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Religious and Scientific Gleanings

SAYS "HELL SCARE" IS DUE FROM THE PULPITS.

Although it is the devilish doctrine of Eternal Torment that is driving the best people of the churches into infidelity, there are some still foolish enough to believe that by thus blaspheming God's name and character they can lead men to honor and obey the Creator. Alas, how great a mistake!

Pastor Russell and a few others are doing their best to stem the tide of Higher Criticism and Agnosticism by showing that in the Bible God has revealed a glorious plan for the world's salvation; and that the Creeds of the Dark Ages and not the Bible originated the devilish doctrines of which all are now ashamed. It is said that Pastor Russell's weekly sermons now reach 15,000,000 readers.

A sermon by the Rev. A. P. Gouthey ushered in the sessions of the Wabash Conference of the Free Methodists. He said:

"A hell scare should be put into the whole country by the preachers of the churches." He told why he thought there was reason for such a scare.

"I am frightened at political conditions," he continued. "Some people say that preachers shouldn't get worked up about politics. The pulpit is the place for politics. If we leave to corrupt politicians the axe to grind, they will grind it. I tell you, conditions are awful. We can hardly depend on assemblymen, judges and juries any more. I hate to say it, but it is true.

"We are on the edge of a volcano all ready for eruption. The rumbling is now going on inside. We are on the verge of a war between capital and labor. God doesn't like America any more than He liked Sodom of old. We must keep our religious principles or God will forsake us.

"I know it hurts to know these truths. Some people want us preachers to talk about beautiful things and smooth over disagreeable things. We sing of 'The land of the free and the home of the brave.' God is being bowed out of the schools, bowed out of the colleges and bowed out of some of the pulpits. We are not training our children in strict ways. It is not for the best interests of the child that he should be fondled and kissed instead of getting the birch put to him. This is getting to be an irreverent age."

LONDON SCHOOL CHILDREN.

All Placed Under Municipal Medical Care.

A new scheme has been adopted in London by which the whole of the elementary school children in the Metropolis will be placed under municipal medical surveillance during their school careers.

In future there is to be treatment for every school child which needs it. There are 800,000 children in attendance at the 800 London elementary schools, and it is computed that every year a quarter of a million will need medical treatment. Spectacles and surgical appliances will be supplied. Schools will be arranged for convalescent and other children needing open-air life. Nurses will "follow up" cases into the houses of the children, and for this purpose the scheme provides for the payment by the municipality of the fees of private doctors.

The scheme passed by the London Education Committee provides, as it were, for the compulsory good health of the children, the State and the municipality taking to themselves the responsibility of discovering children who are ill and providing them with medical treatment.

—Exchange.

PRAYS FOR PERSECUTION.

"Oh, God, send us another Bob Ingersoll to arouse the people," was the plea made by Rev. Charles B. Mitchell, pastor of St. James Methodist Episcopal Church, at the Desplains camp meeting.

"They sit in the pews, with dull, dead indifference that breaks our hearts. It would be better if they threw bricks at us as they did at Wesley, but they don't even talk back.

"This is an age of doubt. We ministers need more than apostolic succession in this scoffing, indifferent and Godless age. The pendulum, I believe, will soon begin to swing back again."

PURGATORY FIRES! NOT NOW, BUT SOON

"Some men's sins * * * go beforehand to judgment, and some they follow after."—1 TIMOTHY 5:24.

GRADUALLY, as the eyes of our understanding open to the true beauties of God's Word, we find that the gross errors of the past have, indeed, some foundation in the truth. Yet the two are so different that they might pass each other without recognition.

As Bible students are allowing the Word of God to interpret itself they are being blessed; their faith is being strengthened as they find that the real teachings of the Bible are beautiful and harmonious and God-honoring and acceptable to sanctified common sense. As so much of our confusion has been connected with the subject of future punishment, it is only reasonable that much of our blessing and enlightenment should come from a better understanding of the Scriptures bearing upon this subject. Our first lesson to learn was the difference between the Bible Hell and the hobgoblin torture chambers of our bewildered forefathers, who had not the Bible in their possession and who, if they had possessed it, lacked generally the education necessary to read it.

When we found that the Hebrew word Sheol is the only word translated hell during the Old Testament period of four thousand years, we were not surprised. But when we found that that word signifies the tomb, the death state, and that it is translated grave in our Common Version Bible more times than it is translated hell, we were surprised. And when further close investigation showed that the good, as well as the bad, go to Sheol, and that the Bible declares that all who go to Sheol were redeemed by Christ's death, and that eventually He will destroy Sheol and deliver all the prisoners of death from Sheol—then we began to see what a serious blunder had been made in the translation.

But when about to blame the translators for deceiving us, we found that the trouble lay rather with a change in the use of language. All know that all living languages are gradually changing. And investigation shows that in old English the word hell was used as a synonym for hole or pit, or something covered over, as the grave. Thus an English farmer in olden times might say, "We helled five hundred bushels of potatoes this fall"; or, "We helled (thatched) our cottage."

The fault was not so much with the translators as with the wrong idea already firmly imbedded in the human mind—not the teaching of the Bible—that God intends to punish in purgatory or eternal torture all except the saintly few. From the first Satan seems to have endeavored to deceive humanity respecting the true character of the Creator; and his success is shown by the warped and twisted interpretations that we all gave to our Heavenly Father's Word.

Sheol Sometimes Used Figuratively.

In probably three or four texts out of seventy the Hebrew word Sheol and its Greek equivalent Hades are used figuratively, as, for instance, St. Paul refers to Hades, the tomb, under the figure of a monster which has been engorging itself with humanity. He represents it figuratively as yielding to the glorified Messiah at His Second Advent and disgorging its prey in the resurrection. Looking forward to the completion of the resurrection at the close of the Messianic Reign, he exclaims, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?" Similarly the Prophet David likened the tomb to a great monster about to devour him, and likened the pains of his sickness to the teeth of the monster, saying, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of Sheol gat hold upon me. * * * Then called I upon the name of the Lord * * * and He helped me" (Psalm 116:3-6)—the king was raised up from illness.

Again, the Lord through the Prophet, speaking of the great giant systems of this present time, declares that they will go down into Sheol, into death, and figuratively represents their meeting in death with the great oppressive systems of the past. (Isaiah 14:9-11.) But there is no suggestion of eternal torment connected with the word Sheol anywhere. And the fact that the Lord redeems our

souls from Sheol, and will destroy Sheol eventually by raising mankind from the state of death, proves positively the gross error under which we labored in respect to the meaning of this word and its equivalent in the New Testament Greek—Hades.

True, there is a reference to the Second Death, where we read of those who shall be brought to a knowledge of God during Messiah's Kingdom and who then shall deliberately and intelligently refuse the way of righteousness. We read: "The wicked shall be returned to Sheol, and all the nations that forget God." (Psalm 9:17.) These are not the ignorant and weak, but the intelligently wicked. They are not those who have never known God, but those who, after knowing Him, forget Him and willfully choose the way of sin. For such God has no blessing of life everlasting. They "shall be destroyed from amongst the people."—Acts 3:23.

