the throne of God; as we read, "He that sitteth upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new!"

But who is this? Oh, the very same one, who, by the grace of God, became our Redeemer—Jesus. He is to be the great King of kings and Lord of lords, and is to "reign from sea to sea, and from river to river to the ends of the earth." And under the blessed influence of that kingdom the full blessing of God will come to the earth again! "All the blind eyes shall be opened, and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped." "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

These are words of the prophets given to us for our hope and the strengthening of our hearts, that we might turn from sin and become more and more the children of God.

We have referred to the world and how it is to be blessed by the Messianic kingdom, the kingdom of God's dear son, the kingdom for which Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." But we see not all these things accomplished yet. We see not mankind brought back to perfection, nor the promise of the good tidings fulfilled amongst men. But we have a word from the Apostle upon this subject. He said, "But we see not yet all things put under man"; they are still out of harmony. But, says the Apostle, we see a beginning of God's work; we see Jesus, who, "by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man." We see more than that. More than eighteen hundred years have passed. Not only has Jesus tasted death, but a great many have been going into death, in answer to the call to be of the bride of Christ, the church of the first-born, to be associated with our Lord. This is the church we sing about in our hymn:—

"The church's one foundation,
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven he came and sought her
To be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her,
And for her life he died."

This, then, is the first work of God in the redemption of mankind—the gathering of the bride of Christ, the church, to share in his glory, honor and immortality. We hope to be of this class; and to this class belong the great promises that they shall share with him in the first resurrection, and then bless all the families of the earth with restitution. The world of mankind is to be restored to all that Adam had and lost, for all of which Jesus died at Calvary; and associated with him will be the church, called out of the world a saintly class who have been walking in the footsteps of Jesus; as we read again "Blessed and holy are they who have part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power; they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."—Rev. 20:6.

This will be the thousand years of Messiah's reign, the thousand years of the world's uplift, the thousand years in which Satan will be bound, the thousand years in which knowledge shall fill the whole earth, the thousand years in which the earth shall be brought to the Paradisaic condition, which was symbolically represented in the Garden of Eden—and when every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth shall be brought to that glorious condition where they will sing praises to God that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

And yet there is another side; for the same Scriptures which tell of the exaltation of the church to glory and the blessings of the world through the kingdom of Messiah, which tell that the earth will be the Paradise of God—these Scriptures also tell us of a class of incorrigibles who will be punished. After this class shall have been brought to a full knowledge of God and shall wilfully sin against divine light and blessings, the punishment against these will be, not eternal torment, but destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.—2 Thess. 1:9.

THE FUTURE INHERITANCE OF THE NEW CREATION

"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Romans 8:17.

The divine promise is that the kingdom of God will be amongst men—"under the whole heavens." The Scriptures state that both our Lord and the New Jerusalem, or glorious kingdom of Messiah, are to come down from heaven to earth; and they call our Lord, therefore, Immanuel (God with us). During that thousand years God will in this sense dwell with men, walk with men. We already have this to some extent in our experience as Christians. God is with men, and Christ and the church are with men, more or less contradicting and putting to shame the things of darkness of the present time.

But with all these suggestions it is not necessary for us to suppose that the kingdom will be earthly. On the contrary, the assurance of the Scriptures is that the church must become spirit beings before they can inherit the kingdom: "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," while those of this class who have been previously dead will have an instantaneous resurrection; and thus we shall be "forever with the Lord"—not forever with the Lord on the earth, but always in the spirit condition. The angels are always in the heavenly

condition, whether they are in heaven with the Father or on earth, and we shall always be in the heavenly condition—the spirit condition.

Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that there will be a restriction upon the church, that she should remain in one place more than another. The intimation seems to be that, after she shall have experienced her change, the church will be for a short time absent from the earth and in the presence of the heavenly Father. We read in the forty-fifth Psalm that the bride is to be brought into the presence of the Great King, arrayed in glorious clothing of wrought gold—"in raiment of needlework." The members of the body of Christ will all be on the spirit plane, whether they are afar off or near the earth. This is what our Lord meant when he said, "I go to prepare a place for you"—in the divine family. This particular place is one that has never been filled by any others.

The various orders of spirit beings created by the Father occupy each its own sphere. But there is no church of Christ amongst these. The church of Christ is invited to occupy a

place next to the Lord, next to the Father, higher than all the other planes of spirit beings. At the first advent this place had not been prepared for the church, although the Lord had it in mind. Our Lord ascended up on high to prepare this place. He did so by making an application of his merit to the church class, by imputing his merit to them and permitting them to become participators with him in his sufferings in the present time, that they might also become sharers with him in the divine nature. Thus he prepared the way to enter into that highest of all spirit planes, the divine.

We are not sufficiently informed respecting the spirit condition to know just how it would be possible for the Lord and the church to remain in the Father's presence and maintain the government of the earth. Perhaps this course is possible. Yet again, such would perhaps not be a wise arrangement. Perhaps it would be necessary for them to be absent from the immediate presence of the heavenly Father and to approximate the earth, just as with Satan and his angels, who are in tartarus—cast down, separate because of sin. But Satan is to be bound for a thousand years; and the position which he has occupied is to be vacated. The entire church is to be "caught up in the air" to be with the Lord forever—not necessarily in tartarus, but "forever with the Lord," that where he may be there they may be also, in harmony with the divine will, to execute the divine purposes.

Our thought, then, is that the Christ will be very closely associated with our earth, just as Satan's kingdom has been; and that they will be equally invisible to men, who will not see them during the thousand years, just as men have not seen Satan and his fallen angels. But as Satan and his angels have been doing an evil work, so Christ and his church will be doing a powerful work, a good work, a work on the spirit plane; and associated with them will be various agencies, one of which undoubtedly will be the "great company." The members of Christ are the ones that are mentioned as "kings and priests unto God," who shall reign on the earth.

THE EARTHLY PHASE—INTELLIGENT, WILLING MEN

Then there will be earthly agents of this kingdom, just as Satan has his agents, who are sometimes under his control through ignorance and superstition, sometimes from mesmeric power, all of which will be removed at that time. But the agents of Christ will be intelligent and willing. At that time the ancient worthies will be "Princes in all the earth." All mankind will gradually come into fellowship with the kingdom and, proportionately, indirectly, become associated with the kingdom itself. Just as any good man helps a government, so all mankind will be blessed in proportion as they approve and uphold the divine arrangements.

Thus the kingdom will be spreading for the thousand years, not only from one individual to another, but gradually bringing them back to full perfection. We read that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." It will conquer everything before it. Nothing shall stop it. Every evil thing having been destroyed, every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth will be heard praising God. Every

knee will bow and every tongue confess; and his kingdom will be without an opponent "from the river unto the ends of the earth"—having accomplished its purpose.

The kingdom will then cease, in the sense that Christ will deliver the authority over to the Father. (1 Cor. 15:24-28) This does not mean that the law of God will be disregarded, as it has been during the reign of sin and death. To meet the exigencies of the fallen condition of mankind, and to bring back as many as possible into harmony with the divine arrangements, a special kingdom will be established—the Messianic kingdom—which will come in between the divine government and mankind, because mankind in its weak condition will be unable to meet the requirements of the divine law. But when this kingdom has restored mankind to perfection, it is the divine purpose for Messiah to relinquish this subordinate kingdom, which will merge into and become a part of the great kingdom of Jehovah. Justice will then operate. There will be no place for mercy, and the heavenly Father is not then represented as being a merciful king to his creatures. The heavenly Father will then have made them perfect, so as to need no mercy, and they will be glad to meet all the requirements of the divine government, and will be blessed in so doing.

THE CHRIST TO BE ASSOCIATE RULER OF THE UNIVERSE

Having terminated this work our Lord will not be without an occupation; but, according to the Scriptures, he will continue to be at the right hand of the Majesty on High—next to the Father. He will relinquish the oversight of the affairs of earth, and will assume again the general position as Associate-administrator of the affairs of the universe in connection with the heavenly Father. We are not to suppose, however, that the heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus will be kept busy hearing and deciding cases and administering justice, for the equilibrium will be such that there will be no necessity for such a course. The whole universe will go on practically without any head; and yet there will be the Head. The Son will be next to the Father in authority; and next to the Son will be the bride. The work that will thenceforth progress is not revealed to us except in a very indefinite manner.

We understand by the power of telescopes that the suns have each a planetary system. If God made this earth a planet to be inhabited, it is only reasonable for us to infer that all the planets of the universe will be inhabited, and that The Christ will behold the heavenly Father and his wonderful universe. The power of the heavenly Father is boundless, so far as we can understand. If after we have considered the hundred millions and more of suns and planetary systems beyond the power of human mind to contemplate—if then we realize that the heavenly Father has made the position of Christ illimitable, and he has exalted the bride of Christ with her Lord, then it is reasonable to assume that the work of Christ and the church will be limitless, and that some blessed work for creatures not yet born is the work of all eternity. We simply wonder in amazement! We wonder at the greatness of his goodness to us, which is to lift us—the faithful few who make their calling and election sure—from our low condition to future glories interminable!

CLEANSING FROM FILTHINESS OF FLESH AND SPIRIT

"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—2 Cor. 7:1.

In our text the expression, "filthiness of the flesh," seems to be a general one, in contrast with the divine purity in which man was created. All violation of law is sin; and all sin is symbolized by leprosy, a very filthy disease. The Apostle, however, does not mean that he and the other brethren were filthy in having the very gross sins that the world has; for any one worthy of the name of brother in Christ would have turned his back upon all gross sins and would have put away all those before he could have become a brother. But the Apostle is speaking of the "dearly beloved" who have left all these, who have left the "wallowing in the mire," as the Apostle Peter puts it.

To what extent we may cleanse ourselves will depend upon the viewpoint from which we speak. The Apostle's thought seems to be that we continue cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, as though he were pointing to a progressive work—to a high standard toward which we progress: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) In one sense, this is impossible. With imperfect bodies, we cannot always do perfectly, even with the best of intentions and motives. But God's provision is that the blood of Jesus Christ keeps cleansing us from all sin, so that his people should maintain this very condition in the Lord's sight—a condition of perfection at all times. That is to say,

if they find they have come short, they should go to him for a covering of their blemishes.

But even if the Lord's people do not recognize where they have done wrong, they should know that all have sinned and come short; therefore, they should entreat the forgiveness of their trespasses. They should come to the frame of mind where they will be willing to cover the weaknesses of others, as they desire to be forgiven by God. We cannot suppose that God would be in love with any one who is practising sin. But he has made that arrangement by which we may be cleansed from sin. Thus the Lord's people are exhorted to be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Their robe is to be wholly without filthiness of the flesh. If a spot should appear, small or great, it would be the duty and privilege of the one whose garment is soiled to have it cleansed without delay and not to remain in filthiness. This matter of keeping our garment unspotted from the world is one that should have our continual attention if we would have the Lord esteem us without spot or wrinkle.

WHAT CONSTITUTES FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT?

"Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." It is the new creature that is addressed. It is the new creature that is to do the cleansing—the new will. The flesh is what remains of the old creature which has been reckoned dead

as respects domination of mind or will. But the old body has been turned over to the new will to be its servant of righteousness, to be its tabernacle, until it receives its glorious body in the resurrection. The new will has the stewardship or responsibility over the old body. Not only are we not to permit it to practise sin, but we are to control it in the service of righteousness.

The Apostle here says that we are to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh; and we are to judge of what might be filthy habits—or of habits we have that we might afterwards think filthy, impure, undesirable. As rapidly as we come to recognize these, we, as new creatures, will seek to expunge them, eradicate them, remove them. Sometimes filthiness of the flesh is manifested by uncleanness of the hands, uncleanness of the teeth, etc. From the time the holy Spirit begins to operate, the Lord's people want their bodies washed literally; they want their hands clean; they want their teeth clean. Again, filthiness of the flesh might be in the nature of rubbing snuff on the nose, for instance. This would not be quite so bad as the chewing of tobacco, not quite so filthy as the smoking of tobacco. The same person at different times in his experience might have different conceptions of this matter, but as we come to see we should correct these habits.

But above all, the Lord's people desire purity in their inward parts; and the Apostle says that we should cleanse ourselves from filthiness of the spirit. This does not imply that the new creature is filthy, but that the mind is filthy. How could the mind of the new creature be "filthy" or unclean? We answer that the new creature must use the old brain; and it is for the new creature to exercise control, not only in the things which we chew and take into our bodies, but also in the operation of the brain, so that we shall think purely; for the brain, as well as the hands and feet, is the implement, the servant, of the new creature, who is responsible for these things. He is to show his loyalty to the Lord by the way he deals with these things entrusted to his care.

Considering the latter part of the text, we are to understand that God will look even deeper than our words and actions—even to the thoughts and intentions of our minds, to see to what extent we would harbor an impure thought. If we find that there has been harbored in our mind a thought disloyal to the Lord and to the brethren, or a malicious thought, whether spoken or not, it is a sin, a blemish, a filthiness of the mind; for it is something out of harmony with us as new creatures—out of harmony with our God.