In the New Testament, the word Gehenna represents the Second Death—the utter destruction of the class consigned to it. As every scholar knows, Gehenna is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Gehinnon. It was the name of a valley outside the wall of Jerusalem, long used as a garbage furnace for the destruction of the offal. But it was never recognized by God as a place for torture or sufferings, or for any living creature.

Although the capital punishment of the Divine Law is death, annihilation, God has subordinate punishments, all of which are for reformation, or we might properly say, all of which are designed to be purgatorial, purifying. Amongst the Scriptures referring to these we might include St. Peter's words, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you"—purify you and test your character, to demonstrate your faithfulness as the people of God and your worthiness of association with Messiah in His glorious Kingdom to be set up at His Second Advent.—1 Peter 4:12.

St. Paul, writing along the same lines, calls these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment," and designed to "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Corinthians 4:17.) They thus work out blessings for the Church by purifying them as New Creatures, eliminating the dross from the gold.

In Malachi's prophecy it is foretold that Jesus would institute purgatorial experiences amongst the consecrated people of God, the antitypical Levites. He does this to purify them of dross and to enable those who have offered their lives to God sacrificially, to be acceptable as His members. We read: "He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver, to purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an acceptable sacrifice."

Jesus has thus been sitting as the Refiner and Purifier of His Church for more than eighteen centuries. The fires of persecution, tribulation, which He has permitted to come upon them are all purgative—designed to purify, to purge, to make them white. His people have the assurance that He will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will with every temptation provide a way of escape.

"The Whole World Lieth in the Wicked One."

All are "children of wrath," and still under Divine sentence of condemnation, except the Church of the First-borns—the antitypical Levites, Spirit-begotten. We who have thus been called out from the world have the settlement of our prospects for life everlasting or the Second Death in this Age, before the blessing of the Lord comes to mankind in general. The Church's trial and purgatorial experiences must all take place during this Age, before the New Age opens, which in the Divine arrangement is provided for the world's judgment. "God has appointed a Day [the Day of Christ, a thousand years] in the which He will judge the world in righteousness [give to each a fair, full, righteous opportunity for reconciliation] by that Man whom He hath ordained [The Christ, of which Jesus is the Head and His faithful followers the members.]"—Acts 17:31.

The World's Purgatory Future.

The Church of Christ constitutes the Elect, the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, through which all the families of the earth, the non-elect, are to be blessed, according to God's promise. The foundation for the world's blessing was laid in the same sacrifice of Jesus by which the Church's reconciliation was made possible. Nevertheless, the prospects for the Church and the world are quite different. The Church, through following her Redeemer voluntarily and sacrificially, in suffering for righteousness' sake, is to be crowned with glory, honor and immortality beyond the veil, with the spirit nature.

By this, the glorious resurrection change, the Church will be prepared for association with her Lord in His great work of blessing Adam and his race—regenerating them. A thousand years have been set apart for the work by the great Life-Giver. The life to be given to the willing and obedient of mankind will be earthly life, human life, human perfection, in Paradise restored, world-wide.

As purgatorial experiences are wise and proper as respects the Church, similarly fiery trials and chastisements are the Lord's plan for dealing with mankind for their good. The purgatorial experiences will prevail especially at the beginning of the New Dispensation and will be abated for all who will turn to Messiah, seek forgiveness and strive to walk in ways of righteousness.

And ways of righteousness will then not mean, as now to the Church, self-sacrifice. Now the Divine rule is that "He that saveth his life shall lose it"; but then whoever would save his life may save it by obedience to the Divine laws, by abstinence to the extent of his ability, from sin. Such may gradually rise up out of their imperfection, mental, moral and physical, to the grand image of God originally represented in Father Adam and lost through his disobedience and his sentence of death.

True, the world has had its sufferings all through the past; the whole creation has groaned and travailed together under the infliction of the sentence of death pronounced against Father Adam and holding fast against all of his posterity. To some extent these have been judgments or punishments for sins; but on the whole we cannot call the world's experiences during the past six thousand years purgatorial. Purgatorial experiences would be those administered under the eye and care of a great director, and designed to purify.

Hot Purgatorial Fires Soon.

Numerous are the symbolical pictures used in the Scriptures to explain and yet to hide the character of the purgatorial experiences of the world, as they will begin in an awful time of trouble as soon as the Church shall all have passed beyond the veil by the First Resurrection change. These terrible troubles coming upon the world are designed of the Lord to purge the world, to bring mankind to a due sense of responsibility, and to show the desirability of righteousness and the undesirability of sin.

"Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the Day that I rise up to the prey; for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the Kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy." (Zephaniah 3:8.) Here we have the purgatorial fire with which the New Dispensation will be ushered in. It will be on earth, and not in some unknown place—neither in the interior of the earth, nor beyond the bounds of time and space." It will be purgatorial in the sense that it will be under the supervision of the Lord, with a view to bringing a blessing to mankind out of that trouble.

That a blessing will come out of it is indicated by the sentence following, which tells that amid the severity of the trouble God will grant grace and mercy and blessing. "Then will I turn unto the people a pure Message, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." (Zephaniah 3:9.) Thus we have another evidence that this is purgatorial or symbolical fire or trouble, and not literal fire, otherwise no people would be left to whom the pure Message could be given. But God's intention is that all mankind, living and dead, shall come to a knowledge of the Truth, for Christ Jesus by the grace of God "tasted death for every man."

(Continued on 2d page, 2d column.)

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DEBTS OF CIVILIZED NATIONS.

The below figures show the public debts and annual interest charges of the principal nations of the world. These debts represent chiefly moneys expended for war, war equipments, battleships, etc. The amounts continue to pile up year by year.

The public scarcely understand the situation; they wonder to whom the amounts are owing and what can be done when pay-day comes.

The wealthy know that these bonds represent their money and they feel satisfied to get even a small interest with such good security and no trouble.

Of late, however, a certain fear is taking hold upon the rich—what if Socialism should gain control? And what if, by and by, the national treasury should go into bankruptcy and repudiate its bonds?

Evidently the world needs just such a good, strong Government and just such wise and just laws as the Kingdom of God's dear Son will shortly bring to them. How significant is the Scriptural statement respecting that—"The desire of all nations shall come." (Hag. 2:7.) Following are the figures:—

	Public Debt.	Annual Int. Charged.
France	\$5,898,675,451	\$186,802,380
Russia	4,558,152,565	204,766,421
German Empire 4,270,488,716		179,778,179
Austria-Hungary	3,703,235,511	133,925,824
United Kingdom	3,669,931,350	152,759,411
Italy	2,602,299,757	96,941,138
Spain	1,817,674,327	78,709,000
British India ..	1,346,999,187	41,681,212
Japan	1,287,604,261	76,283,536
Australasia	1,184,192,157	46,883,998
United States..	1,023,861,531	21,803,836
Portugal	864,561,212	29,907,983
Brazil	657,097,561	32,390,824
Belgium	663,325,145	27,022,108
China	601,916,605	92,375,017
Turkey	527,983,636	36,494,753
Argentine Republic	545,712,120	29,594,251

These are all the nations whose public debts exceed \$500,000,000, but every government on earth has been for years, and still is, borrowing to cover the deficits that are annually created by spending more money than the revenues will justify. They are compelled to issue bonds in order to make up the difference. It is a serious question how long this extravagance can be continued.