The Apostle puts cleansing the flesh first; not that we are to have the flesh clean before the mind, but we are more liable to see the defilements of the flesh than those of the mind. As we get into the practise of looking for the imperfections of the flesh, we are not to forget to look after the imperfections of the mind, as the Apostle exhorts. He proceeds to say that we are learning more and more, under the instructions of our Lord and Head, the Father's representative. We are in the school of Christ, learning what the standards of truth and righteousness are. Now, if we would not do the things which would offend our earthly friends, then we should be very zealous lest we come short of doing the things which would be pleasing in the Father's sight.

THE MISRULE OF THE MIND OF THE FLESH

There is a difference to be observed between the spirit, which stands for mind, and the will, which is the new creature. As an old creature we had both a mind and a body; and the mind in a more or less riotous manner had more or less irregularly governed the body. Sometimes one organ was in control; sometimes another; at one time the organ of alimentiveness, at another time, another faculty. But these qualities of the mind are more or less unbalanced by our conditions in life and our environment.

The world in general seems to be running along this line. Today they find pleasure in one thing; tomorrow in another. Sometimes it is ambition. One may say, "I will be a great general," and that thought becomes the mastering element of his mind. With another, the chief thought is some scheme of motherhood; with another it may be pride of dress and show; with another it may be the love of money, which becomes the controlling element of mind; with still others it may be politics which takes possession of the life. In either case, it rules the life. Anything which would interfere with these aspirations

would be pushed aside; and anything that would help them would be encouraged.

But with the Christian the matter is different. His aspirations and ambitions are that he may be in harmony with God and have the blessings of eternal life, which it is God's will to give to any who are of the right attitude of mind. With the world, the first thought is, "I have been working for some time to be a politician, and I will continue"; or "I have been striving for a certain position in society, and I will still strive for it"; or what not. Frequently the thought of becoming children of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, is set aside as being too hard to strive for. Their thought is that they do not know whether or not they would ever get the things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2:9)—the things which God has prepared for those that love him—for at first these things are not great inducements. This appreciation of righteousness is what the Scriptures intimate to be God's drawing influence.

But if the right influences prevail, there will be a radical change of the life, the reward of which, if faithful, is to be a high and glorious future. Our Lord said that we should first count the cost. Those who take heed to his counsel, in proportion as they may realize what that cost is, find it to be the putting aside of all earthly ambition or honor. These must all be laid aside or counted as loss or dross in contrast with God's glorious promises. In making up one's mind the decision is reached after a discussion of all the qualities of the mind. If there is not such a discussion, there is likely to be trouble afterward. Some element will say that it had not been consulted. Hence, one should do as the Lord said, "Count the cost!"

LET THE WILL OF GOD RULE YOUR HEART

To those who count the cost and make a full submission to God, it means not only a turning from sin, but more than that. It means the full surrender of all one has, every talent possessed, to the Lord Jesus. That function of the brain by which the various qualities of the mind are consulted and a decision reached, depends upon the force and weight the higher qualities of the mind have. By "higher qualities" we mean justice, appreciation of divine mercy, reverence for God, for righteousness and for all things which are holy, etc. The individual who has not such a constitution of brain is not on trial for life at the present time. Only such as possess these qualities belong to the household of faith. Only such are begotten of the holy Spirit.

This action of the mind, of the spirit, when it determines or wills to accept the Lord's will, is best represented by a legislative chamber, as, for instance, the Congress of the United States or the Parliament of Great Britain. These bodies are composed of different members. The person who receives the largest number of votes has the largest influence, and may be said to have control of that body, for he is the representative of the majority. So in our minds; having decided to surrender to God, these higher qualities have accepted the Lord Jesus as the great Head of the church. Thenceforth the person is subject to the will of God.

It is not that we put any quality of our mind to be ruler, but that we put the will of the Lord there and accept him to be ruler in our wills, in our minds. Now, having reached this position in which Christ is the great Head, we should seek not only to cleanse the expressions of our tongues, and our actions, but to cleanse our minds also and bring them into subjection. It is our reasonable service that we cleanse not only our bodies and our words, but the very inmost thoughts of our minds. Anything that could be injurious either to ourselves or to another—envy, strife, hatred, bitterness—is to be put down and submitted to the new regulations, the new will which has taken control.

The very object of the begetting of the new creature, the very object of giving it the opportunity of the present life, is to develop character and to crystallize that character. This seems to be the thought of the Apostle when he says, "Whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son"—not partly conformed, but fully conformed to the image of his Son. Our mental state, our will, must be fully fashioned after the mind of Jesus Christ. And his will was full obedience to the Father's will, to the extent of self-sacrifice, even unto death.

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"PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME"

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."—2 Tim. 3:1.

We are to distinguish clearly between the restraint of the fallen angels "in chains of darkness," and the binding of Satan, who is the prince of demons. The binding of Satan, as the Scriptures set forth, is at the second coming of Christ: "And he laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:2) And during that thousand years Christ and his saints shall reign as kings and priests unto God. The restraint of the inferior angels is mentioned by St. Peter and St. Jude. Speaking of these fallen angels, St. Peter says, "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."—2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; 1 Pet. 3:20.

As we examine the Scriptures we see that there were angels of light who became disobedient, who left their primary estate as angels, and sought to become men, who assumed the human form. We find the record of them in Gen. 6:1-4: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." There were children born to them. "And there were giants in the earth in those days, . . . mighty men which were of old, men of renown." Then the whole world was filled with wickedness more than during the sixteen hundred preceding years. And God swept away all mankind except those saved in the ark.

SPIRITS SEEK TO MAKE VOID THE WORD OF GOD

The Apostle proceeds to show what was done with the angels who fell. They have less power, less privilege, than formerly. Then, they had the power of materialization, and could not only eat and drink, but perform all the functions of men. After the flood they were restrained in chains of darkness; that is to say, they were restrained from materialization and from working their power in light, as they had previously done. However, they were still working, as when Saul sought the witch of Endor to inquire as to how the battle would go.—1 Sam. 28:7-20.

The Prophet Isaiah says we should not have anything to do with those "who peep and mutter" and who pretend to have communication with the dead. (Isa. 8:19) But these fallen angels seek to make void the Word of God; hence the various personations of the dead, as in the case of Samuel to Saul. It is not to be supposed that Samuel would come and give the information which God had said that Saul should not have. The same principle applies down to our day. The fallen angels have not been able to do their work except as they have gotten possession of human bodies by getting possession of their wills.

So we read in the New Testament that there are many possessed—not of devils, but of demons. Of these demons various accounts are given. When our Lord addressed the man who dwelt among the tombs, the Lord inquired, "What is thy name?" and the answer was, "Legion; for we are many." Not only one evil spirit had gotten into the man, but a host of them. When Jesus commanded them to come out of the man, they asked that they might go into the herd of swine. Jesus permitted them to go; and the swine ran down into the sea and were choked. It is recognized as a fact that swine are not easily stampeded. You could whip one of the swine, but if you want them to move, you must whip every one of them. Yet there were enough demons to enter the whole herd of swine.

The fallen spirits seem to be thoroughly degraded in their appetites and desires. And while they prefer to obsess human beings, yet, rather than have no animal body at all, they prefer, as shown in the foregoing, to have the bodies of swine. No doubt our Lord knew what the result would be. It was intended to give illustration as to what are valuable things for us to know: First, as to the number of evil spirits indicated by the number in the herd of swine; and, secondly, to demonstrate that they have no power to enter even into dumb animals, to show that poor, dumb creatures are free from them, and to demonstrate that they cannot trouble us, except as we permit them, or tamper with, or allow our minds to come under their hypnotic or obsessing influence.

MODERN UNBELIEF IN EVIL SPIRITS

And there are similar illustrations. On one occasion the evil spirits spoke out, and when the Apostle Paul could stand it no longer, he rebuked them. In the case mentioned above, the man was clothed and in his right mind, sane enough, when rid of the evil influence. (Mark 5:2-5, 15, 19, 20) So it has been ever since. There are physicians who tell us that more than one-half of all those in insane asylums are there because of obsession by evil spirits. But there are many physicians who do not believe in evil spirits or in obsession.

When the Apostles were sent out by our Lord, they returned to Jesus, saying, "Even the evil spirits are subject unto us through thy name." (Luke 10:17) Those who deny the Scriptures say that these people were deceived, and that our Lord was unscientific. Our holding is the reverse of this—that the

Lord and the Apostles were scientific, and that the people of our day are deceived in supposing that there are no evil spirits. We see these operating today, sometimes foretelling the future, clairaudiently, so that mediums are able to hear and to know things that others about them are not able to hear and know. God's people should be on guard, lest they come under evil influences. We have known some people who have come under this power.

There was a brother in Florida who held conversation with the evil spirits and explained to them the Bible; and he thought he was about to convert some. They gave very respectful attention for awhile and asked questions which he answered. But after awhile they seemed to have their curiosity satisfied, and talked in all sorts of vulgar language. The brother said he could not get rid of them. He wrote to us asking how to do so. We told him to exercise his will, and meantime to offer prayer to the Lord, as the only one who could rid him of the evil spirits. They finally left him. Their hold was broken. A lady who was a writing medium supposed that it was some dead friend writing through her. She came to believe that there were evil spirits taking hold of her hand to do this writing, and refused to have anything more to do with the matter.

FALLEN SPIRITS REGAINING THEIR LIBERTY

The question may be asked as to how it will be in the closing time of this age. The Apostle tells us that these evil spirits are to be restrained until the judgment of the great day. What would seem to be implied? We answer that this is the day of Christ, the thousand-year day. As he has been dealing with the church, so in the thousand years he will deal with the world. Messiah's kingdom is the kingdom for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come!" The Apostle says that the fallen angels are restrained in chains of darkness until the great day. And so we find at this very time, this very day, not only evidences of the inauguration of the new dispensation—the blossoming of the wilderness, the electric light, and all the blessings belonging to this new dispensation—but also the evidences that these fallen spirits are obtaining more liberty. We have reason to believe, on what we think reliable information, that there have been materializations.

Spiritualists claim that, more and more, spirits will exercise this power of materialization. They say that it will be only a little while until the dead will be walking around amongst the living. And materialization is only one of the powers which they can use. It is the fallen angels who are representing themselves as dead humans, in order to deceive and operate contrary to the divine arrangement and plan; and these are still working as adversaries of God and opponents of righteousness. We should not be much surprised if there are some very startling things—very wonderful things—to happen in the near future. If we get any conception of the time before the flood, we realize that the earth was full of violence. God perceived that the thoughts of men's minds were evil and only evil. And so today.

The Apostle tells us that in the dawning of this new dispensation and the closing of this Gospel age, men shall be truce-breakers—violent. He proceeds with an entire list. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) This description is prophetic, we believe, of the time in which we are living. And this condition, we think, will be due largely to the evil spirits, just as in the days of Noah. Our Lord, giving an illustration of how things will be at his second coming says, that it will be as in the days of Noah—people will be eating and drinking, planting, etc. He mentions that people will be ignorant of the time of his coming; that as the flood came suddenly, so would come the time of the ushering in of the new dispensation. Our thought is that probably there will be a good deal of similarity—not that the evil spirits will be able to break the bands, or chains, which have been put upon them, but that it will be part of God's plan to let this happen. God has been restraining these evil spirits during the four thousand years since the flood.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH A SAFEGUARD

Speaking of ourself: if we were living today under the ordinary knowledge of mankind in general, and no more, we feel sure that we should not be able to maintain our position as a Christian. Our faith might waver; we might not be able to believe in the existence of God. But we think the hour is coming when there will be a test of this kind. Mankind will have reason to doubt whether there is any other God than nature, which is a very cruel god. Many are coming to believe even now that the Lord is merely a god of nature, and by processes of evolution has been creating the race in the earth. These will certainly come to a place where there will be a severe trial of faith.

Already many are falling; many are standing aloof from God and the Bible. Incidentally, the Lord describes that time when he says he will proceed to "do his work, his strange work"

—the procedure which will seem most strange to mankind, causing great trials and difficulties to come upon the earth and upon the nominal church systems and all who have identified themselves with nominal church Christianity. Many will be thus caused to lose all faith. We know to expect these things and we have, therefore, blessing and keeping-power now. And perhaps we shall need this special help more in the next few years. Who can say?

We can readily suppose that our adversary will have increased power as this time of trouble comes on. We can suppose that the evil work which will be done will be done by Satan and his fallen angels, who will exercise a very baneful influence upon humanity. Some cases have been brought to our attention recently. One was a statement about a person who had had a picture manifestation. When the picture was developed, it showed a man who had been dead for some time. It is evident, then, that the evil spirits are able to exercise some influence which can produce a picture upon a camera. Another case drawn to our attention was that of a person who has "seen things." This person thoroughly believes that he has seen the things with his own eyes. How could this be so? We may not know all the powers which the evil spirits may be able to use, as, for instance, with those who are clairvoyant and are able to see at a distance. We have all heard of mesmerism—that a person under this spirit control would be able to tell accurately things taking place at a distance. This power was tested by

having a person do certain things at a certain time; and the person under the influence of the evil spirits was able to fully describe the things that were taking place. We are not sure how these things were done. The person must have seen the thing pictured in the brain in some manner beyond our comprehension. We assume that it must have been the fallen angels who could give this picture upon the brain of the medium, who could give the medium the things she would see. In our dreams we see people walk and hear them talk. And if we could have such things given naturally, we can easily suppose the power the evil spirits could have in this matter. This does not, however, make us understand the philosophy of it.