DRINKERS BARRIED AS RAILROADERS.

Some time ago one of the large American railroads announced that in future nobody would be employed in the operating department of the road who was not a total abstainer. Almost as early as railroading itself was the demand on the part of the public that the driver and conductor should not be intoxicated while on duty, and public opinion eventually succeeded in making it a misdemeanor for an employe concerned in the operating of trains to drink while on duty. There reform stopped. It was assumed that what a man did in his own time was his own business, and that if he chose to drink he had as much right to do so as any one else. Now the railroads are realizing that what a man does in his own time may be his own business, but that it may have a decided effect upon what a man does when he is at work. For example, a driver who "made a night of it" may be sober when he turns up for duty next morning, but he is not in the condition he should be in for the safe operation of a train.

To the Editor of the Tribune:

SIR: Last Sunday night the International Bible Students Association, of Brooklyn, N. Y., held a meeting at the Town Hall, and the speaker delivered a lecture on the subject of "Why God Permits Evil." I went there to find out why he could tell me what I could imagine for myself, and I will acknowledge that his explanation of the subject was something I never dreamed of. It was the most interesting lecture I have heard for a long time on Bible history.

Next Sunday night at 7:30 o'clock there will be another meeting, which I would like to ask all our friends to come around to, especially the "Presbyterian Men's Bible Class." You will hear something that will do you good.

WILLIAM BOYD.

Extract from "The North Philadelphia Tribune," issue of Saturday, August 3, 1912. Paper issued at Bridesburg, Philadelphia.

(Continued from 1st page, 4th column.)

The trouble which will follow the gathering of the Church to the heavenly plane, by the First Resurrection, is symbolically represented as the melting of the earth (society) with the fervent heat (strife, contention, discord) of that time. Already we see the Capitalistic element and the Socialistic element and the Labor element preparing for the contest which is to constitute the great "time of trouble such as never was" before.

Not only so, but the "heavens" also will take fire and pass away with a great noise. These are Scripturally shown to be the symbolical heavens, the ecclesiastical heavens. Thus the intimation of the prophecy is that the social strife will extend to and include, not only social, political and financial conditions, but also include Ecclesiasticism. The fiery trouble of anarchy will consume everything of the present, and make way for the New Dispensation, of which St. Peter tells us. In the same symbolical language he calls the New Dispensation a "new heavens and a new earth." The "new heavens" will be the Church in glory. The "new earth" will be the new social order of things established by that Heavenly Kingdom—a reign of righteousness, justice, leading on to a reign of love.—2 Peter 3:10-13.

This great purgatorial experience at the inauguration of the New Dispensation is again Scripturally likened to a "fire." As we read: "The proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the Day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that

it shall leave them neither root nor branch."—Malachi 4:1.

All the fires of that time will be fires of righteousness, consuming the things of pride, sin and iniquity. They will burn as long as there is anything sinful to consume. As quickly as pride is abandoned, so quickly will the fires cease. But the Prophet declares that those purgatorial fires will be thorough-going. They will leave neither root nor branch of pride and wickedness.

The intimation in this is that the fire soon to begin may in individual cases burn on and on—perhaps in the cases of some individuals for a century, for the declaration is that all will be smitten down in the Second Death who shall fail to make some progress towards righteousness during the first hundred years of purgatorial and disciplinary experiences. The sinner a hundred years old shall be cut off.—Isaiah 65:20.

We also note the great distinction between the sufferings of this present time and those of the future. The Church suffers from the Adversary and his misguided servants; and the Lord merely supervises, that these sufferings shall not be too severe nor beyond our power of endurance. But the purgatorial experiences of the future will be along reverse lines. Only evil-doers will suffer, and all the chastisements will be meted out by the great Redeemer with a view to purging mankind from sin and selfishness and preparing them by Restitution for the Heavenly Father's everlasting blessing—eternal life.

FAITH—SALVATION AND WORKS

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."—EPHESIANS 2:8.

THE relationship between faith and works in the matter of the Church's salvation has been a question of controversy for centuries. However, this, like other subjects once mysterious, yields to the clearer light of our day. Now we perceive the importance of both faith and works and the relationship they bear to each other. Faith is the all-important factor in God's sight, because in our fallen condition we cannot do perfect works and because God cannot consistently accept and reward any but perfect works.

God's arrangement for us, therefore, in Christ, is that He will judge us, not according to our works, but according to our faith. Nevertheless, good works are recognized as a demonstration of our faith. So surely as we have the proper faith in God and His promises it will manifest itself in works, even though we cannot do perfectly.

So St. James points out that Abraham was not justified without works, but was required to demonstrate his faith by his works, even though they were not perfect works and could not have justified him.

Age of Faith—Age of Works.

If we call this Gospel Age the Age of Faith, none should misunderstand us to mean that works are now wholly ignored, but rather that works take the secondary place. Likewise, when we say that the coming Age of the Messianic Kingdom will be an Age of Works, none should understand us as meaning that faith will then be ignored. Works will then be the basis of the Lord's judgment in dealing with the world. Thus we read that they shall be "judged every man according to his works." (Revelation 22:12.) Judgment according to works, yet not without faith, may perhaps appeal to some of our minds as being the more reasonable, the more just form of judgment. However, when we come to note the difference between the conditions of the trial of the Church of this Age and the future trial of the world during the Messianic Reign, we can see readily the reason for the different basis of judgment.

The Present Grace Age.

In the present time the Lord is selecting from the world a special class to be the Bride of Christ, and He properly makes Faith the test. (1) Because in the Divine estimation faith in God is one of the grandest elements of character, the one most essential to such as will be entrusted with high positions and authority in the Kingdom. (2) Because the judgment according to faith meets the various conditions of the present time as a judgment according to works would not do.

The Lord calls now for such as will walk in the "narrow way," demonstrat-

ing that if they had perfect bodies as Jesus' body was perfect, they would be perfect in works as well as in faith.

In the next Age, the Divine Plan will not be the selection of self-sacrificing ones for the Kingdom, but the blessing of humanity with an opportunity to return to the full perfection of human nature. They will be required merely to demonstrate their loyalty to God in the use of their lives faithfully in obedience to His Law. The reward for the sacrifices of this Age is to be glory, honor and immortality, the Divine nature and joint-heirship with the Lord Jesus in His Kingdom. The reward for obedience to be given in the next Age will be human perfection in the image and likeness of God, with all the earthly inheritance originally given to Adam—lost through sin and redeemed by the merit of Christ's sacrifice. And since the objective points of the two Ages are different, so will be their methods and conditions.