To what extent these things will be used in the future, we know not. We have no doubt that the things which will be permitted will be very startling. Even to those who have the right understanding of the divine plan of the ages, the things which will be permitted will be very strange. We are prepared for almost anything that might be told. We are convinced of the power of these evil spirits who pretend to do these various things. In fact, we can see that while materialization would be possible to them, a representation upon the mind would be much easier; it would be easier to paint a picture upon the brain.

The Lord's people should have on at all times the whole armor of God that they may be able to stand in this particularly evil day.

RIGHTEOUS REPROOF AND FORGIVENESS OF WRONG

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."—Psa. 141:5.

In the Scriptures the word righteous is used in a two-fold sense. In one sense, absolute righteousness is referred to, as when we read, "There is none righteous, no, not one." In the text under consideration the intimation is given out that our Lord Jesus is the Righteous One who smites. In this sense, of course, the chastisements would come from our Lord; and the one chastised would receive them with appreciation, knowing that the wisdom, justice and love of God are connected with such reproof. But there is a secondary use of the word righteous, applying to mankind. Various persons are spoken of in the Scriptures as being righteous, not because they were perfect, but because they were right-intentioned, right-willed, and manifested in their conduct the Spirit of God, the spirit of righteousness.

In this use of the word righteous, the text seems to imply that all who are the Lord's people should be able to give reproof and correction in righteousness in a manner that would be helpful to those corrected, and for their good; in a way that would bring a measure of comfort and blessing and refreshment; in a manner that would be like excellent or fragrant oil, whose perfume would linger for hours. With this thought before our minds, there is a valuable lesson here. First of all, we should be of those who receive the corrections as of the Lord; and who are glad to be set right if we are wrong in any manner; secondly, we should be of those who recognize that if reproof be proper to give, it should be of a kind that would not be injurious, but such as would be spiritual, uplifting and refreshing.

In order to accomplish this end a reproof should be sympathetic. We should remember that all of the Lord's people are fallen according to the flesh, but are new creatures in Christ; and, if they be new creatures in Christ, they must have the mind of the Lord and desire to glorify him. Any of the brethren giving a reproof from this point of view would recognize that the person reproofed had not bad intentions, and would explain as gently and kindly as possible what are the real facts. A reproof of this kind should not be given suddenly; and the person reproofing should judge of the punishment to be given and of the proper time, etc., as of the Lord. Thus should any one that is righteous do in administering reproof to another. It should be done only after careful consideration and prayer, and after having arrived at the conclusion that this is the best possible way to help the brother or the sister. If all reproof were given under such conditions we may readily suppose that it would be much more helpful than is the usual reproof.

CRUSHING REPROOF IS UNRIGHTEOUS

The expression, it "shall not break my head," would mean that a reproof should not be disastrous, not be crushing, but it should be an anointing or blessing. To crush the head would be to kill the person. The righteous are not in the world for the purpose of doing injury to others or of harming them, but for doing good in the world. Those who injure others are to that extent unrighteous. Those who use their criticism and reproof, etc., so as to exercise a crushing effect upon the reproofed are not righteous. Such should learn how to properly administer

criticism. They should learn that the Apostle's statement, "reprove," "rebuke," etc., was not made to all of God's people, but to Timothy, who was an elder. And only those should be chosen as elders who are men of moderation, men of development, men who have learned to control their own lives and their own tongues, so that they would not crush, but that their rebuke would be helpful and intended to draw the person nearer to the Lord, and to be encouraging and helpful generally.

"REBUKE NOT AN ELDER"

When St. Paul instructed Timothy not to rebuke an elder, but to entreat him as a father, the Apostle did not refer to an elder of the congregation, but a person older than one's self. Do not rebuke a person older than yourself. Treat him as a father; likewise the elder women as mothers; and the younger men as brothers, and the younger women as sisters. In other words, an elder is not appointed in the church to brow-beat or to trample down the liberties of others. The spirit of kindness, gentleness, etc., is the holy Spirit. If an elder rebukes in another spirit than this, he should remember that the person rebuked is not a child and should not be treated as a child—not reprimanded or denounced or told "This is all wrong!" Such an unwise course in administering a rebuke is a fruitful cause of difficulty.

It would not be wise or kind or gentle for a younger person to lose patience with older people whom he feels should know about a matter and to say, "You ought to know all about this. I will give you a lesson." This kind of spirit has made difficulty in various places. Apparently the Apostle's remark is to the opposite of this course of conduct, and exhorts to kindness, gentleness, consideration of age and everything that might enter into the matter. It is very evident from different Scriptures that there was a family sympathy in olden times that we do not see exemplified today, as shown in the Apostle's statement: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters."—1 Tim. 5:1, 2.

Today it is the custom to be very polite toward strangers and very impolite toward those of one's own family; and some will be very polite amongst those who are outside and very impolite to those to whom they ought to give kindness and help and sympathy. The same thought seems to be given in connection with the admonition to "love as brethren." But today, if you want to find true, real friends, you do not often look for them in the same family. In this respect our progress has surely not been of the evolutionary kind. Father, mother, brothers and sisters should be treated with consideration, with kindness, with love. And this principle should be applied to the household of faith.

"LOVE WORKETH NO ILL TO HIS NEIGHBOR"

In 2 Tim. 4:2 the Apostle, as a minister of the grace of God, explains that the declaration of the Gospel may include three features: (1) reproof; (2) rebuke; (3) exhortation. But it is safe to caution all of the Lord's people against too liberal use of the first two features. In order to reprove properly, the

heart should be very full of love and sympathy; else the reproofs and rebukes might be sharp and possibly do more harm than good. Even with the heart full of love it requires a head that is exceedingly well balanced to be able to make use of reproofs and rebukes to good advantage to those who really need them. And herein God's people are to be "wise as serpents, harmless as doves." Exhortation is the form of service which quite evidently can best be used by the majority of the Lord's people. And even this as well as the other efforts, should be characterized by patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness.

WHEN FORGIVENESS IS PROPER

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."—Luke 17:3, 4.

God does not forgive our sins until we acknowledge them and ask his forgiveness. Our Lord expressly states the propriety of expecting those who trespass against us to make some acknowledgment of their fault before we express our full forgiveness. If he "turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."

We are not to accept one portion of the divine direction and to ignore another portion. We are not to say that our Lord meant it when he said, "Forgive him," and that did not mean it when he said, "Rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." With the majority of people, however, it would be quite unnecessary to urge the propriety of repentance—unless they were the transgressors whose duty it is to repent. Most people are sufficiently disinclined to forgive to wait until their forgiveness is asked.

WE SHOULD LIVE ABOVE TRIFLES

On the other side of the question, however, a caution is necessary. The Christian is to have the loving, generous disposition of heart, a copy of the Heavenly Father's disposition. In trivial affairs he is to have so much sympathy and love that he will take no notice of the little wrongs, just as God for Christ's sake deals with us, unless it represents knowledge and wilfulness. Such a rule operating amongst Christians—a determination not to recognize as offense anything that is not purposely done or intended as an offense—would be a great blessing to all, and the proper, God-like course. The transgressions to which our Lord refers are not trivial affairs, things of no consequence, are not evil surmisings or imaginings, are not fancied insults, but positive wrongs done us, which are susceptible of proofs and on account of which it is our duty, kindly and lovingly and wisely, to give some proper rebuke—some intimation that we recognize the wrong and that it has grieved us and hurt us. Then comes the divine rule respecting the one and only proper manner of rebuke given by our Lord (Matt. 18:15-17) and more than once elaborated in this journal and in our other publications. Our Lord intimates that disobedience of his commands evidences a lack in discipleship. Though he gave very few specific commandments, this command which he carefully marked out as the one, only way of adjusting a grievance, is utterly ignored by many advanced Christians.

"EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU"

The disposition to forgive should be with us always, and should be manifested by us at all times. Our loving generosity and kindness and desire to think no evil—or as little as possible—should be shown in all the words and acts of life. This course is God-like. God has a kind, benevolent, generous sentiment towards us, even while we were yet sinners, nor did he wait for the sinners to ask forgiveness, but promptly manifested his desire for harmony and his readiness to forgive. The whole Gospel message is to this effect: "Be ye reconciled to God." Our hearts should be so full of this disposition toward forgiveness that our faces would not have a hard look, nor our words of reproof a bitter sting. On the contrary, they should manifest the loving forgiveness that we should have in our hearts at all times.

Our Lord particularly called attention to the difference between an outward and formal expression of forgiveness with smooth words, and the true forgiveness which is from the heart. The former, or outward forgiveness is only lip-deep, and means that a rankling of an evil, unforgiving spirit is within, and that it will be only a matter of time until the pent-up force of malice and hatred will break forth in words of slander. God reads the heart, and, whatever the lip-profession may be. He will not consider these unless the heart and the life correspond with them. It is vain, therefore, that anyone should say, "I love my brother," and at the same time seek, either by word or act, to do him injury. All the evil-speaking, malice, hatred, envy, strife proceed from evil in the heart; hence the necessity, on the part of all who desire to be of the Lord's body, that they "purge out the

old leaven of malice" that they may be members indeed of the unleavened loaf—the body of Christ.

Forgiveness "in your hearts" is the condition which is always to obtain there. We should never harbor any other feeling than that of forgiveness and good will toward all, no matter how seriously they may have trespassed against us. If this be the case, we shall be longing and anxious to exercise the forgiveness outwardly and to express it to the repentant ones. Hence we shall not seek to compel the most elaborate statement on the part of the penitent; but, like the father of the prodigal, to see the repentant one coming in an attitude of humility will touch our hearts and prompt us to go out part way to meet him, to forgive him, to greet him kindly and to put on the robe of fullest fellowship and brotherhood.

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—Matt. 6:15.

HATE THE SIN, BUT NOT THE SINNER

Our earliest definition of "Injure not" would probably have been that we should not kill or wound our enemies physically; but as we look at the Teacher and heed his words we hear him say, "Learn of me," and we note with the Apostle that though he did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, yet, "When he was reviled he reviled not again [in return]; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously."—1 Pet. 2:22, 23.

If we are faithful pupils it will not be long until we see that the perfect law of liberty, the law of Christ, is a discernor of the very thoughts and intents of the heart; and that while we must hate all sin, we cannot hate any sinner and yet have the love of God perfected in our hearts. We see that this means, not only that we must not even wish to do so. The evil wish must be conquered and the selfish conditions which gave it birth must be utterly destroyed and replaced with love—the Spirit of Christ.

"COPIES OF GOD'S DEAR SON"

We may learn a lesson from the fact that those two grand characters, John the Baptist and our Lord, each fulfilled his own mission, according to the divine arrangement; but that they had different missions. John's mission was pre-eminently that of a reprover and reformer, and we are to understand that as a prophet he was supernaturally guided in respect to the various features of the course he took. Our Lord's mission, on the contrary, was a different one; he was gathering to himself those whom John's ministry served to arouse to righteousness and to zeal to know and to do the Lord's will.

We who are called to be the body of Christ and to follow him may learn a lesson in this as respects our proper course. We are not sent forth as John was, to dwell in the wilderness, living and dressing uncouthly, and to criticize and denounce everything and everybody. Some of the Lord's dear people fail to notice that such commissions are special and very rare; and sometimes in following the wrong copy, they undesignedly bring reproach upon the Lord's cause.

We are to be copies of God's dear Son, our Lord, and not to be copies of John the Baptist. We are not to stir up strife by trying to mind other people's business, not to seek to govern all the affairs of this world, reproving emperors, kings, governors, etc.; but, on the contrary, we are exhorted by the Apostle to remember that what God sees fit to permit, we can see fit to endure. Even though we find many things which we cannot endorse, we may equally find ourselves able to avoid any special denunciation of them—especially of things which have no bearing whatever upon the proper understanding and fulfilling of the Lord's Word. The Apostle points out the proper position, saying, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And our Lord emphasized the same thought, saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."—Rom. 12:18; Matt. 5:9.

AN UNWISE COURSE

Some of the holiest of the Lord's people err on this subject in their own families, and needlessly arouse prejudice and opposition, and make their homes unhappy, by continually finding fault with things which, though not up to the standard of saintliness and cross-bearing, are, nevertheless, not immoral or wicked, even in tendency. Parents and guardians are surely to guard against all tendencies toward immorality, etc., but to find fault with those they love, merely because they are only nominal Christians and have the spirit of worldliness, is certainly unwise. The general life of peace and joy in the holy Spirit is the very best reproof of worldliness they can give, and the very best recommendation of the glorious Gospel they profess. This is the epistle that will be read, the light that will improve darkness.