We have already considered the conditions of the Church's trial; let us next notice how different will be the conditions of the world's trial, according to works, in the coming Age. The reign of Satan and sin now prevalent is to give way; Satan is to be bound for a thousand years that he may deceive the nations no more for that period. The darkness, ignorance, superstition and misunderstanding of God and His plans, etc., which have prevailed for the last six thousand years will pass away. Instead, "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams." The darkness of ignorance, superstition, etc., which at the present time covers the earth, and gross darkness the heathen, makes faith in the present time a very precious thing indeed which only comparatively few can or will exercise.

But, when the shadows and darkness shall flee away, when the True Light shall shine, when "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep"—then faith will not be at its present premium because it will then be very easy to exercise faith. Moreover, while perfect works are impossible now, because of our imperfections of the flesh, perfect works will gradually become possible to the world in the next Age, because as they progress in the light and in obedience to the laws of that Kingdom they will gradually be recovering the perfection of the flesh, mental, moral and physical. And as they recover these powers correspondingly more and better works will be required each year, each century, of their experience.

Finally, before the glorious Epoch shall conclude—before Messiah shall turn over the Kingdom to the Father—all the willing and obedient will have come to full perfection and hence to full capacity for perfect works and God will demand them; they will therefore be the standard or test in the world's trial Day—"They shall be judged every man, according to his works." In both these judgments we see Justice and Mercy harmoniously working together in the interests of those on trial, the differences between the two operations being such merely as adapt them to the conditions of the individuals on trial.

Come Now to Our Text.

A glance at our text shows that it relates to the present Age and not to the period of Messiah's Kingdom. The Apostle is addressing those called to joint-heirship in the Kingdom, of whom

he says in the context that "God in mercy hath quickened us with Christ and raised us up together to a heavenly station in Christ Jesus, that in the Ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." Without question these words apply to the Elect Church, and with equal certainty they cannot properly be applied to the non-elect world, whose opportunity for blessing belongs to the next Age and will come to them from the Father, through the Son, by the Church in glory.

Our text contains another statement which has been the cause of much dispute, namely, the one which declares that "we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." It is easy to understand the forepart of this statement, that we are saved by grace, and easy also to understand the last part, namely, that we are not saved by works and that, therefore, none of us have any ground for boasting in our salvation. "By nature we were children of wrath, even as others." We were under the sentence of death and could not recover ourselves from that condition. Whatever, therefore, should be done for us to help us out of our condemnation and fallen condition would necessarily be of grace, and also of God. Now we come to the more difficult part of our text.

"That Not of Yourselves."

How shall we understand the suggestion that the faith is not of ourselves but is the gift of God? Surely God does not exercise faith for us, and surely also He does not develop the faith in us by some miraculous power, for in either of these cases the saints would be merely machines, reacting as acted upon. This would neither develop nor prove character, nor in any wise fit and prepare us for the glorious work to which we have been called. How is it God's gift?

There is one view of this statement which we believe clears it of all mystery and makes it entirely harmonious with Divine Justice and our responsibility. It is this:

Faith is possible only where there is a basis of knowledge; in proportion, therefore, as God grants us knowledge of Himself and of His great Plan, in that proportion is it possible for us to exercise faith in that Plan, and by our endeavors to demonstrate the strength and sincerity of our faith. While it is true that our knowledge depends in large measure upon our application in the study of the Divine Word—upon our use of the means and opportunities placed within our reach by a kind Providence—nevertheless there are millions of our race who have had no opportunity whatever for knowledge.

For instance, during the more than four thousand years from Adam to the days of Jesus, knowledge and opportunity for faith were very limited. For more than two thousand years God made no direct revelation whatever of His good intentions in respect to sending a Saviour and the delivery of our race from the bondage of sin and death. Then the Message sent was semi-private. To Abraham God declared His intention of blessing the world eventually, and further that this blessing would come through Abraham's posterity. But what did the masses of mankind at that time know of that promise? Faith in that promise was counted to Abraham for righteousness; and the same with Isaac and Jacob. Ultimately the promise descended to the nation of Israel.

Finally, Jesus came, and that which had been promised began to have an actuality, a fulfillment. Yet even then the thing offered was so different from that which the Israelites had for centuries expected, that the majority of them wholly failed to exercise the necessary faith and to enter into the privileges of the hour—membership in Spiritual Israel as sons of God begotten to a higher nature. So, says the Apostle, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the Election obtained it and the rest were blinded." Only the few had a sufficiency of faith to make use of their knowledge.

"If Our Gospel Be Hid."

St. Paul declares that the Gospel is hidden from some during this Age, namely, from the perishing ones whom Satan hath blinded, and these surely are the vast majority of the race. As Jesus declared to His disciples, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear." And thus it has been all down the Age for more than eighteen centuries. Only the few have been so highly favored by birth and environment, etc., as to be able to see and able to hear and appreciate the glorious invitation of this present time.

Furthermore, God's providence has been exercising apparently a discrimination in the sending of the Gospel Message. It went not alike to all parts of the earth. Beginning with Israel in Palestine it moved northward and westward to Greece and to Italy, and thus spread through and amongst the savage tribes of Europe, namely, to such as had "ears to hear" the Divine call to joint-heirship with Christ in the glorious Kingdom soon to be established. From Europe this Message, this knowledge, came to America; and now, within the last century in particular, it is reaching some of the many millions of India, China,

Japan, Africa, etc., but still with the same limitations. It appeals only to a comparatively few in any nation—"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

"Not of Yourselves."

Ah, yes, we can see a force in the Apostle's words, "not of yourselves." It is indeed for ourselves to exercise faith when the knowledge comes to us, yet faith being impossible without knowledge, we were dependent upon God for it. How thankful we should be, how appreciative! How sympathetic we should be toward those who have not been so highly favored with knowledge or whose condition has been less favorable to the cultivation of the hearing ear and of the understanding heart! Truly God is electing and selecting, testing and proving the members of the Church of Christ.

Another phase of the subject well worthy of our notice is that our faith is largely a matter of development; first the seed, then the blade, then the ear, then the ripe corn. When God gave us the first impulse toward a knowledge of Himself and of His purposes, that was the seed from which faith might germinate if it fell into a heart or mind that was good soil for it. And even those whose hearts are good soil for the Message of God's grace and the Kingdom invitation find that they greatly need a certain Divine supervision, watch-care, in order to bring forth fruitage such as the Lord will be pleased to accept.

What would any of us be today without the grace of God assisting us in faith and in obedience? Surely the original faith would long since have withered and died. We must still say, By the grace of God we are saved, through faith, not of ourselves. It is the result of the knowledge granted and the Divine blessing poured upon us.

Growing in Grace, Etc.

In full line with what we have considered is the Apostolic injunction that we must continue to grow in grace and in knowledge and in faith and in love, and to the extent of our ability in obedience and good works. And this growth in grace, this growth in faith, signifies a continued and further growth in knowledge. For instance, the promises

of the Bible contain the spiritual food upon which we as New Creatures must feed in order to grow up to the required likeness of Christ—in order to be fitted and prepared in character-and-faith-development for a place in the Kingdom.

It should not surprise us, therefore, to find the Scriptures clearly teaching that the Bible contains nourishments exactly adapted to our requirements. St. Paul illustrates this matter by saying that in the beginning of our experiences we, as new-born babes, should "desire the sincere milk of the Word that we might grow thereby"—grow in grace and in knowledge and faith and obedience. But he admonishes us also that we should not always continue to be babes, feeding upon the milk of the Word, but that by the use of it and the strength that is derived we should become strong in the Lord, become manly, attaining unto the full stature of manliness as members of the Body of Christ. And for this additional strength the Apostle tells us that we need more than the milk of the Word—we need the "strong meat" of God's Word, of God's promises, that we may grow thereby. And again, in all this finding and using of the "meat in due season" we are indebted to God.

Not only has He provided meat in due season in the Holy Scriptures, "that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished" and able to "rightly divide the Word of Truth," but additionally He has granted help amongst the brethren, that we may build one another up in the faith, until we all come to the full stature in Christ.

How evident then it is that our salvation through faith is not a matter of an instantaneous injection of faith into us in some miraculous manner, but a gradual development, as we have seen; and how evident it is that in the development of this faith we are to be co-workers together with God!

Let us, therefore, be very appreciative of the great privileges granted to us and use them wisely, lest we should receive the grace of God in vain and miss this great Prize which has been offered to us and which we have accepted and which God will be faithful to give to those who faithfully use the blessings of His provision.

not heard"—declaring the omnipotence and omniscience of our great God, their Creator.

We say that these are works worthy of a Creator, and we are surprised that the Great Eternal should in any sense of the word interest Himself and His great Power in a transforming work in connection with our hearts and lives. Nevertheless, the more we consider it the more we are convinced that the creation of angels was a greater display of Divine Power than the creation of the worlds. Likewise the creation of man in the image of God was a far greater creation than that of the material Universe, because man was created in the image and likeness of His Creator—Adam was a miniature copy of God in the flesh.

The Divine intention respecting Adam and his race in general, the Bible assures us, is Restitution—restoration eventually to all that was enjoyed by our first parents in Eden, and lost through disobedience—sin. The Heavenly Father has arranged that the sorrows and tears incidental to the reign of sin and death are not to be in vain. He purposed man's redemption and restoration from before the foundation of the world—foreknowing as He did the course of Adam as a free agent, his disobedience and fall under the death penalty.

Thus the Scriptures assure us that in the Divine purpose Jesus was "the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." And they assure us that the Lamb who was slain is ultimately to be given the dominion over the whole earth, and for a thousand years shall exercise a reign of righteousness, justice, love and power with a view to the reclamation and restitution of all the willing and obedient of the human family—and the destruction of all those who love sin and hate righteousness and who therefore are styled "corrupters of the earth."

We Are God's New Creation.

As we have just seen, the great and important work of human restitution the Father has delivered over entire to the Son, the world's Redeemer; as we read: "He must reign until He shall have put down all enemies"—even death, the last enemy. Then He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, says St. Paul. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28.) But our text is not discussing that work of Restitution which belongs to the coming Age of Messiah's glorious reign of righteousness. On the contrary, it deals with the specially favored and specially blessed ones who during this Age are being called, proved, tested, polished, prepared for joint-heirship with Jesus in His Kingdom.

These are special objects of Divine care, whose blessing consists not in restitution to earthly perfection and an earthly Eden home or Paradise. These are called of God with a "high calling," a "heavenly calling"—to be "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 8:17.) These, St. Peter tells us, have been granted exceeding great and precious promises, that by these promises [as the Divine power or energy working in them] they might become partakers of the Divine nature.

Ah, now we perceive the special sense in which Divine Power is being exercised toward the called and elect Church from that which will be exercised toward the world in general. God is creating a new order of beings in the Universe—an order or class on the Divine plane, which is far above that of angels, principalities and powers or any other plane in the whole Universe. This is the sense, then, in which we are God's workmanship and newly created of Him in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Only from this standpoint can the beauty and harmony of the Bible be discerned. The Father's providences guided that Jesus should first pass through the trials and difficulties and self-sacrifices necessary to a demonstration of His loyalty, which would prove Him worthy of the Divine nature. And so the Apostle tells us that He who was rich, for our sakes became poor; that the Logos humbled Himself and took a bondman's form in harmony with the Divine program. "And being found in fashion a Man, He humbled Himself" still further, even to death, "even the death of the cross." "Wherefore also [on this account] God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in heaven and things on the earth."—Philippians 2:6-10.

Nor did the New Creation cease with this exaltation of the Logos, the Redeemer of men, to the Father's right hand of power and honor and glory, that "all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." (John 5:23.) On the contrary, St. Paul explains to us a Mystery, hidden from previous Ages and Dispensations, but now made known unto God's saints, namely, that the Divine purpose is that a Church class shall be selected during this Gospel Age, to share with the Logos, Jesus, His exalted glory and honor, dominion and power and Divine nature—as a Bride class. Thus we read: "It became Him [the Father], * * * in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."—Hebrews 2:10.

And now, as the Father's Representative and agent, for eighteen hundred years the Redeemer has been doing the work of preparing this class which is to

be His Bride and Joint-heir in His Kingdom—the class which is to be associated with Him in the judging and blessing of the world of mankind in general.

"Ye See Your Calling, Brethren."

St. Paul, pointing out the privileges of those who are now being called, says, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," but chiefly "the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom." (1 Corinthians 1:26; James 2:5.) Those who possess the blessings of the present life in great abundance are thereby disadvantaged respecting this great High Calling, while the poor of this world have their compensation, for the things of the present time having less attraction for them, their ears and hearts and "the eyes of their understanding" are more ready to discern the glorious things of the Divine revelation, which the natural eye hath not seen nor the ear heard—things which God hath in reservation for those that love Him—supremely—for those whose love for God manifests itself in a full consecration of mind and body to know and to do the Divine will.

Our text tells us of the possibilities of our "calling"—of what God through Christ is able and willing to do for us—even bringing us to a perfection of holiness and faultlessness in the Divine presence at the end of our race course. But there are conditions, our text declares, namely: "If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the Hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which was under heaven."—Verse 23.

Since there are conditions, we must give them earnest heed; for how could we be careless or indifferent in respect to so high a calling, so heavenly a Prize as this set before us? Carelessness, neglect, indifference in respect to the terms or conditions, would be manifesting a lack of appreciation of the gift, the privilege, the opportunity; and this in turn would mean that thereby we mark ourselves in the Lord's estimation as unworthy of the proffered honors and glories.

"The Hope of the Gospel."