In other words, we must not expect from, nor try to force upon the unconsecrated the details of our own self-denials. We

must wait until they shall see full consecration to be their "reasonable service" and present their bodies living sacrifices to God. Pastors and teachers, however, should seek to keep continually before the Lord's consecrated "flock" the high Scripture standard, realizing that many influences are continually at work to lower the standard of holiness and devotion.

"WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT WE TO BE?"

How highly we, who belong to the Gospel dispensation, should value its privileges and opportunities, seeking to "make our calling and election sure!" (2 Pet. 1:4-11) If those who were called with an earthly calling to be a "house of servants," rendered but a reasonable service when they engaged in the Lord's work zealously, as did John the Baptist, and were faithful, how much more zeal and energy ought we to put forth—we who have been favored so much more highly? "What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!"—2 Pet. 3:11.

Let us remember that this "high calling," this "heavenly

calling," to joint-heirship with our Lord in the kingdom, is a very special and a very limited call, that it will soon end, and that so far as the divine revelation shows, it will never be repeated. In view of these things, let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel, looking unto Jesus the author, until he shall have become the finisher, of our faith.—Heb. 12:1.

"No looking back on Sodom's plains
No listening still to Babel's strains;
No tears for Egypt's song and smile,
No thirsting for its flowing Nile.

" 'Tis but a little and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home!
Another year, or more, or less,
And we have crossed the wilderness;
Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won!"

THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVETH YOU

JOHN 16:27.

Be still, my soul, Jehovah loveth thee!
Fret not, nor murmur at thy weary lot;
Though dark and lone thy journey seems to be,
Be sure that thou art ne'er by him forgot:
He ever loves, then trust him, trust him still;
Let all thy care be this—the doing of his will.

Thy hand in his, like fondest, happiest child
Place thou, nor draw it for a moment thence;
Walk thou with him, a Father reconciled,
Till in his own good time he calls thee hence.
Walk with him now; so shall thy way be bright,
And all thy soul be filled with his most glorious light.

Take courage, faint not, though the foe be strong;
Christ is thy strength! He fighteth on thy side.
Swift be thy race; remember 'tis not long.
The goal is near; the prize he will provide.
And then from earthly toil thou restest ever,
Never again to toil, or fight, or fear—oh, never!

He comes with his reward; 'tis just at hand!
He comes in glory to his promised throne!
My soul, rejoice! ere long thy feet shall stand
Within the city of the blessed One—
Thy perils past, thy heritage secure.
Thy tears all wiped away, thy joy forever sure!
—Horatius Bonar.

HE HEALETH THEIR DISEASES

MARK 1:29-45.—MARCH 10.

"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."—Matthew 8:17.

Today's study follows closely the one of a week ago. When Jesus left the Capernaum synagogue. He went to St. Peter's home. There St. Peter's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever. It was the work of but a moment for the Savior to take her by the hand and raise her up to health. The fame of Jesus had spread and by evening there were crowds importuning his healing words and touch. "And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many demons, and suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him."

But he did not remain to increase and deepen the favorable impression that he had made. The next morning, long before daylight, he left Capernaum and went into a desert place for prayer and communion with God. St. Peter and the others who had accepted the call to discipleship followed, and found Jesus later, and apparently urged his return, saying, "All men are seeking thee." But Jesus replied, "Let us go elsewhere, into other towns, to preach there also." And he went into the synagogues throughout all that section, all of Galilee, preaching and casting out demons.

Nothing is more attractive to the human mind than the miraculous power of healing disease. No one enjoys disease, pain and suffering. People would be glad to be healed of disease, even if they were assured that the cures were performed by the power of Satan himself. It should not surprise us today that many false doctrines, wholly out of harmony with God's Word, commend themselves to the poor, groaning creation by promises of relief from physical ailments, without medicine, and theoretically by the power and favor of God, and supposedly in proof of the doctrines advocated by the healers.

But since these healers hold various and antagonistic doctrines, it is manifest all are not of God, if any of them are. To our understanding, the Bible teaches that no miraculous healing at the present time is authorized by God's Word. St. Paul declared by inspiration that the gifts granted to the early church and exercised by Jesus and the apostles and those to whom they personally communicated them would pass away. We believe that they did pass away—that they gave place to the next and higher manifestation of divine favor, namely, the fruits of the holy Spirit—meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, and love—as evidence of God's favor and of membership in the church of the first-born. The miracles which Jesus and the apostles wrought were merely with a view to the establishment of the early church. Nowhere is it intimated that it was the

divine will that all people should be healed of disease during this age.

The general healing of disease will doubtless be a prominent feature of the work of Messiah's glorious kingdom after its establishment. Not only will the ailments of the flesh be lifted, but restitution processes will go on step by step, lifting humanity out of sin, disease and imperfection, up to full and absolute perfection, except in the case of those who wilfully and deliberately oppose the divine arrangement, and who, in due time, will be cut off from life in the second death. All the remainder will ultimately reach the glorious condition of perfection mentioned in the Scriptures, where there will be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, because all the former things of sin and death will have passed away; because he that sitteth upon the throne will make all things new.—Rev. 21:4, 5.

SATAN AN ANGEL OF LIGHT

St. Paul intimates that Satan and his messengers, the fallen angels, would seek to transform themselves so as to appear "as angels of light," that they might exercise the greater influence over humanity and that thereby they might inculcate the more successfully false doctrines, subversive of true faith in God and his Word. We believe that the Apostle's words are particularly applicable in our day, and that many conscientious and good people are being deceived, and that miraculous healings are part of the adversary's bait. It would not be appropriate for us to enumerate here the different doctrines which we believe are thus baited. We content ourselves by giving the Scriptural reason for expecting no miraculous healings from God at the present time.

"WHO HEALETH THEIR DISEASES"

It is quite true that under the Law Covenant which God made with Israel, he agreed that sickness should be a penalty for violation of the law, and health a reward for the obedient. The statement of the Prophet, "Who healeth all thy diseases," was applicable physically to the Israelites under the Law Covenant. It has also a spiritual application to the church, the new creation.

But the healing of the new creature and the healing of his flesh are different things. The new creature's soul sickness and heart troubles are all cured by the Good Physician—even though his flesh may suffer pain and go down into death. We are to remember that the condition upon which we were begotten of

the holy Spirit to be new creatures was a full surrender of the flesh and its interests as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service.—Rom. 12:1.

Nor is this any change from the Lord's dealings with the church from the very beginning. So far as the records show all, or nearly all, who were healed by Jesus and the Apostles were "sinners." Surely there is no record of a single instance in which any of the Apostles were healed of any disease. Although St. Paul healed many sick, yet when Epaphroditus was sick and "nigh unto death" we have no mention of any attempt to miraculously recover him.

Similarly, in the case of Timothy, we find that St. Paul neither sent him napkins and handkerchiefs for his healing, nor advised him to pray for his own healing, nor told him that he would pray for him, nor advised him to have others pray for him. On the contrary, he advised certain medicines, "for thy stomach's sake." Indeed, we believe that for God's consecrated people to ask for physical healing would be to attempt to take back again what they have specifically consecrated to the Lord—"even unto death." That the Lord specially overrules in the cases of many of his people to give them remarkable health and strength for their labors in his service, without their asking it, is another matter entirely. This, however, is in no wise in conflict with the fact that God used miracles amongst outsiders, amongst unconsecrated people, as a foreshadowing of the general blessings which will come to mankind under Messiah's kingdom shortly to be established.

Furthermore, let us remember that the miracles performed by Jesus and the Apostles were not attempts to heal all sickness, to banish pain and sorrow. They were merely intended to attract attention to the Gospel message. The time when God shall wipe away all tears from off all faces, and when there shall be no more sighing and crying and dying, will be during and as a result of Messiah's reign of a thousand years.—Rev. 21:4.

Today's study furnishes one proof along this line. Jesus did

many mighty works in Capernaum, but merely to attract attention. He went to other cities and towns, leaving behind him in Capernaum many sick and disappointed. Similarly, we read that when Jesus passed the pool of Siloam there was a great multitude of impotent folk there needing healing and waiting the opportunity to go down into the water therefor. Jesus merely observed one of that multitude and said unto him, "Take up thy bed and walk."—John 5:1-9.

A CLEANSED LEPER THANKFUL

Today's study mentions another case of healing. Leprosy was regarded by the Jews as an incurable disease, and as a type of sin. The leper of this lesson had faith in the power of Jesus, and came and kneeled before him and entreated healing, cleansing. His prayer was answered, not because he was one of Jesus' disciples, nor because he promised to become one of them, but because of his exercise of faith, and in order to make of his case a testimony to the priests that Jesus exercised a power divine. The cleansed leper was told to go, according to the law, and present the customary offering, expressing his thanks to God and giving his testimony to the priest respecting his healing, and to have him examine him as the Law required.

Jesus admonished the leper not to make known so great a miracle; but in his thankfulness he could not restrain himself; he told it everywhere. The result was that Jesus could not thereafter visit the large cities because he would be overwhelmed with the number of sick brought to him for healing. He therefore frequented the rural districts, but even then the people sought him for healing, from every quarter.

But alas! they were more appreciative of the restitution blessings than the great privilege which our Lord specially offered them of becoming his footstep followers and joint-heirs in his kingdom, which, by and by, will dispense restitution blessings and healing far and near to every member of Adam's race condemned through the fall of Adam, and redeemed by the precious blood of Calvary.

DATE OF THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

The date for the celebration of the Memorial will be Sunday evening, March 31, 1912, after 6 p. m. According to the Jewish calendar the fourteenth day of the month will begin at the time mentioned, and it was on that day that the lamb was to be slain, and that our "Lamb" was slain. And it was on the night preceding that our Lord instituted the Memorial and symbolical eating of His flesh and the blood as the anti-type of Israel's Passover Lamb.

We refer our readers to the Sixth Volume of the Scripture Studies, Chapter XI, entitled "The Passover of the New Cre-

ation." There we have endeavored to set forth this subject in detail. We hope that all of God's dear people who trust in the merit of the precious blood of Christ for justification will celebrate this Memorial of the great sacrifice of our Lord. And let us not forget that it also memorializes the consecration to death of all the members of the body of Christ: "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;" "If we be dead with him, we shall also be live with him;" "This cup is the New Testament in my blood." . . . "Drink ye all of it."—Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Mark 10:38.

SIN-FORGIVENESS AND HEALING

MARK 2:1-12.—MARCH 17.

TEXT:—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."—Psalm 103:2, 3.

When later the Savior returned to Capernaum there was a crush to see and hear him, and to bring the sick for his healing words and touch. The miracles which our Lord performed were specially with a view of getting the ear of the people for his message—the Gospel of the kingdom—the good news of the privilege of becoming sons of God and joint-heirs with Jesus in the Messianic government, which would bless Israel and all nations with light, knowledge, and uplift from sin and death conditions.

It was while he was thus preaching that some deeply earnest ones brought to him a palsied man for healing. Unable to come into the house or its court because of the throng, they removed some of the tiling stones of the roof, and lowered the sick man into the presence of the preaching Savior. Such implicit faith, manifested by such heroic effort, could not fail to be appreciated by the Redeemer.

But the unexpected happened. Instead of healing the man of his disease, Jesus exclaimed, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Under God's arrangement with the Jews, under their special Law Covenant, original sin was typically atoned for by the typical sacrifices, and the people were held to account for their own transgressions of the Law. Hence, amongst the Jews serious sickness implied serious sins. Thus Jesus on another occasion said to one of those whom he healed, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee. Go and in no more lest a worse thing come upon thee."

We are not to forget that such special dealings were with the Jews only—that they never applied to Gentiles, nor to Christians, although it is quite true that certain ailments, such as syphilis, appear very generally to follow the transgressors of

Nature's laws, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. The point we make is that God has no such covenant with the church, nor with the world in general today. Hence, the righteous are often sick, and the sinners healthy.

"WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS?"

When Jesus declared the sins of the palsied Jew forgiven, some of the audience declared that such language was blasphemy—that Jesus was arrogating to himself a power which belonged to God alone. They did not stop to consider that if he were indeed the Messiah, the Redeemer, it would imply that he would possess the authority to cancel the sins from which he was redeeming men. Perceiving their thoughts, and knowing that thus they might stumble over a great truth to their injury, Jesus in a few words clarified the matter, saying to them, Which do you consider the easier, to tell a man that his sins are forgiven, or to heal him? He well knew that they would say that the healing was the more difficult, and, therefore, if Jesus were able to heal the man, there would be no reason why he should say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," if he had not the power to forgive sins. In proof of this, He said to the palsied man whose sins he had forgiven, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Immediately the man was healed, and departed carrying his bedding. The people made way for him, and with amazement glorified God, saying, Who ever saw the like!

AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

There are certain great basic principles relating to God's dealings with humanity which should be recognized. Jehovah's government is based, not upon mercy, but upon justice; as we read, "Justice is the foundation of thy throne." In one sense of the word divine justice never forgives and never can do so,