It should not surprise us that the Apostle lays great stress upon the "Hope of the Gospel." God is not working in us with tools of iron and steel or gold or silver to transform or to polish us. His fashioning and transforming tool is the Hope of the Gospel. It is this Hope which the Apostle declares we should "have as an anchor to our soul, both sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil, whither our Forerunner is for us entered." (Hebrews 6:19, 20.) Thus we will be settled and grounded and safe in all the storms of life, great and small. Our anchorage of faith will give us the assurance of the Divine promise, that "all things shall work together for good to those who are the called according to His purpose," to those who are the

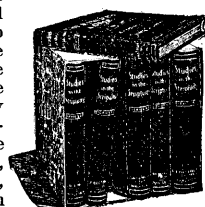
"Happy objects of His grace,
Destined to behold His face."

But the Divine arrangement is that in order to continue in the faith we must feed continually upon the promises of God, and must allow them to have a sanctifying power in our minds, in our hearts and over our words and conduct, making us more and more copies of God's dear Son. As our text intimates and other Scriptures tell us, the Adversary will seek to move us away from the glorious promises of the Gospel, putting fear as an incentive instead of love, or attracting us by worldly pleasures or pride or "the love of money," which is "a root of all evil." Our worthiness to be of the New Creation will be demonstrated by the faithfulness, the persistency with which we will hold on and strive against the oppositions of the world, the flesh and the Adversary, and more and more seek and enjoy the fellowship of the Father and of the Son.

If we know these things, happy will we be if we allow them to exercise us both to will and to do the Father's good pleasure, to the extent of our ability as New Creatures in Christ. If we do so, He who began the good work will complete it in the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ—in the Morning of the New Dispensation—in the First Resurrection. This means a gradual growing in grace and in knowledge and in the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit to the extent of our ability. The merit of our Redeemer compensating for all our unintentional shortcomings. He will eventually present us holy, faultless, unreplicable in the Kingdom.

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THE POWER OF CHRIST'S GOSPEL

"And you who were one time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblemished and unreplicable in His sight, if ye continue in the faith," etc.—COLOSSIANS 1:21-23.

OUR text is a wonderfully condensed statement of the grace and power of the Lord operating in His Church—His faithful footstep followers. The more we ponder our text and its contents the more we must admire the lengths, breadths, depths and heights of the Divine Power enlisted on our behalf, and admire also the faithfulness and ability of the Apostle as the Divine mouthpiece. It is really too wonderful for the natural man to believe that the grace of God could ever present before the Divine presence and glory, perfected, holy, faultless, irreprovable, such imperfect, unworthy creatures as we by nature are! Well did the poet express our sentiments in the words: "I'm a miracle of grace!"

The Apostle is not speaking of a Power Divine working in the heart of a perfect man, fitting him for glory, honor and immortality on the Heavenly plane. He declares, on the contrary, that His words apply to those who were at one time alienated from God, opposed to Him in their minds as a result of wicked works. Such even Divine power is able to transform. The key to this transformation lies in the human will. If it be fully surrendered to the great Redeemer He undertakes to bring about the grand results declared in our text. Force indeed could be used, and the Scriptures assure us that force to some extent will be used during the period of Messiah's Reign, but now, in selecting those who will be Jesus' companions in glory, none are dealt with except such as give to the Lord their hearts, their wills, desiring Him "to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Reconciliation the First Step.

The great Apostle did not neglect to here reiterate the fact that before anything could be done by way of reconciling sinners to God a sacrificial work was necessary. The great Creator's sentence of death upon the race could neither be ignored by Himself nor by any other. No reconciliation to God could possibly be accomplished which would bring the sinner back into full fellowship and the enjoyment of Divine favor and everlasting life except as the penalty for original sin should first be met. So the Apostle reminds us that the One who is able to present us holy and blameless and unreplicable is He who has already made reconciliation for us "in the body of His flesh through death."

Let us pause here long enough to impress upon our minds this great Biblical fact, that it was the death of Jesus which secures for Father Adam (and incidentally for all of his race condemned in him) a release from the death sentence which came upon him as a violator of the Divine Law. And let us not forget that there is an infinite difference between a death sentence which God did inflict and an eternal torment sentence which the

creeds of the Dark Ages misled us into believing was the Divine penalty pronounced against the sinner.

It was because the sentence, "Dying, thou shalt die," was pronounced against Father Adam that the death of Jesus was a Ransom-price sufficient to secure the sinner's release—and the release from death by a resurrection of all of Adam's posterity who shared the results of his sentence. Thus we see the force of the Scriptural declaration that "as by a man came death, by a Man also came the resurrection from the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive—every man in his own order."—1 Corinthians 15:21-23.

But the Father's grace operating in Christ Jesus designs more than merely the abolishment of the death sentence. To merely redeem us and merely bring us back into the condition in which death overtook us is not the Divine Program. It is further reaching; it aims at our complete uplift out of sin, as well as out of death, its penalty—out of weakness and out of imperfection of every kind. It aims to make us holy, righteous; and the Apostle leaves no room for any misunderstanding respecting the degree of righteousness. The result is not to be merely a righteous will, or a righteous purpose, with an imperfection of accomplishment, but so thorough a work that when it is finished we will be faultless and unreplicable, not only in the sight of our Redeemer, but also in the sight of our Heavenly Father. Ah, no wonder if we are astonished at the wonderful power and grace of God which this declaration reveals!

Ye Are God's Workmanship.

The same inspired pen explains elsewhere to us: "Ye are God's husbandry," ye are God's workmanship. (1 Corinthians 3:9.) Let us not lose sight of the thought that "it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13.) While the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Elder Brother and the Captain of our Salvation and the active Agent in our redemption through His death, is associated with the Father in all of this work of our perfecting, nevertheless we are not to lose sight of the fact that all things are of the Father, as all things are by the Son. The two are in perfect accord, but the Scriptures assure us that the Plan itself was the Father's and that He graciously invited the Son to the participation which He enjoys.

When we think of the Divine creative Power our minds go out to the wheeling orbs which encircle our earth, to the millions of suns and hundreds of millions of planets which fill the space about us and which we call the Universe: "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; there is no speech nor language where their voice is

THE APOSTLES AND PSEUDO-APOSTLES

"Have not I chosen you Twelve?"—JOHN 6:70.

AS Christians we have long lamented our differences and wondered at their number. As we have been getting rid one after another of the doctrinal errors of the past, and see their foolishness, and learn that they are not supported by Bible testimony, we wonder how they originally got a foothold in Christian faith. But a glance backward is sufficient to explain the situation.

During the ministry of our Lord and the Apostles the faith of the Church was kept pure, but as Jesus prophesied in the parable of The Wheat and Tares, all this changed as soon as the Apostles fell asleep. He says, "While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares" amongst the wheat. The tares of error sown by Satan shortly after the death of the Apostles have yielded an abundant crop and well-nigh choked out the good seed of the Kingdom—Christ's saintly followers. The nominal wheat-field might almost be called a tare-field, so greatly do the tares predominate.

But in the Harvest, the end of this Age, the dawning of the New Age of Messiah's Kingdom, the Lord will favor such conditions as will effect a thorough separation between the "wheat" and the "tares." He will gather His wheat into the garner. All imitation Christians will, by the fiery troubles of that day, be reduced to the ranks of the world in general.

Judas' Place Improperly Filled.

Whilst the eleven Apostles were waiting as directed for the Pentecostal blessing, they, contrary to direction, busied themselves by appointing a successor to Judas. They chose two men, and of the two selected one by lot, and then supposed that they had made an apostle. Without reproving them God ignored their choice; thenceforth we hear no more of Matthias. In His own time God brought forth the successor of Judas, and we all recognize at once St. Paul, of whom it is written that he was "not one whit behind the chiefest of the Apostles" and that he had visions and revelations more than they all.

St. Paul's writings constitute the major portion of the New Testament, and are invaluable gifts of God to His people. There never were to be more apostles than these Twelve. Jesus declares that He chose The Twelve. Again He declares that God gave them to Him and that He lost none of them save Judas, whose disloyalty had already been foretold.

When Jesus prayed for these He differentiated them from His other followers, saying, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those also who shall believe on Me through their word." Their words are His words. They have been His mouthpieces to the Church. Of these Twelve, and of none others, He declares, "Whatsoever things ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven," and whatsoever things ye shall declare loosed all shall know are loosed and not binding in the sight of Heaven. So carefully did the Lord intend to supervise these in their utterances, that their words would be infallible; and He wished all of His followers to know this.

Furthermore, after our Lord had ascended to glory, He sent a message to the Church through St. John the Revelator. In that message He pictured the Twelve Apostles as a crown of twelve stars, upon the head of the Woman, the Church. Again, in the symbolical picture of the New Jerusalem, which represents the Church in glory beyond the veil, He pictures the Twelve Apostles as the twelve foundation stones. There never were to be any more, nor any less. From this standpoint we see that we are not to expect an additional revelation of any kind. God's people are not to trust either in their own speculations and mental gymnastics, or in visions and dreams; for, as St. Paul declares, "If any man preach any other Gospel than that which we have preached let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8, 9.) So, too, he declares, "The Word of His grace is able to build you up," and to "make you wise unto salvation." Again he said, "The Word of God is sufficient, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished." (Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:15-17.) We see, then, after the Church needed no more than the Twelve Apostles, nor any further revelation of any kind than those given to her through this inspired apostleship. But that there would be some who mistakenly would claim to be apostles, the Lord Jesus clearly indicated, declaring that there would be false apostles, "who say that they are apostles and are not."—Revelations 2:2.

The First Pseudo-Apostles.

When we speak of pseudo-apostles—false apostles—we should not be understood as charging intentional fraud. Rather, sympathetically, let us suppose that the early bishops, in accepting the title of apostles and in claiming for themselves succession to the Apostolic office, were honestly deluded, as much as were the people who thus acknowledged them. Let us remember, further, that the matter grew gradually, just as titles and dignities grow at this day.

Let us remember that the early Chris-

tians were not generally educated—that remarkably few people in olden times were able to read. Indeed, general ability to read belongs only to our generation, to those living in this our wonderful day—the dawning of the New Era of Messiah's Kingdom. Let us remember also that at that time books were very scarce, because very expensive. The Jews did, indeed, endeavor to have a copy of the Holy Scriptures in each synagogue, there to be read once a week, in portions, from large and costly scrolls.

Christians, expelled from the synagogue, had no longer the opportunity of the Jews for studying the Old Testament Scriptures. And the New Testament, written in a fragmentary manner, was costly also, and not brought together as a collection for a long time after the death of the Apostles. The Sacred writings soon became relics, remembrances of the dead Apostles and of Jesus, worshipped by all, but not studied, even by those who were able to read. Their value for instruction was considered at an end, because the theory in the meantime had sprung up that the living bishops were the representatives of the Apostolic office and inspirations. The people, therefore, unable to read, asked not, What say the Apostles? but received their theological instructions from the bishops, whom they believed to be the living Apostles.

When we reflect that very few ministers in one city, even of one denomination, are today fully agreed as respects Divine Truth, we must not be surprised that during the two centuries following the death of the Apostles these supposed "successors" got into all kinds of false doctrine, each leading a company of believers and holding the pre-eminence of his own views, few thinking to measure their presentations by those of The Twelve, Divinely appointed.

"Apostolic Councils" Next.

The doctrinal strife between the bishops grew. Gradually the people of God, about A. D. 250, began to be separated into two classes—the clergy and the laity. The bishops, instead of being chosen by the vote of the people, publicly claimed the Divine right, as the superiors in the Church to ordain for them their clerical teachers. The clergy, under the lead of the bishops as supposed successors to the Apostles, lorded it over God's heritage. Later, in the Sixth Century, the Bishop of Rome began to be considered superior to all other bishops, and finally was declared to be the chief father, or papa, or Pope.

About the Fourth Century creed-making began. The Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed and the Apostles' Creed, all were formulated in the Fourth Century. It was discovered that more than a thousand bishops—pseudo-apostles—were teaching very contrary doctrines on many subjects. The Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity and was perplexed by the variety of teaching. He convened the "Apostolic Council" of Nice. But although he provided expense money for all bishops attending only about one-third obeyed the command.

These bishops disputed and wrangled over differences for days and weeks and months. Finally they reached a conclusion satisfactory to the emperor. It was promulgated with governmental sanction and with the declaration that any persons or teachings to the contrary were to be expelled. Thus a small minority of men, who mistakenly thought themselves inspired, under the leading of an emperor who had not even been baptized, set up a theological standard which since has served well to fetter religious thought in many, and to make others believe that there is nothing in religion but superstition.

Creed-making along these lines progressed for twelve hundred years, while the Bible was neglected. It was not even thought necessary for instruction in theological seminaries. Luther, then a devout Catholic, had taught and preached for years without ever seeing a Bible. The explanation is that the bishops, esteemed to be living apostles in full authority, were thought to have more up-to-date knowledge than the original Twelve, and in Apostolic Councils had formulated creeds which they declared were alone necessary to be believed. Can we wonder that in all those fifteen centuries the real nuggets of Truth which had been delivered by Jesus and the Apostles and the Prophets became sadly incrustured with human tradition, superstition, misunderstanding, etc.?

Groping for the Light.

Our Catholic friends do not agree that a great Reformation movement started in the Sixteenth Century. None of us will claim that Luther and his friends were infallible, and that in one step they passed from the confusion of fifteen centuries into the full blaze of religious knowledge. All, however, Catholics and Protestants, can surely agree that some kind of creed impetus to righteousness came to the Protestant movement of the Sixteenth Century. We have the proof of it all about us.

No longer are Protestants and Catholics warring with each other, burning each other at the stake, etc. Each may feel free to investigate for himself and to accept or reject such doctrines and creeds as he may please.

All true Christian people deplore the division of Christ's followers into numerous sects. Nevertheless we may surely feel a great sympathy for all of them when we remember that each separate sect represents an additional effort on the part of honest minds to grope out of darkness toward the light. All who are awake are conscious that some terrible nightmare of error rested upon Christendom for long, long centuries.

The Torch of Civilization.

Well has the Bible been called the Torch of Civilization and Progress. The Bible, not men, was the great Reformer and leader into civilization. When the Bible was placed in the hands of the people, they began to see that God's message came from Jesus, and the Apostles, and the Prophets of old, and that clericalism and sacerdotal functions were man-made. A desire to know what the Bible teaches became more and more prevalent. The first effort of the clerics was to tell the masses that the priesthood had the Bible and would read it in their hearing—but it was read in Latin, to those who could not understand Latin.

Gradually the desire sprang up for the Bible in the English language. Dr. Tyndale was amongst the first to recognize the need and to supply it to the British. Later on Luther, with assistants, supplied the Germans. But not many were able to read. A partisan spirit arose. Seeing that the Bible was popular, all acclaimed it as the Divine Revelation. But each party condemned the translation made by the other, when in reality there was no particular difference between them. It was all the bishops could do to keep the people from studying God's Word themselves and to make them satisfied with the presentations already given them by their teachers.

Therefore the Bishop of London bought up a lot of Tyndale's Testaments and burned them in public. But more were printed and the demand increased. People hungered for God's Word and felt suspicious of the creeds, as well they might. Then came the Catholic Bible in the English language, and later, our Common Version English Bible, and many others. Still the claim is made that Protestants should not read the Catholic Bible, and that Catholics should not read the Protestant Bible, when in reality the two are practically the same—good translations.

It would appear that there are many religious teachers of all denominations who outwardly extol the Bible for popularity's sake but who in reality inwardly wish the people would never read it, for they realize that the Bible is the

greatest foe in the world to ecclesiastical hypocrisies and superstitions.

Back to the Bible, Says Pope!

The present Pope with a clear vision beholds the drifting of our day away from all faith and religion. Viewing the attitude of the Protestant colleges, universities and theological seminaries, the Pope realized that nearly all the educated young men of Protestant lands are being taught Higher Criticism, which is but the polite modern name for infidelity. He perceived that Protestantism, which originally boasted of its fidelity to the Bible, and protested against the acceptance of the teachings of the bishops as instead of the Divine Word, has cut loose from the Bible as an inspired authority and is drifting upon the rocks of Higher Criticism, rationalism, atheism.

The Pope then bethought him of the Catholic colleges, and found the same Higher Criticism intruding itself there. He perceived that this general trend away from God has already crushed all religion in ninety-six per cent. of the French, and in ninety per cent. of the Germans. The awfulness of this situation greatly impressed the holy father. He realized that our increase of education and decrease in religious faith must speedily spell anarchy. At the risk of condemnation from both Catholics and Protestants as narrow-minded and bigoted, the Pope instituted heroic measures. He gave orders that all Roman Catholic ecclesiastics and teachers must be examined as to their faith, and must solemnly swear to it, and that all books along the lines of Higher Criticism should be banned.

Pope Pius X took another bold, courageous step. The Pope perceiving that the masses would no longer recognize the bishops of Divine authority—as successors to the Apostles, the Papal bull directed the Catholic masses to no longer look to the successors of the Apostles for instruction, but to the Bible itself. He urged upon the bishops that Catholics everywhere be encouraged to read the Bible. This is a move in the right direction. If Catholics should get to reading the Bible (we care not whether they use the Catholic version or the Protestant version), Protestants may be ashamed into real Bible study, instead of the sham make-believe so much practised.

May we not, then, hope that all true Christians, Catholic and Protestant, of every shade, might, through the honest study of the one great Book of authority, come back to the "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," and the one "Church of the Living God," whose names "are written in Heaven?" Toward this end let us labor. Let us each be students of the Bible, and let us be honest and loyal, not handling the Word of God deceitfully. So shall we have the blessing for which Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth."

THE FIG TREE IS WITHERED AWAY

"And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto Him, Master, behold the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away."—MARK 11:21.

OUR thought is that this particular incident in our Lord's earthly ministry may be very significant. We see that nearly all His acts were good, not only for the time being, but, as it were, pictures of larger things to come after. In the casting out of devils, etc., He was showing forth the glory of His coming Kingdom. When His Kingdom shall come, all the sick will be healed, all the blind will have their eyes opened, all the lame will walk; there will be literal healing and blessing of the world. All devils will be cast out.

The Lord did not attempt to heal all the sick He saw on earth. We recall the case where the impotent man was lying on the porch at the pool of Bethesda. Jesus went to that one man and said, "How is it that you are here?" He said, "When the time comes for the moving of the water, others step down before me." Then Jesus merely said to him, "Arise, take up thy bed." He said nothing to the others. He did not pretend to heal all the sick. He was merely demonstrating His mighty power, which will be fully expanded when the glorious Kingdom is established.

Therefore, we think we are taking the proper view of matters when we suppose that even the little things, every little act of the Lord Jesus, was in some degree prophetic, significant of the great things to come. Take, for instance, His coming into the boat at night. There was a great storm; but as soon as Jesus came into the boat, they were at the shore where they were going.

Now in the instance under consideration, we read that Jesus came unto a certain place and there was a fig tree and He declared something about gathering of figs; "for the time of figs was not yet," our common version reads; more properly it would read, "for the time of figs was not over," was not past. It would be strange for Jesus to come before the proper time to look for figs.

And He cursed the fig tree and said, "Let no more figs grow on thee to the age." Then later St. Peter called attention to the fact that the fig tree was beginning to wither, and Jesus said, "Have faith in God." What is the reason?

When the Fig Tree Putteth Forth Leaves Ye Know that Summer is Nigh.

It is our understanding that the fig tree was a type or picture of the Jewish nation, to whom Jesus came when it was proper to expect fruitage. But coming to the Jews, He did not find the nation bearing fruit. The great ones of the nation were cast off; and only the publicans and sinners were ready to accept His message—the very ones the others would not recognize at all.

It is remembered that the nation had a blight upon it. At the end of His ministry, Jesus, riding to the brow of the hill overlooking Jerusalem, said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Luke 13:34, 35.) A very short time afterwards it began to lose its power; and the Jewish nation lost its identity completely as a nation in the year 70-37 years after.

While the Jewish nation has thus been in Hades, in the tomb, so to speak, it is as a nation that they are referred to thus. Of course, they go into the tomb as individuals, as every one else; but as a nation also they have gone into the tomb. But according to the Scriptures there will be a resurrection of the Jewish nation, and a picture of that raising up is given where it says, "The bones came together, bone to his bone," etc. (Ezek. 37:7.) Those bones represent the whole house of Israel, which is referred to as saying, "Our hope is dead" (V. 11); our ambitions are all gone or are asleep!

So God is telling them that all the Kingdom hopes of that nation are to be revived. As Jesus said to His disciples in one of His discourses—When ye see the fig tree beginning to put forth its tender leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. We see the fig tree putting forth its leaves today (see Matt. 24:32; Mark 13:28); we see the Jews looking back to Jerusalem, and we thus see the fig tree putting forth its leaves, or giving signs of life, looking forward to the re-establishment of the Jewish nation. God says there will be such a Jewish nation again.